

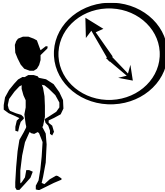
## THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

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### Time of Assembly



#### Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
(every other week)	

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study	6:30 p. m.
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## The Christian's Attributes

By Jefferson David Tant

*"Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins" (II Peter 1:5-9).*

[Continued from Last Week]

### Perseverance

This is an interesting word, as it comes from the Greek "*hupomeno*," which is defined as "cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy:--enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting).

We are well aware that there are negative things that come into the lives of all of us. Among the things that various people suffer from would include illness, job loss and thus loss of income, accidents, death of a loved one, persecution, etc.

Now, I don't think God is telling us to persevere with a cheerful attitude when we are injured in a car accident, or when a loved one dies. I believe the context of the passage would apply to the matter of being persecuted for our faith.

So, what should our attitude be when we are persecuted? There are several scriptures that would have an application. Note a few of them.

*"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.*

*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:10-12).*

Suppose you have to undergo a painful surgery to correct something that is wrong in your body. Do you moan and weep, or do you have a thankful spirit because you know this pain is going to work out for your healing?

If you want to know something about perseverance, you can read Paul’s account of the things he suffered as a disciple of Christ.

*“To my shame I must say that we have been weak by comparison. But in whatever respect anyone else is bold--I speak in foolishness--I am just as bold myself. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? --I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness” (II Corinthians 11:21-30).*

Thankfully, many live in nations where their faith is not severely persecuted, but they may be ridiculed or restricted in some ways. But, as mentioned before, there are nations where believers in Christ are persecuted and even put to death. And why do they persevere? Because they know the joy that awaits them if they endure.

## Godliness

I don’t think we need a long definition of this character trait. I believe we all understand that this means that we live in such a way that others can see God living in us. The way we live in this world should be such that others can see that we are followers of what God has taught us.

This has both negative and positive inferences. In the negative sense, we do not hate our enemies, we do not gossip, we do not covet, we are not selfish, we are not slanderers, we do not wish ill upon others, and we do not return evil for evil.

Then, in the positive sense, in our everyday living, we live in such a way that our example identifies who we are — who we are following.

I remember several years ago one of the members of the church where I was preaching in Georgia went back home to Texas for a high school reunion. This was several years after his graduation. One of his classmates approached him and said, “Max, I

always knew there was something different about you.” What had she observed? She observed that he was a Christian. She observed that his behavior and attitudes stood out as different from others in their class. How so? Evidently, his life was a reflection of godliness. That stood out, and she remembered that even after many years.

As Christians, we should always remember that there are others who see us in our daily lives. And in addition to those we contact on a daily basis, there is One who sees all—our Father in Heaven.

The words of a favorite children’s song would have an application here.

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see,  
Oh, be careful little eyes, what you see.  
There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love,  
Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see.  
Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear,  
Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear.  
There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love,  
Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear.  
Oh, be careful, little tongue, what you say,  
Oh, be careful, little tongue, what you say.  
There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love,  
Oh, be careful, little tongue, what you say.  
Oh, be careful, little hands, what you do,  
Oh, be careful, little hands, what you do.  
There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love,  
Oh, be careful, little hands, what you do.  
Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go,  
Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go.  
There’s a Father up above looking down in tender love,  
Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go.

Others are watching us, whether we are aware of it or not. And we know that God is always watching us.

### Brotherly Kindness

“Brotherly kindness” should be familiar to us, as there is a city in Pennsylvania in the United States that carries that name. The Greek word is *philadelphia*, which is literally translated “brotherly kindness.”

Typically, how would a sister or brother treat another brother? Would there be kindness, respect, appreciation, helpfulness, etc.? Oh, it is obvious that some family brothers do not always act in a civil way. They can be mean, irritating, disrespectful, etc. But are we to treat them as an enemy?

Luke gives some counsel on how we are to treat our enemies, how to show broth-

erly kindness. *"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men"* (Luke 6:35).

Admittedly, it may not be easy to show this kindness to our enemies, to those who mistreat us. But we have an example, showing us that it can be done. Do you remember the words Christ spoke while he was in unimaginable pain while dying on the cross? *"But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves"* (Luke 23:34).

If that's not an example of "brotherly kindness," then I don't have any better examples.

Now, it is obvious that God does not expect us to have warm feelings for those who mistreat us in the same way that we have love for our family members or fellow Christians. But we can determine to have a spirit of kindness even towards our enemies. It may not be easy, but Christ has shown us that it can be done. And who knows whether or not our attitude may have a positive effect on them, and they become our friends. It has happened. Consider Paul's admonition to the Thessalonians: *"See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people"* (I Thessalonians 5:15).

Brotherly kindness is an expression of our love. Paul wrote about this to the church at Corinth. *"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal"* (I Corinthians 13:1). Paul goes on for several verses describing this love. It is not arrogant, or selfish, is not provoked, and seeks not its own, etc.

The "love" in this passage is from the Greek "*agape*," which is the higher sort of love, not the "*phileo*" or brotherly love that is felt when we see an old friend and give a big hug. "*Agape*" love would be controlled more by the mind than the feelings of good emotions when we think of family members or good friends.

Think of the story of the Good Samaritan. Christ told of a man who was stripped, beaten, and left for dead on the roadside. The "religious" leaders, the priest and the Levite, passed by and ignored him. But a Samaritan, who was despised by the Jews, stopped and took care of the man, took him into town to an inn, and paid the innkeeper to help the poor man. This story is told in Luke 10. Notice what Christ said about the Samaritan: *"But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion"* (Luke 10:33).

Then Jesus asked a question: *"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same"* (Luke 10:36-37).

Would you agree that "compassion" would be an expression of "brotherly kind-

ness?”

Question: Do we ever seek opportunities to show brotherly kindness? Or if we see a need, do we pass it by as did the priest and the Levite?

## Love

The final attribute that Peter mentions is the greatest of all. This love is the “agape” love. I don’t know that I can improve on Adam Clark’s Commentary on this passage, so I will share his thoughts, which are based on the King James Version of the Bible, and the word “agape” in the KJV is translated as “charity,” while later versions translate the word as “love.”

“Charity--Love to the whole human race, even to your persecutors: love to God and the brethren they had; love to all mankind they must also have. True religion is neither selfish nor insulated; where the love of God is, bigotry cannot exist. Narrow, selfish people, and people of a party, who scarcely have any hope of the salvation of those who do not believe as they believe, and who do not follow with them, have scarcely any religion, though in their own apprehension none is so truly orthodox or religious as themselves.” (Adam Clark)

## They Went Out From Us

By Terry Wane Benton

Sometimes it is a hidden blessing to the local church when we lose some people and numbers. John spoke of some who ceased in heart to be “*of us*” (I John 2:18f). They “*went out*” because, in heart, they had been secretly drifting away from the truth being preached and could no longer “*endure sound doctrine*” and as a result lost commonality with the local group.

They went out to manifest that the disconnect had already been brewing in them for some time and discussing with knowledgeable leaders their issue was not an option for them since they knew they could not defend their attitudes or issues on a sound scriptural basis.

As their attitude and disconnect continued they were not a good influence on the church or for the church. It was better for the local church to lose that number than to try to cater to them just to appease them and keep the number. A little leaven of that kind would not be good for the church. So, it was a cancer, a drag on the church. It was better if they could not or would not repent, for them to leave than remain a drag on the church.

While ideally, we want people to be of one mind (I Corinthians 1:10), we find the reality to be that divisions must occur to reveal the truth (I Corinthians 11:19) that some members are not really dedicating themselves to God's word. That is unfortunate, but a reality we must acknowledge in local churches from time to time, which means we must all diligently examine ourselves regularly whether we are in the faith (II Corinthians 13:4) and truly abiding in Christ (John 15:4).