

## Brotherly

*“to sum up, let us be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted and humble in spirit”*

### 1 Peter 3:8

**Brotherly**—This is a word you are not likely to forget, once you know what it is. The word is *philadelphio*. We have a city in Pennsylvania by that name. It literally means “brotherly love.” There are four words for love in Greek. This word combines the word *Adelphia* (brothers) and *philo* (love). Peter uses a word that he was intimately familiar with. After he denied that he knew Jesus, Peter went into hiding. Jesus was crucified. It looked like the end. But God reversed everything when Jesus rose from the dead. However, Peter was not leading the way anymore. Filled with shame, he returned to the life of fishing. In the gospel of **John**, chapter **21**, we see how gently Jesus restores Peter’s frame of mind. That chapter is filled with the interplay between *philo* love and *agape* love. Jesus asks Peter if he has self-sacrificing love but Peter is only able to answer that he has brotherly love. Peter’s shame over his denial prevents him from making the boasts he made prior to Jesus’ death. By the end of the story, Jesus has given Peter back what he lost, acceptance and purpose. It is a beautiful story of Jesus’ way of healing our thoughts as well as our bodies.

Now Peter tells us that brotherly love toward each other is a mark of our faithfulness to Christ. He knows this from personal experience. There are few joys more satisfying than the embrace of friends, people you know you can count on, people who have been woven into the fabric of your life. Sharing our lives with others who are on the same path toward heaven is a great comfort and a wonderful reward. The small group that meets at my house every week to study the Bible and share burdens has become so important to me. Those people are real family. They know me and I know them in ways that tell me I am accepted and loved. All of us need that kind of family.

Being a Christian is a commitment to community. God planned it that way. We belong to each other in ways the world cannot understand. We are a family of the forgiven. If you have your own “family” group, share *philo* love with them. As Peter discovered, it is an essential part of the healing process. May you be healed today.