

Romans 12:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Analysis

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Paul specifies what sincere love looks like in the Christian community. **Kindly affectioned** (φιλόστοργοι, philostorgoi) describes the natural affection within families—tender, warm-hearted devotion. This word appears only here in the New Testament, combining *philos* (friendship) and *storgē* (family affection). Paul adds **brotherly love** (φιλαδελφία, philadelphia), another compound: love for siblings. Together, these terms paint the church as a family bound not by blood but by Christ. Believers should feel toward one another the instinctive affection of brothers and sisters.

The second phrase, **in honour preferring one another** (τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι, tē timē allēlous proēgoumenoi), literally means 'going before one another in honor'—taking the lead in showing respect. This command subverts the Roman honor-shame culture, where social climbing and self-promotion dominated. Paul calls Christians to outdo each other not in status-seeking but in honor-giving. This is countercultural love: instead of demanding respect, bestow it; instead of asserting your rights, yield them. Philippians 2:3-4 captures this attitude: 'in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.'

Historical Context

Roman society was obsessed with honor (Latin *dignitas*)—public recognition, social rank, and reputation determined one's worth. Competitions for honor drove

politics, patron-client relations, and daily interactions. Honor was a limited commodity: gaining it meant taking it from someone else. Into this honor-shame culture, Paul introduces a revolutionary ethic: Christians compete to give honor away, not accumulate it. This upside-down value system reflected Jesus's teaching that greatness comes through service (Mark 10:42-45).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does viewing fellow believers as family ('kindly affectioned,' 'brotherly love') change the way you treat them?
2. In what relationships are you demanding honor rather than 'preferring' others—insisting on your rights instead of yielding them?
3. What would it look like this week to 'go before' someone in honor—actively seek ways to recognize, appreciate, and elevate them?

Interlinear Text

τῇ	φιλαδελφίᾳ	εἰς	ἀλλήλους	φιλόστοργοι	τῇ			
G3588	with brotherly love	G5360	one to another	G1519	one another	G240	Be kindly affectioned	G3587

τιμῇ	ἀλλήλους	προηγούμενοι
in honour	one another	preferring
G5092	G240	G4285

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:1 (Love): Let brotherly love continue.

Philippians 2:3 (Parallel theme): Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

1 John 4:11 (Love): Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1 Peter 1:22 (Love): Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1 Peter 2:17 (Love): Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (Love): But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

Galatians 5:13 (Love): For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Psalms 133:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Galatians 5:22 (Love): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

2 Peter 1:7 (Love): And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.