



# TRUTH & RIGHT

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## FELLOW-FEELING

The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, *“But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it”* (1 Corinthians 12:24-26).

We can draw several lessons from this passage, but the overriding one is that Christians ought to care for one another. We need to develop and

encourage empathy — what the dictionary describes as *“the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another.”*

There’s an old English expression that summarizes this same action: **“fellow-feeling.”** That’s a great word, one that deserves resurrecting in today’s vernacular, especially in the vernacular of today’s Christians. We should be a fellow-feeling people, with the capacity to feel joy with others when they have occasion for joy,

sorrow in times of sorrow,  
and compassion in times  
of need.

Our brothers and sisters  
in the first century of the  
modern age were fellow-  
feeling folks. They  
maintained an  
atmosphere of sharing  
and mutual concern,  
providing for one  
another's needs (Acts  
2:44-46). Luke, our  
inspired historian, tells  
us, *"Now the multitude of  
those who believed were  
of one heart and one  
soul"* (Acts 4:32), and that  
none among them lacked  
anything, because the  
others all gave of what  
they had (Acts 4:34).

This principle applied not  
only to their material  
needs, but to their  
spiritual needs as well. A  
Cypriot Levite named  
Joseph not only  
contributed his wealth,  
selling a piece of property  
and giving the proceeds to  
the apostles to distribute,  
but was also called  
Barnabas — *"son of*

*encouragement"* — for his  
efforts to edify the saints  
(Acts 4:36).

The fact that many early  
Christians actively  
demonstrated their  
empathy for others did  
not exempt them all from  
being reminded  
repeatedly how important  
it was that they continue  
in this behavior. Paul  
admonished the church in  
Rome, *"Be kindly  
affectionate to one  
another with brotherly  
love, in honor giving  
preference to one  
another; not lagging in  
diligence, fervent in  
spirit, serving the Lord;  
rejoicing in hope, patient  
in tribulation, continuing  
steadfastly in prayer;  
distributing to the needs  
of the saints, given to  
hospitality"* (Romans  
12:10-13). Since the Holy  
Spirit is not in the habit of  
wasting words, we can be  
certain that those Roman  
saints needed that  
instructional reminder,  
even as we do.

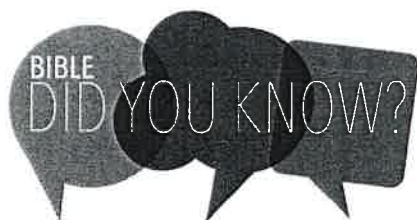
It's also no accident that when the apostle described genuine love to the Christians in Corinth, he did so using actions that define empathy: longsuffering, kindness, and unselfishness (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). If we truly love one another, we will exhibit the patience necessary to seek out each other's needs, and minister to them kindly and sacrificially (James 1:27).

Part of fostering fellow-feeling among Christians is recognizing that every saint has value. We are each different from the others, but we all have qualities and talents that are essential to the life of the body (1 Corinthians 12:20-23). In the physical world, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link; a wall is only as sturdy as its weakest brick. Therefore, for the entire church to be sound and whole, we each need to shore one another up, so that even the weakest

among us is made strong.

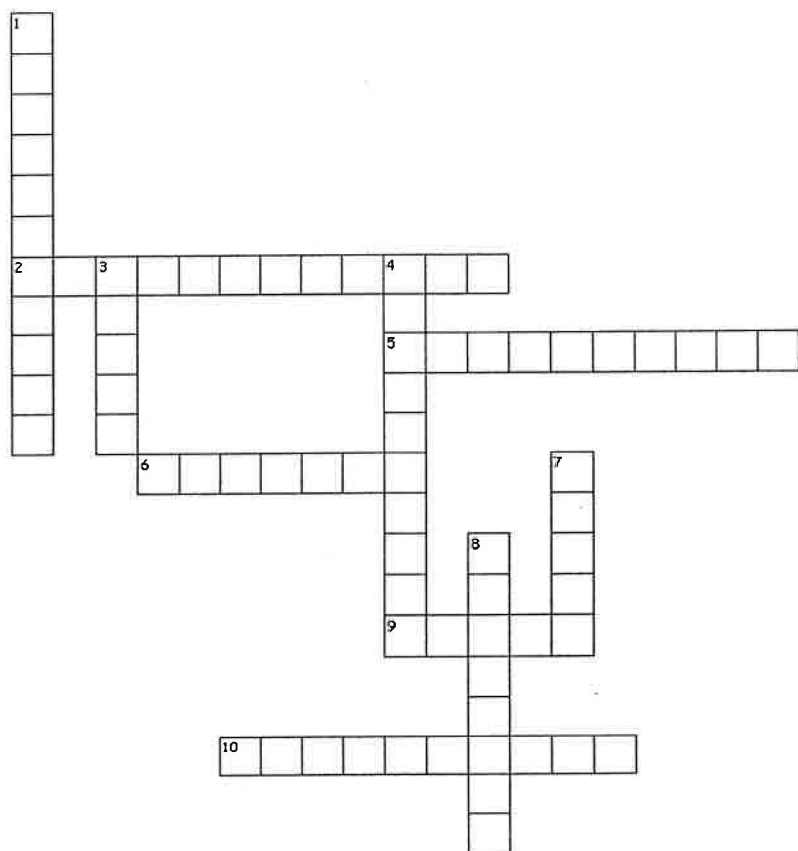
The Bible assures us that our God cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). That being true, we should care deeply for all those who are His — and show it!

— Michael D. Rankins



***“The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother. Ill-gotten gains do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger, but he will reject the craving of the wicked. Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. Proverbs 10:1-4***

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## ACROSS

2. We sing spiritual songs with \_\_\_\_\_ in our hearts to God. (Col. 3:16)
5. Husbands are to love their wives and not be \_\_\_\_\_. (Col. 3:19)
6. Wives are to be \_\_\_\_\_ to their husbands. (Col. 3:18)
9. Christ in us is the hope of \_\_\_\_\_. (Col. 1:27)
10. In His beloved Son we have \_\_\_\_\_, forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:13-14)

## DOWN

1. The Father qualified us to share the \_\_\_\_\_ of the saints. (Col. 1:12)
3. We must set our minds on things \_\_\_\_\_ not on the earth. (Col. 3:2)
4. Christ has come to have first place in \_\_\_\_\_. (Col. 1:18)
7. Love is the perfect bond of \_\_\_\_\_. (Col. 3:14)
8. All forms of immorality amount to \_\_\_\_\_. (Col. 3:5)