

## What Do You Call a Christian? – Brother / Sister

Scripture Reading: I John 4:7 – 5:2

As we have already noted, words change meaning over the years. Sometimes they lose meaning through overuse. Sometimes they are mishandled, causing the true meanings to be corrupted or lost. The word “Christian” has been overused and mishandled over the years. It is the purpose of this study to regain its original and true meaning through the study of Biblical words and phrases.

### **The next term in our study is “Brother / Sister” in the Family of God.**

If God is now our Father (Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 4:6) and Christ is our brother (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:9-17), then we believers are also brothers and sisters to each other. This bond in Christ makes us closer than mere physical family. We are members of God’s “forever” family. We must love and care for each other as siblings should (I John 5:1-2).

God’s humble children are not to compete for power and prestige. God’s loving children should love, honor and respect each other – caring for each other’s needs, and working together in harmony. Let us encourage and protect the unity of heart, mind, and purpose within the brotherhood of Christ.

See Matthew 18:1-4; 23:1-12; John 13:34-35; 17:9-10,16-23; Romans 15:1-7; I Corinthians 1:10; Galatians 5:13-15,26; 6:1-10; Ephesians 3:14-21; 4:1-16; Philippians 2:1-16; 4:1-13; Colossians 3:12-17; I Peter 3:8-9; I John 3:14-19.

When Paul wrote his letters to the churches, he needed to identify himself as having authority, as an apostle of Christ, to teach, correct, and lead them (Romans 1:1-5; Galatians 1:1, 11-24; 2:1-9; Ephesians 1:1; 3:1-9). His authority as an apostle had been challenged. His ministry had been criticized (II Corinthians 10:1 – 13:10; Galatians 6:11-17). Nevertheless, Paul’s letters to the churches are completely saturated with his identification as a “brother” in Christ – ministering to his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. No less than 95 times did Paul refer to those receiving his letters and those who labored with him as “brethren / brothers.” The word “brethren / brother” should not be limited to male gender. Men and women, boys and girls may all be a part of the brotherhood of Christ through faith in Him (Galatians 3:28; Matthew 19:13-15).

It has been said that some people cannot see the forest because of the trees. There are many doctrinal topics to pursue in the Bible, but the relationship between brothers and sisters in Christ is so important; the amount of Scriptures that deal with our relationship to each other are so many, that we almost become blind to it. The following list may look overwhelming, but it is worth prayerful consideration, no matter how long it takes.