

Do Not Bite And Devour One Another

The One Anothers May 31, 2026

From time to time we take a look at one of the 60 or so “one another” commands in Bible. They’re given to Christians so we can know how to properly relate to each other in the church and so we can be built up, *others* can be built up, and our church can thrive in the love of God.

Most of these commands are positive. Meaning they give us practical instruction on what we *should* do toward one another. But there are a handful of negative one another commands as well. Things we should *not* do to one another. I’d like us to look at one today.

Galatians 5:15 - ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another.

Don’t bite and devour one another. This can include unkindness, harming or exploiting others.¹ Not getting along. Paul was writing to a church whose love and unity had broken down. Part of that had to do with false teachings, but it was also because many of the people were just no longer walking by the Spirit but were living in the desires of the flesh.² Putting self first.

It’s *natural* for our human hearts to head in this direction. That’s why we need the heart and mind of Christ. But even as born again Christians, we’re reminded that we’re called to kindness and unity and getting along. Some of us are a little more quick to slice with our words or our attitudes. If we indulge that aspect of our sin nature, it’s going to consume us. It’s going to destroy our testimony. It’s going to stifle spiritual growth in our lives. As Paul says, it can even destroy a local church.

So how can I practice obedience to this command? Well, first I need to make it a habit of filtering my attitudes and words through the grace of God. To remember that we’re commanded to - in a proverbial sense - greet one another with a holy kiss, not a huffy bite.

And then Paul gives a practical way for how we avoid devouring one another just above verse 15:

Galatians 5:13-14 - ¹³ For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don’t use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.

As I serve others, love grows in my heart toward them and annoyance or bitterness or resentment is not given opportunity to grow. So, as I read this one another command and want to step toward God in obedience, one thing I can do is keep my thoughts in check and the second is to try to find ways, even very small ways, to *serve* the brothers and sisters around me. And as we do that we will not be consumed, but we will continue to thrive in God’s plan for us individually and corporately.

¹ *The NET Bible First Edition Notes*

² Galatians 5:16