



## Chapter 31

# Brotherly Love

*“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.  
Honor one another above yourselves.”*

ROMANS 12:10

Valor was our house guest for the summer. He was part of the Korean mission team visiting America to learn about homeschooling. The team stayed at the retreat center where we lived.

He had arrived in the US speaking very little English. During Valor’s three month visit, he became part of our family. Alex called him “Brother.” Alex was glad to have a study partner as well as a buddy to help with the chores around the camp.

“Will you guys please grab the buckets and bleach? And don’t forget the brooms.” I, too, was happy for the extra help. We piled in the golf cart and headed up the hill to scrub the outside pavilion floor for the upcoming retreat.

“Why don’t you and Valor move the benches out on the lawn while I hook up the hose? Teamwork!” I exclaimed. One by one, we moved the heavy seats so that we could wash the cement floor. Working in the Texas summer heat was scorching, so the occasional breezes that made it up the hill were a welcome relief. Working outside was wonderful, no matter what job we were doing.

“Come on, Valor, let’s start over here.” Alex instructed. He showed Valor how to get down on the floor and scrub the spots with a hard brush. Grime turned to gleam as we cleaned off spilled drinks, old chewing gum, and other foreign substances. The pavilion was quite large, and it would take the three of us to get the job done.

Alex and Valor worked on the open area, scrubbing the hard surface. It was great to see these two young men working together. They represented the next godly generation; this thought made my work seem lighter. Valor moved about from one side of the pavilion to the other, distracted by all the new surroundings. You could see the wonder on his face.

“Come on, Valor. Over here,” Alex directed.

“Alex, how are things going?” I asked, wanting to encourage him.

“Well, Mom, to tell you the truth, he’s *dragging his feet*. I’ve covered twice the area he has. At this pace, we’ll be here all day.” Alex was visibly frustrated.

“Alex, Valor has never done work like this before. Let’s try to practice patience.”

“You’re right, Mom. I’ll try to be more patient,” Alex replied, and returned to Valor’s side.

“Let’s put a little *elbow grease* into it, Valor,” Alex said, helping him.

We broke for a quick drink of water and sat down under a shade tree. After quenching our thirst, we resumed our laborious job. My job was to be the tail-gaiter. That is, I followed behind the guys with a hose rinsing the areas they had scrubbed. I received the benefit of feeling the cold water splash across my bare feet.

“Valor, you missed a spot here,” I heard Alex point out. A few minutes later, Alex walked over and pulled me aside.

“Mom, look at Valor now. He’s sitting down over there while we’re working.”



I walked over to give Valor a word of encouragement. He was sitting down on the wet cement. “What are you up to, Valor? Are you learning anything new?” I asked, hoping to be a blessing.

“Look at this furry thing I found. I’ve never seen one of these in Korea.” Valor was sitting down with a stick, playing with a small furry-legged insect. Indeed, he was discovering something new.

“That’s a caterpillar,” I said, stooping down to look closely. “You’ll see many bugs here in Texas that you won’t see in Korea. And all our bugs here are big!”

“Look how slowly he crawls,” Valor said, with wonder.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Alex scrubbing away, gazing over at us while we chatted about the discovery. Remembering a conversation we had earlier, I realized Valor had never worked in big, outdoor spaces like this before. He lived in a high-rise community in Korea. I walked over to remind Alex of this while still encouraging both of them to get the job done.

“Alex, remember this is new to Valor. He isn’t experienced with this type of work. Let’s allow the Lord to teach all of us patience.” I realized how very blessed we were to have this opportunity. Working together was a gift from the Lord.

“Look at all the legs on the worm!” Valor said, as he walked over with the caterpillar dangling from the stick. I put the hose down and turned the water off. I motioned for the guys to take a time out.

“Come on, Alex, Valor—let’s look at the caterpillar.”

“Valor, do you see that all the parts of the caterpillar work together to make him move? He has a head, a body, and many legs. He needs every part of his body to work together. We are all part of this job and need to support each other as we work. When the caterpillar matures, he will become a beautiful butterfly. One day, you and Alex will mature into Godly, young men.”

“Valor, you can put the caterpillar in that extra bucket over there. You’re welcome to take him home when we’ve finished work, and put him in a jar.” This settled his interest. He and Alex walked away excitedly, retrieving the old, plastic container.

I was grateful for the time out that Valor’s curiosity provoked. Alex was challenged to be patient. I was challenged in having to see the work done in more time than expected. Valor learned about caterpillars. And we all finished the job a bit wiser.

“Good job, Brother,” said Alex, as he gave Valor a big “high five.”

*Caterpillars are ravenous eaters with strong jaws, spending most of their time eating leaves. A caterpillar’s first meal is its own eggshell. Caterpillars have 4,000 muscles, 248 of which are in their head (compared with humans who have only 629 muscles).*



## Discussion

What does “brotherly love” mean to you? How can you better demonstrate patience at home or while you are working? What are the benefits of “teamwork”? Who are your teammates (e.g., siblings, Sunday School class, soccer team)? What are some ways you have experienced the Lord’s patience and kindness?



## Scripture

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!”  
Psalm 133:1

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” Matthew 7:3

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13: 4–8a

## Song

“The Butterfly Song (If I Were A Butterfly)” and “They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love”

## Application

Plan a family work day. Write a catchy family-team slogan to sing while you work (e.g., “Whatever the weather, we’ll all work together.”). Craft a sign for your study or schoolroom that reads: TEAMWORK. Study the life cycle of a butterfly or moth. Children love to help wash the car, driveway, or deck. Cool off with homemade popsicles.

## Idiom

*Dragging his feet* means slowly doing what you do not want to do.

*Elbow grease* means enthusiastic, hard manual labor.

## Prayer

Pray and ask the Lord to help you be a blessing to those you work beside.