

## A Band of Brothers

The “Band of Brothers” were soldiers bound together by a common cause and a unique relationship; they were willing to die to save each other. They exemplify the camaraderie and concern that brothers in Christ should feel for one another. Unfortunately, too many Christian men are engaging the greatest of all enemies—the Evil One—taking as their example the Lone Ranger. But the Christian journey was never meant to be walked alone, and spiritual warfare was never meant to be fought alone.

## The Dangers of Lone Rangers

Just reading the New Testament attentively provides the overwhelming picture that we should not attempt this journey or fight this battle by ourselves. God expects us to be actively involved in the spiritual growth and development of others.

*1. Lone rangers may never learn to love. (Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:2, 32; 1 Pet. 4:8)*

Genuine love is seen in how we interact with others every day. Jesus claimed that the love for one another displayed in daily living is the unmistakable proof of a genuine disciple (John 13:35). Our desire is that your interaction around these tables over God’s Word on Wednesday mornings will provide a laboratory for you to learn to better love and forgive and be patient.

*2. Lone rangers may never learn humility. (Rom. 12:16; James 5:16; Heb. 3:13; 1 Pet. 5:5)*

Sin is deceitful, and we are most blind to our own sin. That’s why we need others to exhort us; that’s why we need to confess our sin to one another. It takes humility to open ourselves up to other men, but it is vital for our spiritual health.

*3. Lone rangers may never learn submission. (Eph. 5:21; Col. 3:13)*

One of the great ways for us to learn better obedience to Christ is for us to willingly submit to other believers. Sometimes we will be wronged. Sometimes we will wrong others,

but both situations are greenhouses for spiritual growth.

*4. Lone rangers many never learn leadership. (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Thes. 5:11)*

Not every believer needs to stand up front and teach, but each one of us should “instruct one another” (Rom. 15:14), “admonish one another” (Col. 3:16), and “build one another up” (1 Th. 5:11). You cannot do that by yourself—that type of discipleship happens only within the context of relationships.

*5. Lone rangers many never learn service. (Rom. 15:7; Gal. 5:13; Heb. 10:24)*

We are here to humbly serve one another. On the eve of the crucifixion, the Lord put on the garments of a servant, knelt and washed the feet of His disciples; then He told them, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14).

## Exploring the Book of James

James uses the word “brother” or “brothers” 19x in just 5 chapters; this book is a manual for Christian growth within the community of faith. James is just one brother looking another brother in the eye, and encouraging him as he runs the race. Here is what he says to us as brothers, and we will echo to one another as brothers:

- Brothers, rejoice even when life stinks (1:2).
- Brothers, boast only in what Christ does in you (1:9).
- Brothers, make sure you know who God is (1:16).
- Brothers, guard your responses, especially your temper (1:19).
- Brothers, don’t be racist or condescending (2:1).
- Brothers, recognize that all you have is because of God, not yourselves (2:5).
- Brothers, don’t claim to be a Christian if you live like a pagan (2:14, 15).
- Brothers, make sure you understand what God says before speaking for Him (3:1).
- Brothers, don’t be a hypocrite (3:10, 12).

- Brothers, show compassion and grace to each other (4:11).
  - Brothers, wait expectantly for Christ’s return (5:7).
  - Brothers, don’t complain about each other (5:9).
  - Brothers, be honest (5:12).
- Brothers, guard one another from turning from the truth (5:19).

As you can see, James tackles serious issues, and he does so with honesty and grace. That is what we desire, as well. We want to tackle serious issues—issues that we struggle with, and we want to do so honestly and with grace.