

**BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE**  
**James M. Duncan, Pastor**  
**AUGUST 30, 2020**

**“Going The Second Mile -  
By Greeting One Another”**

**ROMANS 16:16**

I want to start this morning with a little quiz. Now I've already told you that the command to love one another is the **most frequently repeated one another principle**. It appears no less than nine times in the New Testament. Here's your one question pop quiz. **Which one another principle is number two?** This direction is repeated five times in the New Testament (**I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12; I Thess. 5:26; I Peter 5:14**).

Did you ever attend a church and did not feel welcome? This is why Paul commands us to **“Greet one another”** in **Romans 16:16** and other places as listed above. This sermon is a reminder that our churches are meant to be places of warmth and worship. In chapter 16 Paul focuses on his relationship to other Christians with whom he has been associated in one way or another in his ministry. The chapter contains a list of twenty-six people to whom Paul is sending his greetings. As Paul begins to close this letter, in his final words he demonstrates what it means to really love people. Loving people doesn't mean superficial, insincere, and artificial affection which we so often confuse with love.

Could it be that in this tiny little nugget of New Testament teaching that we happily skim across that there is cure to our isolation? Might this be a sign that points us to the answer of our aloneness? Let me start out with several observations from this verse.

**1. The Emphasis is on Greet, not Kiss**

When we read **Romans 16:16**, “Greet one another with a holy kiss,” our attention is immediately drawn to the word kiss, but in the grammar of the text, that is not where the emphasis of this verse lies. **The main thrust of this command what? Greet not kiss.**

**2. Universal Principle versus Particular Cultural Application**

We do need to be careful how we apply this 1st Century teaching to our modern situation. We could simply transfer the physical practice of kissing, but totally miss the point. It's kind of like when Jesus washed the disciple's feet, and asked them to do the same. We need to be able to distinguish between the universal essence of this command and the cultural application. The essence of the command is not the form.

**3. Context, Context, Context**

In Bible College when I took Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, my professor impressed us that the first three rules of good Bible ] Interpretation were context, context, and context and that is what we must do with this verse. You will see in the first 15 verses that the word **“GREET”** is used **16** times by naming **26** specific individuals or groups which is the emphasis of this passage, then we have **V-16**.

The treasure of this chapter is that it shows us the power of personal relationships. This all begins with the way that we welcome and receive one another. Let me give you three ways in which this passage is powerful.

**I. THE POWER OF NAMES**

First of all, we see the power of names. This is no generic greeting. Paul didn't give one of those, “Say hello to everyone for me.” Paul's greetings are very personal and tender. I find it amazing that Paul took the time to address so many of these people by name. To value a person's name is to value them. To use their name in a warm and personal way is to honor them. Call people by their name. You would also notice how many women Paul greets in this text (**Vs.1-3**). Nine of the Twenty-six are ladies, and five of them are especially commended for their ministry in the church.

**II. THE POWER OF HELLO**

We also see in this text the power of **“hello.”** There is something very endearing and disarming about a warm hello. And no, I'm not going to start singing Adele. I have a great idea for a bumper sticker, **“World peace begins with 'hello'.”** A hearty embrace can turn a bad day good. A friendly smile and a cheerful greeting can lighten your step and that is one reason that I Hate face masks, you can't smile or speak to people. **I want as much as anything for Bible Baptist to be a church that values people and relationships as much as genuine worship.**

**III. THE POWER OF TOUCH**

Thirdly, we see in this text the power of touch. These weren't impersonal greetings. That's why it is significant that their greeting included an embrace and a kiss. Now notice that this kiss is **“a HOLY kiss”** and is in no way romantic. Paul isn't mandating a certain **STYLE** of greeting here. His emphasis was not on the **FORM** of greeting, but that it be **HOLY** and that it be a **SINCERE** form of greeting. He's teaching that we should greet people without partiality, and it should be sincere and heartfelt. So, a handshake in our culture perfectly fits the idea Paul is emphasizing since that's how we greet one another in our culture in a warm and sincere way. A verbal greeting is one thing. It's nice and polite and all, but to add touch to a verbal greeting takes it to a whole other level. It takes time and effort.

The way we welcome and receive one another is a testimony to what we believe about how God welcomes and receives us.