

## Kissing in the Bible

The emotional act of the kiss is as old as mankind himself. Kissing the lips by way of affectionate salutation was customary among near relatives of both sexes, in both patriarchal and later times. Jacob kissed his cousin Rachel at their meeting. (Gen. 29:11) Kissing between individuals of the same sex, and in a limited degree between those of different sexes can be seen throughout the scriptures. The kiss on the cheek as a mark of respect or an act of salutation has at all times been customary in the Middle East, and can hardly be said to be extinct even in Europe. In the early Christian church the kiss of charity (love) was practiced not only as a friendly salutation, but as an act symbolical of love and Christian brotherhood. Paul's encouragement to greet one another with a "holy" kiss is seen in Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:26. The Apostle Peter also suggested the kiss of brotherly love (1 Peter 5:14). The "kiss" is still practiced among Christians today although somewhat limited. Acceptable social practices guide the use of the kiss and is reflected in the church as well. The "handshake" has replaced the kiss among men while a gentle kiss among women seems to be acceptable in most circles.

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*Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen. (1 Peter 5:14)*