

Salt Church

Romans 12:9-21

“Love in Action”

April 19, 2026

The Greatest Book Ever Written

David and Cindy (June 6-14)

Recap

Romans 12:6-8

⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

- What we learned was this:
 - **God has given each of us gifts** that are to be used for His glory and the joy of His church.
 - **To misuse or not use** the gifts that the Lord has given us is a sin because He has commanded us to use those gifts.
- We also learned that God gave us the gifts so that **we would get in the game!**
 - No one has the right to just be a spectator.
 - All of us have something that is useful for the building up of the Kingdom.

Today we look at our motivation

“Love in Action”

9 Love must be sincere.

- When I read this, I understand it to mean that there is a type of love that is not sincere.
- Agape = (God love)
 - ***This is not the same love that you have for tater tots!***
 - ***This is true sincere love***
 - ***9 Let love be without hypocrisy.*** NASB
 - That is what the Greek word for “sincere” means.
 - Without hypocrisy
 - You may have used or heard the phrase ***“I love you in the Lord”*** that is with hypocrisy
- The key to understanding everything that follows this is that it is all driven from a “sincere, without hypocrisy love.” (God love)

Did you catch that love is listed 1st?

- Why?
 - **Because sincere love is the driving force behind everything the child of God does.**
 - We see this throughout scripture.
 - In the list of the fruit of the spirit in 1 Corinthians love is listed 1st because it is the primary fuel that drives the child of God.
- Jesus said that the entire Bible can be summed up by:

- **Love the Lord your God** with all of your heart, soul, and mind.
 - And by **LOVING your neighbor** as yourself.
 - Get those two things right and you have accomplished the purpose of the Bible.

Loving is very important but so is hating! (What in the world Pastor?)

Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil;

- If I were to ask anyone who claims Christ,
 - “Does the Bible ever command us to hate?” I am sure they would say no.
 - **But what do we see here?**
 - A non-negotiable command to hate what is evil.

apostugeó: To abhor, to detest, to utterly hate

Phonetic Spelling: (ap-os-toog-eh'-o)

Perhaps this is what is wrong with the church.

- Maybe we have become desensitized to evil
- **We no longer hate it**
 - It's not that we welcome it we just are indifferent to it.
 - We accept it

Jude gives some pretty strong words related to this matter

Jude 20-23

²⁰ But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

*²² Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—
hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.*

- **“Hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”**
 - *Pastor how do we witness to a corrupted world without coming in contact with them?*

It is true that the child of God should pursue the lost, but we must be careful not to be stained by the sin that so easily entangles the flesh.

- In a sense we should “wash our hands of it”

Think of it this way:

- Health care workers are always ready to jump into the blood and guts that come with their jobs.
 - But they always wear protection lest they become contaminated with the illness that they are trying to save their patient from.
 - Our 1st line of defense is to follow the command to hate evil.
 - Health care workers will tell you that the 1st line of defense is the simplest of all actions, they wash their hands often.

Final thought on hating evil:

God hates evil:

Proverbs 6:16-19

*There are six things that the Lord hates,
Seven that are an abomination to Him:*

¹⁷ Haughty eyes,

a lying tongue,

And hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸ A heart that devises wicked plans,

Feet that run rapidly to evil,

¹⁹ A false witness who declares lies,

And one who spreads strife among brothers.

- I think it is safe to say that if God hates those things
 - **We should hate them also**
 - I will also add that those things will absolutely tear a church apart.

As we close this section on hating evil, I want to close with a verse that says the same thing but says it in a different way:

2 Timothy 2:22

²² Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

- It is saying the same thing but in a more positive way

Moving on...

cling to what is good.

kollaó: To join, to cleave, to unite, to adhere to glue

Pronunciation: kol-LAH-oh

In the Greek it is “clinging” meaning *it is an ongoing process.*

So, what does “clinging to good” look like?

Philippians 4:8

⁸And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

“clinging to good”

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

¹⁹Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Do not scoff at prophecies, ²¹but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. ²²Stay away from every kind of evil. “clinging to good”

I bring that last verse before you because there is a **discernment** expected.

- 1st we interpret the Bible with the understanding that **“context is king.”**
 - The context of this verse is:
 - You can stifle the Holy Spirit by scoffing at prophecies or not testing the prophecy against scripture.

- Holding on to “what is good” is to hold onto truth.
 - And staying away from “every kind of evil.”
 - **We wash our hands of evil**

We continue

10 Be devoted to one another in love.

- “Devoted” is the Greek word philostorgos
 - cherishing one's kindred
- “love” is the Greek Philadelphia **not agape as before**
 - “Brotherly love”
 - Being devoted or cherishing one another in brotherly love.
 - Jesus said that the world would recognize us by our love for each other.
 - I think this is one of our strongest attributes here at Salt.

Honor one another above yourselves.

- “honor” is the Greek word time (tay-mee)
 - **timé: Honor, value, respect**
- “above yourselves”
 - **proégeomai: Pronunciation: pro-eh-geh'-om-ahee**
 - **To lead the way, to go before, to consider others as more important.**

“Value, respect others as more important than yourself”

Can you feel the weight of this very high standard? (heavy)

- This not to be understood as false humility but rather it is **the fruit of loving your brother.**
 - This shows up as respect and genuine concern for each other.

- It is a powerful thing when a church loves each other in this way.

¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

- In the Greek it reads like this:
 - “Never be lacking in haste, do not be lazy in serving the Lord.”
- The reminder from Paul (through the Holy spirit) is simply this:
 - ***This is a real problem within the church.***
 - Many know what God is calling them to do
 - And many have a desire to serve in some way, but they are lazy. Don't be lazy!
 - The Greek word for haste is ***spoude*** often translated “**diligence**”
 - We learned last week that it can be translated “careful haste.” (leaders are commanded to lead in this way)
 - Simply put, **do not put it off!**
 - The word “zeal” is **zeó: To boil, to be fervent, to be hot!**
 - Get out there and make something happen!

(side note)

- It has been my experience that some people burnout in their service to the Lord.
 - They come in red hot for the Lord, and they keep reaching out for more and more to do. (and the church obliges)
 - **Pretty soon they are overwhelmed and exhausted.**

- Then they walk away because they are tired then they start feeling guilty.

The \$50 question

- How do we maintain zeal for the Lord without burning out?

Burnout is caused by an unbalanced life.

- Hear me church when I say these next words:
 - You burnout because **it is a sin not to observe a Sabbath rest!!!!**
 - You are commanded by **The Lord your King** to do no ordinary work one day a week.
 - This means, one day a week you rest your body and your mind.
 - You rest and you thank Him for His command to rest.
 - He is so good to us, so kind, He even allows us to choose the day.
- ***Can you hear what I am saying?***
 - We are like little children that need a nap and for whatever reason we refuse to take the nap.
 - Take the nap, it is good for your body, mind, and soul.

What happens if we ignore the Sabbath command?

- 1st it is a sin to do so,
 - Sin always leads to destruction
 - Thus, our bodies begin to breakdown

- Blood pressures go up
- Heart conditions appear
 - Our bodies do not have time to heal, and the result is catastrophic failure.
- Our minds become tired and irritable
 - We become grumpy and less than a pleasure to be around.
 - And we start to doubt in Gods goodness.
 - We need the Sabbath rest every week.

11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

- A big part of maintaining zeal in the service for the Lord is obeying His command to rest when it is time to rest
 - And work when it is time to work.

Moving on

12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

- (In the Greek) “In joyful pleasure, endure tribulation, remaining faithful in constant prayer.”
- There are a few things that jump out to me here:
 - 1st is “**hope**”
 - “**Joyful hope**” meaning there is a faith built into this kind of hope.
 - Meaning this hope is fueled by what we know and understand about Jesus and His present Kingdom here on earth and the coming Kingdom in the future.

- Both are realities but have very different experiences.
- **The reality of the present Kingdom in Christ** is that we will have to endure trials and tribulations because the world is filled with sin.
 - The hope is the promise of Jesus to ***“never leave us nor forsake us”***
 - And the power to overcome this world comes through the power of The Holy Spirit.
 - He helps us remain steadfast during difficult and prosperous days.
 - How?
- ***In the Greek the command is to be constant in prayer.***
 - **What does that look like?**
 - It starts with personal prayer and study of God’s word.
 - You may ask why did you throw in “the study of God’s Word?”
 - Here’s why:
 - **“We speak” in prayer**
 - ***God the Father speaks primarily through His Word.***
 - I say primarily because He also speaks through the Holy Spirit meaning He can give you a word, but that word can never contradict His Word.
 - I sense that form of communication most when I meet people and the Lord

says, “pray with them, witness to them, help them, etc...)

- I also sense it when I am preparing sermons.

In the end what we learn from this verse is this:

- Hope can be found in prayer
- **There is hope in Jesus Christ** and because of that hope the darkness is going to try to destroy your hope (faith).
- **The command on our life is to endure and persevere.**
 - How?
 - **Through the consistent communication with God** through the Holy Spirit in prayer and the reading of God’s Word.
 - **How consistent?**
 - We should never allow our minds to think that God is not connected to how we think.
 - He hears and knows our inner thoughts and therefore we can reason that it is like having God on speaker phone and He never hangs up.
 - **You should want that, and you need that.**
 - In short, we should always be communicating with God.
 - And yes, there is value in praying with others whether it be a large group or small.

- There is also value in knowing that you are always connected to God.
- As we close out this area on prayer, I sense the need to remind us of a few things:
 - We should set apart of each day for prayer.
 - For some it is early in the morning and for others it late at night.
 - I have done both.
 - Find that place where it's just you and the Lord
 - Talk to Him about whatever is on your heart
 - He wants to hear from you
 - There is peace found in this conversation
 - You need this more than you know

13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

- In the Greek it reads more like this:
 - ***Share with the saints that are in need by pursuing them with hospitality.***
 - **This insinuates that there should be a special affection among Gods people.**
 - This is a huge drawing card to the unbelieving world.
 - They want this and need this and if we do it, they will see it.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

- In the Greek it sounds more like this:
 - ***Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (LOL)***

What do we do with this?

- The simple answer is this “do what it says!”

Recently I was reading a book by Dallas Willard. (***Renewing the Christian Mind***)

- He is with the Lord now, but he has quite a resume
 - Former Baptist minister
 - Author of eight best-selling books on Christian thought
 - Theologian
 - Professor of Philosophy at USC
 - An amazing man of God

He quoted this verse, and he said, “How many churches actually teach their people how to do this?”

- **There it is, PASTOR!**
 - I thought about Jesus. (sounds so spiritual)
 - HE flipped tables
 - Chased people with whips
 - Called the religious leaders of the day (His enemies)
 - A bunch of snakes
 - Sons of Satan
 - Whitewashed tombs (look good on the outside but they are filled with death and decay in the inside)

○ *What do you do with that Dallas?*

▪ **How is that blessing your enemies?**

Blessing your enemies does not mean that you do not stand for the truth

- In otherwards you can correct a liar
- When Jesus called them “sons of Satan” that was divine truth and a warning about who was in control of their lives.
 - **Sometimes truth is “Tuff Love”**
 - Jesus could have retaliated but He chose not to.
 - He allowed those men to nail Him to a cross.
 - He extended grace and mercy to anyone that would listen.
 - Some of them were saved (Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea)

So, what do we do?

- How do we bless our enemies?

I am going to quote what Dallas Willard said because I believe it is wise and true:

1. **We must define blessing** as the “projection of good into the life of another”
 - a. It is an active, volitional choice to wish for, and pray for the well-being of someone else.
 - i. This is opposite of cursing someone.

2. The Why? (Our Family Resemblance)

- a. (We must ask ourselves) What has God done for His enemies?

- i. Has not the sun shone on them as well?
- ii. When we bless our enemies, it is a clear demonstration of Gods relationship through us. (**we become more like Him and the world see's it**)

3. It is not impossible

- a. Often considered impossible, Dallas argues that ***blessing enemies is easier and better for the soul*** because it frees the person from the resentment and **the grind of carrying hate in their heart.**
- b. When we learn to do this out of genuine love for Christ not because it is a law to be followed or begrudging submission, but rather **another way to worship God.**
 - i. All that is to say that it requires us to be rightly related to God which allows us to draw upon His power as we cannot do it on our own.

4. Practical Application (THE HOW)

- a. Pray for your enemies (This will help put things into perspective)
- b. Bless them when given a chance (do or say something nice about them)
- c. Remember that the goal is to overcome evil by doing good. (We begin to look more like our Father)

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

- There is nothing tricky here either.
 - The Greek is the same as the English.

- The main point is that we should enter into whatever season or emotion people are in.
 - This implies that we should be close enough to them that we would know.
 - ***Okay, Pastor, I hear you but is that possible to do for everyone?***
 - Maybe.
 - **It depends on the size of the group.**
- I would say that we should be on the lookout for those who are hurting and those that are rejoicing.
 - It is important that we should do neither alone.
 - ***I would also say that neither is a permanent state that we should stay.***
 - King Solomon wrote that there is a time and season for everything.
 - It is wrong to stay in perpetual morning and it should be understood that rejoicing all of the time is not realistic.
 - You can choose to rejoice in all circumstances
 - **But it would not be realistic to assume that you're going to feel like rejoicing every day.**

¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

The NKJ says it this way:

16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

In this case the NKJ is closer to the Greek meaning.

- To be “of the same mind” is to be unified.
 - **In Joe’s marriage class** he talks a lot about “**union with Christ**” and how that union effects the “**union of marriage.**”
 - The point is that there in a oneness that must be shared and understood in Christ so that we are on the same page as Jesus.
 - So, it must be in marriage.
 - **This is being “of the same mind toward one another”**

Now, who is the bride of Christ?

- The church
 - Paul (through the Holy Spirit) is saying that we too should be one as we are one with Christ.
 - **This goes back to the renewing of the mind.**
 - It’s a process that is ongoing with lots of moving and ever-changing points.
 - And often it is difficult because people do have different opinions.

With that in mind, and what we know about our sinful nature, this should help us understand Paul's words:

- ***Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position.***
 - I don't see this as an issue within this church **but as we receive new people it could become a problem.**
 - What is the root of this problem?
 - It is pride for Paul says, "***Do not be conceited.***"
 - "***Pride goes before destruction***"
 - "***God resist the proud but gives grace to the humble***"

In this church we welcome everyone.

¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

- **Kakos** is the Greek word translated as evil
 - It means to cause injury or harm
- Again, we fall back to blessing instead of hating
 - We are never more like Christ than when forgive.

Paul continues

Be careful to do what is **right** in the eyes of everyone.

kalos: Good, beautiful, noble, excellent, honorable

- This is what has been translated as "right."

With our new understanding we read it this way

Be careful to do what is Good, beautiful, noble, excellent, honorable in the eyes of everyone.

- That has a different feel to it

- To do what is good, beautiful, noble, excellent, and honorable takes more thought, more work.
 - “right” seem colorless to me.
 - It definitely takes more work if you’re dealing with evil people.

We continue

¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

- The Greek sounds basically the same.
 - The part of this verse that catches my attention is the first few words, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you...”
 - Meaning not everyone wants to have peace with you.
 - But we still do our part:
 - Blessing those that curse us
 - Not returning evil with evil
 - Not creating dissention
 - Giving people the benefit of the doubt.
 - Being as patient as we can
 - **Remembering who we represent.**
 - **But not being shocked when we come across those that do not want peace.**

Verse 19

19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

- **Revenge sales a lot of movies.**
 - It seems so satisfying at times
 - But the reason God wants us to leave it up to Him is because He has all the facts.
 - He knows the hearts and minds of everyone involved.
 - He is the only one that sees the whole picture.
 - Therefore, He is the only one that can judge rightly.
 - He is also extremely merciful.
 - He is so patient and kind.
 - **This is why His wrath is so ferocious.**
 - God is not asleep, and He sees everything, and He doesn't need our help.

20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

- Why?
 - Because God is feeding His enemies everyday
 - And we were once enemies of God
 - **Some of those enemies will become children of God.**

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

- Why?
 - Because this is what God does
 - Because this is what God has commanded

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

- ***Such and odd thing to say!***
- Paul is making reference to an Egyptian custom.
 - When a man had done someone wrong, and it had become clear to everyone he would take a metal pan or bowl and fill it with burning coals.
 - He would pick it up and place it on his head and walk around with it on his head enduring the pain that it caused.
 - This was symbolic of his shame and the pain of his shame.
 - It was a way of saying “I am ashamed of how I acted, forgive me I was wrong”
 - This is what happens when we repay evil with good.

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

- This is one of the most difficult commands to follow and we cannot do it in our own strength.
- But we are never more like our Father than when we do this.

Here is the command on our lives

⁹ Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

16 Live in harmony with one another.

Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.

Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.