



## PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS – True Love

### Community Group Study Guide Romans 12:14-21 – Week of November 6th, 2022

#### 1. The Litmus of Love.

One of the most misrepresented understandings in our culture is regarding love. In the world, we are taught that love means simple to follow our hearts, to be true to ourselves, and to let “love be love.” However, scripture refutes this perspective sharply. Scripture reminds us that our hearts are desperately sick, and not worthy of following (Jer. 17:9). Scripture tells us that we are called to deny ourselves, not embrace ourselves (Luke 9:23). Furthermore, God is love, and love is defined by God. To define love by love seeks not to help us understand love, but to refuse to allow God authority over love. It is a rebellious deception to take for ourselves something that we do not own. The litmus of love is measured by God's standard. (1 John 4:7-10)

#### 2. The Limits of Love.

Who then are we to love? Who is our neighbor? The heart behind these questions have a similar desire: tell us who we can excluded from loving. Loving those who bless us, those who we care for is easy. However, as Christians, we are commanded to love our enemies; to bless those who persecute us. Furthermore, everyone is our neighbor, and we are called to love them. We do this, because this is how God has loved us. We were enemies of God, yet He loved us. He sent His Son to pay our penalty and to reconcile us to Himself. This is why the limits of our love are to be generously extended, even our enemies.

#### 3. The Latency of Love.

By latency, we mean the unseen potential of love, and the impact that it can have in our lives. Loving those who are unlovely glorifies God, and evokes a repentant response from those who you are loving. By being obedient in this manner, we are imitating Christ.

### DISCUSSION GOALS

#### Head

Love is defined by God, and He has poured out His love on us. In turn, we are called to love everyone, even those who are unlovely. This extends even to those who persecute us.

#### Heart

We are to remember how God has treated us, in that He gave us His love not based on our merit, but on His Grace

#### Hands

We are to love our neighbors, not based on their merit, but based on grace. This extends to everyone. If possible, we should seek to live in peace with everyone.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Baptism Seminar

November 20th @ 1pm

#### Members Meeting

December 3 @ 5pm

## Read Romans 12:14-21

1. In our culture today, we define love in a very personal way. We are taught to follow your heart, to be who you are, and to remember that love is love. What does scripture have to say about these ways of thinking? How does this personalized love ultimately oppose and undermine God?
2. Last week we talked about what love is/how it is defined. This week, the passage is applying that genuine love directly to difficult situations. Why is love most needed in these difficult and conflicted circumstances? How are we living out the Gospel when we obey verse 14?
3. Pastor Shane had mentioned that we often find it easy to “weep with those who weep,” but are more challenged to “rejoice with those who rejoice.” Why is this the case? How does genuine love effect and influence the way we weep and rejoice with others?
4. Who is our neighbor? Who is excluded from God's commandment to love your neighbor?
5. Paul instructs us to live peaceably with all, so far as it depends on us. In what fashion does it depend on us? How do we practically live in peace? What are the challenges that arise?
6. When speaking to the Church, Paul tells them that they are to live in harmony with one another and to have the one mind. What is this mind/unity that we are to have? How must we treat one another to accomplish this unity? (Phil. 2:1-8)
7. Read Verse 19-20 What are the practical applications of this verse? What comfort and encouragement are found in the promise here?
8. Verse 20 reminds us that responding in love, specifically when we are mistreated, can lead those who are doing wrong against you to repentance. When have you seen this play out in your own life? What were the consequences of repaying evil with good?