

105. The Book of Romans 12:9-12

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(10-15-25)

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So, after 11 chapters learning about the doctrine of salvation—we finally have come to the application portion of the book.

VI. Application: The Behavior of God's Righteousness (12:1–15:13)

As we have already said, verses 3-21 deals with Christian *conduct*—how we live for Christ to glorify Him in this fallen world.

Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *Let love be without hypocrisy...*

'Love' (agape) is never hypocritical—it is always genuine and sincere because it's God's love.

The word **hypocrisy** (hypocrite) comes from a Greek word that literally meant "*mask wearer*" and was used of an actor on stage playing a part. In time the word came to mean "*putting on an act and pretending to be something you're not*."

As we have said, the word '**love**' is the Greek word *agape*—a word most often used in the New Testament in relation to God's love. God's love (agape) isn't just words and feelings—it's actions (the definition of God's love in 1Cor.13 contains all verbs).

Agape love is *action* based not *feelings* based—"for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son". (John 3:16) John says that true Christians love other Christians—but not just verbally—they love them tangibly.

1 John 3:16-18 (NKJV)

¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

As we have already said, loving people as God commands with His agape love is *impossible* for us—it is beyond our ability because it's a supernatural, divine love! This is not a love I can *generate* or *replicate*; it is not in me to love like this—God's love has to be *given* to us.

Romans 5:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

It is through our abiding in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit flowing thru us that this kind of love can become a reality in our lives to touch others around us.

Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. **Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.**

“Abhor what is evil.”

Hate evil—don’t tolerate it, laugh at it (sitcoms) or be associated with it in any way.

One pastor—

“Evil is the antithesis of holiness and therefore the antithesis of godliness. Just as the “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10), “Fear of the Lord [also] is to hate evil” (Prov. 8:13). The child of God abhors evil because God abhors evil.”

“Cling (be glued) to what is good.”

This is the very thing Paul admonished the Christians in Thessalonica to do—

1 Thessalonians 5:21–22 (NKJV)

²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

It also seems that Paul defined what he had in mind when he said, **“Cling to what is good”** in Phil. 4:8:

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Paul began Chapter 12 by giving us the key to finding and following **what is good** when he admonished us—

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

One author said—

“As we separate ourselves from the things of the world and saturate ourselves with the Word of God, the things that are good will more and more replace the things that are evil. Therefore, surround yourself with good people, good music, good books, good places and whatever else is honoring to God.”

Romans 12:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ **Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;**

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love...”

The word for **love** that Paul used here is *‘philadelphia’* or **‘brotherly love’**.

In verse 9 he tells us to have **agape love** (God's love) for one another—and then he follows it up in verse 10 by telling us to also have **brotherly love** for each other as Christians in the Church—*"I thought 'love' is 'love', this sounds a bit redundant."*

God's love is a *sacrificial* love—a love that doesn't have to involve feelings (Jesus commanded us to love our enemies with God's love in spite of not having loving feelings for them).

So, Paul is saying to Christians, *"Yes of course love each other with God's love—but couple that with brotherly love which means to have family affection for one another—in other words love being around each other."* (Elaborate)

"In honor giving preference to one another." (verse 10)

The word **preference**—usually has the basic meaning of *'going before'*, or *'leading.'*

But the idea here is not that of putting ourselves *before* others with regard to importance or worth—but the very opposite idea of **giving honor** to fellow believers by putting them first. To **honor** is not *'to flatter'* or to give *'hypocritical praise'* in the hope of having the compliment returned or of gaining favor with the one being honored.

One author said,

"Here the idea behind the admonition 'to honor' is to show genuine appreciation and admiration for one another in the family of God. We are to be quick to show respect, quick to acknowledge the accomplishments of others, quick to demonstrate genuine love by not being jealous or envious, which have no part in love, whether agapē or philadelphia."

This is the same command Paul gave the Christians in Philippi—

Philippians 2:3 (NLT)

³ Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, **thinking of others as better** [more important] **than yourselves**.

There is so much *'me first'* in the Body of Christ today (selfishness and self-promotion) being fueled by all the self-esteem teaching today. But ultimately, it's a fulfillment of Paul's prophecy in 2 Timothy 3:1-2 that in the last days people in the Church would be *"lovers of self."*

You say, *"Christians have never been free of self-love—what will be different in the last days?"*

It will become a *virtue* instead of a vice—again through self-esteem teachings that have entered the Church.

Romans 12:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ **not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;**

Not lagging in diligence could be translated, *"not lazy in zeal and intensity."*

One pastor said—

*"In the context of Romans 12, **diligence** refers to whatever believers do in their spiritual living. Whatever is worth doing in the Lord's service is worth doing with enthusiasm and care. Jesus told His disciples that He *"must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; the night is coming, when no man can work"* (John 9:4).*

The Lord knew His time of ministry was limited and that every moment in His Father's service on earth should count for the most possible. Paul admonished believers in the Galatian churches: *"So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith"* (Galatians 6:10; cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:13)."

Paul reinforced this in his epistle to the Ephesians—

Ephesians 5:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Fervent in spirit

The word **fervent** comes from a Greek word that means *'to boil'*—the idea being to serve the Lord with enthusiasm and not just *'going through the motions'* or seeing our service for Him as a chore or a duty that we rush through just to get it done.

Whereas **diligence** pertains mainly to action, being **fervent in spirit** pertains to attitude. No one in the early church was more zealous, more fervent in spirit than Paul himself—

1 Corinthians 9:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.

Colossians 1:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Romans 12:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ **not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;**

Notice Paul said, **"serving the Lord"** *not* serving your church or your pastor.

You'll only serve a pastor or a church like CCEG ('man') for a short while before you burn out—but the goal is to *'last out'* (make it across the finish line) which will only be possible if you **serve the Lord**—if you do it for Jesus.

A word of caution—when you get serious about Jesus (in your walk, and in your service), the devil will get serious about you and will attack you relentlessly. The result will be a tendency to grow weary and to let your zeal for the Lord grow cold—which is why Paul said:

Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)

⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Romans 12:12 (NKJV)

¹² **rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;**

One author put it well—

*“No matter what our present circumstances may be, we can and should **rejoice in our hope**—in the coming of our Savior, the redemption of our bodies, and our eternal glory. We are exhorted to be **patient in tribulation**—that is, to bear up bravely under it. Such all-conquering endurance is the one thing which can turn such misery into glory. We should **continue steadfastly in prayer**. It is in prayer that the work is done, and victories are won. Prayer brings power in our lives and peace to our hearts.”*

There is a strange story from the Old Testament that teaches the power of prayer for victory.

Exodus 17:8–16 (NKJV)

⁸ Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. ⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses’ hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶ for he said, “Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

The first thing we learn from Israel’s victory over the Amalekites (a type of the flesh in Scripture) is that it was made possible—by the *uplifted hands of Moses* (Exodus 17, verse 11). The uplifted hands of Moses was emblematic of prayer—

Psalms 28:2 (NKJV)

² Hear the voice of my supplications When I cry to You, When I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.

1 Timothy 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

Prayer is essential for victory but it’s not easy—in fact, it’s exhausting! But *persevering prayer makes all the difference in our battles* with the flesh, the world and the devil.

**When our arms are lifted up to God in prevailing,
persevering prayer—we will gain the victory.**

- If we grow weary and our hands drop (we get discouraged and stop praying) we will be defeated—which is why Jesus admonished us in Luke 18:1 that “*God’s people always ought to pray and not lose heart.*”
- Paul commanded us in Ephesians 6:18, “*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*”
- James reminded us, “*The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*” (James 5:16)
- The rod in Moses’ hand symbolized the *authority* God had given him (Exodus 4:17).

Jesus has given us authority—

Luke 10:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

However, when Moses' arms grew tired and began to drop—Aaron and Hur were there to help support him (Exodus 17, verse 12).

*This is why praying with other believers
is so important—we need each other's strength.*

When one has grown weary and discouraged in their prayers for their marriage or children or their lost loved ones—other believers can come alongside them and help to 'hold their arms up.' In other words, there is strength in numbers—which is why we are commanded not to forsake the fellowship of the Body of Christ in the local church. (Hebrews 10:25)

Now if you gave this story a quick glance and I asked you where the battle was taking place—most people would say, "In the valley with Joshua and the children of Israel fighting with the Amalekites"—but they'd be wrong!

The person in touch with the Holy Spirit realizes that the real battle was taking place on top of the mount with Moses, Aaron and Hur in intercessory prayer!

The famous prayer warrior S.D. Gordon said, "Prayer is striking the winning blow—service is simply gathering up the spoil."

(Not to minimize the value of service but to elevate the importance of prayer!)

Now as important as prayer is in victory over the enemy—by itself it's not enough. Prayer has to be coupled with the Word of God if we're going to be victorious over the flesh—

Exodus 17:13 (NKJV)

¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)

¹² For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Psalms 119:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

1 John 2:14b (NKJV)

¹⁴ ...I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

Three times Satan came against Jesus in the wilderness with temptation and all three times Jesus defeated him by saying, "It is written" and then quoted the Word of God.

Victory in the Christian life over the flesh, the world and the devil will only be won through prayer and the Word of God—

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NKJV)

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons [plural—the Word of God and prayer] of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

Someday our struggle with the flesh will be over, even as God promised Israel—they wouldn't have to fight with Amalek forever—

Exodus 17:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

Someday, when we die or the rapture happens, we will finally be freed forever from our war with the flesh—

1 John 3:2 (NKJV)

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (NKJV)

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

Until that day we will always have war with the flesh—

Exodus 17:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶ for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

God is saying to us that we are to keep fighting the flesh no matter how tired we get—and above all to never make a treaty with it.

**The Lord has only one command
when it comes to our flesh—
to utterly destroy it!**

Remember that was God's command to King Saul to utterly wipe out the Amalekites—but he disobeyed God and didn't utterly wipe them out. And do you remember what happened to Saul?—an Amalekite wiped him out!

God will never let you make peace with your flesh—He will have war on your flesh until the day He utterly blots it out.

If you don't destroy your flesh—it *will* destroy you!

James 4:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

We don't gain victory over the flesh through deliverance or therapy. We resist, deny, and crucify the flesh by faith in the promises and power of God.

Deuteronomy 25:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God.

The lesson here is clear—the farther we get from Jesus in our walk—the easier it will be for the flesh to defeat us. The closer we are to Jesus the safer and stronger we will be.

Remember in the gospels we read how Peter followed Jesus at a distance and wound up denying his Lord three times!

Remember Romans 12 and Paul's admonition to all believers in Jesus—

Romans 12:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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