


The Necessity of Love

Romans 12:9-21

Randy Hageman

July 6, 2024

Follow along with today's message. Use the blank spaces for fill-in notes and use the  to add your own. Select "Email" at the bottom of this page to send a PDF to yourself.



The Necessity of Love

Romans 12:9-21

The first eleven chapters are a detailed picture of Paul's understanding of the Gospel, but as we turn to chapter 12, Paul's focus is about to change.

1Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

—Romans 12:1-2 (NIV11)

These first two verses of chapter 12 sum up how we proceed to live out the first eleven chapters, and it is an ongoing intentionality to practice what we preach.

In the remaining portion of this letter, Paul now begins to give concrete examples.

When you and I fail to live out our faith, when we fail to serve within the body of Christ, we are no longer striving to be part of God's Kingdom but the kingdom of this world, whose master is Satan.

The deeper focus in chapters 12-15 is that we live out the Gospel through love, *agape* love, which is the kind of love God shows - a love that accepts us for who we are and sacrificially works for our good.

***Jesus:** Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.*

—John 13:35 (NLT)

To live out our Christian faith, to truly follow Jesus as his disciples, means, as Jesus taught us, that we must not only love God but also love one another.

TWELVE CONCRETE WAYS OF LOVING ONE ANOTHER (John Stott):

9Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

—Romans 12:9-16 (NIV11)

1. Sincerity: "Love must be sincere" (vs. 9a)
2. Discernment: "Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." (vs. 9bc)
3. Affection: "Be devoted to one another in love" (vs. 10a)

4. Honor: “Honor one another above yourselves.” (vs. 10b)
5. Enthusiasm: “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” (vs. 11)
6. Patience: “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” (vs. 12)
7. Generosity: “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need.” (vs. 13a)
8. Hospitality: “Practice hospitality.” (vs. 13b)
9. Good will: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” (vs. 14)
10. Sympathy: “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” (vs. 15)
11. Harmony: “Live in harmony with one another.” (vs. 16a)
12. Humility: “Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.” (vs. 16bc)

Paul now turns to a more comprehensive discussion of how Christians are to relate to some of our most difficult relationships, our enemies.

Jesus: 39But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.... 43You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” 44But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

—Matthew 5:39, 43-44 (NIV11)

Paul takes Jesus’ teachings and expands on what it means to love people who are hard to love, who even seem impossible to love.

17Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19Do 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. 20On 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.” [Proverbs 25:20-21] 21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

In several different ways, Paul is telling us that living out the Gospel means that retaliation and revenge are forbidden to followers of Jesus.

God has decided that retaliation and revenge are His ultimate responsibility, because it's never as simple as getting even or getting revenge, and we often end up hurting ourselves worse in trying to retaliate against our enemies.

POSITIVE THINGS WE CAN DO IN RESPONSE TO EVIL:

- Vs. 14 - “bless those who persecute [us]”; seek what is good for them.
- Vss. 17-18 - “do what is right” and try to “live at peace with everyone.”
- Vss. 19-20 - serve our enemy.
The “burning coals” are intended by God to heal, not hurt, to win them over rather than alienate them more, to shame them into repentance.
- Vs. 21 - “overcome evil with good.”

If we persecute and repay evil and take revenge, because those are all evil responses, we have given in to evil, doing what Satan wants rather than what God wants and knows is best for us.

 **Next Week:** Dollars & Sense