

Series: Community and Diversity

Sermon: **The Overcoming Love of a Harmonious Community**

Delivered by: **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor; Date: **October 30, 2016**

Bible text explored: Romans 12:9–21

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”^[a] ²⁰To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”^[b]

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

[ESV]

^aDeut.32:35; ^bProv. 25:21-22

Review and application:

Paul here describes how the one who offers his or her whole self to God as an act of worship will receive and convey his love in a fresh, new way.

1. If authentic love is demonstrated within a healthy family (vv. 9-10), what indicators of mutual care and commitment should mark all in the Christian community?
Name one creative way I could play “second fiddle” and honor someone else.
2. In verses 11-12, what keys do you find to maintaining your spiritual fervor in serving others?
3. Pastor Moody noted that the Greek word translated hospitality (in v. 13) is literally *stranger love*. How should we be reaching out to newcomers or outsiders?
Am I prepared to admit that I have failed to meet this standard for love?
4. Paul is indirectly quoting Jesus in verse 14. How can I abandon grudges I consider justified? (See Matt. 5:44 and Luke 6:27-28.)
5. Pastor Josh observed that cheering for the successful and empathizing with mourners runs counter to our instinctive tendencies. What does verse 15 teach me about identifying with others?
6. What pointers does verse 16 provide for nurturing community harmony in our church?
7. How does a tendency by believers to hit back when wronged (v. 17) undermine the high moral ground which allegiance to the gospel holds?
Why (v. 18) should I aspire to be at peace with everyone? (See Matt. 5:9.)
What exception does Paul acknowledge to one’s ability to achieve reconciliation?
8. Why (vv. 19-20) is “getting even” actually usurping a role that is God’s alone?
Why, on the other hand, might returning good for evil cause your opponent to repent or restore fellowship?