

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 34

I. Exposition of Chapter Twelve. (Continued)

A. Verses 9-21 – The Outworking of Righteousness in Relationship with Others.

1. Verses 9-13 - Relating to those in the Christian family.

a. Verse 9 – “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

1) **NOTE:** It’s interesting and worth noting that both here and in I Corinthians, the necessity of love is brought up after spiritual gifts. (cf. **I Corinthians 12 and 13**). Whenever we operate in any God-give gift, we need to do so with an attitude of genuine love for God and others. We’re not out for accolades for ourselves but for glorifying God and edifying others.

2) Love without hypocrisy.

a) The word “**love**” is the Greek word many know, “**agape**”. In the New Testament this word usually refers to the unconditional, sacrificial, supernatural love, that quality of love that God is (**I John 4:8, 16**). This is also the quality of love that the Holy Spirit enables us as His children to manifest (**Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 5:5**.)

b) To understand the word “**hypocrisy**”, it helps to understand the original meaning of a “**hypocrite**”. In the ancient Greek world, a hypocrite was an actor, a stage-player. It speaks of someone pretending to be someone he’s not.¹ So when Paul says our love should be “**without hypocrisy**”, he’s saying that our love is supposed to be genuine, sincere and not pretending. (cf. **I John 16-18**.)

3) “**Abhor what is evil.**” – The word “**abhor**” means, “**to hate**” and “**to detest with horror.**”² (Also see **Psalm 97:10 and Proverbs 8:13**.) In our world today people, including Christians, think that if we love people we’ll not acknowledge any kind of evil in their lives. But, the truth is, love attempts to help people out of sin and help them be free from what can ultimately destroy them. (cf. **Galatians 6:1**).

“Unpretentious love sees the evil in a brother, mourns over that evil, rejects that evil, and spares no energy toward rescuing the fallen brother.”³

4) “**Cling to what is good.**” – To “**cling**” means “**to glue together**”; “**to fasten firmly together.**”⁴ (cf. **I Peter 3:8-12**).

b. Verse 10 – “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

1) “**...kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love...**” – The words “**kindly affectionate**” are one word in the Greek and mean “**natural family love**”; “**tender affection**”; and “**pertaining to love and affection for those closely related to one.**” The added words “**brotherly love**” emphasizes the meaning. This word for “**love**” is “**philadelphia**”. In other words, have a tender affection for one another as members of a close family. This is the “**love of belonging.**” Several translations translate “**kindly affectionate**” as “**devoted**” (e.g. **New American Standard Version**).

2) “**...in honor giving preference...**” – “**Honor**” means, “**to value**”; “**to esteem**” and “**to have worth.**”

“Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Romans 12:10 - Holman Christian Standard Version

c. Verse 11 – “[N]ot lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

1) The word “**lagging**” means “**slothful**”; “**slow**”; “**hesitant**” or “**lazy**” and the word “**diligence**” means “**what you’re striving for**” or “**zeal**”. So, Paul is saying, “**Don’t be lazy in your zeal...**”.

¹Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 248.

²Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

³Picirilli, 249.

⁴Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

2) **“...fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”**

a) **“fervent”** means, **“to boil with heat”**; **“to be hot.”**⁵

b) The word **“spirit”** can be referring to the human spirit or to the Holy Spirit.

Kenneth Wuest states the following

“Paul exhorts to fervency in the Christian life which is engendered by the Spirit, not produced by the flesh (self-effort).”⁶

c) The phrase **“fervent in spirit”** is found only one other time in **Acts 18:25**.

“Never lag in zeal *and* in earnest endeavor; be aglow *and* burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord.”

Romans 12:11 – Amplified Bible

d) Remember Jesus warned about being lukewarm – **Revelation 3:14-19**.

“The Church was neither hot nor cold. It was neither one thing nor the other. It was lukewarm, which is partly cold, partly hot. It was a state of mixture. Divided between Christ and the world, wanting heaven, yet wanting the world, Christ in one hand and the materialistic world in the other hand, having a form of godliness, but denying the power and the reality – such is lukewarmness in a Church!” - Kevin J. Conner, *The Book of Revelation*.

d. **Verse 12 – “Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.”**

1) **“If verse 11 speaks of our zeal for service that grows from warm devotion to God, verse 12 speaks of our consistency and perseverance in this devotion.” – Picirilli.**⁷

2) **“Rejoicing in hope...” – “Rejoicing”** means, **“to be glad”** and **“to rejoice exceedingly.”** The word **“hope”** means **“the expectation of receiving something good”**; **“to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial”**⁸ (4:18; 5:2, 4-5; 8:20,24; 15:4,13.)

“Hope means more than a vague wish that something will happen. It is a sure and confident expectation in God’s future faithfulness and presence. The horizon of Christian hope extends beyond death into an eternity prepared by God himself, the reality of which is guaranteed by Jesus Christ.”⁹

a) **If our hope is only in this life, we are pitiable – I Corinthians 15:19.**

b) **Jesus Christ is our hope – I Timothy 1:1.**

c) **Jesus’ coming is our “Blessed Hope” – Titus 2:13.**

3) **“...patient in tribulation...” – “patient”** means; **“to persevere”**; **“endure”** and **“to sustain.”** – (cf. **Hebrews 6:11-15; 10:36-39; 12:1-2.**) **“Tribulation”** means **“to crush”**, **“press”** and **“squeeze”**. Referring to trials and afflictions. (cf. **James 1:2-4**).

4) **“...continuing steadfastly in prayer.”** – The words **“continuing steadfastly”** mean **“to be devoted to”**; **“to adhere to”** and **“to be steadfastly attentive.”** (Acts 2:40-47)

e. **Verse 13 – “distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”** - Our care and concern will demonstrate itself in practical deeds done for others, either going to them (**distributing to the needs of the saints**) or inviting them to come to us (**given to hospitality**) The ancient Greek word for **“hospitality”** is literally translated **“love for strangers.”**

⁵Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader, vol 2., 214.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Picirilli, *Romans*, 251.

⁸Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 295.

⁹Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).