

RO 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

RO 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

RO 12:17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On 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."*

RO 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

*In reality what we have here are **The Principles Governing Christian Conduct**
Or as I call it; **Getting our behavior right.***

*Paul presupposes the dedicated life,
presupposes a commitment to Jesus and
presupposes that we want to live a life aimed at pleasing God.
He also presupposes a knowledge of God's grace and
Presupposes an exhibited forgiveness in their lives which enables one to discover and
demonstrate the will of God.*

Paul deals with Relationship to fellow Christians is treated first (vv. 9-13), then the stance to be assumed toward those who are outside the church (vv. 14-21).

*9-10 "Love" is primary,
but if it is not sincere, it is not real love but only pretense.*

*In 1 Corinthians Paul paused in his discussion of spiritual gifts to inject a chapter on love (1Co 13); thus it is fitting that he should follow his presentation of spiritual gifts here in Romans with the same emphasis. **The whole conduct of believers should be bathed in love.***

Failure to love our fellow Christians casts doubt on our professed love for God

1 John 4:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

The greek word used here is agape. And in Greek literature it has the kind of meaning of "a generous move by one for the sake of another." Not at all the kind of love Valentine's day stirs up in us.

In the New Testament this love word – agape is used in nearly every case to speak of God's relationship to man. It gives us an image of God doing for us super generously. Graciously, mercifully, hugely, abundantly and exuberantly

. This does not mean that the term means that God's love is agape and other loves are different words Phileo, stergo or eros. This is the word used to describe the direction of God's love for us. From Him to us. Big Love.

So how does this hit us??? **Our direction of our love should mimic God's – outward.**

Just as gifts are for others, so to is our love.

Notice both here and in 1 Corinthians, Paul has a bit about love when he talks about spiritual gifts. Why? Gifts used without love are not how God designed them. Love used for personal reasons is not how God has designed it.

Thus love must be sincere. An outward going fair dinkum love.

In v. 10, Paul puts love into a living context. It must be shown to people. **10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.**

He uses some special terms here denoting "brotherly love" philadelphia. philia = love delphia = brethren / brothers Interestingly enough this word for devoted is the only place in the New Testament where another love word stergo is linked with another brethren or brother type word. Philostorgos = loving dearly.

"See what Paul is doing here – he is piling up love words so we get it.

"Honor one another above yourselves" (v. 10).

This is based not on some personal attractiveness or usefulness but rather on the fact that every Christian has Christ in the heart and can express him through one's own individuality. We honor God when we recognize his transforming work in our lives. If the according of such honor seems to diminish the recognition of what God has done in our own lives, the problem is readily solved by the example of the Son's exalting of God the Father despite the Son's equality with him (Jn 10:30; Php 2:4-6).

11-12 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Paul now momentarily directs our attention to the Lord and our service to him before returning to the horizontal relationship within the body of Christ (v. 13).

Paul seems to be saying here that **To maintain your spiritual energy – do some serving.** We all go through spiritual apathy from time to time – this is Paul's remedy. The Lord calls us to serve him with our best. Such service arouses hope in us, tinged with joy, of seeing Jesus in his glory and of being united with him (1Pe 1:7-8). This hope sustains us as his servants, and enables us to be "patient in affliction" At this point, Paul's mention of prayer is natural, since it is our great resource when we are under stress and strain.

Look at verse 13. Even under persecution we should not allow ourselves to be so preoccupied with our own troubles that we become insensitive to the needs of other believers. To share our earthly goods with others is never more meaningful than when people are hard pressed to find sufficient supplies for themselves.

When this sharing takes place under one's own roof, it is labeled "hospitality"

Interesting that hospitality in the greek is another love word. lit., **"love for strangers";**

The word "practice" means "pursue or chase after. We are to chase after people to be hospitable to. No not harass them , look to do good to them. The Lord had encouraged his disciples to depend on such kindness during their mission (Mt 10:11).

That is a direction we need to seriously think about in our churches direction and vision. Becoming more hospitable to each other. With it, the "church in the house" became a reality (16:23; cf. 16:5).

RO 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

The material in these verses seems to describe a Christian's relations to one's neighbors and friends (including believers), preceded by one reference to their opponents

Paul's injunction to bless persecutors rather than curse them undoubtedly goes back to

our Lord's teaching **Mt 5:44; 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**

The teaching was incarnated in the Savior himself and became clearly manifested during his trial and his suffering on the cross. Persecution can take various forms, stretching from verbal abuse and social ostracism to the use of violence resulting in death. Some form of persecution was so common in the experience of the early church that Paul can assume as a matter of course that his readers will suffer it **To bless one's persecutors involves praying for their forgiveness and for a change of outlook regarding the Christian faith.**

It can be done only by the grace of Christ.

One charge follows another without any apparent connection as Paul calls on his readers to share one another's joys and sorrows It has often been noted that it is easier to fulfill the second half of this command than the first, because our natural inclination is to feel genuine sympathy for those in sorrow, but to share their joy may present difficulty if another's achievement or good fortune is viewed with envy. In general, people have less need for fellowship in times of joy than in times of grief, for if loneliness is added to sorrow, the trial is compounded.

16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Living "in harmony with one another" dispels discord in the church. As a means to attaining this harmony, Paul stresses the necessity of rejecting the temptation to **think superior thoughts** about oneself and of coming down off the perch of isolation and mingling with people "of low position" or of a humble frame of mind. And lest one consent to do this while still retaining heady notions of one's own superiority, Paul puts in a final thrust: "Don't be conceited" (v. 16). Conceit has no place in the life ruled by love **1CO 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud..**

17-21 Paul takes his stand alongside believers by giving them explicit counsel about how to face the hostile world. **"Do not repay evil for evil"** (v. 17), for to do so would be to follow the inclination of the sinful human nature. The remainder of v. 17 means that believers are constantly under the scrutiny of unsaved people as well as of fellow Christians, and they must be careful that their conduct does not betray the high standards of the Gospel **RO 12:17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.** **18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.** Each situation that holds prospect for a witness to the world should be weighed so that the action taken will not bring unfavorable reflection on the Gospel. We must not only be doing right but be seen to be doing right.

The charge to **"live at peace with everyone"** is hedged about with two qualifying statements. **"If it be possible"** suggests that there are instances in human relations when the strongest desire for concord will not avail. If disharmony and conflict should come, however, we should accept the responsibility for resolving it. Believers may not be able to persuade the other party, but we can at least refuse to be the instigator of trouble. God wants us to be peacemakers

This peace-loving attitude may be costly, however, because some will want to take advantage of it, figuring that Christian principles will not permit the wronged party to retaliate. In such a case, what is to be done? The path of duty is clear: We are not to take vengeance, for vengeance trespasses on the province of God, the great Judge of all. We must "leave room for God's wrath" (v. 19), trusting that he will take care of the situation. This is something we really need to get a grip on. **Let God deal with it.** Not just the tough bits of life but all of life. He will not be too lenient or too severe. Here Paul quotes Dt 32:35, whose context indicates that the Lord will intervene to vindicate his

Paul does not suggest that God's wrath will be visited on the wrongdoer immediately. On the contrary, the hope is that those who have perpetrated the wrong will have a change of heart, will be convicted of their sin, and will be won over by the refusal of the Christian to retaliate (v. 20). Here again Paul lets the OT speak for him (Pr 25:21-22).

20 On 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."

"Burning coals" are best understood as the burning pangs of shame and guilt. There is, of course, no definite promise at this point that offenders will be converted. By going the second mile and showing unexpected kindness, believers may also spare their companions from having the same experience. In that measure, society has benefited.

Guidance on the problem of coping with evil reaches its climax in the final admonition: **"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v. 21).** Being overcome by evil means to give in to the temptation to meet evil with evil, to retaliate. To overcome evil with good has been illustrated in v. 20. The world's philosophy leads people to expect retaliation when they have wronged another. To receive kindness, to see love when it seems uncalled for, can melt the hardest heart.