

RO 13:8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

RO 13:11 And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Most of us here have debts. We have a housing loan, a car loan, we have to pay for electricity and gas and such. We have some big debts. Yet this verse tells us to let no debt be outstanding, except for the debt of love to each other.

Now over the years I have heard many conclusions to these verses. One was that we shouldn't borrow money, even to buy a house. If you couldn't afford it then that was your lot in life. Another view was that the only debt worth having was a debt of love, so you could go into overdraft expecting people to love and forgive you no matter what you did to them. I suppose they are the extremes.

Now my view is simple. Let no debt be outstanding I think means pay what is due when it is due. If you have a loan, pay the repayments on or before the due date, if you have a bill to be paid, pay it when it is due, Don't owe anyone anything.

Paul is strengthening his statement from

Romans 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Give everyone what you owe him. MMM I think it is a pretty good standard to live by. I think it is an all of life principle. If you owe God, give to Him, if you owe a business man pay Him, if respect is due for older folks give it. Let no debt be unpaid includes the debts of respect, includes the payment of bills, includes giving credit to who it belongs to.

I'll give you an example. At a church in Newcastle, there are some people doing a great job of bringing new people in. They are not leaders, not pastors just your usual church members with a commitment to bring people to God. At a denominational gathering, the Pastors took all the credit. They said they were doing such a great job. The amazing thing is, God is working despite the arrogance displayed by the ministers. Credit should go to a couple of very effective church people. But it doesn't. I think they deserve credit.

It is similar here, I can't claim credit for things happening. My job is to train and equip you to do it. Or that is what I was told when I came here. I haven't been told any different since. I need to give the credit to those who are doing God's work. Kids Church teachers, out there doing it. Credit to them. Bible study groups, Credit to the leaders. XLR8 I can't take credit for the growth of those kids, and neither can the church, but the leaders can – credit to them for a good job, well done.

Here is a principle – give credit where it is due.

We move on to the debt of love. Why, if we cant have debts of other kinds, can we have a debt of love? It seems as if there is a conflict here of theological standards.

Remember a couple of weeks ago we looked at this verse. **RO 12:9** Love must be sincere.

Paul is still working on that thought process.

Love is a priority.

Love must be fair dinkum.

Now I know some didn't agree with my summation of the love word in the greek – agape.

Good, I made you think.

But I stick to what I said. Agape is an outward movement of love. From God to us, AND from us to others.

A continuing outgoing love – thus we can not fully pay the debt.

It is like our house loan. Goes on for 25 year. Seems to go on and on and on. And it's is out going.

From our pockets to the bank.

All jokes aside the principle is Love goes out. If it doesn't we aren't paying our debt.

But how do we do this love thing???

⁹ The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Love others like you love yourself. Place their importance alongside your own. Do what is best for them.

Notice, it does not say Cuddle and kiss, be soppy, it doesn't even say be affectionate.

It says Love your neighbor as yourself. Treat them with the respect you offer yourself.

In this way we do what God wants.

That's what **Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.** We fulfil what God wants by practically treating others like we treat ourselves.

Why is it that we need to do this? Why do we have to show love to people?

Let's look at Paul's reasoning.

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Because it is time to. It is time to make our expressions of love make a difference.

Be careful though not to think that loving = salvation.

That verse could be read more like;

The culmination of your salvation is close.

Translated that could mean.

Jesus coming again is close, your death is closer than you think.

We need to keep an eye on that. Our love deeds are to make a difference in people's lives. Actually in their eternity.

So wake up from your slumber and realise our actions towards people make a difference.

The time is getting shorter for our actions and in fact our words to make a difference to people's understanding of how Jesus fits into their lives.

This list that Paul drops on us explains a behavioral standard.

¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Notice – no orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality and debauchery, hey I recognise that this part of the list, we would probably be feeling pretty good about.

We aren't into that.

But hold your horses.

Dissension and jealousy. These two are very insignificant seeming. BUT

We can all be placed in these categories at some stage. Dissension is causing disunity, jealousy is wanting what others have. Surely, we can recognise the danger. We can as easily fit into the list as a basically immoral person.

And our defense against that happening is right here in front of us.

¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ

He word clothe has the essence that we put on the clothes. In other words put on, cover ourselves with Jesus. How????

Time with Him, prayer, bible reading, church, bible study. Let Jesus become part of lives.

When that happens, the loving becomes easier.