

Studies in Christianity Christian Love #23

S#1.

Love In Action

S#2.

Text : **Romans 12: 3-21**

A. Our lessons have shown is that love is the summation of God's will.

1. **Matthew 22: 36** – And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **S#3.**
38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. **39** "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
2. **Gal. 5: 14** – For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

B. We looked at many individual components of love.

1. Patience and kindness
2. Selflessness
3. Closeness of relationship

C. With this lesson we'll look at **Romans 12** to observe some ways we're instructed to apply love in our lives.

I. Vs 1-2 ... Love for God requires a total commitment to Him.

S#4.

A. Vs 1 ... "I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,"

1. The Holy Spirit has just spent eleven chapters explaining what God has done.
2. He has cleanly presented salvation as a gift that cannot be earned .. grace thru faith
 - a. Righteousness is imputed without regard to merit.
 - b. Righteousness is imputed in response to complete trusting faith.
3. It is given as grace, as a reward for faith. (***Faith does not earn grace,***)

B. Those who receive the gift are required to make a response to it.

1. The recipient must totally surrender his will to that of the gift giver.
2. That surrender is referred to as presenting one's self as a sacrifice.
 - a. Vs 1b ... "to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,"
 - b. When a sacrifice is "presented" (*offered*) ownership is transferred.
 - c. "To present" is a particular word used to describe putting an offering on the altar.

3. The sacrifice God requires of the Christian is not like those under Moses.
 - a. The sacrifice is given to God, **but** it is kept alive.
 - b. Being alive in is a perpetual benefit to God.
4. Sacrifices under to old covenant were to be without spot or blemish.
 - a. **Deut. 17: 1** – You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or a sheep **S#5.**
which has a blemish or any defect, for that is a detestable thing to the Lord your God.
 - b. God purifies our bodies to remove all spiritual blemishes.
 - c. Our part of the sacrifice is to keep it sanctified and devoted to Him.

C. The love commitment to God is an ongoing process.

1. **Rom. 12: 2** – “do not be conformed to this world,”
2. Even though the sacrifice remains living, it is changed by the offering.
 - a. The sacrifice has been sanctified and purified. (*fundamentally changed*)
 - b. The life of the sacrifice must reflect to the values of the owner/recipient.
3. **Rom. 12: 2** – “but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,”
 - a. The life of the sacrifice is different because the mind has been changed.
 - b. Repentance : a change of thinking resulting in a change of life.
4. The sacrificed person lives differently than the world because she thinks differently.

II. Those who will love others must not value themselves above others. **S#6.**

- A. **Romans 12: 3** – I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; **S#7.**
 1. It is the nature of man to view himself with elevated eyes.
 2. When spiritual gifts are added to the mix (v6), there is an even greater temptation.
 3. Every member is important, but only when each performs its specific function.
- B. **Love figures a way to fit in and contributed to the good of the whole.**
 1. **Romans 12: 4** – For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
 2. Without love the individual members will each seek preeminence as in Corinth.
 3. **Mark 9: 35** – Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, " If anyone **S#8.**
wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

C. The Spirit makes it clear that each has a gift whether miraculous or not.

1. **Romans 12: 6** – Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to **S#9.** us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.
2. Service is NOT a miraculous gift, but one that is very valuable if done with love.
3. If it is clear that someone loves you, **he/she** can exhort without offense.
4. Some have the ability to make money and use it to serve God. (**Bro. Prince**)

III. Vs 9 ... Love for the brethren must be real, never just an act.

S#10.

A. Romans 12: 9 – Let love be without hypocrisy.

1. Hypocrisy : anupokritos ... without mask ; undisguised ; unfeigned
2. If one's love is not sincere, he may fool some men for a while, but NOT God.
I Cor. 4: 5 – Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but **S#11.** wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.
3. Jesus was very adamant against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.
Luke 12: 1b – He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."
4. How does one develop a sincere love for others ?
 - a. It is part of the process of transformation ..
2 – "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," (*changed value system*)
 - b. Agapeo is a commitment ,, NOT ,, an emotion.
 - *c. It is like learning how to walk or ride a bicycle - one starts off shaky, but develops.
5. **ILL ...** Salespeople are trained to be enthusiastic ... **HOW**
 - a. They are trained to the point they are convinced their product is the very best.
 - b. People who want to be enthusiastic associate with enthusiastic people.
 - c. They are then trained how to act enthusiastic and encouraged to keep it up
 - d. They are told to keep acting enthusiastic and learning about the product until they actually become enthusiastic or quit.
6. One will only put forth such an effort to learn how to love IF he has a heart for it.
I Pet. 1:22 – Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a **S#12.** sincere love of the brethren, ferently love one another from the heart,

B. In order to love from the heart, one's heart must be pure.**Vs. 9b – Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.**

1. Vs. 1 ... The living sacrifice must be “holy” when offered.
2. Holiness is not the normal state of a person's heart.
**Jer. 17:9 – The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked;
Who can know it? (NKJV)**
3. The pure motive for love comes in response to **chapters 1-11 ... the gospel.**
4. The world loves motivated by a desire to receive in response.

C. Christian Agape is motivated by a devotion to one another.**Vs 10 – Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;****S#13.**

1. “devoted” is a special word used only here in the N.T.
 - a. φιλόστοργος (*philostorgos*) being very affectionate, loving dearly or tenderly
philóstorgos (from *phílos*, "lover, friend" and *storgē*, "natural or family love")
 - b. The mutual love of parents and children and wives and husbands
 - c. **Thus**, there is to be a true family bond between Christians.
2. “brotherly love” is also used in this same sentence.
 - a. φιλαδελφία (*Philadelphia*) from 5361; *the love of brothers, brotherly love*
 - b. Using both of these in the same sentence reinforces the bond between Christians.
 - c. We are literally one family because we all have the same blood ... ***that of Jesus.***
3. This is why we call each other brother and sister ... we are one brotherhood.
I Pet. 2: 17 – Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

D. The Christian is to be respectful to everyone, but especially to each other.**Vs 10b – give preference to one another in honor;**

1. Honor .. τιμή (*time*) ... to set a price on ; to honor ; to value ; to assign worth,
2. Give preference ... προηγέομαι (*proēgeomai*) ... to go before,
3. Thayer's Lexicon : to go before and show the way, to go before and lead,
(*This is not a response to another, but something in which we take the lead.*)
4. The ESV translates it as “**Outdo one another in showing honor.**”
- *5. Thus, each Christian is to try to show more honor to the brothers than others.
ILL. – It is like trying to be the highest bidder at an auction.
- *6. It is this attitude that catches the attention of outsiders and distinguishes us.
**John 13: 35 – By this all men will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another.”**

IV. Developing a loving church requires sustained effort.**S#14.****A. Love requires that it be actively practiced.****Vs 11 – not lagging behind in diligence**

1. The old King James has a poor translation : **Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit;**
2. Lagging behind : ὀκνηρός (*oknēros*) ... *shrinking, timid, idle, lazy*
3. Diligence : σπουδή (*spoudē*) ... 1. Do quickly 2. Do one's best 3. Eagerness

B. The relationship between Christians must be approached with an eager attitude.**Vs 11b – fervent in spirit,**

1. As a Jew the Apostle Paul tended to talk in Hebrew parallelisms. **This is one.**
2. Hebrews Parallelism is where : “the words of two or more lines of text are directly related in some way.”
3. The emphasis is that the relationship between Christians requires diligent effort.

V. Some practical reasons for developing a loving church.**S#15.****A. Why should we expend the effort and zeal to build a loving church ?****Vs 11c – serving the Lord**

1. There is some textual discussion on this point, but I believe it pointless.
2. As a Christian, we are not our own.

I Cor. 6: 19 – Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit S#16.
who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

20 For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

3. Vs 1 ... We have offered our body to God as a living sacrifice.
- *4. **THEREFORE,** both individually and collectively we exist to serve God on the earth.

B. We band together as a family to serve our Heavenly Father because we love Him.**Vs 12 – rejoicing in hope,**

1. We serve the Father because we anticipate living with Him eternally.
2. We live a life that is different and more demanding than is lived by those around us.
 - a. But we do not view the added responsibilities as a burden to be borne.
 - b. **I John 5: 3 – For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments;**
and His commandments are not burdensome.
 - c. We rejoice in our labor because we anticipate Heaven at the end of the road.

- *3. When we used to pick berries in the heat of the sun,
 we did not count it as work because we knew those berries would become a pie.

C. Satan heaps all manner of tribulation upon us but we persevere.**Vs 12b – persevering in tribulation,**

1. We will not allow ourselves to be distracted or discouraged because of the promise.

Heb. 10: 36 – For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done **S#17.**
the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

2. We serve God as Jacob served Laban for Rachel.

Gen. 29: 20 – So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and
they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

D. As we face tribulation, we do it together.**Vs 12c – devoted to prayer,**

1. Prayer keeps the bonds strong between the Christian and His Master.

2. However, it also keeps the bonds strong between the servants.

James 5: 16 – Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and **S#18.**
pray for one another so that you may be healed. The
effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

E. When we function as a family, we take care of each other.**Vs 13 – contributing to the needs of the saints,**

1. No one who loves a brother can watch him suffer and do nothing.

I John 3: 17 – But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in **S#19.**
need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God
abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love with word or with
tongue, but in deed and truth.

2. Helping each other requires that we know each other's needs.

F. Those who love use their homes to serve God. (*Largest investment*)**Vs 13b – practicing hospitality.**

1. There is an urgent need for us to practice fellowship much more than we do,
But hospitality does not refer to the meals we enjoy together.
2. Hospitality is one way we contribute to the needs of the saints.

CONCLUSION :

When we say the love of the scriptures is not just an emotion, **S#20.**
it opens a whole discussion about how we bear one another's burdens.

INVITATION : The love we have for God is reinforced by His promises. Do you ?**S#21.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Romans 12: 3-21**

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. **4** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **7** if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. **10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; **11** not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; **12** rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, **13** contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. **16** Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. **17** Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. **19** Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. **20** "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.