

**Romans: The Good News According to Paul #71**  
*“Godly Living in a Godless World”* (Part 1) Romans 12:9-10  
 Heather Bible Chapel (June 9, 2019) Pastor Larry Nelson

**Introduction:**

1. Please open your Bibles this morning to Romans Chapter 12.
2. It is no secret to anyone who follows the news, that we are living in dark and dangerous times.
3. It was almost 3 years ago, as hundreds of people were running away from gun fire, Dallas Police Officers ran toward it.
  - a. Hours later, when it was all over, 11 officers had been shot, and 5 of these brave men had paid the ultimate sacrifice, fulfilling their vows *“To Protect and to Serve.”*
  - b. And all of this mayhem was perpetrated by one godless, bitter man, who had previously expressed, that he wanted to murder whites, and especially white cops.
4. Someone once said, *“The darker the night, the brighter the light!”*
5. At this time in North American history, Christians have a great opportunity to shine brightly for the glory of God, as we seek to bring the light of Christ’s hope, healing, and salvation to a lost and sinful world.
6. Paul began *Romans 12:1-8* with an exhortation to worship, where Christians are called, *“... to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God ...,”* and then he urges us to use our Spiritual Gifts for the glory of God and the good of others in the church.
7. The fulfillment of these God-ordained obligations, does not happen in a moment, but over a lifetime of faithful relationship and service, to our worthy Master and Savior, who gave His all for us, and who calls us to give our all for Him.
8. But without the relationship of love and devotion to God, service for Him will be nothing more than a hollow and joyless religious duty.
9. Earlier in *Romans 6:17-18*, Paul spoke of the balance between love for God, and the slave/Master obedience that He requires of every Christian.

*Romans 6:17-18*

- 17 *But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,*  
 18 *and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*
10. In *2 Corinthians 5:17*, Paul refers to every Christian as being a *“new creation in Christ”*, where the old, sinful life has passed away, as it is being replaced by a new God-honoring one.

*Ephesians 2:10*

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”*

- a. Because our position before God is that we are “new creations” in Christ, therefore our practice, or life style, should be one of “good works”, as our will is reshaped to be in conformity with God’s will, as it is revealed in His Word.

**TRANS>** The next section of *Romans 12:9-21*, lists 25 clear exhortations as to what God-honoring “good works” are actually supposed to look like., And so, over these next two Sunday mornings, I am planning to study two of them with you.

- I. **The Virtues of Personal Godliness** (Romans 12:9)  
 II. **The Value of God’s Forever Family** (Romans 12:10)

*Romans 12:9-10*

- 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;*

**TRANS>** So point #1 in your sermon outlines this morning is:

I. **The Virtues of Personal Godliness** (Romans 12:9)

- A. In all these exhortations, Paul is speaking about the Christian’s personal inner convictions, as they relate to his moral values,
1. Personal convictions, are far more than just obeying biblical the commands about right and wrong behaviors.

*Romans 12:9a* “*Let love be without hypocrisy ...*”

- B. The greatest virtue of the Christian life is *agape* “*love*”, which by definition focuses on the welfare and needs of others, and that without any expectation of what we may receive in return.
1. Jesus summarized the O.T. Law with two commands:

*Matthew 22:37-39*

- 37 *YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.*  
 38 *This is the great and foremost commandment.*  
 39 *The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.*

2. And it is interesting that in *Galatians 5:22-23*, Paul begins the 9-fold “*fruit of the Spirit*” with “*love.*”
3. And in *1 Peter 1:22* we are commanded to:

*1 Peter 1:22* “*... fervently love one another from the heart.*”

*1 Peter 4:8* “*Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*”

4. In fact, love is so foundationally important to the Christian life, that Jesus gave unbelievers the right to judge the genuineness of our faith by the way we demonstrate love toward our fellow believers.

John 13:35 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

5. Please hear this carefully., Love is not primarily an emotion., Love is action, which even the youngest of God’s children need to learn how to live, and to give it.
  - a. Wise parents will teach agape love to their children through instruction, and more importantly through personal example.
  - b. Dad’s, you should regularly be asking your children: “¿What loving things can we do for your mom today?”
  - c. And Mom’s, you should regularly be asking your children: “¿What loving things can we do for your dad today?”
  - d. Parents, If you forget everything else that I say this morning, please remember this! **When it comes to your children, the inner attitude and outward grace of agape love is so important that you should constantly and creatively endeavor to frame your instructions and corrections around love for God and love for others. <REPEAT>**
6. Continuing in this context, Paul goes on to exhort, “Let Love be without hypocrisy ...”
  - a. Judas said that he loved Christ, but his self-serving hypocrisy is still being remembered 2000 years later, as he betrayed his Master for 30 pieces of silver.
7. Pure *agape love* is never polluted with self-centeredness, or a “¿What’s in it for me?,” motive of the heart.
8. And just by way of reminder, selfless love is impossible apart from the deliberate, moment-by-moment submitting to the Holy Spirit’s control in our lives.

**TRANS>** Not only are we to “*love without hypocrisy*”, but Paul’s next exhortation to all Christians in our *Romans 12:9* text, is to:

*Romans 12:9b* “Abhor what is evil ...”

- C. Sincere love for what God loves, and hatred for what God hates, are two sides of the same coin.
  1. *1 Corinthians 13:6* tells us that love, “*does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.*”

*Proverbs 9:10* “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, ...”

*Proverbs 8:13* “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil;, pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate.”

2. The holy hatred of sin, begins with hating the sin in our own lives, which must be confessed and forsaken, out of love for our heavenly Master and Savior.

1 John 2:15-17

15 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*

17 *The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

3. When the Apostle John commanded us not to love the world, he was speaking of the sinful ways of the world, which are opposed to the will of God.
4. "... *the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life ...*" all stand in direct opposition to God, and when we are tempted by them, we must choose to hate and turn away from them, even as Jesus did when He was tempted.
5. Demas was one of Paul's traveling companions, who started well, but he ended badly.
  - a. Obviously, in great sorrow, Paul wrote to Timothy saying in:

2 Timothy 4:9-10

9 *Make every effort to come to me soon;*

10 *for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica ...*

- b. No Christian is immune to loving for this present world.
- c. And it is interesting to me that the both John and Paul use agape love to describe sinful love for the world.
- d. Simply put, the Christian is not to give love and devotion to this sinful world, which is biblically reserved for God, our fellow believers, and to reaching lost souls for Christ.
6. Making shipwreck of one's faith does not usually happen overnight, and it rarely happens alone.
  - a. Paul put it this way:

1 Corinthians 15:33 *"Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals."*

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

14 *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

15 *Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?*

16 *Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? ...*

- b. Both Matthew and Luke speak of those who derisively referred to Jesus as, "...a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"
- c. Dear ones, it is one thing to reach out to the unbelieving world with the saving Gospel, even as Jesus did, but it is something entirely different to become close friends with those who live their lives in opposition to God and His ways.
- d. We only have a limited amount of time for close friendships and social interaction,

and so we need to be careful about who we spend it with.

e. Speaking positively, King David said:

*Psalm 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*

*2 Timothy 2:22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

7. God would have us to hate evil and devote ourselves both to what He loves, and to those who are pursuing godly Christian values.

**TRANS>** So back in our Romans text, not only are we to *love without hypocrisy* and to *abhor what is evil*, we are to:

*Romans 12:9c "... cling to what is good."*

D. This word "cling" <kol - la - o>, means to glue.

1. As devoted slaves of Christ, we are to glue or bind ourselves "to what is good."

a. And none of this just happens by accident.

b. Clinging to what is good takes deliberate and constant effort.

*1 Thessalonians 5:21-22*

*21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;*

*22 abstain from every form (or appearance) of evil.*

*Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on (or cling to) these things."*

c. Again, please note that all of these mental disciplines require deliberate and conscious, Holy Spirit-empowered effort.

d. The old adage "Just let go and let God", may sound good, but it is a recipe for defeat and disaster.

*Hebrews 12:3-4*

*3 ... consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

*4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;*

e. Virtuous Christian living requires, Holy Spirit-empowered work, personal discipline, and sweat.

*Philippians 2:12-13*

*12 So then, my beloved ... work out your salvation with fear and trembling;*

*13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

- f. Clearly, we do not work for our salvation, but we are commanded here to work out our salvation.
- g. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to devote ourselves to working out what God has already worked in, as we learn to "... *cling to what is good.*"

**TRANS>** So far this morning, we have studied The Virtues of Personal Godliness, and now, in the time that remains, I want to focus on:

## II. The Value of God's Forever Family (Romans 12:10)

- A. Although we won't be able to cover them all this morning, or even next week, in verses 10-16, Paul lists 10 very practical ways in which genuine Christians are to show the value of their fellow believers.
- B. First, we are to:

*Romans 12:10a "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love ..."*

- 1. "Brotherly love" is made up of two Greek words <philos> and <adelphos>, which when you put them together you get <philadelphia>
- 2. *Agape love* and *brotherly love* are by no means contradictory.
- 3. But rather they compliment one another, and for the Christian, it is quite impossible to separate them.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

- 9 *Now as to the love of the brethren <philadelphia>, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love <agapao> one another;*
- 10 *for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more*

- 4. All Christians know intuitively that we should have a strong familial affection and loyalty to one another, because of our common love and devotion for our Master and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- 5. In fact, this is so important and yet so basic to the Christian life that the Apostle John used it as an absolute test for the genuineness of a person's faith.

### 1 John 2:9-11

- 9 *The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.*
- 10 *The one who loves <agapao> his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.*
- 11 *But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

1 John 3:10 *"By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love <agapao> his brother."*

1 John 3:17-19

- 17 *But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God <agapao> abide in him?*
- 18 *Little children, let us not love <agapao> with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*
- 19 *We will know by this that we are of the truth ...*

6. Each Sunday before the this Worship Service, Heather Bible Chapel shares a Communion Service together.
  - a. Love for our fellow brethren in Christ is so important that Paul warned Christians, in *1 Corinthians 11:28-32*, that we should not partake of the Lord's Supper without first examining ourselves with regard to our love for one another.
7. Please allow me to ask all of you two very personal questions:
  - a. Men and women, boys and girls, grammas and grandpas, "*¿Do your fellow Christians in this church know that you love them?*"
  - b. And if so, "*¿How do they know that you love them?*"
  - c. Remember, agape love is not just some abstract emotion.
  - d. Agape love is primarily, action.
  - e. Aren't we all very glad that John 3:16 does not read: "*For God so loved the world that he had warm feelings toward us, and then let us all go to Hell.*"
  - f. No, it reads: "*For God so loved the world that He **GAVE!** ...*"

*Proverbs 27:5 "Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed."*

- g. Simply put, when it comes to loving one another, Yes, we need to say it, but more importantly, we need to show it.
8. Being "*devoted to one another in brotherly love*", is not just something that we do when we are in the mood, or when it is easy.
  - a. Paul says that we are to be "*devoted*" to it, which means that we must work at it, every day.
  - b. Remember, love for the brethren is not a suggestion, it is Jesus' command to all of us.
9. For some, the reason why it is so hard to love as adults, is because we never learned to give agape love as children.
  - a. And so to you who are parents and grand parents of young children, show them by your example, and instruct them with your words, to excel still more in their love for God and for one another.

**TRANS>** Paul continues this theme of brotherly love in our next phrase of:

*Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;  
give preference to one another in honor;*

- C. In this phrase, Paul is harkening back a few verses to *Romans 12:3*, where he says “... I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think ...”
1. To “*give preference*” means that we are to put the needs of others before ourselves.
  2. And again, this is best taught and learned when we are young children.
    - a. Awhile back, Marian and I were enjoying lunch with a beloved Christian family, when their youngest spilled his drink all over the table.
    - b. And without a moment’s hesitation, his older brother put his arm around his shoulder as he comforted him with kind words.
    - c. And then, with his other hand he poured some of his drink into his little brother’s glass.
    - d. This simple act love was so unscripted, and yet so profound, that I had a hard time holding back my own tears, as I saw the fruit of good parenting, and Holy-Spirit empowered agape loving being played out before me.
    - e. And I will never forget it!
  3. Remember, Agape love gives, and that without expectation of getting anything back in return.
  4. And Paul says that we are to do this “*in honor*”, which means that we should be quick to recognize the godly behavior and accomplishments of others.
    - a. Although the word “*honor*” is rarely used today, we should remember that it is a biblical word, and that God intends for us to use it.
    - b. As Christians, we should “*honor*” our brothers and sisters in Christ, when they choose to make difficult Christ-honoring decisions.
    - c. And so, when the mayhem and tears had passed, I praised this young boy for his quick responses of loving compassion and practical sharing.
    - d. Although the Bible forbids the use of manipulating “*flattery*” in our speech, it commands us to give honest “*praise*” and “*honor*.”
      - (1) And sometimes, it is fully appropriate for “*praise*” and “*honor*” to be given in public.
    - e. And again, parents should be teaching this to their children, from a very young age, by praising and honoring your spouse in front of, and to your children.

- f. Here is your *Nelsonism* for the day: “*So much of what we teach our children is caught rather than taught.*”
- g. And nowhere is this more true, than when it comes to today’s text of:, *giving preference to one another in honor.*

## CONCLUSION:

1. So as I close this sermon this morning, I want to leave you with this simple suggestion and challenge.
2. Why not have a family project this week, where you discuss and memorize two great Bible verses that sum up Paul’s teaching for today.

### *Philippians 2:3-4*

- 3 *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;*
- 4 *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*
3. These are verses that every Christian should aspire to live by, and every parent should be living and teaching to their children.
4. Remember: “*So much of what we teach our children is caught rather than taught.*”

## CLOSING PRAYER: