

The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)

Romans chapter 12, beginning at verse 9, and we will read through the end of verse 13. That is going to be our focus this morning after a bit of introductory comments. Romans 12:9:

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. (Rom 12: 9–13 NASB)

Now why did I land here today in Romans chapter 12 instead of Hebrews chapter 13? I started this last week, not committed to the idea that we would be in Hebrews 13 for this Sunday or the next Sunday, but I started to do some study in Hebrews 13, and I found myself continually turning back and taking note of the way in which the applications in Hebrews, sorry, Romans chapter 12—this is going to be difficult to keep these passages separate in my mind—the applications in Romans chapter 12 paralleled the applications in Hebrews chapter 13. Not only does the structure of the proclamation of truth followed by application parallel in both of those passages, but I find in Romans chapter 12 some of the same applications of truth given as we find in Hebrews 13 but with a little bit more explanation. In fact, I find the apostle Paul in Romans 12 fleshing out those ideas very thoroughly over the course of a number of chapters. In fact, with your Bibles open to Romans 12:9, I want you to look there at that passage and just kind of let your eyes glance through that as I read to you again from Hebrews 13:1–5.

1 Let love of the brethren continue.

2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

3 Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

4 Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." (Heb. 13:1–5 NASB)

You'll notice there that the apostle Paul in Romans 12 mentions showing hospitality, remembering prisoners, or the idea of persevering in tribulation or in persecution. That's also in the context of Romans 12. And of course, love for the brethren in verse 1: "Let the love of the brethren continue." That's Hebrews 13:1. Romans 12:9 is, "Let love be without hypocrisy."

And we're parachuting into this passage in Romans 12, so I want to set the context for you so that you can understand what the apostle Paul has been doing in the book of Romans and why it is now that he begins to sort of flesh out some of these applications. And to do that, you'd have to glance back up to verses 1 and 2 of Romans 12. And this is where the apostle Paul switches from a doctrinal emphasis in the first eleven chapters to more of a practical application emphasis in Romans 12. So 12:1:

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God [notice the *therefore* at the beginning of that verse, at the head of chapter 12], to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God [now you'll remember that last week we looked at acceptable service in Hebrews 13], 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. (Rom. 12:1–2 NASB)

The apostle Paul in Romans chapter 12 is drawing to a conclusion his theological principles and truths that he has laid out in the first eleven chapters of this. And so he says, in light of God's mercies, therefore, by the mercies of God, or that is to say, in light of all of these mercies that you have received—and you may be tempted to think, OK, so what mercies does he have in mind? Well, you go back to chapters 1–3 and we find out that we were lost and dead in our trespasses and sins, under the wrath of God, that there was none who did good, no not one, that we were all under sin and all justly condemned. Chapter 1 describes that sinful condition of the Jews and the Gentiles. Chapter 2 sort of begins to apply that to the Gentiles. They say you shall not commit

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

adultery, but do you commit adultery? You say you shall not murder. Do you murder? And the apostle Paul begins to indict all of humanity regardless of their ethnic tribe or their nationality or their background. All of us stand guilty and condemned—that's chapters 1–3—so that we are all under sin.

But God (Rom. 3:24) has made a way of salvation so that you and I can be justified (chapter 4) like Abraham, not by our works which damn us and condemn us, but instead we can be justified or declared righteous even though we are not righteous in practice. We can be declared righteous in the courtroom of God's justice on the basis of faith and faith alone. And therefore (chapter 5) we have peace with God, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and we have the Spirit of God now who dwells in us. And though we all died in Adam's sin and were condemned because of his one transgression, through the act of obedience by the Lord Jesus Christ all those who have placed their faith in Him are now justified and declared righteous, and in Him we have both righteousness and life, so that all who are in Adam die and all who are in Christ will live. Adam's act of disobedience is imputed to all of us so that we are all sinners. That explains chapters 1–3. But by Christ's act of righteousness and His obedience and His sacrifice on the cross, many—that is, all who are in Him—will be justified, will be made righteous and declared righteous.

So (chapter 6) then we are set free from the sin that condemned us in chapters 1–3. Now we are free from sin, so therefore we do not yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness but now instead instruments of righteousness so that we may become slaves of obedience and slaves of righteousness. And yes (chapter 7), we will still continue to war against sin and hate the indwelling sin that is in us. And that indwelling sin is going to make yielding our instruments to righteousness very difficult, so that you may in fact get to the point where you say, “Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24) The things that I want to do, I can't do. The things that I don't want to do, those are the things that I feel compelled to do, and I want to be delivered from that.

Well, praise God, the answer in chapter 8 is that in Jesus Christ there's no condemnation to those who are in Him. So now because of what Christ has done (chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7), you and I are now sons of God, indwelt by the Spirit of God, and if we walk in obedience to the Word of God and in the Spirit of God, we will now practice righteousness. And now we will be delivered. And though we long, because we are in these bodies of death, to be swept up with all of creation and delivered from the

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

groaning that affects all of us, this barren land in which we live, now because of the work of Christ we will be caught up with that groaning creation and we will be renewed. And eventually that battle with sin will be over. We will be delivered from its presence. We will be delivered from its power. We will be delivered entirely from its dominion.

But then the question comes up at the end of chapter 8: if all of that is true, then what is true then of the nation of Israel? Chapters 9–11. They were so prominent in God's plan of redemption; what has happened to them? And Paul says they've not been cast off, they've not been sent away, because God still has a plan for national Israel because “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. 11:29). So we Gentiles have been grafted into this salvific tree that is planted in the nation of Israel. We benefit from all of the salvation blessings. And guess what. At the end of all that, we get a kingdom. So we're delivered and we get a kingdom and a new creation and all of that just like was promised to Israel. Now we're grafted in and we get to receive that as well.

So Israel has not been set aside. Instead you look at the entire panoply of God's mercies and grace and you say, “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?” (Rom. 11:34) God is infinite in wisdom. Who could possibly have fabricated a plan of salvation like that, that would deliver unworthy rebels, people allied against His truth and against His Word, hating God, hostile in their minds, enemies of God in their unrighteousness, and then turn them into sons, and not just sons but Spirit-indwelt sons, and not just Spirit-indwelt sons but Spirit-indwelt sons who are in union with their head, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the only way their salvation can fail is if He fails. And then we get all of that and all of those blessings right along with God's eternal plan with the nation of Israel itself. Magnificent.

Therefore, brethren, in light of those mercies—not in light of His justice, not motivated because of His wrath, but in light of His mercies upon you, (verse 1 of chapter 12) “I urge you . . . to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice.” See, when you contemplate what you have been given and what has been done for you, the only thing we can say is just, OK, I'll just—He's worthy of it all. And therefore, I will present my body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service of worship. And we will not be conformed to this world—that is, we will not have our minds and our hearts, our affections, our desires, our thinking, and our behavior conformed to the worldly pattern around us which leaves God out and is at war with Him. Instead, we will be *metamorphoo*, transformed, changed, metamorphosed into something different. So we are to be transformed.

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

This is a command, and this is something that we are to pursue. This is something that we are to be engaged in. It involves the resistance of being conformed to the world system and instead a pursuit of a transformed mind, which happens through the Word of God and the work of the Spirit of God that He does when the Word is preached, when it is memorized, when it is studied. When we bring that in and begin to live our lives in obedience to that, the Spirit of God does a work through the Word of God and the child of God to conform them into the image of the Son of God. So we are renewed then, and we are to pursue that renewal.

And it is out of that pursuit of being renewed by the Spirit of God that all of the moral commands in Romans 12, 13, 14, and 15 flow. Those four chapters, the commands of that, all flow out of those mercies. It is in light of those mercies that we are to be obedient. So gospel truth gives birth then to obedience to the moral commands of Scripture. And if we try and obey the moral commands of Scripture without first heeding the doctrinal, theological gospel truths, then we are just nothing but moralists or legalists. But if instead our love for the Lord and our desire to be conformed to the truth and our efforts toward pursuing sanctification without which no one can see the Lord, if that is gospel driven, then in fact we won't be moralists and we won't be legalists, but we will be obedient sons of a king.

So it's the same pattern you see in Hebrews chapter 12. Since you have not come to Mount Sinai but Mount Zion, since you have been given the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem, since you have been brought to the myriads of angels and the general assembly and the church of the firstborn and God, who is the Judge of all, and to Jesus Christ, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks better than the blood of Abel, and since you have received a kingdom which cannot be shaken, therefore we show gratitude by which we offer to God acceptable service, we love the brethren, we show hospitality, we remember the prisoners, etc. So all the obedience to the moral commands flows out of affection for the mercies that we have received, and chief inside of those moral commands is love.

So we are commanded at the beginning of chapter 12 to be transformed. So now the question is what does a transformed life look like? What does a transformed sinner look like? How do they behave? How do they interact with other people? How do they go to war with their sin? How do they relate to their sin and temptation and desire, etc.? How do they treat other people in this body of likewise transformed individuals? Well,

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

beginning in verse 3, the apostle Paul says it involves service to the body of Christ through the spiritual gifts that He has given to us. Look at verse 6:

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. (Rom. 12:6–8 NASB)

And then we have a way in which we are instructed to relate to others, especially when we are being persecuted. Look down at verse 14, skipping for just a moment the text we're going to come back to. Chapter 12:14:

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice [this is what the life of a transformed sinner looks like], 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. (Rom. 12:14–18 NASB)

Does that command sound familiar? Pursue peace, and sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. Here's how Paul says it in Romans 12:18: "Be at peace with all men." Look at verse 19:

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.'

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12:19–21 NASB)

That command is similar to Hebrews 13:16: “And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” How does a transformed sinner treat his enemies and deal with evil and evil people? That's chapter 12 here, verses 19–21.

And then speaking of enemies and evil people—government. Chapter 13, we are to be subject to those who are in authority over us. I'm sure it's entirely coincidental that the very next subject Paul brings up is government. And though the author of Hebrews does not speak of governing authorities, the author of Hebrews in chapter 13 does address the issue of submission to authority. Chapter 13:7: “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.” Hebrews 13:17: “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

Then you'll notice in Romans chapter 13, verse 8 that the apostle Paul returns back to the subject of love, which he started to unfold beginning in chapter 12, verse 9. Romans 13:8:

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

9 For this, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom. 13:8–10 NASB)

Love does its neighbor no harm. If you love your brother, you won't take his wife in adultery. And if you love your brother, you won't take his life in murder. And if you love your brother, you won't covet his stuff and you won't take his stuff by stealing. Therefore, you can see that every sin that we commit really springs from an inordinate love for ourselves or a lack of love that we have for somebody else. If I love somebody else, I would do them no harm. In fact, my love for others would keep me from ever offending somebody else or doing harm to them. So at the root of all of that, my offense or my sin against my brother, and this is the same for all of us, our offense and our sin

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

against our brother or our sister in Christ really comes down to a lack of love. If we loved one another, we would never do them any harm.

So you can see how that connects back to chapter 12, verses 9–13. For all of these moral commands are colored with love. Love bleeds into all of them. And it is love that motivates our war against sin. Chapter 13, verse 11:

11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than we believed.

12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. (Rom. 13:11–14 NASB)

You can see how Romans 13 sounds a lot like Hebrews 13.

4 Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." (Heb. 13:4–5 NASB)

Love for God, love for family, love for your spouse, love for your children, love for your church, love for your neighbor, love for all the people, including your enemies and those who persecute you, will motivate your obedience to all of these commands and particularly your desire to be sexually pure. Sexual impurity is at its heart a self-love and not a love for others. It is a self-love and not a love for others.

And then this idea of love also bleeds into chapters 14 and 15. You're saying, Jim, when are you going to get to the text that you promised we're going to get to? I'm not going to read chapters 14 and 15, but look, chapter 14 is all about the conscience. If you love your brother, you won't judge another brother in terms of what he decides to do with his own conscience on the areas where Scripture does not speak. That's motivated by love. And further, if you love your brother, not only will you not judge him, but you

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

won't exercise your liberty and your conscience in such a way as to try and trick or persuade him into violating his conscience so that he would sin and you would cause him to sin by joining you in something that his conscience does not give him liberty to do. Therefore that is an expression of love.

In chapter 15, if you love one another, you seek to bear the weaknesses of your brother. Chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15 are all colored by love. It is love for the mercies of God, love for others out of a gratitude for the mercies of God that motivates all of these acts of obedience. Love pervades it all.

So now with very little time left, let us return back to chapter 12, verses 9–13. We've seen quite a picture, I think, of how love affects all of these things. I would just remind you that chapter 13 of Hebrews, verse 1, begins with this command: “Let love of the brethren continue.” So now the rest of this sermon, as short as it is going to be, is going to be somewhat of an overview of the subject of love from verses 9–13 of Romans chapter 12. And there are five qualities of love, this love that springs as a fruit from the mercy of God toward us. There's a kind of love that you and I are to pursue.

Look at verse 9, the first mark of this. The first characteristic of this love is that it is sincere. Romans 12, verse 9: “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.” A biblical love is a sincere love. It is not—that word *hypocrisy* or “without hypocrisy” means unfeigned, genuine, sincere. It means it's not fake or pretentious or pretended, counterfeit or phony. It's not mingled with pretension. It's not a simulated love, but a genuine love, agape love, the kind of love that is sacrificial. That's one of the other marks we're going to deal with here in a moment. It is a genuine and sincere love, not a pretended one. It's not simply acting loving toward others on Sunday mornings from ten till noon. That's a hypocritical love. Instead, the kind of love that we are called to is a love that thinks of others, including others in our body, others in our family, others in our own household, not just on Sunday mornings but always. It is that others-focused kind of genuine love that is interested in the other person and seeks their good constantly. That's genuine love.

Love to get something, like to get a return, that is a hypocritical love. It's not genuine love. The husband who loves his wife so that he can get something from her, that is a hypocritical love. That's fake. That's pretending. That's not offering up genuine love. That's just doing something for a period of time so you can get a return on the love. Children who feign love for their parents in order to get a reward, that's a pretentious love. To act loving without a heart that bears that love and really expresses that love is a

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

hypocritical, insincere, pretended, fake, phony, counterfeit love. That's not genuine and true love. Love that has with it an ulterior motive, simply to be approved by others, to be loved by others, to be liked by others, to be seen by others, that's hypocritical love.

The love that the apostle is describing here, a love that is true and sincere and genuine, is a love that has to flow from God because God is the source of that kind of love. 1 John 4, verse 7: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” Now that is not to say that an unbeliever has no capacity for some expression of love, because unbelievers do love, right? Unbelievers love their dogs, they love their kids, they love their wives, they love their jobs, they love their comforts and their conveniences, they love life. Unbelievers are capable of that kind of love. But the type of love that Scripture describes that is genuinely selfless and sacrificial and serving, the type of love that is sincere like this, can only come from God. When you see that kind of love, then you know you're dealing with somebody who has been born of God, because God is love. And that is the kind of love that He sheds abroad in the life of His people. The ability to love your enemies, to truly love your enemies—show me an unbeliever who can do that. Can you? No. An unbeliever who would be willing to lay down their lives and sacrifice everything even for their enemy, for another constantly? That kind of love does not rest within the ability or the capacity of an unbeliever. Only believers have that kind of love. And we have that kind of love not because we conjured it up from within ourselves but because God loved us first. First John 4:19: “We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” God is the initiator of this kind of love. He is the source of this kind of love. And the kind of love that is a nonhypocritical love for the brethren is something that can only flow out of a redeemed heart.

One element of this love, by the way, and this is the next phrase in verse 9, is an abhorrence or a hatred for evil. “Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good” (Rom. 12:9). Those are two sides of the same coin. And by the way, your hatred for evil is itself an expression of the kind of love that God gives to His people. If you say to me that you love God, but you are fine cozying up to that which dishonors Him and shows your disdain for Him, you're a liar. If you love evil, if you love sin, if you love that which dishonors God and blasphemes Him, then you do not have an appropriate love for God. Do you want to know what it takes to push out all of this self-love and inappropriate love out of our own hearts? It is to have that filled up with a love for God. And if a love

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

for God, an appropriate kind of love, dwells within us, we will abhor, we will hate evil. And now in our day we have Christian leaders all over the country who are cozying up to every form of immorality and evil in the name of showing love and tolerance and blessing people, etc. And that type of a tolerance for evil shows you just how unloving they truly are, because they would never love that which dishonors God.

Second, this is a selfless love. It is a selfless love, verse 9. It is a—sorry, a sincere love, verse 9. It is a selfless love, verse 10. I'm not used to operating with an outline that's so nice like this. So I'm going to stumble all over this. This is new territory for me. Romans 12, verse 10: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor." You see the others-centered focus of that? Biblical brotherly love is not just a natural affection that you have, whether you are a believer or not, that you simply bring into the church environment. Instead, it is a sincere and selfless love that actually—catch this—prefers the other person over itself. It's not just that you conjure up the same kind of love for them that you have for you, but it is that you and I would get in sincerity to a point where we actually prefer the other person's interests over our own interests. That is a selfless love. Philippians 2, verses 3–4: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

Of course we look out for our own interests. That's natural. That's why you go to a job. That's why you pay the bills. That's why you adjust the thermostat. We are always naturally inclined to look out for our own interests. But, the apostle says, you don't do that, but instead you consider the other person as more important than yourself. That's the selfless aspect of love. To give up for one another. To serve one another. To prefer one another. To give somebody else the biggest slice of pie, the bigger bowl of ice cream, the better cut of steak, the heart of the watermelon instead of all the seeds around the outside, to do that. It's the opposite of what you see kids do when they walk up to the table full of desserts out on the plates and they begin to instantly examine which one of them is bigger. If they had a micrometer, they would be out there measuring that and weighing them because they're hoping for at least a half a gram more than their brother or sister gets. See, that's the opposite of biblical love. Selfless love says, I'll take the smallest one so somebody else can have this. To prefer their interests ahead of your own. And it's not just that. In fact, it is to seek the good of the other person and even the honor of the other person over yourself. A selfless love seeks the betterment of the reputation and the honor and the name and the acclaim and the

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

position of the other person ahead of itself. So if you have an opportunity to give credit to somebody, you're more than willing to lavish that credit and honor upon somebody else even if it means that you get none of it. You may deserve all of it. But if you can honor somebody else in some way without lying, and exalt them, that is to prefer them above you, above ourselves.

First Corinthians 13:5 says love “does not seek its own,” and it is not self-centered. It does not seek its own. 1 Peter 1:22 says we are to have “a sincere love of the brethren” and to “fervently love one another from the heart.” Fervently love one another from the heart. 1 Peter 4:8: “Keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

So it is sincere, it is selfless, and third, verse 11, it is serving. Romans 12, verse 11: “Not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” This is motivated by love. Last week we saw this connection in Hebrews when the author says that we are to “show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service” (Heb. 12:28). That is to say that our service to the Lord and to others in the body of Christ is motivated by our gratitude or our thankfulness for the mercies that we have received and the benefits that we have been given. And one of the ways that we do this is the use of our spiritual gifts, which is why the apostle Paul in chapter 12, verses 3–8 describes our spiritual gifts and using them in serving one another in the body of Christ. And that of course is connected to preferring others. We have a desire—should have a desire to be a blessing to other people and to use the gift that God has given to us in ministry and in service to other people to platform them, to exalt them, to encourage them, to edify them, to bless them, to impart to them some grace. That is what a spiritual gift does. And the one who loves will desire to do that, make opportunity even to serve, and will intentionally pursue service to God. 1 Peter 4:10 says, “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” That service is motivated by love. A sincere, selfless, and serving love.

Fourth, verse 12, this love is steadfast. Verse 12: “Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer.” Every single one of these commands in verse 12 has the idea behind it of some sort of steadfast or persistent keeping on in something. Notice that in verse 12. “Rejoicing in hope.” What is hope? Hope is the confident expectation of something that is to come. You haven't received it yet, but you're rejoicing in what you know lies ahead. And if you bail out on that, then you're not rejoicing in hope. Hope

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

looks forward, hope anticipates until it receives what it is that has been promised or is expected. And so even with that phrase *rejoicing in hope*, the apostle Paul is encouraging us to continue on to be steadfast and to persevere in that confident expectation of what is to come.

The second phrase: *persevering in tribulation*. The suffering and the affliction that attacks us in this life should not deter our love and our service. The tribulations that come, either through persecution or just the difficulties of living in a sin-cursed and fallen world, tempt us to bail on that and to get out of the tribulation. You and I are to be steadfast in that.

And *devoted to prayer*. It is easy to skip out on prayer. It is easy to say amen before we should say amen. It is easy to slack off in that discipline and to tap out and to give up, but Scripture calls us to a persistence in that.

So the love that we are called to is a steadfast love. It continues to rejoice in the hope of what might lie ahead. It continues to persevere in prayer, and it continues to persevere even in tribulation, suffering, and affliction. And by the way, our lack of fervency in any of those things does itself come back to a lack of love. If I stop rejoicing in hope, it is because I lack, in some measure, love for something. For the truth, for God, for my fellow man, for my neighbor, for my brother or sister in Christ. Same thing with bailing out of tribulation and not persevering in prayer. It is love that motivates all of that.

And fifth, this love is not just sincere and selfless and serving and steadfast. You know that last one's going to end with *s*, right? I couldn't do that or I would've stopped with the fourth one. It is in fact sacrificial. Romans 12, verse 13: "Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality." It's sacrificial love. The word *contributing* there is the word *koinonia* in the Greek, or a form of the word *koinonia*. It has to do with fellowship, a sharing, or a participation in it. You see, fellowship is not just sitting around talking about football on Sunday afternoon. Fellowship is not just enjoying a meal together and talking about everything under the sun except spiritual things. Fellowship, true biblical fellowship, is a sharing in something. It's two people sitting around and enjoying the same thing together and participating one with another in that thing, some spiritual enterprise. And the thing that brings Christians together is the fellowship or the sharing that we have in Christ and His church and His purposes and the truth. And we share in that, we participate together in that.

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Fruit of God's Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

Well, the idea of contributing here is the idea of fellowshiping in or sharing in the needs of the saints. Love is sacrificial in that it sees a need and then seeks to meet that need. There's so much that goes on—and for this, so many here need to be commended. There's so much that goes on inside this body of Christ where a need is made known and it is met, oftentimes, most of the time, before even anybody else in leadership knows that the need exists. That need is shared, and it is made known to people. It begins to be circulated, and people jump in to meet that need, as far and as wide as that person's circle of influence and knowledge goes. And that is exactly what it is that the apostle calls us to here, to contribute to the needs of the saints. And this is a costly, costly expression of love, to practice hospitality. Practicing hospitality requires sacrifice. Sacrifice of your time, your talents, your treasure, your attention, your work, the giving of yourself, the laying aside of your own interests, serving others in that way.

Remember that love and hospitality are connected in Hebrews chapter 13. You remember that? “Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality” (Heb. 13:1–2). “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it” (v. 2).

And love and hospitality are connected in 1 Peter 4. I want you to listen to all of the things that we have talked about here. Peter mentions them in 1 Peter 4.

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Pet. 4:7–10 NASB)

There in that series of verses you see the apostle Peter speak of the same thing that the author of Hebrews does in Hebrews chapter 13 and the same thing that Paul does in Romans chapter 12: prayer, love, fervency, hospitality, and serving one another. Now I'll just ask you these questions and take a couple moments for you to reflect upon them. What would your life be like if these things characterized every single relationship that you have? Your marriage, your relationship with your children, your relationships with your coworkers, with your neighbors, with your friends, and with every other person in

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

the body of Christ, and with your enemies? What would our lives look like? Would they look the same? Would they be radically transformed? These are in fact the qualities of a transformed life. These are the things that mark those who are redeemed: a sincere, selfless, serving, steadfast, and sacrificial love.

Our love is evidenced in these things. All these moral commands, the things we're seeing in Romans 13, 12, Hebrews 13, love and affection for God, for His mercy, that is all at the root of that. And so we can only pray that God may grow us in these things, encourage our hearts in these things, motivate us, enable us, give us grace to manifest these things.

Copyright © 2023 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Fruit of God’s Mercies (Romans 12:9–13)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.