



THRIVING

Through Love & Service

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ROMANS 12:9 – 14 (NKJV)

- ⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.
- ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;
- ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;
- ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;
- ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.
- ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.



- In this paragraph, Paul continues to instruct us about the content of the sanctified life with a slight change in direction.
- Whereas in the previous paragraph, the exhortations about spiritual gifts apply individually only to those with the particular gift in view, here, the appeals are general and apply equally to all Christians.
- Roman is not a thorough handbook on ethics but a list of some essential characteristics of a transformed and thriving life.

LOVING PARTICIPATION

- Here the emphasis is on the attitudes of those who exercise the spiritual gifts.
- It is possible to use a spiritual gift in an unspiritual way.
- Paul makes this same point in 1 Corinthians 13, the great “love chapter” of the New Testament. Love is the cardiovascular system of the spiritual body, which enables all the members to function in a healthy, harmonious way.

THRIVING THROUGH LOVE

Romans 12:9 – 11 (NKJV)

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THRIVING THROUGH LOVE

Whether it is a heading or not, it is appropriate for this injunction to appear first, given the supreme importance of the virtue of love. Jesus singled it out as the essence of God's law.

Matthew 22:36 – 40 (NKJV)

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

LOVE IS THE CENTRAL DEMAND OF THE NEW COVENANT.

John 13:34 – 35 (NKJV)

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

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

Love “quickly became treasured as Christianity's foundational and characteristic virtuous standard.”

AGAPE

- Agapē was taken and given a uniquely Christian meaning by Jesus.
- The “Agape” Christian meaning is drawn from the nature of God as displayed in his work of salvation through Jesus Christ, i.e., his selfless and sacrificial concern for the happiness and well-being of others.

Romans 8:39 (NKJV)

...nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 (NKJV)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

1 John 4:10 (NKJV)

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Love is **SACRIFICIAL**,
NOT hypocritical.

THRIVING THROUGH LOVE

- The essence of the agapē urged upon us as Christians.
- It differs from the other forms of love in that it does not depend upon some uncontrollable inner emotion, desire, or need for fulfillment but is a deliberately willed attitude of concern and goodwill based on the needs of the loved one.
- The point of Paul's injunction is not that Christians should love one another since this commandment should be engrained in every Christian's mind from the beginning of his renewed life. This must be an honest love, not a hypocritical love, and it must be humble, not proud

In Romans 12:10, “giving preference to one another” means treating others as more important than ourselves.

LOVE MUST BE SINCERE

The love that we profess must be sincere; it must be from the heart and not be an external mask only.

- The word for “sincere” is ἀνυπόκριτος (anypokritos), which means “unhypocritical, unfeigned, genuine, not counterfeit, without pretense or sham.” It means “without a mask.” In Greek drama, “the hypokritēs was the ‘play-actor’ who projects an image and hides his true identity behind a mask” (Dunn, 2:740).
- Metaphorically and morally, a hypokritēs (a hypocrite) is anyone who pretends to be something he is not.

CHRISTIANS ARE COMMANDED TO BE WITHOUT HYPOCRISY IN LOVE.

2 Corinthians 6:6 (NKJV)

by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

1 Peter 1:22 (NKJV)

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

LOVE REQUIRES FAITH

1 Timothy 1:5 (NKJV)

Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith

2 Timothy 1:5 (NKJV)

when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

CHRISTIANS ARE COMMANDED TO BE WITHOUT HYPOCRISY IN LOVE & WISDOM.

James 3:17 (NKJV)

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

“There is no vice worse than hypocrisy, just as there is no virtue surpassing love; thus hypocritical love is the ultimate moral contradiction.”

– Murray



Philippians 2:1 – 4 (NKJV)

- ¹ Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,
- ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
- ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.
- ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

LOVE WHAT IS GOOD

Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Amos 5:15 (NKJV)

Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

- Many of us grew up with something different in mind because we were taught, in many cases, to love what is evil and hate what is holy.
- Here good and evil are general terms, representing everything that is morally wicked and ungodly and everything that is morally good and holy.

Hold on to what is good may be rendered idiomatically as “**tie yourself to what is good.**”

It means that Christians cannot just passively ignore evil but must actively and aggressively oppose it, speak out against it, and flee from it.

(DeWalt, 200–201)



1 Timothy 6:10 – 11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

2 Timothy 2:22 (NKJV)

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

The verb for “cling to” is likewise strong. In the active voice, it means to join or glue two things together.

It means “attach yourself closely” to everything good. The Christian must cleave to what is good and never let go of it; this begins by becoming united with, together, Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:16 – 17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.”

¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

TAKE A STAND FOR GOOD

The message here is clear: there can be no neutrality in the moral realm. We cannot hide behind some alleged moral or cultural belief.

Good and evil objectively exist in God's nature and God's law. Christians must take an unequivocal stand against evil and for good.

THRIVING IN LOVE CAUSES US TO SERVE

Romans 12:10 (NKJV)

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

Serving Christ usually means satanic opposition and days of discouragement. Paul admonished his readers to maintain their spiritual zeal because they were serving the Lord and not men.

When life becomes difficult, the Christian cannot permit his zeal to grow cold.

BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER IN BROTHERLY LOVE.

- Here, Paul moves from the general love (agapē) Christians must have for all people to the more intimate love we must also have toward one another.
- He uses words compounded from two other Greek words for love, φιλία (philia) and στοργή (storgē). The former is affectionate love between friends; the latter is tender affection among family members.
- Kindly affectionate - It is a kind of natural affection, like that which parents and children feel toward one another.

BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER IN BROTHERLY LOVE.

- It is “an attachment sealed by nature and blood ties” and primarily represents “the mother’s instinctive love, benevolence, and devotion toward her children.”
- The other word is φιλαδελφία (philadelphia. It is a combination of φιλία (philia) and ἀδελφός (adelphos, “brother”) and literally means “brotherly love.”

As members of God's family and spiritual siblings of Jesus Christ, Christians have a sibling relationship with one another.



Romans 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

Romans 8:14 –17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

2 Corinthians 6:18 (NKJV)

“I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”

- Thus, we are exhorted to develop the close and affectionate relationship that should exist among brothers and sisters.
- The use of both of these words together does two things. First, it magnifies the importance of understanding the church as a family.



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