

LESSON 26: ROMANS 12:9-21
MARCH 3, 2021

OVERVIEW

- . The nature of love – Romans 12:9-13
- . The Christian and his enemies – Romans 12:14-16
- . Right living – Romans 12:17-21

THE NATURE OF LOVE – ROMANS 12:9-13

- . Love must be sincere – Romans 12:9
 - . Sincere is an English word derived from the Latin words *sine cera* which means “without wax”
 - . Refers to an ancient practice of using wax to hide cracks in inferior pottery
 - . Quality pottery was stamped with *sine cera* to confirm it was quality pottery that hadn’t been altered
 - . This phrase became synonymous with people who do not hide their true nature
 - . The love Paul is referring to here is *agape*, the highest form of Greek love, which is God-like
 - . God’s love for us is sincere – holy and unvarying
 - . As Christians, we are new creatures in Christ and must learn to love without hypocrisy – holy and unvarying
- . Love is discriminating – Romans 12:9
 - . A person who develops a mindset determined “not to hate anything” is not being Christ-like
 - . It may perplex a lot of Christians to have both love and hate used together in describing the nature of love
 - . This passage teaches us that love must be discriminating
 - . God’s love is holy, perfect love, yet God hates sin
 - . Real Godly love hates what is evil and clings to what is good
 - . God hates evil because He sees how it corrupts and destroys people who He loves
 - . God hates seven things – Proverbs 6:16-19
 - . Haughty eyes (arrogant, superior or disdainful)
 - . A lying tongue
 - . Hands that shed innocent blood
 - . A heart that devises wicked schemes
 - . Feet that are quick to rush into evil
 - . A false witness that pours out lies
 - . A man who stirs up dissension amongst brothers

- . God also hates religion that is merely formal, with no depth of conviction
Isaiah 1:12-15, Amos 5:21
- . If we are to love as God loves than we need to learn to distinguish between good and evil and learn to hate evil
- . We are called to hate the sin while at the same time learning to love the sinner
- . Nine practical commands – Romans 12:10-13
 - . Be devoted to one another in love
 - . In Greek there are four types of love
 - . *Eros* – refers to romantic love
 - . *Agape* – highest form of love used in verse 9 – Godly love
 - . *Philia and Storge* are two types of love, both used in the original text in this verse
 - . *Philia* occurs in this phrase and means brotherly love
 - . *Storge* is part of a longer Greek word that translated means devoted
 - . The interpretation is that, when it comes to our Christian brothers, we are to be a devoted, loving, closely knit and mutually supportive family
 - . Honor one another above yourself
 - . Never be lacking in zeal
 - . Don't get discouraged – continue on steadily
 - . Keep your fervor
 - . Fervor is from a verb meaning to boil
 - . The Lord wants us to be aglow in the Spirit
 - . Serving the Lord
 - . Ties in with the two previous points – the reason we are to do these things is to show focused on the work and cause of Christ
 - . Be joyful in hope
 - . Be patient in affliction
 - . Instead of being resigned to what can't be changed, wait confidently for God's resolution of the problem
 - . Be faithful in prayer
 - . Keep praying
 - . Share with people in need – be hospitable

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS ENEMIES – ROMANS 12:14-16

- . Now Paul moves to the most radical matter of all, speaking of how we are to treat our enemies
- . We are to bless, not curse our enemies – Romans 12:14
 - . “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:44-45
 - . It is natural to want to strike back

- . Overcome this evil tendency by doing good
 - . When we bless others, we ask God to do good to them
 - . It is in this sense that we are told to bless and not curse
 - . We are to pray for our enemies asking God to bless them
- . Four characteristics of true Christians – Romans 12:15-16
 - . Empathy
 - . The ability to identify closely with someone else, to make his case your own, and allow what has happened to him to affect you
 - . We often do this superficially
 - . We must stop thinking of ourselves and our own interests
 - . The only way we can do that is by a transformation accomplished in us by Jesus Christ
 - . Amicability
 - . Christians should be easy to get along with
 - . The common touch
 - . Instead of being proud, we must stop thinking of other people as being beneath us
 - . Humility
 - . Right thinking about both ourselves and others dominates verse 16

RIGHT LIVING – ROMANS 12:17-21

- . Verse 17 has two parts
 - . The first part, “Do not repay anything evil with evil” is the negative version of the Golden Rule
 - . The second part, “Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody” makes a distinction between right and wrong
 - . The key word in this second part is *right*
 - . The Greek word used in Paul’s letter was *kalos*, which can mean good, right, proper, fitting, better, honorable, honest and fine
 - . The way to understand this word is to know that it was used by the Greek philosophers to describe the goal of sound thinking – the assent to truth
 - . Christians are to lead the way or good or right thinking and they are called to do this always
- . Keeping the peace – Romans 12:18-21
 - . Christians have not always been a peace-loving people
 - . Some divisions among Christians are based on important matters of theology but many are not
 - . “Blessed are the peacemakers” – Matthew 5:9
 - . Paul has discussed what it means to have peace with God

- . Now for the first time he discusses the subject of peace between human beings
- . The four verses in this section make four important points
 - . Realism – Romans 12:18
 - . This way of speaking recognized two potential sources of difficulty
 - . The behavior of other people may destroy peace
 - . There may be issues at stake that will make peace impossible
 - . Truth can not be hartered away just to maintain peace
 - . Realism recognizes that this is a very wicked world
 - . Evil exists and must be resisted by right thinking people
 - . However we must realize that some things lead to peace
 - . We need to be on the side of things that lead to peace
 - . Forbearance – Romans 12:19
 - . “Do not take revenge, but lead room for God’s wrath”
 - . Do not avenge yourselves
 - . Put the other person before yourself and learn to not always try to win the fight
 - . Difficult to do especially when we are under attack
 - . Times of attack are a profound test of faith
 - . Leave vengeance to God
 - . Learn to see beyond the now and to trust God
 - . Active goodness – Romans 12:20
 - . The thrust of this verse is clear enough
 - . We are to do good even to those who do evil to us
 - . What does it mean to heap burning coals on our enemy
 - . Increase your enemy’s guilt
 - . Kindness will cause your enemy to feel shame
 - . Doing good is the best way to subdue an enemy and win them over
 - . Good triumphing over evil – Romans 12:21
 - . Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good
 - . We are to respond positively in love, thus overcoming the evil in the situation
 - . We must remember with deep gratitude that this is how God has treated us
 - . We must study the example of Jesus Christ
 - . Be close to Christ and strive to draw closer to Him always
 - . “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength”
Philippians 4:13

NEXT LESSON – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021 – ROMANS 13:1-7