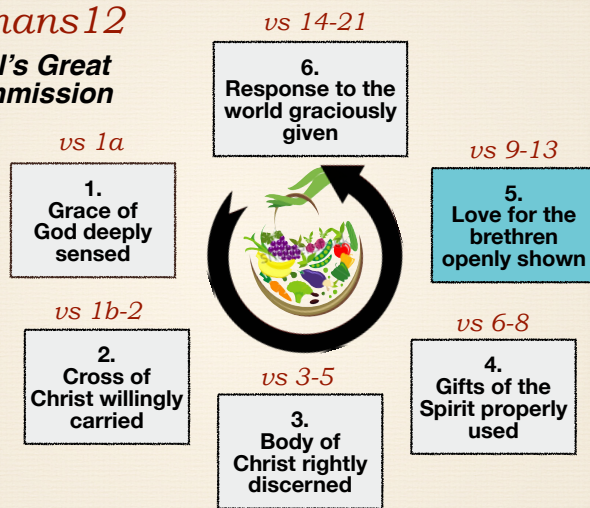


Romans 12

Paul's Great Commission



Romans 12

“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.”

“⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy.”

Ephesians 4

“¹⁵ but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for **the building up of itself in love.**”

“⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy.”

Three common myths about Christian agape love

1. Love is a feeling that sweeps over a person and creates an impulse to do loving things.
2. Love has a mind of its own that can be trusted to guide behavior.
3. Love is the essence of the Law so when we follow the Law we are loving.

Love is the natural choice of a life under the control of Christ's Spirit.

“⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy.”

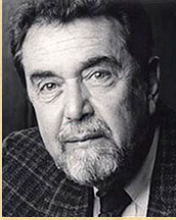
Agape (love) is distinct

- “Agape” is a **rare** Greek word outside the N.T. and by far the **most common** word for “love” in the N.T.
- It is centered on the **welfare** of the one loved, unlike “phileo”, which is a warm feeling centered on the passion of the one loving.
- It is **unconditional** and often applied to those who would be enemies of the one loving.
- It is associated with God and **Christianity** almost as an “in house” term.
- It is both a **noun** and a **verb** - a **command** and an **impulse**.

Romans 12

“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.”

Leo Buscaglia



"I have a very strong feeling the opposite of love is not hate - it's apathy, It's not giving a damn."

"9 Let love be without hypocrisy."

This is the theme of vs.9-13

- Paul is concerned that love be **genuine**, authentic, full blown, and expressed.
- Love is too often associated with an **individual & superficial** sense of wants - material fortune, social fame, etc.
- Or love is **limited** to a warm feeling or impulse that sweeps over us.
- Love is hypocritical if it does not respect and reflect the following **characteristics**.

"9 . . . Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."

Love is sensitive to moral truth

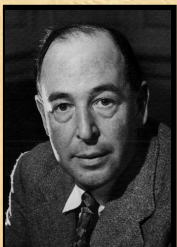
- "Abhor" (hate exceedingly) and "cling" (embrace as a lover) are both strong words.
- Love is a heart commitment that is hypersensitive to all that is good (ethics and morality) and it hates evil.

"9 . . . Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."

Love is sensitive to moral truth

- Love is defined not by man apart from God but by man bearing the image of God.
- Love is not so much a respect for a person's wishes as it is a responsibility for the welfare of their soul.

C.S. Lewis



"You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body."

Mere Christianity



Bell Hooks

"Love is moving toward another person's soul with a commitment to help them reach the deepest desire of their heart."

(which is reconciliation with God, self, & others)

¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Love is sensitive to human worth

- “Devoted” and “brotherly love” come from the same Greek word - philo or “friendship.”
- “Preference” (surpassing one another) in the sense that we put ourselves ahead of others in giving respect.
- Be known for the generous way you show respect for other believers.

¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Love is sensitive to human worth

Honor Appeal Critique Criticize Condemn

There is a place for critique but that is not where we are to start our response to family members.

Honor Rules

1. View your words to and about others as a part of God’s investment in their soul’s well-being.
2. Earn the right to critique others through:
 - listening well until you understand
 - showing your motives with action
 - be sure you are the right person and this is the right time
3. If you are not a part of the problem or the solution, wait and pray rather than complain, confront, and condemn.

Never say “I love you”
if you don’t really care.
Never talk of feelings
if they aren’t really there.
Never hold my hand
if you’re gonna break my heart.
Never say you’re going to...
if you don’t intend to start.
Never look into my eyes
if all you do is lie.
Never say “hello”
if you really mean “goodbye.”

¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Love is sensitive to Christian ministry

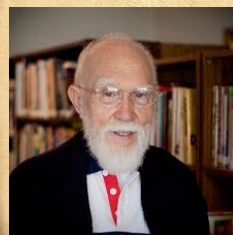
- “Don’t be lazy in bringing zeal to your work of service to God.”
- Love calls for more than reluctant duty.
- Zeal and power are poor substitutes for truth, commitment, & discipline.

¹² rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

Love is sensitive to challenging trials

- The topics in verse 12 go together - hope is challenged by tribulation which calls for prayer.
- Love creates joyful hope enabling us to endure all things.
- Love creates a positive expectation that sees obstacles as opportunities.

- “Tribulation” is opposition which tends to erode hope.
- “Tribulation” is the only context in which perseverance is meaningful.
- It is not what happens to us or what we bring on ourselves that determines our fate but rather how we respond to disappointments.
- Starting well is rather insignificant if we don’t finish well. Finishing well is almost always tied up in how we respond to obstacles along the way.



Earl Rodmocker

“God never promised us a smooth ride, just a safe landing.”

Hope - Obstruction - Prayer

- “devoted” is “steadfast continuation” starting with commitment and including discipline.
- “Prayer” is communion with God, distinct from fellowship with His people.
- Prayer is not always to change the circumstances but more often to challenge our perspectives.
- Worship is a vital part of a church’s life in that it should refresh our communion with God, renew our perspective on reality, and reset our priorities in living.

“¹³ contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.”

Love is sensitive to social needs

- “contributing” is a Greek word that has the idea of “sharing.”
- “hospitality” is making room for others with proper respect.
- The way we make room for others, especially the least among us is the greatest contribution we can make to the Body Life of the church.

Romans
12:9-13

Love is sensitive to:

1. Moral truth
2. Human worth
3. Christian service
4. Challenging trials
5. Social needs

Impulses of an unhealthy Disciple

relativism
cynicism
absenteeism
pessimism
narcissism

Commitments of a healthy Disciple

passion for virtue
showing honor
eagerness
perseverance
generosity