

**Start your study here**

**Read** Read, Record, Reflect, Respond

Prayerfully	Reflectively	Extensively	Creatively	Intensively	Specifically	Effectively
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Notice that the textual rewrite is done based on syntax (grammatical structure) not simply on verbal or topical relationship and correlation.

Repeated
Alike
Different
Accentuated
Related
<b>Think Context!</b>

**Romans 12:9-21**

- 9 Let love be genuine.  
     Abhor what is evil;  
     hold fast to what is good.
- 10           Love one another with brotherly affection.  
               Outdo one another in showing honor.
- 11           Do not be slothful in zeal,  
                     be fervent in spirit,  
                     serve the Lord.
- 12           Rejoice in hope,  
               be patient in tribulation,  
               be constant in prayer.
- 13   Contribute to the needs of the saints  
     and seek to show hospitality.
- 14   Bless those who persecute you;  
       bless and do not curse them.
- 15   Rejoice with those who rejoice,  
       weep with those who weep.
- 16   Live in harmony with one another.  
     Do not be haughty,  
       but associate with the lowly.  
     Never be wise in your own sight.
- 17   Repay no one evil for evil,  
       but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.
- 18   If possible, so far as it depends on you,  
     live peaceably with all.
- 19           Beloved, never avenge yourselves,  
               but leave it to the wrath of God,  
                     for it is written,  
                     “Vengeance is mine,  
                     I will repay, says the Lord.”
- 20   To the contrary,  
     “if your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
     if he is thirsty, give him something to drink;  
     for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”
- 21   Do not be overcome by evil,  
     but overcome evil with good. (ESV)

Review: The mercies of God motivate our consecration which results in transformation leading to doing the will of God particularly in humble service within the body of Christ.  
 Observations: 1) Structure 2) Repetition of key terms 3) Interplay between how to relate to believers and unbelievers 4) Hortatory or exhortative tone  
 Question: What are Christian ethics? Do we demonstrate them? Why or why not?

Language and Syntax:  
 31 Commands  
 9 Imperatives  
 17 Participial Imperatives  
 2 Imperative infinitives  
 3 verbless imperatives

Though not fully convinced the text is chiasmic I have represented it that way because it is helpful to show some of the structural markers though the passage is more topical exhortation than package instruction—so a basic Outline:  
 12:9-13 How Christians should love each other  
 12:14-16 Responding appropriately to all through humility  
 12:17-21 How Christians should treat their enemies

Topic: 9a Genuine Love  
 Structure: 12:9-13 How Christians should love each other  
 Chiasmic 2-3-2-3-2  
 Simply to arrange his thoughts, not necessarily to show relationship of each part of the chiasm

Topical sentence for whole section: Theme—Real love  
 “Love without Hypocrisy” “Love, not role play”

Love—ἀγάπη (*agape*)  
 A self-giving love modeled after God’s love for man, but illustrated in the giving of Jesus to die in man’s place and for the penalty of the sins of mankind

**Romans 12:9-21**

**9** Let **love** be genuine.  
 Toward Believers  
 Reactive  
 Abhor what is evil;  
 hold fast to what is good. (How Christians should love)

**10** Love one another with brotherly affection.  
 Outdo one another in showing honor. (Humility)

**11** Do not be slothful in zeal,  
 be fervent in spirit, progressive  
 serve the Lord. (Active)

**12** Rejoice in hope,  
 be patient in tribulation,  
 be constant in prayer.

**13** Contribute to the needs of the saints  
 and seek to show hospitality. (Concrete—tangible love)

**14** Bless those who persecute you;  
 bless and do not curse them. (Counter to nature)

**15** Rejoice with those who rejoice,  
 weep with those who weep. (Connection?)

**16** Live in harmony with one another.  
 Do not be haughty,  
 but associate with the lowly.  
 Never be wise in your own sight. (Concrete—tangible love, see 12:3)

**17** Repay no one evil for evil,  
 but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (Structure: 12:17-21  
 17a “evil”  
 17b-18 How to treat non-Christians  
 19 Prohibition against vengeance  
 20 How to treat non-Christians  
 21 “evil”)

**18** If possible, so far as it depends on you,  
 live peaceably with all.

**19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves,  
 but leave it to the wrath of God,  
 for it is written,  
 “Vengeance is mine,  
 I will repay, says the Lord.”  
 Instruction is to think about how to do what is honorable in sight of all—neither ignore those who you disagree with nor be a Caelian because what is honorable to one may not be to another  
 Do all you can—but you may not be able to maintain peace with everyone—but never retaliate

**20** To the contrary,  
 “if your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
 if he is thirsty, give him something to drink;  
 for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”  
 “never avenge yourselves” followed by two “but” clauses (ὁλλά) verse 19 and 20, the ESV translates the 2<sup>nd</sup> ones “to the contrary”

**21** Do not be overcome by evil,  
 but overcome evil with good. (ESV)  
 Toward Unbeliever  
 Proactive  
 The ethics of Jesus  
 See cultural explanation in notes for this figure of speech—Point:  
 Do good when others don’t deserve it—your kindness is more powerful than your scolding

**Working Idea** (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

Believers responding to the mercies of God  
not allowing the world to press them into its mold of thinking or living  
but being transformed by the renewing of their minds to do the will of God  
will serve others through the ministries given to them by the grace of God  
will love those within in the community  
    seeking the best for them and the community  
will seek to live at peace with all people  
    not retaliate against those who persecute

**Main idea:**

Priority of Real Love

**Teaching idea/explanation:**

This passage will challenge our ability to teach one main point because there are so many “main points.”

Paul will provide us more than ample instruction to explain but more significantly, to apply. But remember as we move into this strong exhortation section that we dare not forget Paul’s previous teaching. We cannot simply “do” Christianity. The instruction in this section is rooted in the “mercies of God” which are the motivation for our “doing.”

Duty is important, but it is much more effective when devotion propels duty.

We have learned of our wonderful position in Christ (Romans 5-6, 8) and of our inability to overcome sinful patterns through mere effort along (Romans 7).

You will notice that this series of ethical instructions is not all that could be said about Christian ethics, for the focus is on **inter-relational** ethics, not individual or personal ethics primarily.

Paul does not discuss individual purity and self-discipline but how the internal ethics—those that are produced through transformation by renewal of the mind—are lived out in the context of relationship.

And he breaks down the relational environments into:

    Among believers—“one-another”

        Primary focus love

    Among unbelievers—“all”

        Non-retaliation

As you teach this section you will find that you will need to do more “topical” instruction than progressive development of a theme.

I have laid the text out chiasmically (and provided some support for that in the notes), I am not fully convinced that the text is as neatly structured as the chiasm indicates. The chiasm helps reveal some of structural markers and rhetorical features—such as the use of infinities and participles as imperatives.

But in the explanation section you will see that I deal more with specific topics than the whole flow.

Let me encourage you to identify which of the instructions you need to spend more time discussing and applying—this should be fertile ground for discussion, challenge and growth.

## Introduction

### Christian Ethics

Many have defined this section as a summary of Christian ethics.



Talk about it

### Definition of Ethics

**1** *pl but sing or pl in constr* : the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation

**2 a** : a set of moral principles : a theory or system of moral values (the present-day materialistic *ethic*) (an old-fashioned work *ethic*) — often used in *pl. but sing. or pl. in constr.* (an elaborate *ethics*) (Christian *ethics*)

**b** *pl but sing or pl in constr* : the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group (professional *ethics*)

**c** : a guiding philosophy

**d** : a consciousness of moral importance (forge a conservation *ethic*)

**3** *pl* : a set of moral issues or aspects (as rightness) (debated the *ethics* of human cloning)<sup>1</sup>

What makes something “Christian ethics”?

What are Christian ethics? Do we demonstrate them? Why or why not?

Jesus’ commandment to love is the essence of Christian ethics. When a Pharisee asked Jesus to identify “the great commandment in the law,” Jesus answered, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:37–40). The apostle Paul also declared that all the commandments are “summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the Law” (Rom. 13:9–10). This great love commandment summarizes and fulfills the intention of the Old Testament Law.

While love is the summary of Christian ethics, the New Testament contains many specific ethical instructions. A basic pattern for this ethical teaching is the contrast between our old existence before faith in Christ and our new existence in Him. Christians are called to leave behind their old conduct and to put on the new (Eph. 4:22–24), to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), and to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23).

Although as Christians we are free from the Law, we are not to use that liberty “as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love” to “serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). Love is best expressed through service and self-giving (Matt. 20:26–27). These points lead naturally to the observation that Jesus Himself is the supreme example of righteousness. Christian ethics are summed up not only in His teaching, but in His life as well. So true discipleship consists of following Jesus (Eph. 5:2) and being conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29).

The call for righteousness is directed to the individual, but ethics also has an important social dimension. The centrality of love indicates this very clearly. The prophets of the Old Testament emphasized the connection between righteousness and social justice (Amos 2:6–8; 5:24). The ethical teachings of the Bible as followed by Christians will have an impact on the world (Matt. 5:13–16). But in spite of all these truths, the Bible does not call for a social program to be imposed upon the world. The ethics of the Bible are for the people of God. The Sermon on the Mount is for disciples of Christ. As Christians follow biblical ethics, the world will be affected for good by them.<sup>2</sup>

## Review

The mercies of God motivate our consecration which results in transformation, leading to doing the will of God particularly in humble service within the body of Christ.

## Summary

Love one another and the things that are good, hate what is evil.

<sup>1</sup>Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.*, Includes Index., Eleventh ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

<sup>2</sup>Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, R. K. Harrison and Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1995).

Seek to live at peace with all, not retaliating evil for evil, bless and minister to those who are against you.

In verses 1–2 Paul summoned the church to be completely devoted to God and to be renewed in their thinking so that the will of God becomes a reality in their lives. In verses 9–21 Paul sketches in some of the contours of the will of God. He mentions love first, and this conforms well with the Pauline insistence elsewhere that love must be preeminent (1 Cor. 12:31–13:13; also Rom. 13:8–10; Gal. 5:14; Eph. 5:2; Col. 3:14; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Tim. 1:5).<sup>3</sup>

## Overview

Romans 12:1–15:12 constitutes a discourse on living the Christian life. Imperatives, or surrogates for them, occur throughout the discourse. By comparison, in the previous two discourses command forms are either not found at all (1:18 through the end of chap. 5) or are somewhat less frequent (chaps. 6–8). This in itself might predispose us to make the last part of the book equivalent to its main hortatory thrust in keeping with the purpose as presented in 15:15–16<sup>4</sup>

The internal structure of 12:1–15:12 is hortatory throughout. As mentioned, either imperatives occur or other verb forms such as participles, infinitives, and even verbless clauses that seem clearly to be surrogates for imperatives. But in that the structure we are about to examine in 12:9–21 exhibits a heightened degree of peak-marking, it seems advisable to consider it either to be central or at least part of the central section of this embedded discourse. This is not to deny that there is something masterful about Paul's clarion call to present ourselves as living sacrifices in 12:1. This can be considered to be a prepeak section that anticipates the peak-marking to follow. And as a further complication, although 14:1–15:12 is a rather prosaically developed section, the passage may well reflect a primary concern of Paul in writing the epistle: to get believers of varying backgrounds and scruples to accept one another. But even this rather prosaically developed section culminates in a flourish of Scripture quotations regarding the acceptance of the Gentiles into the people of God (15:9–12) The benediction found in 15:13 presumably marks closure on some level. Possibly it closes the body of the epistle. Taking account of these and other factors, we avoid positing an unordered string of hortatory structures by postulating three main blocks of material that are related as follows:

*Preparatory Exhortation* (12:1–8)

general (vv. 1–2)

particular (vv. 3–8)

*Central Exhortation* (12:9–13:14)

theme (12:9–21 [developed in three paragraphs])

application (13:1–7)

theme:

exhortation (vv. 8–10)

motivation (vv. 11–14)

*Resultant Exhortation* (14:1–15:12)

The centrality of the second section is seen in its having a chiasmic structure with reiteration of the ethical demand for love on the believer, in the attachment of the motivation element in the reiteration (Christ is coming), and above all in the carefully crafted paragraphs found in the first statement of the theme in 12:9–21.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 6, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 662.

<sup>4</sup>Robert E. Longacre and Wilber B. Wallis, *Soteriology And Eschatology In Romans*, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 41 (The Evangelical Theological Society, 1998; 2002), 41:373.

<sup>5</sup>Robert E. Longacre and Wilber B. Wallis, *Soteriology And Eschatology In Romans*, JETS 41:3 (September 1998) p. 374.

## Preview

### Action of the Justified: Toward the Assembly Romans 12:1-21

#### Foundation of Conduct

#### Function of Conduct

In Humility

In love

3

8

9

21

### Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

Practice real love

### Outline

**I. Prologue:** *Paul's commission to preach Christ to the nations* 1:1-17

**II. Doctrine: Justification—The Righteousness of God Revealed** 1:18–11:36

*God's Gracious Provision of Righteousness is Acquired by Faith in Jesus Christ*

**III. Duties of the Justified—Righteousness of God Reflected** 12:1–15:13

*The Justified Believer is to Act According to His Position before God*

**A. Duty Toward the Assembly** 12:1-21

*Action of the Justified: Toward the Assembly*

What remains to be said about God's righteousness? Only the very pragmatic matter of how it should be applied by believers (12:1–15:13). First, it should be applied among fellow believers (12:1-21). This is accomplished by a consecration of our lives to God, in light of all that he has done for us (12:1-2). Once we have committed ourselves to him, we can begin to serve others. This service should be done by the employment of spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body (12:3-8), and with an attitude of sincere love—both for believers and unbelievers (12:9-21).<sup>6</sup>

**“Therefore” Service** 12:1

1. Foundation of Conduct: Consecration 12:1-2
2. Function of Conduct: Focused on Others 12:3-21
  - a. In humility: Using God-given enablement 12:3-8
  - b. In love: Demonstrate Christian Ethics 12:9-21

### Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be Aware



Think about it

#### 12—16 “Therefore”

Moving from the more doctrinal to the more practical—keeping the practical anchored in the doctrinal and making sure the doctrinal is practical.

#### 12:9–15:12

How do you live in the body—accepting one-another's differences while maintaining unity.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, bible.org

## 12:9-21 In love—demonstrate Christian ethics

### Question

How do you answer someone who says “Christian’s are hypocrites?”

Yes

At least they have a target (ethic) they are trying to live up to

Only hypocrisy if one claims to be or pretends to be “more” or “better” than others.

What should the community of faith be known for? What is the core of Christian Ethics?

Love

John 13:35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”  
(ESV)

How well do “we” succeed in fulfilling or satisfying the command to love?

Within the church?

In the world?

What would it take for our church to be known as a loving church?

Love is demonstrated through humble interaction with others, even in peaceable or positive response to those who are antagonistic.

## 12:9-13

### Interaction:

What is love?

What is the difference between “hypocritical love” and “real love”?

One is self-seeking

One is other-centered

Why do love and good need to go together?

How do we make sure that what we love is good?

## 12:9

David Black has pointed out<sup>12</sup> that the series of apparently desultory exhortations in 12:9–13 turns out on careful inspection to be “a highly crafted and artistic piece of Greek prose.” “Let love be real” (a verbless clause) is taken as the theme, followed by a chiasmic development with use of assonance and rhyme as well as a careful balancing of words and phrases over against each other. No overt imperatives occur. Rather, the hortatory development is via participles. While the phonological and stylistic elegance of the Greek original cannot be translated into English, we try to give a bit of the roll and sonority of the original in the gloss that follows:

Let love be real:

A. *hating* the evil,  
*clinging* to the good.

B. In brotherly love, devoted to each other;  
in honor, preferring one another;  
in (such) eagerness, never flagging.

C. As to the spirit, fervor;  
as to the Lord, servant.

B'. In hope, rejoicing;  
in trouble, enduring;  
in prayer, persevering.

A'. The needs of the saints *sharing*,  
hospitality *practicing*.

Notice, as one of the several features that characterize the above, that the participles are preposed in A but are postposed in A’—thus wrapping the passage like an envelope.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>12</sup> D. Black, “The Pauline Love Command: Structure, Style, and Ethics in Romans 12:9–21,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria* (1969).

<sup>7</sup>Robert E. Longacre and Wilber B. Wallis, *Soteriology And Eschatology In Romans*, JETS 41:3 (September 1998) p. 375.

## Love

Ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος –love sincerely, love without (ἀ privative) hypocrisy, without playing a role

This is a verbless clause used as either a topical statement or more likely a command.

JESUS HIMSELF PUT love for God and love for others at the heart of his “new covenant ethics” (Mark 12:28 – 34 and par.; John 13:31 – 35). The apostles only rarely call on their converts to love God, preferring to speak of faith and obedience instead. But they follow Jesus almost to the letter in making love for other people the central focus of their exhortations (e.g., Rom. 13:8 – 10; 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:13 – 15; Col. 3:14; James 2:8; 1 John 2:9 – 11). But “love” can be a vague idea. One of Paul’s purposes here is to specify some types of behavior that manifest “sincere” love.<sup>8</sup>

**Point:**

Love is primary, but if it is not sincere, it is not real love but only pretense.<sup>9</sup>

“must be genuine”  
without hypocrisy

The underlying word was often applied to the actor who “played a part” on the stage. Christians can avoid love that is mere “play-acting” if they put into practice the commands that follow.<sup>10</sup>

Love—ἀγάπη (*agape*)

Since this is main point of the passage, let me provide a longer definition of love (*agape*).

These quotes are all from the *New International Dictionary of NT Theology*, edited by and published by Zondervan, Articles on Love, drawing out the word ἀγαπάω (*agapao*), ἀγάπη (*agape*).<sup>11</sup>

*agapao* in Gk. is often quite colourless as a word, appearing frequently as an alternative to, or a synonym with, *erao* and *phileo*, meaning to be fond of, treat respectfully, be pleased with, welcome. When, on rare occasions, it refers to someone favoured by a god (cf. Dio. Chrys., *Orationes* 33, 21), it is clear that, unlike *erao*, it is not the man’s own longing for possessions or worth that is meant, but a generous move by one for the sake of the other.

**NT 1 (a)** In the NT love is one of the central ideas which express the whole content of the Christian faith (cf. Jn. 3:16). God’s activity is love, which looks for men’s reciprocal love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16).

By contrast, *agape* and *agapao* are used in nearly every case in the NT to speak of God’s relationship with man—not unexpectedly, in view of the OT usage. Where *agape* is obviously directed towards things (Lk. 11:43), the very use of the vb. *agapao* is intended to make it plain that here love is directed to the wrong ends, i.e. not towards God. Thus the vb. is used of misdirected love in Jn. 3:19 (love of *skotos*, darkness), Jn. 12:43 (love of *doxa ton anthropon*, the glory of men), and 2 Tim. 4:10 (love of the *nyn aion*, the present age). But in the case of the noun *agape* there is no corresponding negative usage in the NT. It is always in the sense of *he agape tou theou*, the love of God, either subjective gen. (i.e. God’s love of men) or the objective gen. (i.e. men’s love of God), or referring to the divine love for other men which the presence of God evokes. This brings *agape* very close to concepts like *pistis*, *faith*, *dikaiosyne*, *righteousness* and, *charis* *grace*, which all have a single point of origin in God alone.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 409.

<sup>9</sup> Everett F. Harrison, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Pradis Electronic Resources.

<sup>10</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 409.

<sup>11</sup> I am using the electronic version published by Zondervan for the Pradis Bible Software program.

**(a)** Paul stands entirely in the line of OT tradition when he speaks of the love of God. *agape* is for him electing love, as is indicated by his use of *agapetos*, “the chosen one”. This adjective is commonly used by Paul, but is entirely lacking in Jn., as is also the vb. *kaleo* (call). Rom. 9:13ff. and 11:28 show in particular how Paul’s thought links up with the Israelite election-tradition. The *kletoi* (“called”) are the *agapetoi* (“beloved”) (Rom. 1:7; Col. 3:12). As in the OT the motive for the election is God’s love, which can also be rendered by *eleos* or *eleeo* (Mercy). (The LXX translates the root *rhm* sometimes by *eleeo*, sometimes by *agapao*.) This love becomes a revealing activity in Jesus Christ’s saving work (Rom. 5:8; 8:35ff.). The circle of guilt, wrath (Anger) and judgment is broken through, for in Jesus Christ God appears as love. Indeed this love comes to be predicated of Jesus Christ himself (e.g. Gal. 2:20; 2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 5:2).

Paul, therefore, characterizes love for one’s neighbour as love for one’s brother in the faith (Gal. 5:6). 1 Cor. 13 summarizes everything to be said here. There *agape* is always both God’s love and man’s love. Love stands over every power and authority introducing and encircling the whole. ([Ed.] In a study of the phrase *ta tria tauta*, “these three things”, and *meizon de touton he agape*, “but [the] greatest of these [is] love”, R. P. Martin asks: “May it not be, then, that this tremendous chapter ends on the note of an unexpected climax, as though Paul were saying, Excellent as are the features of this well-known triad, with love the still outstanding trait, there is something greater still, the love of God expressed in Jesus Christ our Lord?” [“A suggested Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 13:13”, *ExpT* 82, 1970-71, 120].)

1 Cor. also makes it clear that love is the force which holds a Christian community together and builds it up. Without love, no fellowship or shared life is possible (1 Cor. 14:1; 16:14; Eph. 1:15; 3:17ff.). The *soma Christou*, body of Christ, is built up by love (1 Cor. 8:1; 2 Thess. 1:3; Phil. 2:1f.; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:2). When Paul offers the church the example of his own love he is calling them back again to their fellowship in the love of God (2 Cor. 2:4; 8:7). Paul also takes up the command of the OT and of Jesus to love (Rom. 13:8ff.; Gal. 5:14), thus setting *agape* alongside *pistis*, and over against the *nomos* (Law). The law has been fulfilled, because Jesus is love, and has died for sinners. Insofar, therefore, as Christians love one another they too fulfill the law, not in the sense that they attain any perfection, but that they are now living in God’s new reality through the strengthening power of forgiveness. *agape* is a reflection of what is still to come (1 Cor. 13:9, 12, 13).

Abhor what is evil;  
hold fast to what is good.

It is interesting that Paul is not satisfied with simply telling people to love, he makes sure that it has concrete expression.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (ESV)

Colossians 3:14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (ESV)

The terms Paul uses here, “abhor” and “hold fast” are very graphic and powerful words. “abhor” means to hate, be repulsed and consequently to avoid  
“hold fast” is a term used for sexual intimacy, to join closely together, to be united.

Christian love is more than a feeling; it leads to a violent hatred of evil and a tenacious attachment to what is good.<sup>12</sup>

**Point:**

While we often say that love is blind, that is only true in that it is not easily angered and doesn't hold on to wrongs committed against it.

But love doesn't ignore wrong or evil behavior.

As we seek to have sincere love, it must also be pure love.

That is why Jesus says,

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (ESV)

**Teachers**, since the Moo commentary provided to you, does a good job providing understanding of the terms, I will only briefly add additional thoughts, particularly aimed at engaging people in conversation.

12:10-13 Facets of Real Love

Continually show brotherly love

Devotedly love like brothers

*phileo* is the most general word for love or regard with affection. The many derivative words show this clearly: e.g., *philos*, a friend; *philema*, a kiss; and compound words such as *philosophia*, love of knowledge, philosophy (*wisdom*); *philoxenia*, hospitality (*Foreign*, art. *xevno*"); and proper names like *Philippus* (lit. lover of horses, horse-lover). *phileo* mainly denotes the attraction of people to one another who are close together both inside and outside the family; it includes concern, care and hospitality, also love for things in the sense of being fond of. Ideas related to *phileo* do not have a clear religious emphasis.<sup>13</sup>

Outdo one another in showing honor.

Do not be slothful in zeal,

be fervent in spirit,

serve the Lord.

**Point:** Love is active in seeking the benefits of others

Rejoice in hope,

be patient in tribulation,

be constant in prayer.

**Point:** Love perseveres

Contribute to the needs of the saints

and seek to show hospitality.

**Point:** Love is generous

**Summary**

Love is not passive but active

Love is not satisfied when others suffer

**Implication**

Active, giving, other-centered love must be the norm of our lives if we are to be the community of believers God intends us to be.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 409.

<sup>13</sup> *New International Dict of NT Theology*. Pradis CD-ROM: Articles/L/Love/ ajgapavw

**Interaction / Application**

Talk about it

One a scale of 1-6, one being very limited, and six being almost saintly, how would you rate your love?

Overall loving attitude and actions? 1 2 3 4 5 6

Love for your spouse and family? 1 2 3 4 5 6

Putting the needs of your spouse first? 1 2 3 4 5 6

Love for other believers? 1 2 3 4 5 6

How generous are you? 1 2 3 4 5 6

How broken is your heart when you see someone in physical need? 1 2 3 4 5 6

How broken is your heart when you see someone in financial need? 1 2 3 4 5 6

How broken is your heart when you see someone in spiritual need? 1 2 3 4 5 6

How do you demonstrate you love (concretely and tangible)?

What does your calendar (your time) reflect about how important building healthy relationships are to you?

**Action Plan:** What will it take for you to move one number in the positive direction? Write down at least one or two action steps.

**12:14-16**

This paragraph contains six exhortations that are stated positively and three that take a negative form.<sup>46</sup> The apostle urged his readers to invoke God's blessing on behalf of those who persecute them.<sup>47</sup> We remember the teaching of Jesus on the Mount, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5:44 // Luke 6:28).<sup>48</sup> Stephen provided an example of this godly attitude when as he was being stoned, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60; cf. 1 Cor 4:12). The principle of nonretaliation for personal injury permeates the entire New Testament. It provides guidance when life brings us up against those who care nothing for us and are in fact opposed to all that we stand for. Ask that they might enjoy the blessings of God! Love inevitably desires the best for other people regardless of who they may be. The old nature says, "Curse them"; God says, "Ask me to bless them."<sup>49 14</sup>

<sup>46</sup> In vv. 9–13 there were ten participles functioning as imperatives; in vv. 14–16 there are four imperatives, plus three participles and two infinitives that serve that purpose.

<sup>47</sup> In the Greek world εὐλογέω meant "to speak well of" (cf. the English "eulogize"). Here it carries the Hebraic sense of calling upon God to bestow his favor on another.

<sup>48</sup> ὁμᾶς is placed in square brackets in the UBS text indicating considerable doubt on the part of the committee about whether it should be included. Those MSS that omit ὁμᾶς broaden the exhortation to persecutors in general. Cf. Paul's words in Phil 2:2–5.

<sup>49</sup> Black comments that while "'blessing' and 'cursing' was a regular feature of synagogue practice, the teaching of Jesus abolished the formal practice of 'cursing' one's opponents" (*Romans*, 175). Stuhlmacher comments, "Until Christianity became a state religion in the fourth century A.D., the practice of loving one's enemy remained one of the main characteristics of the Christian church within its non-Christian environment" (*Romans*, 196–97).

<sup>14</sup>Robert H. Mounce, vol. 27, *Romans*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1995), 239.

12:16

Look back at 12:3 where Paul already has dealt with this subject.

12:3 Right thinking about ourselves

***True Humility***

Notice the balance

Not thinking too highly

But thinking correctly

Sober judgment—objectively

Humility is the ability to acknowledge the “true me”—what God has created me to be, with strengths. But it does not:

ignore the presence of one’s weaknesses

amplify and proclaim one’s strengths

Pride sows the seeds of discord. The tendency to regard oneself as worthy of preferential treatment is universal in scope. The entire range of personal conflict, which reaches all the way from minor squabbles to international wars, reflects the misguided idea that we are better than they or that they have done something against us. So Paul counseled us to “live in harmony with one another” (v. 16).<sup>52</sup> This unity is less the result of accommodation to the other person’s point of view than it is the result of arriving at a mutual understanding of God’s way of thinking. Like spokes in a wheel that converge at the hub, the closer we are to God the closer we come to one another. Paul admonished his readers not to be proud since it is pride more than anything else that destroys the harmony of the body.<sup>53 15</sup>

If a twelve-year-old makes A's in school and generally makes wise choices, how would you help her apply this verse to herself?

Never be wise in your own sight. (Romans 12:16)

You might say:

1. It means that you gladly admit that all true wisdom is from God. It is his, and not finally ours.
2. It means that you recognize that any sense of superiority comes from comparing yourself only with your inferiors. But the most important person to compare yourself with is God, and he is infinitely wiser than you. Not only that, there are a lot of people in the world wiser than you.
3. It means that you feel humbled by the fact that you are a sinner deserving of God's wrath, and that you are amazed at the grace that gives you eternal life. This humility and amazement swallows up a sense of pride.
4. It means that you do not count yourself worthy of being served, but rather "empty yourself" and become obedient and serve others, both the wise and the foolish.
5. It means that you are mainly not thinking about yourself at all but taken up with how admirable Jesus is and how wonderful his works are and how interesting and needy others are.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Barrett translates, “Have a common mind” (*Romans*, 241).

<sup>53</sup> As in Rom 11:20 the warning is against arrogance or haughtiness rather than ambition.

<sup>15</sup> Robert H. Mounce, vol. 27, *Romans*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1995), 240.

<sup>16</sup> John Piper, <http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/1196/>

**Interaction / Application**

Talk about it

One a scale of 1-6, one being very limited, and six being almost saintly, how would you rate yourself toward those who don't like you?

Overall attitude and actions toward antagonists? 1 2 3 4 5 6

How do you demonstrate your love (concretely and tangible) to those who are against you?

How would you rate your instinctive response toward those who are being blessed? 1 2 3 4 5 6

How would you rate your instinctive response toward those who are rejoicing, when you are struggling? 1 2 3 4 5 6

Who are you more likely to desire to befriend, those in plenty or those in want? Why do you think this is true?

**Action Plan:** What will it take for you to move one number in the positive direction? Write down at least one or two action steps.

**12:17-21**

The natural impulse is to return injury for injury. But retaliation for personal injury is not for those who claim to follow the one who told his disciples to turn the other cheek and go the second mile (Matt 5:39, 41; cf. Gal 6:10; 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9). Instead, believers are to be careful<sup>56</sup> to do what is honorable in the sight of everyone<sup>57</sup> (cf. Prov 3:4). The early church understood the necessity of having a good reputation with outsiders (1 Tim 3:7). Although it is imperative that believers take pains to do what is right in God's sight, it also is important that what we do, as long as it does not violate Christian ethics, is well thought of by the world (cf. 2 Cor 8:21). In so far as it is possible, we are called to live at peace with everyone. Wickedness is to be opposed and righteousness lauded, but Christians must be careful not to allow their allegiance to God to alienate them from the world they are intended to reach with the gospel. Jesus pronounced a blessing upon the peacemaker (Matt 5:9), and the author to Hebrews wrote that we are to "make every effort to live in peace with all men" (Heb 12:14).<sup>17</sup>

## 12:18

If possible, so far as it depends on you,  
live peaceably with all.

## 12:19-20

for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head

**Simply put:** Always payback evil with kindness leave justice in God's hands

An observation is in order to clarify this figure of speech.

→ Paul is not saying, "Your aim is to heap burning coals on someone's head" but the outcome of your kindness is that this will happen. It is not our job to insure that it happens; our job is to do the right thing.

<sup>56</sup> *προνοέω* etymologically means "to think of beforehand."

<sup>57</sup> Dunn writes that "Paul shows himself ready to appeal to a widespread sense of what is morally right and fitting" (*Romans*, 2:748), but Cranfield correctly observes that "the arbiter of what is good [is] not a moral *communis sensus* of mankind, but the gospel" (*Romans*, 2:646). What Paul was saying was that the believers in Rome were to live out the implications of the gospel.

<sup>17</sup> Robert H. Mounce, vol. 27, *Romans*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1995), 240.

The question that remains—what does “heaping burning coals on someone’s head,” mean?

Two main options that are normally provided:

1. The imagery is one of divine judgment
2. The imagery is one of personal shame

#### *Basic understanding*

Instead of doing one's enemy an unkindness the believer should do him or her positive good (cf. Matt. 5:44). This may result in the antagonist acknowledging his error and even turning to God in repentance.<sup>18</sup>

Here Paul is drawing upon the Proverbs to show that we should treat even our enemies with great kindness. The image of “burning coals” from Proverbs 25:21, 22 probably refers to the pangs of conscience, which is more easily triggered with kindness than with angry hostility.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Potential culturally explanation*

The imagery seems to be tied to a very common issue—keeping your fire going. Without the aid of lighters or matches, individuals needed to keep a watchful eye on their fire. The wise would insure that there was always an ember hot enough to restart the fire. The foolish or slothful would waste their time and lose track of the important thing—keeping their fire going.

If one let their fire go out, he would have to take a pan (normally clay) to someone’s house and ask for burning coals. They were placed it in a pan, a cloth would be wound up and placed on the head. The pan of coals was placed on the cloth sitting on the head.

If you saw someone walking toward their house with burning coals on their head, you knew they had been foolish.

If you saw someone leaving the house of their enemy with burning coals on their head, you knew that person was not only foolish, but ridiculous—shamed.

#### *Interpretive options*

Whereas the meaning of verse 19 is clear in its prohibition of personal revenge in the ethic of love and in light of the promise of divine vengeance, there is vigorous debate as to the meaning of verse 20, as it follows on the heels of verse 19 and relates to the rest of the context. Two of the three principal views on verse 20 were first presented by Chrysostom and Augustine. The former held that the “coals of fire” referred to some future divine punishment that awaits those who spurn the Christian’s deeds of love. If the enemy did not repent at such grace extended, he summoned on himself the sure judgment of God.<sup>5</sup> Augustine, however, held that these “coals of fire” referred to the burning pangs of shame that the enemy would experience on being shown kindness, and which would lead to repentance and reconciliation.<sup>20</sup>

One interpretation of heaping burning coals on his head is that it figuratively describes doing good that results in the conviction and shame of the enemy. The expression supposedly alludes to the old custom of carrying burning coals in a pan. When one's fire went out at home, a person would have to go to a neighbor and request hot coals that he or she would then carry home on the head. Carrying the coals involved some danger, discomfort, and uneasiness for the person

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<sup>18</sup>Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Romans 2004 Edition* (DTS Professor, © 2004 Published by Sonic Light, <http://www.soniclight.com/>)

<sup>19</sup>Allen Ross, Ph.D., *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, (© The Biblical Studies Foundation, www.bible.org, 2004).

<sup>5</sup>Cranfield, himself no advocate of this understanding, yet admirably relates this position. Chrysostom “explains that Paul knew that even if the enemy were a wild beast he would scarcely go on being an enemy after accepting the gift of food, and that the Christian who has been injured would scarcely go on hankering after vengeance after he has given his enemy food and drink; and [he] goes on to say that to give one’s enemy food and drink with the intention of increasing his future punishment would be to overcome of evil” (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary [Edinburgh: Clark, 1979], 2:649).

<sup>20</sup>John N. Day, “*Coals of Fire*” in *Romans 12:19-20*, *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 160* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2003; 2004), 160:640 (Oct 03) p. 416.

carrying them. Nevertheless they were the evidence of the neighbor's love. Likewise the person who receives good for evil feels uncomfortable because of his neighbor's love. This guilt may convict the wrongdoer of his or her ways in a gentle manner.

A better interpretation, I think, takes the burning coals as a figure of God's judgment that will come on the enemy if he persists in his antagonism. The figure of "coals of fire" in the Old Testament consistently refers to God's anger and judgment (cf. 2 Sam. 22:9, 13; Ps. 11:6; 18:13; 140:9-10; Prov. 25:21-22). Thus the meaning appears to be that the Christian can return good for evil with the assurance that God will eventually punish his or her enemy.<sup>385 21</sup>

In responding to our enemies in this way, the text from Proverbs goes on to say, we will "heap burning coals on his head." Most of us are familiar with this language. It has passed into Christian parlance as a way of encouraging believers to do good to those who are nasty to us. What is usually implied is that our responding to evil with good will cause people to become ashamed of their actions and perhaps seek reconciliation with the Lord.

Whether this idea of contrition is what is communicated by the imagery in Proverbs is less certain. "Coals" and "fire" in the Old Testament usually connote divine judgment. Thus, Proverbs (and Paul) may be saying that kindness toward enemies will result in further judgment on them from the Lord. But this interpretation does not fit the context. With almost all modern commentators, then, we think the popular Christian interpretation of the clause is probably right: Paul urges us to show kindness to our enemies with the hope that they will become ashamed of their actions and seek the underlying reason why we can respond with such love.<sup>22</sup>

### **Conclusion**

While the cultural understand preaches well, the context seems to favor doing what is right and allowing God to take care of the results—which could mean divine judgment.

This means that what Paul is teaching us is, that when we have done everything we can to avoid conflict, without success—this is how we should act:

We should not retaliate

We should leave the results in His hands and not try to create our own justice.

Practically speaking, this may even mean we cannot defend our reputation—but allow God to care for us.

Several facts support the first view that the "coals of fire" represent divine judgment and that Romans 12:20 is in large measure reinforcing the message of verse 19. These facts include the grammatical structure of the verses in their apparent parallelism, the context in which they are located, and the development of the imagery from the Old Testament. The imagery of "coals of fire" is invariably used in the Old Testament as a symbol of divine anger or judgment. For example mirroring the imagery of Proverbs 25:21–22, from which Paul quoted, Psalm 140:9–10 reads, "The heads of those who surround me may He cover them with the trouble of their lips. May (fiery) coals fall upon them; may He throw them into the fire, into watery pits—may they never rise!"<sup>14</sup> For the apostle Paul to utilize this potent image in a manner foreign to its common usage—and without any clear contextual indicators to that effect—seems unlikely.<sup>23</sup>

Romans 12:19–20 has a certain symmetry, which suggests that the message of verse 20 is to be construed as complementary and essentially identical to that of verse 19. The commands in verses 9–21 are characteristically participial in form—stationed under and serving to explicate the

<sup>21</sup> Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Romans 2004 Edition* (DTS Professor, © 2004 Published by Sonic Light, <http://www.soniclight.com/>)

<sup>22</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 413.

<sup>14</sup> 14. Cf. Psalm 18:9, 13 (2 Sam. 22:9, 13); 2 Esdras 16:53; and Psalm 11:6, emended to read מַחֲרִיטִים, "coals of" (cf. Symmachus' ἄνθρακας), in lieu of the Masoretic text's מַחֲרִיטִים "snares." As it stands, the Masoretic text of Psalm 11:6 contains an unparalleled metaphor for judgment, which evidently arose from an accidental transposition of the *yod* and *mem* in a consonantal text. Moreover, the adopted reading yields better line symmetry than that of the Masoretic text.

<sup>23</sup> John N. Day, "Coals of Fire" in *Romans 12:19-20, Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 160* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2003; 2004), 160:640 (Oct 03) p. 418.

summary heading of “genuine love” (ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος, v. 9). This prevailing structure<sup>15</sup> serves to bind verses 19–20 together under the primary participial command: “Do not avenge yourselves, beloved.” This primary command is counterweighted by the two parallel ἀλλά phrases of verses 19–20: “but give place to (God’s) wrath,”<sup>16</sup> and “but ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him [something] to drink.’ ” What the one expresses in a passive manner with regard to the renunciation of personal vengeance, the other expresses in an active manner with regard to the doing of good. In some measure these deeds of kindness are compared to making room for God’s wrath. Furthermore the primary command is substantiated by the two γάρ phrases:<sup>17</sup> “for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay,’ says the Lord,” and “for in doing this, you will heap coals of fire upon his head.’ ” This apparently intentional parallel structure suggests quite strongly that these “coals of fire” refer to the same divine and principally eschatological vengeance expressed in verse 19.<sup>18 24</sup>

Thus implicit in the affirmation that the Lord will repay (12:19), heaping coals of fire on the head of the enemy (v. 20), is the fact of continued enmity.<sup>21</sup> This view is not to be construed as presenting a fundamentally negative view toward the Christian’s enemies, as in the caricature, “do good to your enemy so that his punishment will be all the more severe.”<sup>22</sup> Rather, it is a positive word of comfort for Christians in the face of stubborn and unrepentant enmity. In the context of verses 9–21, verses 19–20 function not only to reemphasize what is to be the ethic and characteristic activity of the Christian, but also to provide a consolation to the believer in the face of stubborn enmity and provide support for the justice of God in the face of injustice.<sup>23</sup> Christians are called to seek the benefit of those who hate them (v. 14), but believers are also to remember that grace repeatedly spurned has the assurance of divine vengeance (v. 19).<sup>24 25</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This pattern is broken in only two places, if one excludes the summary heading (v. 9a) and the concluding call (v. 21). These are verse 14 (εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς δῆκοντας ὑμᾶς, εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε) in which the repeated imperative is used to highlight this verse for its characteristic importance and as the fulcrum of the passage, and verses 19–20, in which the single participial command μὴ ἐαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες, ἀγαπήτοι (v. 19a) is supported and expanded by what follows in verses 19b–20.

<sup>16</sup> “The reference to God’s wrath and leaving room for it is exceedingly important in interpreting this text. When we believers are mistreated, abused, and our rights are infringed upon, the desire for retaliation burns within us because we have been treated unjustly. We are not to give in, however, to the desire to get even. Rather, we are to place the fate of our enemies firmly in God’s hands, realizing that he will repay any injustice on the last day” (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentaries on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 673).

<sup>17</sup> Although the second γάρ is part of the quotation from Proverbs 25:21–22, it functions within that quotation as a word of comfort in support of the actions of kindness. And within the structure of Romans 12:19–20 and the development of its argument it functions in a similar way.

<sup>18</sup> Piper, “*Love Your Enemies*,” 115. Also Krister Stendahl believes that it is unlikely that “the passage as it stands could reasonably be understood by its first readers in any other sense than as a word related to the vengeance of God” (“Hate, Non-Retaliation, and Love: 1 QS x, 17–20 and Rom. 12:19–21,” *Harvard Theological Review* 55 [1962]: 352).

<sup>24</sup> John N. Day, “*Coals of Fire*” in *Romans 12:19-20*, *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 160* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2003; 2004), 160:640 (Oct 03) p. 419.

<sup>21</sup> Piper notes that “there is a very real sense in which the Christian’s love of his enemy is grounded in his certainty that God will take vengeance on those who *persist* in the state of enmity toward God’s people” (“*Love Your Enemies*,” 118 [italics his]). Cf. the example of Christ in 1 Peter 2:23, who suffered without retaliation, because He entrusted Himself to God the Father, who judges justly.

<sup>22</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1988), 750.

<sup>23</sup> As Schreiner summarizes, “The sure realization that God will vindicate us frees us to love others and to do good to them,” thus conquering evil with good (v. 21) (*Romans*, 675). Darrell L. Bock notes the following with regard to the love command in the Sermon on the Plain, from which much of the essence of Paul’s remarks was drawn: “The reason the disciple can love all humanity is that the disciple knows that God will deal justly with all one day. Even the woes of Luke 6:24–26 are grounded in God’s final act of justice. It is the sermon’s eschatology of hope and justice that lays the groundwork for the disciple’s love ethic” (*Luke 1:1–9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentaries on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994], 567).

<sup>24</sup> Also the state and the judicial system are to exercise divinely sanctioned vengeance, and Christians are to uphold that justice and to submit under God to those institutions that exact it (13:1–4).

<sup>25</sup> John N. Day, “*Coals of Fire*” in *Romans 12:19-20*, *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 160* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 2003; 2004), 160:640 (Oct 03) p. 420.

12:21

Do not be overcome by evil,  
but overcome evil with good. (ESV)

With this verse Paul brings the discussion back to where he started. The outflow of love is to abhor evil. Therefore we should not be overcome by evil ourselves.

The goal of love is to love what is good. Evil will be overcome by doing what is right and good, not what is evil. Two evils don't make a good.

<b>Interaction / Application</b>		Talk about it
One on a scale of 1-6, one being very limited, and six being almost saintly:		
Would people say you're a peacemaker? 1 2 3 4 5 6		
How likely are you to repay someone's "evil" toward you? 1 2 3 4 5 6		
How content are you to leave difficult situations in God's hands? 1 2 3 4 5 6		
<b>Action Plan:</b> What will it take for you to move one number in the positive direction? Write down at least one or two action steps.		

**Summary**

<b>Implications/Application</b>		Talk about it
How can this class help each of us develop more meaningful, healthy relationships that enable us to minister to and be ministered to by each other?		

**Key Point**

Pure active love is our priority

	What do we learn About God?
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He will deal justly

	Act on it
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Based on the interactive questions and your action plan items, find an individual whom you trust, ask them to check up on you once every week for the next month.

## ***Counter-Cultural Christians***

Christians need to be counter-cultural. Not *simply* by voting or participating in the political process, but even more significantly by living counter-culturally. What are the moral inclinations of our society? What philosophy is being propagated in our culture? How do the moral values of our society clash with the God-given values of the Bible?

### *A Counter-Cultural Christian's Relationship must reveal . . .*

Submission	not	selfishness
Service	not	demands
Sincerity	not	hypocrisy
Sacrifice	not	unyieldedness
Others	not	self
Compassion	not	hostility
Liberty	not	license
Obedience	not	self-will
Unity	not	division
Authenticity	not	deception
Availability	not	unreliability
Accountability	not	independence
Assurance	not	judgment

### *A Counter-Cultural Christian's Character must demonstrate. . .*

Love	not	hate
Joy	not	dismay
Peace	not	stress
Patience	not	anxiety
Kindness	not	rudeness
Goodness	not	corruption
Faithfulness	not	disloyalty
Gentleness	not	cruelty
Self-control	not	lack of discipline

### *A Counter-Cultural Christian's Thoughts must be . . .*

True	not	false
Noble	not	common
Right	not	improper
Pure	not	corrupt
Lovely	not	obnoxious
Admirable	not	contemptible
Excellent	not	mediocre
Praiseworthy	not	unsuitable

Philippians 2:1-4 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (ESV)

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (ESV)

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (ESV)

## **Romans 12:9-21**

- 9 Let love be genuine.  
Abhor what is evil;  
hold fast to what is good.
- 10 Love one another with brotherly affection.  
Outdo one another in showing honor.
- 11 Do not be slothful in zeal,  
be fervent in spirit,  
serve the Lord.
- 12 Rejoice in hope,  
be patient in tribulation,  
be constant in prayer.
- 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints  
and seek to show hospitality.
- 14 Bless those who persecute you;  
bless and do not curse them.
- 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice,  
weep with those who weep.
- 16 Live in harmony with one another.  
Do not be haughty,  
but associate with the lowly.  
Never be wise in your own sight.
- 17 Repay no one evil for evil,  
but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.
- 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you,  
live peaceably with all.
- 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves,  
but leave it to the wrath of God,  
for it is written,  
“Vengeance is mine,  
I will repay, says the Lord.”
- 20 To the contrary,  
“if your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink;  
for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”
- 21 Do not be overcome by evil,  
but overcome evil with good. (ESV)

# Action of the Justified: Toward the Assembly

## Romans 12:1-21

**Foundation of  
Conduct**

**Function of Conduct**

In Humility

3

8

In love

9

21