

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #47

Romans 13:8-10

The world needs to see true Biblical love being worked out and lived out in this world.

That is precisely what Paul wanted the Romans to understand in their church.

1. He wanted them to know about their responsibility to God. 12:1-2
2. He wanted them to know about their own spiritual gifts. 12:3-8
3. He wanted them to know about their responsibility to the church. 12:9-16
4. He wanted them to know about their responsibility to enemies. 12:17-21
5. He wanted them to know about their responsibility to government. 13:1-7
6. He wanted them to know about their responsibility to this world. **13:8-10**

THE BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST OWES THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD A DEMONSTRATION OF BIBLICAL LOVE.

You and I have a continual debt to pay to our society and it is not to hide from it, it is not to condemn it, it is to love it.

This theme comes from the first part of **verse 8**, which says, “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another.” The Greek text literally may be translated, “You owe no one nothing” (Μηδενι μηδεν οφειλετε).

This verse is not teaching that it is wrong for a Christian to borrow money. In fact, borrowing and paying back is absolutely Biblical.

What was not Biblical were interest payments. **Exodus 22:25** says, “If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, **you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.**”

According to **Psalm 37:21** it was not borrowing that was wrong, it was not paying back that was wicked. “**The wicked borrows and does not pay back**, but the righteous is gracious and gives.”

According to Scripture, lending is actually a mark of spirituality. **Matthew 5:42** says, “**Give to him who asks of you and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.**”

Even Jesus Christ borrowed a boy’s lunch and He also borrowed a man’s donkey. **The Bible is not some protest against capitalistic gain or against legitimate financing.**

Now the context of this statement is one of hoarding taxes which were owed to the Roman government. The Jewish leaders were teaching the people that they did not have to give the government one dime. The word was spreading that these Christians only should give their money to God, not to Rome, and some were not willing to pay money they owed the government or pay back the money they had actually borrowed.

So when Paul says, “Owe nothing to anyone,” what he means is, “Pay your debts. Pay your taxes and if you have borrowed money, pay it back in the manner in which you agreed.”

However, Paul says, **there is one debt you owe that I don’t want you ever to think you have paid off - it is the debt of love.**

In fact, five times in these three verses that word “love” shows up. It is the Greek word “agape” (*αγαπω*) which is God’s highly calculated love as opposed to an emotional and irrational love. **We owe the people of this world an unending demonstration of a very specific kind of Biblical love.**

When we love the people that God has allowed to be in this world with this specific kind of love, we fulfill our responsibility to the law of God!

Now when Paul says we fulfill the law, he does not mean that we fulfill the righteous requirements of the O.T. law. No human can ever fulfill all the righteous requirements of the O.T. law (Romans 3:19-20). What Paul means is that when we love people, we become a complete demonstration of God’s righteousness, a complete fulfillment of living out God’s law toward others. This is what God expects from us who have been touched by His grace.

Now, beginning with **verse 9** and that conjunction “for,” Paul explains how this works. As we examine what Grace Age believers are required to do, there are five O.T. law love demonstrations which we are to live out before this world.

Some of the older and better manuscripts list four of the Ten Commandments, but there are also some manuscripts that list five. Most textual critics believe that this was actually a “harmonistic corruption,” which simply means that some copyists wrote their lists based on the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20:13-17 and Deuteronomy 5:17-21, and simply unintentionally added the fifth missing commandment in the grouping (Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 197-198). All five commandments are drawn from the famous Ten Commandments and we certainly could include them in our love demonstration.

**LOVE DEMONSTRATION #1 – We owe this world love by not committing adultery.
13:9a**

The particular type of adultery Paul has in his mind is sexual unfaithfulness with another person’s mate. Paul is saying when we love properly we will not be involved in sexual immorality with someone else’s spouse.

Biblically speaking, there is no such thing as a “love affair” with someone else’s spouse. In fact, the proper Biblical term is “anti-love affair.” When one loves right, one will not be involved in any immoral relationship because one will care too much to do that.

LOVE DEMONSTRATION #2 – We owe this world love by not committing murder. **13:9b**

The idea here is if you truly love someone you will not murder them. Back in Paul's day, getting away with murder was much easier than today.

When you think about it, the most selfish, anti-God act of pride is to murder someone. A murderer exalts himself to a position of determining when someone's life should cease.

LOVE DEMONSTRATION #3 – We owe this world love by not stealing. **13:9c**

The idea here is that when we truly love others Biblically, one of the ways we will demonstrate the righteousness of God will be by not stealing. We will not commit a theft because we care about others and what is theirs.

If we truly love others, we will not steal what is theirs. We will not steal their time or materials. We will not steal someone else's answers or discoveries.

LOVE DEMONSTRATION #4 – We owe this world love by not lying. **13:9d**

Actually, the NASV does not have this phrase, "bearing false witness," in it. As we said, some of the earlier Greek manuscripts do not contain the phrase, but the principle is certainly true and, in my opinion, there are enough manuscripts that do include the participle, "not pseudo-testifying or false witnessing" which indicate we could leave it in and not be adding or subtracting from God's Word.

If we truly love a person, we will not make up lies against him.

LOVE DEMONSTRATION #5 – We owe this world love by not coveting. **13:9e**

That word "covet" means to have a passionate longing or desire for something we do not have.

We owe this society a demonstration of righteousness which says, "I am content with what I have, and I praise God for what He has given you."

If we say we love God, we must love people. That is a debt we owe to society.

There is no greater testimony of any of us than when we have a rigor for life, a love for people, and a devotion to God and His Word.

God loved this world enough to give up His only Son. We can certainly give up our selfish, self-centered thinking and love others too!