

Practical Christian Living

Text: Romans 12:9-21

Introduction:

1. Theme of chapter: Consecrated Christian living (Vs. 1-2).
2. This lesson: The Apostle Paul fires a volley of short, sharp, powerful commands concerning a range of areas in the Christian's life. These are the practical out workings of the consecrated life described in Vs. 1-2.
3. We will study these practical exhortations under 7 headings.

I. The Christian's Love (Vs. 9-10)

A. The Quality of our love (Vs. 9)

1. Genuine love (Vs. 9a)
 - a. 'dissimulation' = hypocrisy, play acting
 - b. Note: This is often illustrated in the unsaved world where people veil their malicious intentions or feelings towards others with a pretend love.
2. Pure love (Vs. 9b)
 - a. "abhor that which is evil" = true Christian love produces a hatred for evil, not an accommodation of it! 'abhor' means to hate bitterly or exceedingly
 - i. Psalm 97:10 *"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil..."*
 - ii. Psalm 119:128 *"Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."*
 - iii. 1 Cor. 13:6 *"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;"*
 - b. "cleave to that which is good" = 'cleave' means to glue to, cement, join or fasten firmly together (Wuest). Word used to describe the marriage union – "cleave to his wife." (Matt. 19:5) Translated 'join' in Acts 8:29

B. The Demonstration of our love (Vs. 10)

1. "kindly affectioned" = family affection (e.g. parents and children; brothers and sisters).
2. "brotherly love" = both these phrases come from the same root word. This phrase made up of 'phileo' (to have affection for) and 'adelphos' (a brother); hence, the affection for a brother. It is the "family" love. We are to have tender love and feeling towards one another.
3. The church is spoken of in family terms in Scripture. Paul referred to "the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). He instructed Timothy to tread the other members of the church like family members (1. Tim. 5:1-2)

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4. 1 John 5:1 *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”*
5. 1 Cor. 12:25-26 *“...the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”*

II. The Christian’s Service (Vs. 11)

A. Diligent Service (Vs. 11a)

1. “not slothful” = not lazy, sluggish
2. ‘business’ = lit. diligence. Our service to the Lord in its various forms.

B. Fervent Service (Vs. 11b)

1. ‘fervent’ = to boil with heat, seethe, be hot or on fire. Our service to the Lord is to be warm hearted and fiery.
2. Titus 2:14 *“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, **zealous of good works.**”* We were redeemed not just to be saved from hell but that we might also serve!
3. “serving the Lord” = the Lord is the focus of our service. When we take time to consider the One we are serving, it will keep our service hot. “Christians should consider themselves as wholly and at all times the servants of the Lord, and, remembering that His eye is ever upon them, do all things as in His presence.” (Haldane)
4. Challenge: Do we exhibit this diligent, fervent spirit in our ministries in the local church? Do we minister at all?! Or are we like the Dead Sea with much intake but no output? Are we spectators or participators; resigners or helpers?

III. The Christian’s Trials (Vs. 12)

A. Rejoicing in our Trials (Vs. 12a)

1. ‘hope’ = the basis of our joy. Christian hope is a confident expectation.
2. Examples: The hope of our future glorification (Rom. 8:18-25) or the hope of the rapture (Titus 2:13)

B. Enduring in our Trials (Vs. 12b)

1. ‘tribulations’ = a pressing together
2. ‘patient’ = lit. means “to remain under”. “To remain under the test in a God-honoring manner, not seeking to escape it but eager to learn the lessons it was sent to teach.” (Wuest)
3. Col. 1:11 *“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, **unto** all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;”*
4. Illustration: The ‘patience’ (same word) of Job (James 5:11)

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C. Praying in our Trials (Vs. 12c)

1. “continuing instant” = to persevere. Translated “continued steadfastly” in Acts 2:42. Means to adhere to; be devoted to; to occupy oneself diligently with something.
2. Prayer in times of trial and test of great importance. Nehemiah a good example of a man who was consistent and faithful in prayer.

IV. The Christian’s Giving (Vs. 13)

A. Material needs (Vs. 13a)

1. ‘distributing’ = root word ‘fellowship’ (1 John 1:7); to enter into fellowship with; to be a sharer or partner.
2. ‘necessities’ = needs (e.g. food and clothing), not wants
3. ‘saints’ = our giving is to be prioritized. We are to exercise benevolence to all men but especially the household of faith. Gal 6:10 *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, **especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**”*
4. Example of Jerusalem church
 - a. Acts 2:44-45 *“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”*
 - b. Acts 4:32 *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”*

B. Hospitality needs (Vs. 13b)

1. ‘given’ = to hunt or pursue. Word most commonly translated ‘persecute’ in the N.T.
2. This is more than a willingness to extend hospitality but an active pursuit of opportunities to have this ministry to the saints.

V. The Christian’s Sympathy (Vs. 15)

A. The Triumphs of others (Vs. 15a)

1. The ability to rejoice in the triumphs and successes of others. No spirit of envy.
2. ‘sympathy’ = made up of ‘sym’ (together) & ‘pathos’ (feeling). So, it means to feel together with someone.

B. The Trials of others (Vs. 15b)

1. Entering in to the grief and burdens of others.
2. Gal. 6:2 *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*
3. 1 Cor. 12:25-26 *“...the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”* Note: Body principle. If you experience pain in one of your

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members (e.g. hand or foot), that pain is felt by the whole body.

VI. The Christian's Mindset (Vs. 16)

A. Unity of Mind (Vs. 16a)

1. Speaks of our attitude towards each other. We are impartial towards our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord.
2. Phil. 2:2 *"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."*

B. Humility of Mind (Vs. 16b)

Note: This is the key to unity. It is unity achieved through humility.

1. Submission to the lowly
 - a. "mind not high things" = thinking exalted things (e.g. of ourselves or setting our focus on self-promotion). Speaks of a spirit of self-importance and self-promotion. Vs. 3 – We are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.
 - b. 'condescend' = means to submit or yield to one of lower rank or status to ourselves. Wisdom resides in humble hearts!
 - c. "low estate" = word translated twice as 'humble' (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5) Word used to describe our Lord as *"meek and lowly in heart."* (Matt. 11:29)
 - d. 1 Cor. 6:4 *"If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are **least esteemed** in the church."*
 - e. Eph. 5:21 *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."*
2. Surrender of our own opinions
 - a. 'conceits' = conception; that which is imagined or formed in the mind; idea; thought; opinion. (Webster) Literally means to be wise according to yourself, in your own eyes.
 - b. To make our own thought patterns the basis for what we consider wisdom is to indulge in foolishness. Prov. 26:12 *"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."* Obadiah 1:3 *"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee..."*

VII. The Christian's Witness (Vs. 14; 17-21)

Note: Vs. 9-16 primarily have to do with those within the church. Vs. 17-21 shifts the focus to those without.

A. Our Testimony before men (Vs. 17-18)

1. 'recompense' = to pay, give, render. If we are treated wrongfully, we do not respond in kind.
2. "provide things honest" = 'honest' comes from the Greek word 'good' and refers to the outward expression of inner goodness. "The Christian is to take careful forethought that his manner of life, outward expression, is honestly representative of what he is as a

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child of God.” Illustration: Mrs. McGrath’s impression of her employer that contributed to her coming to salvation

3. “live peaceably” = we are to strive for peace with our fellow man.

B. Our Response to our enemies (Vs. 14, 19-21)

1. We are to bless them and not curse (Vs. 14) We return kindness and love to those who mistreat us. Matt. 5:44 *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”* Christ the perfect example – “Father, forgive them”
2. We are to leave justice in God’s hands (Vs. 19)
 - a. ‘avenge’ = to vindicate one’s right; taking the law into your own hands
 - b. “give place” = to give the place occupied to another, to make room for. We are to step aside in the situation and leave matters in the hands of the Judge of the universe who will always do right.
 - c. ‘wrath’ = preceded by definite article so literally “the wrath”. Reference to the Divine wrath.
 - d. “it is written” = Quotation from Deut. 32:35
3. We are to repay ill treatment with kindness (Vs. 20-21)
 - a. “coals of fire” = quotation from Prov. 25:21-22. Vs. 22 adds “and the LORD shall reward thee.”
 - b. ‘overcome’ = to conquer

Conclusion: Are we surrendered to living a consecrated Christian life in all of these areas? Where are we at in relation to our love one for another in the local church? What sort of thought patterns do we entertain about ourselves? Are we responding to provocations with Christ-likeness?