

Loving One Another

Epistle to the Romans

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Let's take our Bibles and look together again in Romans 13. Our last time in this study we considered verses 1 down to verse 7, how all the powers that be are subject to God and therefore we're not to resist any power, and that raised some questions that some of your acquaintances hearing that wrote back some responses and asked what about, what about if it's a government that is clearly requiring you to go against your conscience, are we not to resist? Clearly in Scripture where any government or power that would require us to act against the clear revelation of God in the Word, we are to resist but not with violence. We are to resist according to the Truth. Just like the apostles, they were arrested for having preached in the name of the LORD Jesus Christ and they were told and even beaten and put in jail and told not to preach again in His name. Well, what they did was go right back out and continue preaching. So that doesn't mean that we're not to resist to the point of compromise wherein man's rules and laws contradict the rule and Word of God, that we clearly like Peter said, judge you whether it's better to obey God or better to obey man than God, we obey God. We submit to Him but at the same time, it may be that the LORD so purposes that the church face persecution as a result, as it was in the early century and many times down through the centuries. We find that the church has been persecuted but even in that, we bow and acknowledge that whatever power the LORD has raised up, He's the One that has put it there.

So we looked at that last time. God is sovereign. He rules over all things in the world but in our lives individually as well, and even there He shows His sovereignty because here we are sitting and rejoicing in hearing this message of Christ in some relative freedom, at least that's my case. No matter how contrary this message is to man's belief in his unbelief, yet the LORD continues to open many doors to have the Gospel of the LORD Jesus Christ proclaimed and declared, whereas in other countries of the world, were you to preach this message on the radio or in any place of worship, you would probably be arrested in that particular country, but even there the LORD is sovereign and directing in all things.

So today we pick up with verse 8 down to verse 14 and it has to do with "Loving One Another"; how it is that as members of the body of Christ, we are to love one another for Christ's sake. Here in Romans 13 and it says in verse 8, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." We know that the law

was given in the Old Testament for two reasons: to love the LORD our God with all our heart, soul and strength; and to love one's neighbor as ourselves. We would have to be the first to confess that none of us has ever measured up, none of us has ever been able to fulfill that law, but it is fulfilled in Christ. When the LORD Jesus Christ came into the world, He didn't just set aside the law of God but He came to fulfill it, and we can see in Him how He fulfilled this law on our behalf, and now by His Spirit within us, certainly our desire is to please God, not that it requires that for our salvation or sanctification or any aspect of our eternal glory, but the Spirit of Christ being in us, knowing and seeing how He loved God on our behalf, and He loved His neighbor as Himself, that we, then, fulfill that law by looking to Him as our Mediator and thereby love one another.

So it goes on in verse 9, "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet," but here Paul is citing the 10 Commandments, "and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." What he's addressing here is those that would say, "Well, it's all under the blood so it doesn't matter how we treat one another," and some even take this to the point of licentiousness. The Nicolaitans of whom John was directed to write in the book of Revelation, were that sort of people. They believed that it's all under the blood and so we can go out and commit adultery all we want to, we can go out and kill, we can steal, we can bear false witness, and it's not going to matter. Once saved, always saved. Well, that's contrary to the law of love that Christ has fulfilled; that, yes, He has fulfilled all righteousness on behalf of sinners such as we are, but His Spirit, that same Spirit of Christ that dwells in us, causes us not to want to commit adultery, not to want to kill, not to want to steal. Someone said at one point that it doesn't change who we are but it changes our want-to. I know for myself, I can testify that I sin more than I want to. I'm not going out and looking for occasion to sin even though I'm the worst of sinners in myself. That's why Paul cried out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our LORD."

So what characterizes those that are objects of the love of God in Christ Jesus is that they love. Christ said of His disciples, "By this, the world shall know that you're my disciples in that you love one another," and that truly takes the Grace of God because even as we fellowship together as saved sinners by the blood of the LORD Jesus Christ, we're still sinners, and so we're gonna say and do things that are going to offend one another and we are just as capable of falling into the most grievous sin as anybody out there, and yet we don't hold this against another but rather we lift one another up knowing ourselves to be who we are as sinners, and therefore when we see another fall, we're not pointing the finger at them but we're commending one another to Christ.

That's why verse 10 says, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour," we're not looking for occasion to cause a neighbor to stumble, "therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep," verse 11 of Romans 13, "for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." He's talking there about our final redemption. Every day that goes by, we are one day closer to being delivered from the body of the sin, the body of flesh, and so we don't become lethargic in

how we live knowing it is high time to wake out of sleep. We can never fall away. It's the Grace of God that keeps us, but we sure do get sleepy and lethargic. We can become even presumptuous in thinking, "Well, it's LORD that's keeping me and so it doesn't matter how I live."

And I believe the Spirit of God gives us an urgency, knowing ourselves to be nothing in the flesh, and that Christ has paid the entire debt and yet the Spirit of God puts within us the desire, the urgency to ever be looking to Christ alone, knowing that the salvation that He has wrought is nearer than when we believed. In other words, the time is ticking and winding down to when we will be taken out of this world and, therefore, we shouldn't live in this world as if this is the end, and certainly not live holding onto this life because many times, if not most times, when there's differences between brethren, it's selfishness and we're holding on to something that we desire for ourselves without considering the other. Whenever you point the finger at another sinner who is a brother in Christ as best as we can tell, just imagine that we will be spending eternity with that one for whom Christ paid the debt. So we're not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think but to think soberly and to think righteously, not to be high-minded but to reason or see ourselves as we are in Christ according as God has dealt with every man the measure of Faith. So all of these are evidences that we're the LORD's whereby before we wouldn't have cared and committing adultery, stealing, killing, bearing false witness, that's all part of who we are in Adam yet in Christ now the LORD gives us an affection one for another.

It says there in verse 12, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the LORD Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

So beginning back at the top at verse 8, "Owe no man anything." This verse has been used to discourage buying on credit or borrowing money but that's not why it was written here. Most people today could never own a car or a home or continue in business if borrowing money was forbidden in Scripture. As long as you are paying back what you owe, you don't owe anything. You're paying back according to the terms for which you borrowed the money. But the verse in this context gives us instruction to make good on all obligations whether it's a civil or a natural duty. Obedience, respect, honor and service are debts which are to be paid. Parents, for example, are due respect and obedience from their children. Husbands and fathers are due submission. Leaders are due honor and support. And this is just part of living in this life in the hierarchy with which God has placed us there. We can't walk in and tell our employer, for example, that, "I'm a Christian. I belong to Christ. I only have one Head and He's the LORD Jesus Christ and therefore I don't have to follow your instructions." How long do you think you'd stay on the job and what kind of testimony would that be or that our attitude even toward earthly employers.

No, it says here, "love one another." This is particularly in the context of the body of Christ obviously. It's true of the world that we're to exercise love toward those of the world, knowing how God has loved us, but this is the full answer of everything that's stated above. One who truly loves God and others will fulfill what God demands. There are plenty of Scriptures that we could look at but Galatians 5 perhaps is a good Scripture that sums it all up. I've been accused by many of preaching works whenever you come to these particular portions of Scripture and yet when I ask people, "Well, how would you preach this?" They don't have an answer. They act as if there's no requirement of us as God's children anyway that manifest or evidence God's work of Grace in us when that's exactly how this is being described. It's not in order to gain or maintain salvation but it is the Fruit of the work of the Spirit of God in the heart of those that Christ has redeemed and the Spirit of God has drawn to Him.

For example, in Galatians 5 all the way down through here, we could read the entire portion, but it says in verse 13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty." So, in other words, we are free men. We are no longer bound to the law in any way to observe it or keep it as a cause or a reason for salvation or even for maintaining it, but it says "only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh," in other words, to say, "Well, I'm a free man so I'm gonna go out there and I'm gonna take my neighbor's wife." That's not a loving act. Or, "I'm gonna go ahead and if I need to, I'm gonna kill this person because I'm in disagreement with them, and it won't matter because it's under the blood." Or, "I'm gonna take what belongs to another." You can see how that really is contrary to love, taking, stealing what is of another. That's not how love is manifest or bearing false witness or coveting. You see, those are all sins of the flesh as described here, "an occasion to the flesh," but it says, "by love serve one another." In other words, we're constantly subjecting ourselves or submitting ourselves to one another out of love for that other individual. Again, it's stated here in verse 14, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

So, it's like in the game of soccer, these are the rules by which you play the game. Any sporting event where you've got teams together, you might be on the same team and you might have opponents, but you can't use your liberty in any way to violate a rule that has been established, otherwise you get called out. So the rule of the life of a child of God is this: love, love even as we have been loved by the LORD Jesus Christ.

Now stop and think about how He has loved me unconditionally and has not put my sin to my account. So serving one another would mean, then, when I'm wronged by another, I don't hold that against them and, therefore, grudges are not to have any place in our hearts. They can only cause a root of bitterness to spring up within you and by that many be defiled.

So these are values by which those that are the LORD's live because of the Grace of God, not in order to earn God's favor but because of His favor toward us. It seems pretty clear to me, even though I'm the worst of sinners, yet I'm totally cast upon the LORD Jesus Christ and weigh every situation with everybody that I encounter, with whom I work, my

desire that the Spirit has given me is that the LORD Jesus Christ be glorified and not to answer according to the flesh but according to this rule to love one another.

Now in verse 9 here when he's going down through these particular commandments, if you go back to the Old Testament and read about the 10 Commandments, you'll see that it is describing the second table of the law but the law was written on a stone and one side had commandments with respect to God. It begins with, "Thou shalt have no other graven images before me," the first five commandments deal with love for God, but then the second table, the other side that we see listed here, has to do with our neighbor. Now if we've been loved of God, we know that the LORD Jesus Christ has fulfilled every one of these commandments, but by the Spirit of God, because He has fulfilled those commandments on our behalf, then that love of God on our behalf will certainly affect how we walk and talk with others in this world. In fact, if you consider it, because of God and Who He is as revealed in the first five commandments, it does affect how it is we worship God. When He says to have no idols before Him or take His name in vain, it's describing the respect and the awe, the reverence that God gives any one of His own toward God. That's the Spirit of God that so works to that end, and that's why we worship the way we do. We don't give any credence to another.

But at the same time, if we love our neighbor as we love ourselves, then we're going to deal with that neighbor as we would want to be treated. I know the world calls this the Golden Rule, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and they cite it always pointing the finger at another, "You shouldn't be acting that way because you shouldn't do to me what you don't want done to you." It's a way of throwing it back in a neighbor's face which is not love at all anyway.

But having that love and respect for a neighbor, and here you have to consider being a child of God and having the Spirit of God, we live with eyes of discernment. Have you ever run into somebody that is so dull that they can't even read body language? You know, their way of acting, their manner of acting is causing some others to really get upset at them but they don't when to quit. We've all worked around people like that. I truly believe the Spirit of God gives us discernment in how we deal with others in the world because the Spirit of God has so dealt in our own heart to see that we're no better than any others. So why would I exalt myself above another? I know we do and that's the sin nature that is within us, but thank God He doesn't leave us there.

There's been many a time perhaps that we've been directed by the Spirit to go back and ask forgiveness in how we responded and acted toward another, and that in and of itself is a Spirit that the world does not know. People aren't asking forgiveness today, they're seeking to justify themselves. But as the LORD in His Grace has dealt with us, we're going to deal with others just as we know He has dealt with us. In other words, as we see in verse 10, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." The one who truly loves his neighbor will not willingly harm him. Now we offend. It takes a perfect man not to offend in word or deed and Christ alone is that Perfect Man but being His disciples, being those that are members of His body, the LORD by His Grace gives us the Grace not to respond in kind or wish ill toward anybody that has offended us. When I see others acting as they do, I

think often, "But for the Grace of God there go I." So my mouth is stopped rather than to jump on when others are critical and criticizing other individuals to think, "But for the Grace of God there go I." I believe the Spirit of Grace gives us the desire, like it says in Scripture, "as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men." Well, what lies in us is nothing but sin but I believe it's talking about the Grace of God that He gives to endure, to support, to not react or want to hurt another and to do everything for that other's happiness and contentment.

But it's really showing us that the whole law is comprehended or fulfilled in this one word, love. There are many today that are preaching the laws just like this here as a duty. No, what Paul is writing here is an example of love. I remember years ago hearing an illustration of a man who was a widower and had three children and so he hired a housekeeper and a nanny, someone to come take care of his children for him while he was away at work, and every morning when she would show up, he'd have a list of things that he wanted her to do and she would always check the list on the refrigerator and by the end of the day he wanted every item to be checked off on that list. So that was her duty, but then as time went by, he fell in love with her and over time married her. Well, guess what? The list went away because now it was a different relationship. Now it was a relationship of love and his children were her children. It wasn't a relationship anymore of an employee with an employer but one of a wife to a husband. And so love was what drew them together and in love now she didn't need that list. In fact, she would probably be offended if he kept putting the list up with the check boxes. Now he loved her, she loved him, and they loved their children.

So in love, she served him and served those children. That's an example, I believe, of what it is for us to be in Christ. We've been married to Him and, therefore, our desire is to please Him in how we deal with one another. That whole law now is summed up in one word, love, and I love to preach the love of God. I love to preach the love of Christ for wretches such as we are because when the Spirit of God brings that home to our hearts, we bow in humble adoration and wonder how it is that He could have saved such a wretch as me.

So Paul in verse 11 there is reminding them that time is of the essence. I was thinking that this morning, that of everything else that I have to do in this life, I can't think of anything better than coming down here to my office and sitting down and over the internet through this technology, meeting together with others that the LORD has been pleased to save by His Grace and for whom Christ paid the debt. Everything else goes aside. Nothing else really matters. All of these things that we fret and worry about in life, they will soon be gone. In the view of eternity, it's really not going to matter and I think of that often when a situation arises that just irritates me and gets me upset, and I do so because there again is that pride of the flesh thinking I deserve better, when in reality none of us deserves anything. It's only by the Grace of God we live and who are we to demand anything other than what God has purposed and ordained, and even these situations that we find irritating, we have to pull back and think, "You know, God ordained that." And what's really more important than anything is that I'm a blood-bought child of God and therein I rejoice and all the rest fades away.

It says, "knowing the time," in verse 11. How many times do you look up there at the clock and think, "Oh, I've gotta get going." Knowing the time. Well, this time here of which he speaks has to do with where we are right now in the grand scheme of things in respect to eternity. This is the day of salvation. This is the day of Grace and Mercy in Christ and we live and move and have our being in Him. While the Gospel is preached, while we have our faculties, it is time to rejoice and to rest in all that the LORD Jesus Christ has accomplished on behalf of sinners such as we are. This is written to those whom the LORD has already taught by His Spirit and yet may have grown careless or indifferent as to our relationship to Christ and the church, and so it's time to awake out of indifference, it says there awake out of sleep, awake out of carelessness or divided attention when it comes to Whose we are and why we're here and how the LORD is directing our lives. That final deliverance and our eternal rest are much nearer today than when we first believed, when the Spirit of God first did His work in our hearts.

So it's a reality that some of us will be called away from this earth in a very short while. We don't know, we just presume we're gonna live to the age of retirement and beyond, but today may be that day and I stop and think about that, how my day is driven as if all of this matters. In the Light of eternity, none of it matters. The only thing that matters is that I am Christ's and He is mine, and that I will, by His Grace and Mercy, spend eternity with Him. But we tend to live like the most important thing is living when in reality we should be mindful that the most important thing is that we're all dying and this may be the day that the LORD takes us from this world.

I've often said that we should plan as if we are going to live forever but we ought to live as if today is our final day. We can make our plans and so we should, and yet let's not forget the most important thing is who we are in Christ and who are those that He has given us for fellowship with one another, and how that we're not to be so busy about doing the things of this world that we forget, we become careless with regard to our relationship even to our LORD Jesus and to those that He has purchased by His blood. Our relationship with Christ is our most important position, and I pray in all things as the LORD unfolds this day for us, that we keep our mind and hearts set upon Him, "the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and has now sat down at the right hand of the Father."

That's what Paul writing to the Colossians says, "Set your affection on things above," and I believe that as the Spirit of God enables us to do that, then out of that comes a right-mindedness with regard to others of the LORD's that are members of His body, caring for one another and not being so consumed with our ailments and our troubles that we are of no worth or encouragement to others who may be going through far worse. I believe all of this is how, in Love and the Grace of God is manifest in, by and through His children.

It says there in verse 12, "The night is far spent." I remember when 70 years old seemed to be really old. I remember when 30 seemed old and 40, then 50, and yet the closer we get to those stages, we realize that indeed the present time of life is far spent for most of us. We don't know how long the LORD has ordained that we should live on this earth and

here it's called the night in verse 12, "The night is far spent." When you consider that, then really what is vital? What is important? How many times have I said to myself in 100 years will any of this really matter? No, it won't. We're to occupy until He comes, whether He comes at the end of the world as we understand He will and we are at the end of the world now we just don't know, and at what point that clock is ticking, but either way He's coming for us in death to take us out of here.

So how much of this in Light of that? You've heard people ask the question, "If you knew you were going to die today, how would it change the way you live?" That's an important question that really shouldn't change in any way the way we live if we understand that everything in this life is temporary. It's better to have that mindset, it's called the night, because this life on earth at best is filled with nothing but works of darkness. We live in a world of sin and hatred, disease, death, war and poverty. We've all had that conversation, "How much worse can it get?" Well, if you think it's worse now, there's nothing new under the sun, go back and read back in the days of Noah, of Sodom and Gomorrah. There's nothing new under the sun. This world continues to spin on the same axis as it has and yet for those that are the LORD's, it's as described in Psalm 23, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." What is it that keeps us but our LORD Jesus Christ Who's the Shepherd? And a shadow can't hurt you. Christ said not to fear those that can destroy the body but Him that can destroy body and soul in hell.

So we live each day, this is just here to make us mindful that nothing in this life is an end in and of itself. We live each day as ones delivered out of darkness, and it says, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The dawning of the day. How many of us have spent a night where we can't sleep and you just lie there waiting for the sun to rise so you can get up and get to work. It's a deliverance in and of itself. Well, the day is at hand. Christ is at hand. He is the Day Star.

So our focus isn't on the hatred or sin or disease and death of the world, we have enough in ourselves to cast the entire world into hell, but where is our hope? Well, our Hope is in the Day Dawning and Christ is that Day, and so to give diligence to Him and to thank Him for Who He is and how He has saved such wretches as we are. Let's spend less time on the things of the flesh and spend more by God's Grace in considering Christ and, as it says, seeking the Kingdom of Heaven, here it says to "cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." I liken it to somebody that has an evening out that they're going to dress up for and they come in with their work clothes on. Well, you cast off those old, dirty, sweaty clothes and you put on the Armor of Light. We do that every time the LORD enables us to turn our thoughts away from the things of this life and this flesh, and to reflect on Him, the Armor of Light.

In Ephesians, Paul wrote about the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, those are all types and pictures of the LORD Jesus Christ Who is the Helmet of our Salvation and Who is the Breastplate of Righteousness, it's by His righteousness that we're declared righteous, that righteousness imputed, shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Every part of who we are, our dress, is what He's been pleased to give

us by His Grace and so think of somebody all dressed up, people look at him and say, "Where are you going?" It might be a prom. It might be an official event somewhere, but people say, "You look good dressed up," and you think, "Well, you should have seen me two hours ago. I was a mess." It's just a manner of living in this world whereby nothing should rob us of the joy of who we are in Christ and His dress and what we have in Him.

So verse 13 instructs us to live and to walk and to talk and conduct ourselves in an honorable manner to the honor and glory of the LORD Jesus Christ. Why would you not want to? Know again we are weak in the flesh and left to ourselves we would certainly follow the course of this world, but we don't live as the world lives because of the difference that Christ has made by His Grace. In carousing, in drunkenness, immorality or quarreling and jealousy, these are things that are descriptive of those left to themselves. I'll tell you, it's not that I think myself any better than anybody else but it's what affects who I'm with and I don't need to go out at night and drink it up and party up like the world does. The world thinks you're strange for not doing it, but none of those things move me and nor should they. They are unbecoming, really, to any believer, that to live as the world lives.

They live that way because that's all they know but with Christ, He directs our hearts toward Christ and toward that fellowship of believers. I'd much rather be in worship with other believers and even now spending this time with you. I know that because of my business contacts, there are a lot of events that take place on Saturday and Sunday, a lot of people want you to come over or they want you to attend this event or that, and if it's a Saturday night or even a Saturday morning, I just tell them, "I'm not free," because I would rather fellowship with the LORD's people and enjoy what we enjoy in Christ even as we're doing right now, than to spend that time with the world. And I'm thankful, it's not a duty, it's not because, "Well, I'd better do this to be a good test." No, it's because of the joy that the LORD gives me to rather spend this time with the LORD's people than with the world, and that's where our pleasure and delight is, it's in the fellowship of the Gospel and our companions in this life are those that Christ has redeemed and taught by His Spirit. We can speak of friends, but they're not really friends because there's no friendship between Light and dark. We can call them perhaps acquaintances. We have a lot of acquaintances, but when it comes to whose we are and those we associate with, we walk with those that are the LORD's.

So Paul sums it up here in verse 14 by saying, "put ye on the LORD Jesus Christ." We've already been put on by Christ if we're His. In other words, simultaneously on His death, He took the sin of His people and He imputed, God imputed that righteousness immediately to their account, so we've already been put on by Christ. We live in that righteousness that He earned and established and God imputed, but when it says here, "put ye on the LORD Jesus Christ," it's in a manner of identifying with Him Who paid our debt and we do so in public confession of Him. If anybody were to ask us, "Well, what makes the difference between you and the world?" The only thing we can say is the Grace of God manifest through the work of the LORD Jesus Christ whereby He has taken my sin and in place has put His righteousness. These are opportunities to testify of the Grace of God as to the difference when men ask.

I've had people tell me that, not that I'm glorying in this but they say, "There's just something different about you." I've had a lot of business relationships and even outside of the church, people that respect me even in the business world, but that's not me, that's according to how the LORD has been pleased to bless me and that's true of any one of us regardless of where He's put us in this life. There's gonna be a difference and in that sense, truly to walk as Christ walked, to love as He loved, to forgive as He has forgiven, to be submitted to the Father's will in all things, the world has trivialized this by saying WWJD, what would Jesus do? That's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about here is having put on the LORD Jesus Christ, we don't make provision for the flesh. Nothing in this flesh is to eclipse the glory that belongs unto Christ alone, so to put on Christ is in every conversation give Him the glory. Even when people commend us for something they consider to be good that we have done, all we can say is, "All glory and honor belong to the LORD Jesus Christ alone." And so it should be.

We give less thought and attention to this body of flesh, this flesh isn't going to improve. I'm not saying that somehow we get better and better, but it's in every occasion the LORD causes us to reflect and thank Him that He has not left us or given us over to the lusts of this flesh or the passions of this body, but in all things those are submitted unto the LORD Jesus Christ alone.

There is that one Scripture in Philippians 4:8 which is greatly misunderstood but I believe in the Light of Who Christ is and what we've heard, we can understand this even better. Philippians 4. In verse 4 Paul said, "Rejoice in the LORD always: and again I say, Rejoice." So there again we're not tied to happiness, our happiness is not in everything going the way we think it ought to go. No, but in all things to rejoice in the LORD knowing that His hand brings about all things.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The LORD is at hand." Moderation is used in the sense of humbleness, humility, never taking credit ourselves for anything.

But, "Be careful for nothing," don't be caught up in fear and worry where your mind and thoughts are on things in this world, "but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Every situation is an opportunity, an occasion for us to cry unto the LORD with thanksgiving and make those requests known unto Him.

It says, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." That peace that the LORD Jesus Christ procured there on the cross on behalf of sinners such as we are, it's that very peace that now works through us, knowing we've been reconciled to God, and it keeps our hearts and minds, notice, through Christ Jesus, having eyes for Him.

And here's the greatly misunderstood verse, it's not given us something to do when it says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest." I remember back when I was in religion, I made a list, okay, well, what are things true that

I need to work on, what are things honest I need to work on. That's not what it's talking about. It's talking here in context of verse 7, that He keeps your minds through Christ Jesus. Well, He's the one True One. He is the one Honest One, "whatsoever things are just," He's the one Just One, "whatsoever things are pure," He's the only Pure One, "whatsoever things are lovely," He's altogether lovely, "whatsoever things are of good report," He's the only one with that good report, "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." In other words, think on them as reflected in the LORD Jesus Christ. Let the mind of Christ dwell in you and verse 9 says, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." So this very Grace of God manifest in us is always an occasion to manifest it toward others with whom the LORD, that the LORD has put in our path.

I hope that's helpful. I know I need to hear it and yet let's not forget that we love, it's because He first loved us.