

## Romans

Romans Chapter Thirteen    Romans 13:8-14

July 3, 2011

This is lesson number 95 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

**The Theme of the Letter**

**Romans 1:16-17**

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

**Title: The Will of God for Believers as Neighbors.**

***Beginning with Chapter 12 the Apostle Paul is instructing Christians how they must respond to the mercies of God, having been justified freely by His grace, by presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable worship.***

Our Lord Jesus asked this question: Luke 6:46-49

**"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"**

We believe in plenary inspiration, which means that every part of Scripture is as much the words of Christ as anything in “red letters” in your Bible.

We live in an age where many people accept anything that is called Christianity to be genuine. The only way that kind of looseness can be acceptable is to disregard the Bible.

Anyone who is enabled to read the Scriptures with Holy Spirit illumination knows that certain kinds of behavior are condemned.

The most egregious example of having no regard for the Scriptures in today’s news is a main-line protestant church having a debate over the correctness of ordaining to the ministry of an admitted practicing homosexual. How is it possible for that to even be a matter of discussion?

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Such a person needs the restorative discipline of the church with the goal of recovery and repentance or expulsion from the body; not placed in a position of leadership.

This is not new; read Jude where the same kind of sexual perversion was accepted in the local church and the church was chastened for it by Jude.

How is it possible that in nearly all Baptist churches this morning that only about one third of those who are members attend worship on a regular basis?

Sisters and brothers you are exceptional. You desire to meet with the church and you know that hearing the word of God preached is the way to be encouraged and to be built up in the faith.

I know that is why you are here this morning and I ask you to silently pray for this lesson and for this preacher.

Worship of God involves the commitment to be obedient to God's word and that is what we have been studying. Romans 12:1-2 sets the background for the rest of the book of Romans.

### **Romans 12:1-2**

**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

So far we have studied the **perfect will of God** for believers when they meet with the **church** and exercise their various spiritual gifts. Humility and mutual respect are the two principles of conduct [12:3-8].

We then saw that we must continue our love without hypocrisy as we go out into the **world**. We are not to act like the world acts by repaying evil with evil but rather to reward evil with good. [12:9-21]

Then Christians must also live peaceably under various kinds of governments. We are told that God appoints all authority. Because God gives authority to those in authority they do not have the authority to command you to violate God's word. So unless the authority orders you to violate God's word you are obligated to obey the authority or suffer the consequences. [13:1-7]

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**The Christian's behavior is to be guided by the Scripture in the church assembly, in the world, and under government authority.**

**The next area of Christian living is with our neighbors.**

Let's first look at verses 8-10 and then we will examine verses 11-14.

### **Romans 13:8-10**

**Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

A Christian is an honorable person in all things.

Let your yes be yes and your no be no. When a Christian says something it is not necessary to wonder, "What did he mean by that?"

**This is called integrity.**

Your **reputation** is what others believe to be true about you but your **integrity** is what you are. A person with integrity does not behave in a certain manner because someone else is watching. Integrity is what you are when you are all by yourself.

How does this apply to living with our neighbors?

Do not be careless in anything.

**"Owe no one anything except to love one another..."**

Do not be careless with items loaned to you. E.g., you have a book that someone loaned to you. Don't lose it. Don't forget to give it back. Don't put it on a shelf with your own books. Leave it out in plain sight so you will remember to return it.

If that sounds trivial and unimportant to you it only proves that you don't take your reasonable worship of God seriously. You see we are now into every day kind of things that we are confronted with.

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**“Owe no one anything except to love one another...”**

A sure sign of the moral decline in America is the lack of shame and stigma regarding bankruptcy. What used to be shameful is now part of some peoples' financial planning. Buy up stuff, hide assets, and then default on credit debt.

A Christian simply must not be careless about what he or she owes.

This does not mean you cannot use credit. The Bible tells us very clearly when to charge interest and to not charge excessive interest on loans.

A Christian's love for his neighbor is a reflection of his love for God. The entire law is summed up in two statements.

### **Mark 12:28-31**

**Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"**

**29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."**

The law is summed up in love: Love God and love your neighbor.

**Very simply, love God more than you love yourself and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.**

At this point Paul mentions four commandments from the second table of the law and tells us that to love our neighbor is to follow these commandments and thus fulfill the law.

**We must be very clear about this.** Love is not the law nor is the law to be equated to love. Law prescribes the action and love constrains us and compels us to follow the law.

What exactly does that mean?

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It is popular in our day to say that doctrine is not important as long as you love everyone. But you cannot love correctly without the knowledge of the law of God.

Let me remind you that there are three Greek words that are translated as “love” in English.

The word *agape*, which is the word in our text, is a totally unselfish love.

“For God so loved the world...”

God does not love because of any reciprocation on our part.

I recently read that in the entire classic Greek writings that *agape* is never used. The reason Paul wrote the chapter on love in First Corinthians 13 is because the Greek culture did not understand *agape* love, the kind of love that Christians must demonstrate.

Then there is *phileo*, which is brotherly love, or familial love.

*Eros* is erotic lust and is well known in our society.

*Eros* is what Hollywood and TV says is love.

*Agape* love is not an emotion it is an action.

That is why I can love my enemy who is trying to destroy me.

Paul ties together the law and love for neighbor.

If there is any doubt in your mind about the validity of God’s commandments in the NT and the response that love demands I urge you to read First John. The apostle John clearly gives us the relationship between love and obedience.

If you ever entertained the idea the Ten Commandments have been set aside by the NT then you will have to deal with what Paul says here in verse 9.

The purpose of the so-called moral law as it is embodied in the Ten Commandments has never changed.

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When the Holy Spirit applies the law to a man's heart [Cf. 7:7], the Holy Spirit convinces that man of sin and judgment. In sovereign mercy the Holy Spirit uses the law to lead a man to see his need for the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. By an act of sovereign grace in pure mercy that man is given the gift of faith and he is enabled to believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood to cover his sin. That man will see the beauty and perfection of Jesus Christ as the righteousness of God.

That is all the law was ever meant to do.

The law gives the knowledge of sin and that's all it can do.

When a man tries to use the law to be **justified** or to be **sanctified** he is only demonstrating his **total ignorance** of the purpose of the law.

**“Love does no harm to a neighbor...”**

If I love my neighbor I would not dream of stealing his wife or daughter. If I love my wife, I would not betray her, or give her unnecessary heartache.

**“Love does no harm to a neighbor...”**

Go back to Chapter 12:9-21 and see how that passage tells us the way to react to evil in the world in general and how much more it is applicable to a neighbor. Nothing less than positive love for others can urge us to avoid evil.

**“Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”**

John Murray explained this phrase with the following metaphor.

“Love fills to the brim the cup which the law puts into our hands. Love is the first drop; it is the last drop; and it is all the drops in between. From start to finish it is love that fulfills the law. When love is all-pervasive and inclusive, then the fulfillment of the law is completed.” *Principles of Conduct*.

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Stuart Olyott sums up verses 8-10 this way:

“Once more we see something of the wholesomeness of Christian character. Personal holiness is not a thrill, a beat of the heart, a tremble, or the exuding of some indescribable influence. It is the preserving of the dignity of women, all round courtesy, the protection of the marriage bond, control of temper, opposition to personal violence and revenge, respect for other people’s property, the prompt payment of debts, refraining from lies, gossip, and the spreading of rumor, thankfulness of one’s own circumstances, and the refusal to envy another’s – and all the other virtues which can be summarized by the particular laws quoted, and the Law of God in general.

“Personal holiness is measured in terms of being clean-minded, wholesome, truthful, and a person of integrity. It means being free from conceit and self-interest, with a heart anxious to please God, and therefore keen to act aright to all who are in His image. There is nothing sensational or mystic about a holy person; nor is he weak or spineless. He is wholesome, strong, and pure. It is not a sign of godliness to be avoided by your neighbors, who consider you to be ‘weird’ or ‘odd’. It is more a sign of godliness to be the most trusted neighbor of all.” [*The Gospel as it Really Is*, p 129]

### **That is the teaching of Romans 13:8-10**

Now let’s consider verses 11-14.

#### **Romans 13:11-14**

**11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

The reason Paul gives for Christian conduct is because the end of time is coming. It has been over 2000 years since the Apostle wrote this word of encouragement to the church in Rome and by extension to all Christians.

We are to live our lives in the expectation of the end. We may not be alive when the Lord Jesus returns in glory at the end of the present age but then we might be.

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There is nothing yet to be done by God before the Lord Jesus returns. It may be another 2000 years or we may not finish this study. We are to live expectantly. In another place Paul uses a word that pictures a man standing on his tiptoes with his hand over his eyes looking intently to get a better view.

Our Lord Jesus warned, “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him.” [Matthew 24:44]

We are not to be, as it were, asleep morally or slack in our worship of God.

**“... for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed...”**

About twenty-five years ago a false prophet troubled the Christian community with a prediction of the exact date of the return of Christ. A lady in my Sunday School class asked me what I thought about that. I responded by saying that suppose you did know the exact time of the return of Christ. What difference would it make in your life? Do you need to quit a bosom sin; do you need to repent?

That same false prophet stirred up some more ignorant people just this year and he was wrong again. Want to bet that he won't be back again and some more ignorant people will listen to him?

John Bunyan wrote, “A man is ready to die when that is all he has left to do.”

**You all know the three aspects of being saved.**

**Justification** - you have been saved.

This is a one-time event by grace through faith alone.

**Sanctification** – you are being saved.

If you are justified, you are becoming personally holy.

**Glorification** – you will be completely saved.

That is what Paul has in mind here. Every day our final salvation is closer.

One old preacher said, “One day I will be plumb saved.”

**12 Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.**



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Therefore cast off the 'works of darkness' and live in the light of God's word and personal holiness. Live decently. Avoid all kinds of impurity.

All Christian duty is included in putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; in being like Him, having that similarity of temper and conduct, which results from being intimately united to Him by the Holy Spirit.

**14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

Do not make plans to sin. Do not think of ways to indulge the sinful nature.

Sin will always be trying to get an advantage and cause us to dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ so do not give sin any help by planning to sin.

We have before us yet another lesson in the true worship of God which is to present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

**Being a Christian is being saved from sin and unto holiness.**

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**You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sin.”**

**By God's mercy the next lesson from Chapter 14 in the Book of Romans will be on the will of God for Christian in matters of conscience.**