

Lesson 26 – Romans 12:9-21 – Pt. I

The Lord has laid on the heart of Paul to call on His people to do several things: 1) present your bodies to God as living sacrifices, 2) do not be conformed to this world, 3) be transformed in your maturation process, and 4) do not evaluate yourself in arrogance, but in sobriety. These set him up to remind the readers that we function together in the work of the Lord as many members functioning in one body. Now then he moves onto a section of blunt imperatives for Christians to follow.

___ direct instructions for followers of Christ:

1. Love genuinely. There should be no fakery, nor insincerity in Christian love. When we move for another's benefit, it should never have any traces of self.
2. Abhor evil. When we encounter evil, we withdraw, escape, or reject it outright. As a running back stiff arms a tackler, so we block the onslaught of evil.
3. Hang on to good. Christians attach themselves to good. God's people are "welded" to good. We must be permanently attached.
4. Love each other as brothers. Our affection for each other is that of close family. Brothers often fight, but that never shakes the reality of their relationship. They must always remember their blood binds them together, as Christ's blood does for us.
5. Work to show more honor than your brothers. It is very nice to know people value you highly, but we want to recognize others value far beyond our own. The principle may be expressed: accept praise with grace and give praise generously.
6. When it comes to your zeal, do not be sluggish. Our charisma is vital and real. If you are going to live for the Lord, then live. Don't be lazy about it.
7. Be spiritually enthusiastic. Believers should be excited about their faith. Our spirituality should be ever recognizable because of our excitement.
8. Serve the Lord. Serve the Lord as His slave, servant, or dedicated worker. A slave of Christ does not belong to himself, but to God. Live as that slave.
9. Having hope, rejoice. Joy is a hallmark of the believer because we have hope. I don't see how anyone with daily hope cannot be anything but joyful. You have the keys to the kingdom.
10. Be patient though suffering. Life isn't always easy, and can sometimes be very difficult. Go through that difficulty with patient endurance.
11. Commit to prayer. Like everything in a believer's life, prayer is a discipline. Prayer should be a well established part of any believer's lifestyle.
12. Contribute to the needs of the saints. If a bro./sis. has a need you can meet, do so. We have great opportunity to bless those in need. Let us do so. However, be mindful of Bible teaching that you don't give to make yourself feel better, but that your giving is out of love for them.

Lesson 27 – Romans 12:9-21 – Pt. II

13. Look for every opportunity to be hospitable. Be eager to share your stuff.
Hospitality extends beyond your home. Hospitality is the near kin to generosity. Hospitality retains ownership, whereas generosity changes ownership.
14. Bless your persecutors. Praise, encourage, or uplift those who come after you to cause trouble in your life. Make sure you don't wish evil upon them.
15. Rejoice with the rejoicing, weep with the weeping. No matter the situation, empathize with each other. "Empathy- the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position." - Wikipedia
16. Live in harmony with one another. Our lives together should model coherence, understanding, and beauty. How? All eyes on the Savior.
17. Do not demonstrate any arrogance but befriend those of lower class. Make the house calls, the Bible studies, or lunch invitations in the trailer park or low-income apartments.
18. Never highly estimate your own wisdom. Believers should exercise wisdom by recognizing they lack it. Remember, wisdom is sourced outside of yourself, Prov. 2:6.
19. When evil is done to you, don't do it back. The reality of vengeful harm should be absent from our lives as Christians. (Later verses explore this sentiment further.)
20. Consider your behavior so that you may do what all deem to be honorable. Even a sin saturated culture understands honor, live so they may see integrity in you.
21. Be at peace with everyone, at least on your side. Christians should make every effort to enjoy a peaceful relationship with everyone. This may not be possible with some, but we make sure we do everything we can to make it so.
22. Never avenge yourself, instead, let God, in His wrath, take care of it. Who's wrath would you prefer your enemy sees?

On the flip side...

23. Feed your enemy if he hungers, and give him drink if he thirsts. In essence, we meet their needs however we can. By repaying evil with kindness, we find blessing, and they receive more discipline.
24. Do not be conquered by evil, but subdue it by doing good. A great weapon in our arsenal against the sin of this world is to live what we know to be good. As we pursue righteousness, wickedness is overtaken.