



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

Romans 12:9 - ⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

This morning we're beginning a 4-part series from Romans 12:9-21 where Paul gives 25 distinct but closely related exhortations.

In verse 9 and following, the apostle Paul, for the first time in the book of Romans, becomes very specific in what is required of us as believers in our daily walk.

In Romans 12, the apostle begins to deal with the practical application and outworking of the great doctrine that he's been laying down in the first 11 chapters.

Everything to this point in chapters 1-11 has been laying a doctrinal foundation, and by the way, this underscores the importance of theology and doctrine.

Paul doesn't begin the book of Romans in Romans 12:9, he emphasizes this foundation of truth, doctrinal truth, theological truth upon which he will now build.

That's his method. Doctrine first, then application.

So, everything to this point has been intensely doctrinal and then even in Romans 12:1-8 he discusses general requirements of us as believers to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice and exercise our spiritual gifts.

And so, the chapter can be divided up as follows. The first two verses lay down the great overriding principles that govern the Christian's conduct. They're a general introduction to the remainder of the letter.

Then the subsection that runs from verse 3 to verse 8 deals with Christians in the church exercising the various gifts that the Spirit of God gives for the edification and the proper functioning of the church, which is the body of Christ.

But from verse 9 and following, Paul is concerned to deal more with the general conduct and behavior of Christians as individuals and in their relationship to their fellow Christians, and beyond that in their relationship to people in general in the world.

Now a question that we might ask is this - Has the apostle just laid down a number of proverbs for guidance, without being concerned to have any arrangement?

Did he just put down a number of things as they occurred to him or is there some order and arrangement here?



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

Of all the apostles, Paul had a very orderly mind. He was a logical man. He thought clearly and systematically.

We know that there have been many times when he breaks into his theme, and forgets it and is carried away, but that doesn't matter, he always comes back to it. He has a fundamental order and system in his mind.

In verse 9, the apostle lays down 3 great principles which must govern the whole of the life and behavior of the Christian.

And in verses 10-11 he's concerned with our general spirit, our general attitude as Christians, towards what we are, towards one another, and our work.

In verses 12-13 he moves on to show us how we should react to varying circumstances, both our own and other peoples.

So, what we have in verses 9-13 are 13 virtues of love, 13 distinguishing marks of love.

And having dealt with our action and activity, he's now turning to our reaction. First, what you do, secondly, what you do when things happen to you. Action! Reaction!

Then in verses 14-16 Paul deals with our reaction to other people. In verses 12-13, it was reaction to circumstances, but now he deals with our reaction to people, their behavior, their conduct and their circumstances.

From verse 17 to the end of the chapter, there is clearly one special theme, and that is our reaction to wrong and evil.

For example, maybe somebody has been dealing with you in a wrong way, in an evil manner. How do you react to that? How do you treat them?

The apostle takes that up and expands it more than any other single theme.

Then he ends the passage with, again, a general principal or Maxim, "don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

And really the apostle here, is putting, in his own way, our Lord's own summary of the commandments.

Mark 12:28-31 - ²⁸ And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

most important of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The most important 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 and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

That is what we have here from verse 9 to the end of chapter. Love of God, love of neighbor, even if your neighbor happens to be your enemy.

It's a statement of the leading principles of the sermon on the mount.

We can't possibly understand the teaching of this section and profit by it, unless we constantly bear in mind the teaching of the first two verses of the chapter.

Romans 12:1-2 - I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Point 1 – Sincerity – Love without hypocrisy.

Romans 12:9 - ⁹ Let love be genuine.

So, in our verse this morning, Paul begins by talking about sincerity.

What a wonderful, perfect summary of the whole life of the Christian! There's no basis to Christian living apart from this verse, and the Christian life must always be thought of in these terms.

Beginning in verse 9 Paul suddenly becomes painfully specific, and this is where Christianity gets real.

This is where the rubber meets the road. This is getting down in the weeds. This is where you and I are to live every moment of every day, this is personal holiness spelled out.

So, the way we're to understand this is at the very beginning of verse 9 where it says let love be genuine, all of these really are defining marks of love.

This is like first Corinthians 13, the 13 virtues of love. This is the apostle's hymn of love.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

You remember it says love is patient, love is kind, love does not take into account a wrong suffered, love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things, love never fails.

This is the Romans version of 1 Corinthians 13. So that's why this is very challenging. It's in one sense easy to know sound doctrine. The challenge is to LIVE OUT sound doctrine.

So, Paul says that love must be genuine. Other translations say let love be without hypocrisy. Paul goes on repeating this. You'll find it again in chapter 13:10.

Romans 13:10 - Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

That's just another way of saying let love be genuine.

And as he begins here, we see that love never fakes it. Love must always be genuine, from the heart, in action.

There are many words which are used in the New Testament to deal with love and the apostle here uses the strongest, the deepest, and the greatest word that was available - Agape.

Agape is a word most of you are familiar with, even if you don't know Greek, but it was rarely used in the Greek culture.

It was a very foreign concept in Roman society. It wasn't something that was desired.

However, it became the leading distinguishing mark of the church and of true believers.

Agape is the word that Paul uses to express God's love to us.

The Greek language didn't have a word which conveyed the Christian concept of love.

So, he had to say a number of things about love to safeguard it from debased or inadequate ideas.

I want to talk a little more about this word Agape.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

First, it's unconditional love, it's love without reservation. It's therefore a call to us to give to God our allegiance, in all ways, and with the whole of our being.

Secondly, the apostle is quick to say let love be genuine. This means that we must not be playing a part, we must not be pretending.

It means that we must not be hypocrites. We must be honest. It must be true love, not something artificial which simulates love. Not only must we not deceive others, but we shouldn't even deceive ourselves.

We're living in an age which abuses the word love more than any other word. That's the influence of movies and television and the way in which people talk about falling in love. They call it love, but they mean lust.

Thirdly, most of all, love must never be contrasted with law. The apostle says in verse 8 of the next chapter that love fulfills the law.

Now in this context we're dealing with love for other Christians.

At the end of verse 10 he says give preference to one another and then in verse 13 he says contributing to the needs of the saints and practicing hospitality.

So, the whole context here is loving the believers, loving other saints. And this is reinforced throughout the entire Bible.

And I want to give you a couple of cross references to underscore the importance and the priority of loving one another in the body of Christ.

In John 13 verse 35 Jesus said by this all men shall know that you're my disciples that you have love one for another.

It's really the badge of discipleship, that we have love one for another.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 - If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

And then at the end of this chapter in verse 13, he says now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

This should scream volumes to you and me of the priority and the imperative that I love you, that you love me, that we love one another.

In the next chapter here in Romans 13 and in verse eight he says owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

1 Peter 1:22 – Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

1 Peter 4:8 - Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

So, we see how important love is. Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the spirit. What's number one on the list? – Love.

You would think this would get through to us. So first and foremost is love. One more cross reference.

1 John 3:14. This is so critically important.

How would you know if you're a believer, how would you know if you are born again?

It's a pretty good question. How would you know that you have eternal life? Well, this verse will tell us.

1 John 3:14 – We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

Meaning you're still lost, you're still unconverted, you don't have one drop of spiritual life in you, if your life is characterized by self-focus.

The mark of a true believer is that you have passed out of death into life, that you have love for the brothers.

Someone who shows no evidence of agape love has no claim on Christ or eternal life.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love

By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24

So, what is love from the biblical perspective? Love is sacrificially giving of yourself to seek the highest good in another.

Love is always giving, not taking. Lust takes, love gives, and you give in a costly manner.

It's sacrificial giving.

Love is selfless, love is self-giving, love is self-denying, love is sacrificial.

And I think it's really because love is so important in the Christian life, there's a sense in which it's at the very epicenter of the Christian life.

It's really worth our taking these few moments to drill down and underscore what love is and why it's so important.

If I genuinely love you from the heart, I will promote your best interest. I will do what will build you up and affirm you and help you in the Christian life. Love is others oriented.

And what Paul is saying, is that if you present your body as a living and holy sacrifice to God, that leads to something, it leads to others, it leads to serving others, that's what verses 3-8 are all about, about spiritual gifts and serving others.

But now beginning in verse 9 Paul really begins to peel the onion back and Paul now really begins to talk in the specific ways that we are to love one another.

And I think we can even put it this way - if we're not loving others like this it's because we haven't presented ourselves to God as a living and holy sacrifice.

Because he says when we present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God, he says in verse 2 that you will prove what the will of God is.

That means that you will come to know by experience what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

And now he's giving us the first steps in the will of God, that will of God which is good and acceptable and perfect. Here are the real steps that you will take in the will of God.

So, in verse 9 here's the first step - let love be genuine. Real love is genuine, it's without hypocrisy.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love

By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24

Now let me give you the historical background on the word hypocrisy in the first century.

One of the leading forms of entertainment was to go to what we would call a play or theater, there would be a stage and there would be like a Greek play.

And the actors would go on the stage for a Greek play and they would put on a mask.

And they would in essence hide behind this mask and pretend to be someone other than what they really were.

And they had already memorized their lines and they knew the vocabulary and they would emote and they would know how to control their voice and their body language.

And they would carry out a role and they would be this kind of person or they would be that kind of person.

And then when the play was over, they would come off the stage, take the mask off and they would go back to being who they really are in real life.

And Paul draws on this and he says, love cannot be like that, you cannot put on a mask when you come to church or when you're around other believers and pretend to be someone that you're not.

You can't be one person on Sunday morning and then you're someone else in the office on Monday afternoon.

You can't just put on a show when you're around other believers and just pretend to be spiritual and know the vocabulary and know how to give appearances.

Real love it is not just with mere words and playing out a part.

Real love is without hypocrisy, real love is authentic, real love is genuine. In other words, Paul is saying let love be honest.

You should be real with other believers and real in your expressions of concern, real in your expressions of encouragement, real when you say hey, I'll be praying for you, real in how are you doing?



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

So, this is where Paul begins and it's very challenging and it's very convicting for me and for all of us and the only way we can love genuinely and without hypocrisy is as we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we walk not according to the flesh, because our flesh always comes out with hypocrisy and pretense.

It's when we are filled with the Spirit, walking in the power of the Spirit, yielded to the Holy Spirit, that the fruit of the Spirit is love, real genuine Christian love.

So, I think each one of us needs to look inward at our own life and ask God to remove any sense of hypocrisy.

And remember the Pharisees had mastered the art of religiosity and with that hypocrisy.

Remember in Matthew chapter 6 Jesus addresses this, and Jesus says -

Matthew 6:1-7- "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, (like you're on stage), for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (which was just to be seen by men. But God's turned his eyes the other way.) ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵ "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷ "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

They just go on and on and it's all just a show.

So, this is saying, we can't be like the Pharisees and be hypocritical in the show of our love.

The consummate hypocrite in Scripture was Judas. He feigned devotion to Jesus to achieve his own selfish purposes.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

His hypocrisy was unmasked and his self-centeredness was made evident when he betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Letting love be genuine also means that we must keep God's commandments. You remember how Jesus himself defined this in John 14:15.

John 14:15 – If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

He says it again in John chapter 14 verse 21.

John 14:21 - Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

Or the 23rd verse of the same chapter.

John 14:23 - Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Love is something that always shows itself in conduct and in action. It's not a mere sentiment.

1 John 2:4-6 - ⁴Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

We're not only to keep God's law, we're called upon, as we are reminded here, to love it.

Psalms 119:97 - Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

It's the keeping of the commandments of God, and not only keeping them, but loving the law and loving to keep the law.

If you merely keep the letter or just keep within the law and are not true to the spirit, your love is not genuine.

That means that you really hate it, you wish it wasn't there, but because you don't want to suffer punishment, you just keep on the right side of it.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

So, when the apostle says let love be genuine, he's saying let your life of obedience to the commandments of God be wholehearted, entire, and with no reservations.

So often we live the life we do in order to please ourselves, to pander to pride and to feed it, or because we want the praise of others.

If our motive for living the Christian life is either to please ourselves or to please others, our love isn't genuine.

In other words, we're being called here to please God above all else and live to his glory and to his praise.

This is a command and that reminds us that love is not just a sentiment or a feeling.

So how do you do that? How do you make sure that your love is genuine?

Well, the apostle Paul has already answered the question in Romans 6.

Romans 6:17 – But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

If you really understand the doctrine that's been delivered to you, and if you believe it, then it will move your heart and you'll practice it with the whole of your life.

The Holy Spirit in us creates this love within us.

Romans 5:5 - And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

So, we make sure that our love is genuine by making sure that we're not just governed by our whims and feelings, our likes and dislikes - when I'm in a good mood, I'll be nice; if I'm in a bad mood, I'll be difficult.

No, love is always thinking it out, always realizing, always coming back to the therefore of Romans 12:1.

Point 2 – Purity – Hate Evil

Romans 12:9 - Abhor what is evil.

The second principle follows of necessity, of course, from the first. The opposite of love is to hate, and that's the very term that the apostle uses.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

And by this we learn that true love despises the evil that hurts others.

Again, all of this is in the context of love, loving others in the body of Christ.

And when he says abhor what is evil, the focus is in the immediate context here of genuine concern for other Christians.

So, when he says abhor what is evil, he's saying the evil that hurts loved ones, that hurts others in the body of Christ.

The word abhor is a very strong word. Again, it's the opposite of love, so this is a sharp contrast.

Abhor means to despise and there's an evil we are to hate.

Abhor means to have a horror of, to dislike utterly. The Greek word the apostle uses has a prefix which means a separation from, away from.

The word means shrink from evil with abhorrence.

Evil is not something abstract. It's opposition to good. Unfortunately, the world in which we are living is giving us a very clear demonstration, day by day, of the meaning of evil.

The constant bombardment of our senses through TV, movies, and books with the immoralities, violence, and perversions of modern society makes it difficult to be shocked by anything.

Genuine hatred of evil causes avoidance of evil.

Psalm 1:1 - Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

Evil not just the absence of good. It hates the good and is militant against it.

Again, just look at the evil in the world, in pleasure and all the entertainments it offers.

Don't we see this force that's ruling and guiding the world, the organization that's behind it, and the delight people have and making money out of it all? That is evil.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

You have to have a horror of that says Paul. This very strong word means shying away from evil, as a horse shies away from something that scares him.

Have a hatred, an utter dislike of evil. We must not merely not do things that are wrong and evil, we have to hate them.

It's possible for someone to avoid doing evil things while having pleasure in them in his mind and in his imagination.

If that's your position, you're not abhorring evil. It's not merely that we keep on the right side of the law by not doing the wrong thing, but we find evil revolting.

That's Paul's exhortation. Evil is unthinkable, in mind, in imagination, in thought, and in action.

How does someone become capable of reacting like this to all evil? You'll never abhor evil unless you have an understanding of the doctrine. Go back to verse one.

Romans 12:1 - I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

If you are only a moralist and not a Christian, you won't be abhorring evil. There is only one thing that can ever make you abhor that which is evil and that is a love for God.

You'll never understand the nature of evil, until you understand something of the doctrine of the holiness of God, because evil is the opposite of that.

When you think of our holy God who made a perfect universe, and saw that it was good, and when you think of this other thing that came in, then that makes you abhor it. Read Psalm 104.

The psalmist gives a great account of God's universe, of nature and creation, and of how God controls everything.

And then at the end, he suddenly brings in the wicked. Why does he do that?

It's because he's looked out at the glory and the perfection and the marvel of it all, and then he sees this miserable sin marring the glory in the perfection, and he says get rid of it.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

The only way to react like that is to have a knowledge of God and his glory and his holiness, and in his majesty.

Palm 97:10 - O you who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

You hate evil because you see it in the light of God and his purpose.

Amos 5:15 – Hate evil, and love good.

1 Peter 3:10-12 - ¹⁰ For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

The more we know God and love him, the greater will be our hatred of evil. We won't just refrain from doing things, we won't just be nice little moral people who don't do certain wrong things, we'll have a positive hatred of evil.

The command is that we are to be like God.

1 Peter 1:15-16 - ¹⁵ But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Don't merely look at these things. Look at them always in light of God, and the light of his holy nature, and the light of his love to you and what he's done for you by his grace and mercy.

Your love for him should lift you up to that realm so that you look down upon evil and hate and abhor it.

Let me just go a little further here. To abhor evil means to hate it exceedingly. And again it's more than just dislike for evil, but to utterly reject it, to refuse it, and the evil here is also what injures others.

It's wicked and sinful that will bring harm to others.

And this evil could be in my life and could be a call for repentance because sin in my life does hurt others.

Sin is never self-contained. Sin is never just kept to myself. Whenever I sin it has an effect on those who are around me.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love

By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24

And so, I need to abhor evil in my own life, sin in my own life and I need to abhor evil as I would see it in other believers.

And that is what Matthew 18 talks about - if your brother is caught in a trespass go to him and show him the fault of his ways and if he hears you, you've won your brother.

You've done the most loving thing you could possibly do to him, to help remove this this spec out of his eye.

And it amazes me that so few churches practice church discipline. To allow your brother or sister in Christ to continue in serious, harmful sin is not loving at all.

Now I'm sure there are some churches out there that do practice church discipline and handle it very poorly. They pour shame on the one in sin and have nothing more to do with them.

But that's not the way true biblical discipline is handled. The right way always has the goal of restoration in view, and we speak the truth in love and exhort them to repent and prayer for them.

We're to remove the log out of our eye first before we go to remove the spec from our brother or sister.

And if they won't hear us, then we bring two or three brothers or sisters with us all in the intention of love.

But we abhor the evil that we see, that's festering inside.

So, we're not to be neutral towards evil, we're not to be passive, we're not to just look the other way.

Jesus abhors evil as Hebrews 1:9 tells us – he loves righteousness and hates wickedness. And so does God the Father – Read Psalm 5,7,9 and 11.

The child of God abhors evil because God abhors evil.

Evil grieves the Holy Spirit. Evil is the enemy of God and the enemy of love and it's to be as fervently abhorred as love is to be fervently coveted.

How can we be indifferent towards that which grieves the Holy Spirit? - Ephesians 4:29



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

So, this calls upon us to abhor what is evil in true genuine love.

Evil destroys true love. Love is not genuine when it allows evil to fester in yourself or others, so abhor what is evil.

POINT 3 – Positivity – Hold On To The Good

Romans 12:9 - Hold fast to that which is good.

The opposite of the command to abhor evil is to hold fast to that which is good.

And true love holds tightly to what is good for others.

Hold fast, or cling, or cleve, is a most interesting word. The Greek word conveys the idea of sticking 2 pieces of wood together with glue.

So, it means stick yourself to the good with glue. Cement yourself to it!

Join or fasten yourself so firmly to the good that you can't be separated from it.

And so, we are to be glued to what is good and what is good here refers to what is good for others.

In Philippians, chapter 4, Paul further helps us understand what is good.

Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

And good means that which is good in the sight of God.

The word good here means that which is inherently right or upright, that which is morally excellent, that which is honorable.

And so, what's good for others is holiness and godliness and righteousness.

We're to cling to what is good in our own lives. We are to affirm the good that we see in the lives of those that we love.

And we're to always be promoting that which is good, to place a very high value on what is good.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

And we're to influence others for good, by the example of our lives, or by our words or by our sacrifice that we make for them, we're to always be promoting the good in others.

This good is that which is holy and righteous. So let us think about how we can truly love one another, by doing everything we can to remove what is evil and to promote that which is good.

What you need is not to be reminded of the commandments but to be reminded of Him and His holy nature and His love for you, His grace to you, who deserved nothing but punishment in hell.

You love and hate.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 - Hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

You're consumed by a passion to serve the God who has done so much for you through His dear Son, who did not even spare His Son, but delivered Him up for you.

If you want to know how to live, don't start with the practicalities, start with the truth, with doctrine.

Understand it, grasp, see what it means in terms of God's love to you, and then you'll find a great love welling up in your own heart, and the Spirit will come and will shed the love of God abroad in your heart as Romans 5:5 tells us.

Now, if we're honest with ourselves, we know that we all fall short of this high calling. And that might be discouraging to you.

We certainly should be striving to obey these commands by God's grace, but instead of looking at how we aren't doing these things as well as we should we need to look to Christ, who perfectly obeyed.

His love was genuine and without hypocrisy. Listen to what the Scriptures say about the love Jesus had for the apostles.

John 13:1 - Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

End means perfection or completeness. So, Jesus loves His own with the fullest measure of love.



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love **By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24**

John 15:13 - Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

The Lord's death was the supreme evidence of His love.

Not only was his love genuine but He abhorred evil.

And I believe the evil that Jesus most abhorred was false teaching, because it damns people to hell.

Matthew 23:13-15 - ¹³ "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

Mark 3:1-5 - Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. ² And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." ⁴ And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵ And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Not only did Jesus abhor the evil of false teaching but he abhorred the temple being desecrated.

Mark 11:15-17 - ¹⁵ And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶ And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷ And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."

And finally, Jesus held fast to that which was good. He always did good. He healed people, prayed for them, cast demons out of people, wept for people, and the greatest good of all is that he died for sinners!

So beloved look to Christ!

Now if you're here today or maybe watching online and if you've never repented of your sins and placed your faith in Christ, I plead with you to do so today because



Romans 12:9 - Genuine Love
By Pastor Mike Clark 07/21/24

today is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time. If you put it off, you may never have another opportunity because none of us is promised tomorrow. So put your trust in Jesus alone.

Amen.