



**Brick-By-Brick, Week 3**  
**“Faith Made Visible: Generosity & Hospitality”**  
**By Pastor Bill Alderson - 8/4/2024**

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**Series Verses: Romans 12:9-21**

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” <sup>20</sup> To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Pastor: “People of God, this is the Word of God!”**

**Congregation: “Thanks be to God!”**

**This Week’s Verse: Roman 12:13**

**<sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.**

**Intro:**

Welcome to the third week in our series “Brick By Brick,” based on Romans 12:9-21. First, a quick recap of where we are so far:

- **In week 1**, Pastor Mike looked at verse 9, where we learned that our love must be genuine, free from hypocrisy, truly from the heart, reflecting God's love for us. We are called to hate evil, rejecting and avoiding anything that harms others or goes against God's holiness. Instead, we must cling tightly to what is good, promoting what is morally right and beneficial for those around us. These principles – sincere love, abhorrence of evil, and commitment to good – form the foundation of how we should live as followers of Christ. And so we build up our faith, *Brick by Brick*. 😊



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- **In week 2**, I had the privilege of continuing our journey by exploring Romans 12:10-12. Last week we looked at Paul's call for us to love one another with brotherly affection, to outdo one another in showing honor, and to be fervent in spirit as we serve the Lord. We learned that our love must be active, intentional, and transformative. We are to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and be constant in prayer. These instructions help us to conduct ourselves as a community of believers, reflecting Christ's love in all we do.

Today, we continue our bricklaying journey by looking at **verse 13**, which calls us to **“contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”**

At a high-level, this verse reminds us that true Christian love goes beyond words – the Grace we’ve been given in Christ should result in living out our faith through acts of generosity and hospitality.

I want to kick off today by sharing with you a story about **Charles Spurgeon**, a name many of you are likely familiar with. Known as the "Prince of Preachers," Spurgeon was a renowned Baptist preacher in 19th century London<sup>1</sup>. His sermons drew thousands, and his written works continue to inspire Christians today. But Spurgeon’s legacy isn’t just about his preaching; it’s also about his life-long commitment to living out the principles of Christian generosity and hospitality.



In 1867, Spurgeon founded the **Stockwell Orphanage** for Boys, later known as Spurgeon's Orphanage<sup>2</sup>. London, during Spurgeon's time, was a city with stark contrasts. While it was a hub of wealth and commerce, it also had areas of extreme poverty and hardship. Many children were orphaned, living on the streets without food, shelter, or care. Spurgeon saw this dire need and felt compelled to act.



The Stockwell Orphanage was not just a place where children could find a roof over their heads. Spurgeon ensured it was a nurturing environment where children received food, clothing, education, and spiritual guidance. He believed that meeting the physical needs of these children was just as important as tending to their spiritual well-being. According to the Spurgeon Library, throughout Spurgeon’s ministry hundreds of children were rescued through the orphanage, many of them joined the church and some even went

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/blog-entries/who-is-charles-haddon-spurgeon/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://spurgeons.org/about-us/our-heritage/>



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on to study at the Pastors’ College and became pastors and missionaries.<sup>3</sup> Spurgeon’s work with the orphanage exemplifies the kind of active, practical love that Paul speaks of in Romans 12.

Spurgeon’s life and work serve as a powerful example of how we can live out this principle in our own lives. In addition to Stockwell Orphanage, according to the Spurgeon Library: “over 60 charitable and evangelistic ministries were launched out of Spurgeon’s church, including a pastoral training college, two orphanages, night schools, Sunday schools for children, evangelistic missions, Bible studies, prison ministries, deaf ministries, blind ministries, ministries to refugees, and much more. All these ministries were committed to caring for the practical needs of the poor around them so that they might be able to share the gospel with them. These dozens of ministries were largely founded by members of the church. But in doing so, they were only following the example of their pastor.”<sup>4</sup> And their pastor was simply following the example set forth in the life and teachings of his Savior, Jesus.

This brings us to our main point today:

#### **Main Point:**

True Christian love is expressed through generosity and hospitality.

- Spurgeon didn’t simply talk about Christian love; he demonstrated it through his actions. He invested his time, resources, and energy into caring for the most vulnerable members of society. His commitment to the body was a living testimony of what it means to contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. In doing these things he was simply modeling the example set by our Savior.
- As we dig into Romans 12:13 this morning, we’ll explore how meeting the needs of our fellow believers and actively seeking opportunities to show hospitality are vital expressions of our faith. Through these acts, we can reflect the love of Christ and build a stronger, more supportive community. Our journey today will focus on three key aspects of living out this principle, showing us how to embody the love and hospitality that Paul describes.
- By understanding and applying these teachings, we can encourage one-another to move from simply believing in Christian love

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/tour/lesson-of-the-orphanage/>

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to actively living it out in our everyday lives. Let's now turn our attention to the first key point, examining how we can meet the needs of fellow believers as an essential expression of our faith.

**Key Points:**

**1. Meeting the needs of fellow believers is an essential expression of our faith.**

- **"Contribute to the needs of the saints." (Romans 12:13a)**
- Meeting the needs of fellow believers is a crucial way we express our faith in action. Paul tells us to "contribute to the needs of the saints," highlighting the importance of generosity within our Christian community. This isn't just about giving money or resources; it's about showing love and support to one another in tangible ways.
- To help us understand this more deeply, we'll look at three supporting Bible verses. Each verse highlights a different aspect of how we can meet the needs of others. We'll see how generosity should come from a heart of faith, how supporting our community reflects the unity of the early church, and how sharing what we have pleases God. These verses will guide us in living out our faith through active generosity.
- Let's begin by exploring what it means to give generously and cheerfully, as taught in 2 Corinthians 9:7:
  - **A Heart of Generosity –**
  - **2 Corinthians 9:7**  
"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)
    - **Context and Explanation:**
      - This verse was written by the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians. Paul was addressing the church in Corinth, a bustling and diverse city in ancient Greece. The Corinthian church had previously pledged to support the Christians in Jerusalem who were facing severe hardship and poverty. Paul wanted to ensure that their promise would be fulfilled not out of a sense of duty, but from a place of genuine willingness and joy.
      - Paul's encouragement to give from the heart emphasizes the importance of the intention behind our actions. He was clear that giving should not be forced or done with reluctance, but should come from a place of joy and willingness.



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This teaching was important for the early Christians as it highlighted that true generosity goes beyond the mere act of giving; it is about the attitude and heart behind it.

- **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**
  - The impact of Paul's message was significant. It helped the Corinthians understand that their contributions were a reflection of their faith and love for their fellow believers. By giving cheerfully, they were not only providing for the physical needs of others but also demonstrating the love of Christ through their actions.
  - For us today, this means that our generosity should stem from a sincere desire to help others. When we contribute to the needs of fellow believers, we are showing that we value them and their well-being – Brotherly Affection. It reflects our faith in action and aligns with the biblical principle that love should be practical and visible. True Christian love isn't just spoken; it's shown through generous actions that meet the needs of others.
- **A Community of Believers –**
- **Acts 2:44**

**"All who believed were together and had all things in common." (Acts 2:44)**

  - **Context and Explanation:**
    - This verse is found in the book of Acts, which was written by the apostle Luke. Acts describes the early days of the Christian church, immediately following Jesus' ascension into heaven and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Acts 2:44 specifically refers to the early Christian community in Jerusalem.
    - The believers in Jerusalem were marked by a profound sense of unity and shared life. They didn't view their possessions as solely their own but held everything in common, ensuring that everyone's needs were met. This radical sharing was a direct response to the teachings of Jesus, who emphasized love and care for one another. And to be clear, these were not works to be done to try to ACHIEVE salvation, they were works based on receiving salvation.
  - **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**
    - The early church's practice of holding all things in common had a powerful impact on both the believers and the surrounding community. It showcased a deep level of commitment and mutual support. This communal lifestyle helped to ensure that no one among them lacked necessities, thereby strengthening the bonds within the community and bearing witness to the love of Christ.



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- For us today, this example of community support underscores the importance of caring for one another within the church. Meeting the needs of fellow believers is not just an individual responsibility but a collective one. When we come together as a community to support each other, we reflect the unity and love that characterized the early church. This communal support is a tangible expression of our faith and an essential aspect of living out true Christian love.
- **A Sharing of Resources –**
- **Hebrews 13:16**  
"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebrews 13:16)
  - **Context and Explanation:**
    - The book of Hebrews is a rich theological text whose authorship is traditionally attributed to Paul. Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were facing persecution and the temptation to revert to Judaism. The author encourages them to persevere in their faith and reminds them of the superiority of Christ and the new covenant.
    - Hebrews 13:16 emphasizes practical aspects of Christian living. The exhortation to do good and share what you have reflects the core values of generosity and kindness that should characterize believers. The reference to sacrifices being pleasing to God connects to the Old Testament understanding of offerings but reinterpreted in the context of the new covenant. Now, the sacrifices that please God are not just ritualistic acts but the practical outworking of faith through good deeds and sharing.
  - **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**
    - The impact of this teaching was to remind Jewish Christians that their faith in Christ should be evident in their actions, especially in how they treated others. Doing good and sharing with others were seen as sacrifices that honored God, demonstrating a living and active faith.
    - For us today, this means that sharing our resources is a vital expression of our faith. Our faith should motivate our works, and our beliefs should be **demonstrated** through our actions. When we share what we have with others, especially those in need, we are making sacrifices that are pleasing to God. This aligns with the key point that meeting the needs of fellow believers is an essential expression of our faith. Sharing resources is a practical and impactful way to live out the love of Christ, showing that we are committed to the well-being of our Christian community.



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**2. Pursuing hospitality involves actively seeking opportunities to welcome and care for others.**

- "Seek to show hospitality." (Romans 12:13b)
- Pursuing hospitality means more than just being polite or inviting friends over. It involves actively looking for ways to welcome and care for others, especially those who might feel left out or in need. Romans 12:13 encourages us to "seek to show hospitality," reminding us that this is a crucial part of living out our faith.
- To understand this better, we'll look at three important Bible verses that show different aspects of hospitality. These verses will help us see how welcoming strangers can bring unexpected blessings, how love in action means caring for each other without complaining, and how inviting others in, especially those who are often ignored, reflects the heart of Jesus.
- Let's begin by exploring what it means to welcome strangers and the blessings that can come from it, as described in Hebrews 13:2.
  - **Welcoming Strangers**  
**Hebrews 13:2**  
"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
    - **Context and Explanation:**
      - The book of Hebrews, as we mentioned earlier, was addressed to Jewish Christians who were struggling with their faith and considering a return to Judaism due to persecution. The author aims to encourage and strengthen their faith by emphasizing the superiority of Christ and the new covenant.
      - Hebrews 13:2 specifically advises believers not to forget the importance of hospitality. The reference to entertaining angels unaware recalls the story of Abraham in **Genesis 18**, where he unknowingly hosted three visitors who turned out to be angels. This verse highlights that showing hospitality can have unexpected spiritual significance and blessings.
    - **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**
      - This message would have been impactful for the early Christians, reminding them that their actions towards strangers could have profound spiritual implications.



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It encouraged them to be open and generous, even to those they did not know, reinforcing the idea that hospitality is a key aspect of Christian life.

- For us today, this teaching underscores the importance of being welcoming and open-hearted to everyone, not just those we know or are comfortable with. By extending hospitality to strangers, we embody Christ's love and open ourselves to potential blessings we might not foresee. It challenges us to go beyond our comfort zones and actively seek opportunities to care for others, reflecting God's love through our actions.

○ **Love in Action**

**1 Peter 4:8-9**

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." (1 Peter 4:8-9)

▪ **Context and Explanation:**

- The Apostle Peter wrote this letter to Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), who were experiencing various trials and persecutions. His letter aimed to encourage them to remain steadfast in their faith and to live in a way that reflects Christ, despite their difficulties.
- In these verses, Peter emphasizes the importance of earnest love among believers. He highlights that love is powerful enough to cover many sins, meaning that it fosters forgiveness and unity. Peter then instructs believers to show hospitality to one another without complaining, implying that hospitality should be given freely and joyfully, not **be grudgingly**.

▪ **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**

- Peter's message would have reinforced the idea that love and hospitality **are essential Christian virtues**, especially in times of hardship. It encouraged early Christians to support and care for one another genuinely, fostering a strong and supportive community.
- For us today, this teaching is another reminder that our love for others should be active and practical. Showing hospitality is a tangible way to express this love. When we welcome others into our homes and lives without grumbling, we demonstrate the selfless love that Christ calls us to exhibit. This act of hospitality helps build stronger, more supportive communities, reflecting the love and unity that should characterize the body of Christ.





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- **Inviting Others In**  
**Luke 14:13-14** "But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Because they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:13-14)
  - **Context and Explanation:**
    - This verse is part of Jesus' teachings found in the Gospel of Luke. In this passage, Jesus is at a dinner party at the house of a prominent Pharisee. He uses the opportunity to teach about humility and generosity. Jesus challenges the social norms of the time by instructing His listeners to invite those who are often marginalized and overlooked in society—the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.
    - Jesus' teaching here emphasizes selfless hospitality. He points out that true generosity involves inviting those who cannot repay the favor. This kind of hospitality reflects God's grace, which is freely given to us without expectation of repayment.
  - **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**
    - Jesus' radical message would have been challenging for His audience, who were used to inviting guests based on social status and the expectation of reciprocation. His teaching encouraged them to rethink their attitudes towards hospitality and generosity, focusing on those in need rather than social gain.
    - For us today, this teaching challenges us to extend our hospitality beyond our circle of friends and family. It calls us to be inclusive and to actively seek out those who are often neglected or marginalized. By doing so, we reflect the grace and love of God, showing that our hospitality is not based on what we can gain but on the desire to serve and bless others. This goes back to our key point that pursuing hospitality involves actively seeking opportunities to welcome and care for others, reflecting Christ.

**3. Generosity and hospitality bear spiritual fruit that glorifies God and strengthens the community.**

- "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." (John 15:8)
- Generosity and hospitality do more than just meet immediate needs; they also bear spiritual fruit that glorifies God and strengthens our community. When we give and show kindness, we reflect God's love and help build a stronger, more unified church. This principle is beautifully summarized in John 15:8, where Jesus says, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." (John 15:8)



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- To explore this further, we will look at three more important Bible verses that highlight different aspects of how generosity and hospitality bring glory to God and build up the church. These verses will show us how serving others reflects Christ's love, how our good deeds can be a light to the world, and how using our gifts strengthens the body of Christ.
- Let's start by examining how serving others reflects Christ's love, as explained in Galatians 5:13.
  - **Reflecting Christ**  
**Galatians 5:13** "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."  
(Galatians 5:13)
    - **Context and Explanation:**
      - The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians to the churches in the region of Galatia, which is in modern-day Turkey. These Christians were struggling with the influence of false teachers who were insisting that they must follow Jewish law, including circumcision, to be truly saved. Paul wrote to clarify that salvation comes through faith in Christ alone, not through the law.
      - In Galatians 5:13, Paul emphasizes the idea of Christian freedom. He explains that believers are called to live in freedom, but this freedom should not be used for selfish purposes ("the flesh"). Instead, it should be an opportunity to serve one another in love. This kind of service reflects the selfless love of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.
    - **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**
      - Paul's message to the Galatians was transformative. It redirected their focus from legalistic practices to a life of love and service, embodying the true spirit of Christian freedom. The Galatians were encouraged to reflect Christ in their actions, showing love and serving each other.
      - For us today, this teaching underscores that our freedom in Christ is not about indulging in selfish desires but about serving others. When we practice generosity and hospitality, we reflect the love of Christ. These acts of service are not just good deeds; they are **spiritual fruits** that glorify God and strengthen our community. By serving one another in love, we build a supportive and caring environment that reflects the heart of Jesus.



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○ **Being a Light**

**Matthew 5:16** "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."  
(Matthew 5:16)

▪ **Context and Explanation:**

- This verse is part of the Sermon on the Mount, a collection of teachings by Jesus recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus delivered these teachings to His disciples and a large crowd gathered on a mountainside. The Sermon on the Mount covers many aspects of righteous living and emphasizes the values of the kingdom of heaven.
- In Matthew 5:16, Jesus encourages His followers to let their light shine before others. This light represents the good deeds and righteous living that come from following Him. By doing good works, believers can positively influence others and lead them to glorify God. Jesus' teaching here highlights that our actions should be visible and impactful, demonstrating the love and goodness of God to the world.

▪ **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**

- Jesus' message was empowering and challenging. It called His followers to live in a way that visibly reflected God's love and righteousness. The early Christians took this to heart, and their good works and loving actions drew many to the faith, glorifying God in the process.
- For us today, this teaching encourages us to let our actions be a testament to our faith. When we practice generosity and hospitality, we are letting our light shine before others. These acts of kindness and service are not just about meeting physical needs; they are also about pointing people to God. By being a light, we draw attention to God's love and inspire others to glorify Him. In this way, generosity and hospitality bear spiritual fruit, glorifying God and strengthening the body of believers.

○ **Building Up the Body –**

**Ephesians 4:12** "To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12)

▪ **Context and Explanation:**

- The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians to the church in Ephesus, another major city in ancient Asia Minor. Paul's letter addresses various aspects of Christian life and doctrine, emphasizing the unity and growth of the church.



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- In Ephesians 4:12, Paul explains that God gave different gifts to believers to equip them for ministry and to build up the body of Christ. This means that every believer has a role to play in strengthening and edifying the church. The purpose of these gifts and ministries is to promote unity, maturity, and growth within the body of believers.
- **Impact and Relation to the Key Point:**
  - Paul’s teaching on equipping the saints had a deep and meaningful impact on the early church. It helped believers understand that they each had a valuable contribution to make towards the health and growth of the church. This teaching fostered a sense of responsibility and collaboration among Christians, leading to a stronger and more unified community.
  - This teaching highlights the importance of using our gifts and resources to serve others and build up the church. When we practice generosity and hospitality, we are actively participating in the work of ministry. These acts of service help to strengthen the bonds within the Christian community, fostering unity and growth. By building up the body of Christ, we glorify God and create a supportive and nurturing environment where believers can thrive.

**Main Point: True Christian love is expressed through generosity and hospitality.**

- As we reflect on the main point that true Christian love is expressed through generosity and hospitality, it's important to consider how these principles can be practically applied in our daily lives. We've seen how the early church exemplified these virtues through their actions, providing for one another and welcoming strangers with open arms. The teachings of Paul, Peter, Luke, and Jesus Himself underscore that our faith should be active and visible, bearing spiritual fruit that glorifies God and strengthens our community.
- Now, the challenge before us is to embody these principles in tangible ways. It's not enough to simply agree with these teachings in theory; we must live them out in our actions. By being generous, we reflect the love of Christ and support our fellow believers. Through hospitality, we create spaces of welcome and care that mirror the heart of God. And as we do these things, we not only bless those around us but also grow in our own spiritual walk, drawing closer to God and each other.



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**Challenges for the Congregation:**

1. **Be Generous** - Find a way to contribute to the needs of someone within our community this week.
2. **Show Hospitality** - Invite someone over for a meal or coffee, extending genuine hospitality.
3. **Reflect Christ's Love** - Look for opportunities to serve others in your daily life, reflecting Christ's love through your actions.

**Closing:**

As we conclude, remember that our love should be tangible, marked by generosity and hospitality. Church, let us all strive to meet the needs of our fellow believers and open our hearts and homes to others. By doing so, we reflect the love of Christ and bring glory to God. Show the zeal of your faith through your compassion for your neighbors. Let your actions reflect the depth of the grace you have in Christ Jesus.

**Communion:**

**Confession of Faith:**

Elder – “Christians, what do you believe?”

Congregation - LBCF 1689 Chapter 26 Section 6

The Church Consists of Saints Who Are Committed to One Another

**The members of these churches are saints by calling. They visibly manifest and show evidence of their obedience to the call of Christ through their profession and way of life. They agree to walk together according to Christ's commands. They give themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God in submission to the ordinances of the Gospel.**

12. Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2

13. Acts 2:41-42, 5:13-14; 2 Corinthians 9:13

**Benediction:**

**Romans 15:13**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.