



8/11/25

*I was challenged from yesterday's message right off the bat. The statement was, "Be careful not to say to the Lord, 'Yes, Lord, I want whatever You want... but not that.'" How many times have I been guilty of that??? I pray that you and I will be able to say, "Yes, Lord, to whatever You want." And just stop there. O Lord, please make it so!*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*Romans 12:9-21 ~*

*This is one of those passages that can't be taken out of context or it will be all about working for approval rather than living this way because I have God's approval. I have to go back to vs.1-2 before I can move on to vs. 9. Romans 12:1-2 says, "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. 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." Everything I do needs to stem from a humble, surrendered heart that is centered on serving and worshiping God. Serving and worshiping God will not conform to what the world teaches. It is a life that is allowing the Holy Spirit to be constantly transforming me to be like Jesus as He changes the way I think. With that in mind, I can move on to vs. 9 ~*

*Vs. 9-13 ~ When I look at the Greek transliteration, I see that this is all one big sentence. Everything in these verses is the actions of a heart that loves genuinely, without hypocrisy. It starts out, "Let love be genuine." Already I know that this is a type of love that can't come without the Lord's help. The Greek word for love here is "agape." It is a divine, sacrificial, unconditional kind of love that could only flow from a heart that had received the love of God into my heart through salvation. To expect someone to have this kind of love without having the Holy Spirit dwelling in me would be crazy. Impossible.*

*So now... because of the mercy that stems from the love of God being poured into my life... let His love that flows through me be genuine. ALL that comes after is what that love will look like*

*in me more and more... I can't pick and choose which ones I want to embrace as love. They are all together the love of God for me, poured out through me to love others.*

*To love genuinely, I will be ~*

- *Hating evil... because "agape love does not rejoice at wrongdoing" (1 Corinthians 13:6)*
- *Holding fast to what is good... because "agape love rejoices with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6). It is not enough to hate the evil, but I have to turn away from the evil and cling to what is good. Don't just set the bad thing down. Replace it with the good.*
- *Devoting myself to others with another kind of love, "phileo" love... brotherly love... This is tender affection. So for those who say, "I love you, but I don't like you", I'm not sure that goes with this. I find it to be hard sometimes, and loving someone with tender affection for the glory of the Lord is sometimes a sacrifice. But if I ask the Lord for help, He will help me care for others with this tender affection.*
- *The ESV says, "Outdo one another in showing honor." I really don't like that translation. It sounds like a competition. That's not what it means. It actually says, "Esteeming others in honor... showing preference to others." Put the needs of others before my own. That's easy for me to do with my kids or grandkids or my husband, or even close friends... but with everyone? That will take God's divine intervention.*
- *Not being slothful in zeal... not lagging behind in being intentional. Genuine love doesn't just happen... it's intentional.*
- *Being fervent in spirit... the Greek word for this is like the boiling of water. My love is so great that it bubbles up fervently to care for others. Wow. Before I can give this kind of love, I need to embrace that this is the kind of love God has for me. O Lord, help me to believe that!*
- *Serving the Lord... Genuine love serves the Lord... and serves others from a heart that serves the Lord. Genuine love is not about serving SELF.*
- *Rejoicing in hope... celebrating that the love God has for me is absolute, so I can be in constant expectation that He is who He says He is. That will definitely motivate how I love.*
- *Being patient in tribulation... Whatever the struggles are, genuine love endures without giving up. This is what Jesus has done and continues to do for me.*
- *Being constant in prayer... never stopping the conversation. God has modeled this for me so beautifully through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Romans 8 tells me that both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always interceding for me. They are in a constant conversation with the Father for me. I am never "out of sight, out of mind" with them. God created me for relationship. Let Him never be out of my spiritual sight... let me never avoid Him or ignore Him, but let me be in constant conversation with Him because I have peace with Him through Jesus.*
- *Contributing to the needs of the saints... Genuine love cares about helping other believers in need in whatever gifts God has given me to be that help.*

- *Pursuing hospitality... Genuine love cares about caring for those who don't know the Lord.*

*Let me not miss that this kind of divine impossible love is what Jesus has shown me. It is impossible love if done in the strength of man. But in the strength of the divine, Jesus Christ, I can do all things... including loving the Lord and others genuinely.*

*Vs. 14-21 ~ As if all those things describing genuine love weren't enough, God calls me to do even more of the impossible... Nothing is impossible with God.*

- *Bless those who persecute me. Don't persecute them back. Don't retaliate. Ever. Just like Jesus didn't retaliate against His persecutors when He went to the cross. Absolutely impossible for me... without His help. All things are possible with Him.*
- *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Sometimes it can be harder to rejoice with those who rejoice than weep with those who weep. Sometimes I can feel inferior because of the blessings others receive. If I'm truly wanting to be a living sacrifice to God, I will be able to rejoice or weep or whatever fits the circumstance with others... because I am completely secure in God's love for me. O Lord, please make it so.*
- *Live in harmony with one another... set my mind on the things of Jesus with them and then we can be moving in the same direction... even if we aren't doing the exact same things, what we do will complement each other for the glory of God.*
- *Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. If I truly see myself through the Lord's eyes, I will have no reason to think too highly of myself. I will consider myself as being one of the lowly... the poor... the needy.*
- *Never be wise in your own sight... Proverbs 28:26 says, "Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool." To be wise in my own sight is to think I know better than the Lord. That will not go well!*
- *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all... Don't retaliate. 1 Peter 2:23 says of Jesus, "When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly." I need to follow His example. I can show honor even to those who don't show me honor because God always shows me honor.*
- *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all... So far as it depends on me. I can't control what other people do, and I'm not responsible for their behavior. So we may not be able to live at peace with each other... but let it not be because I am unwilling. O Lord, please help me to do what You call me to do and leave the rest to You.*
- *Never take revenge but leave it to the wrath of the Lord. His word is true, and He says in His word, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." Trust that He's got it. How I handle the way I'm treated by others is clear evidence of how much I trust the Lord.*
- *Not only should I not take revenge, but if my enemy is hungry or thirsty, God wants me to provide for his needs. This heaps burning coals of fire on his head. This does not*

*mean I get to watch my enemy suffer while God scorched him. In Isaiah 6, God had an angel touch Isaiah's lip with burning coal to show that Isaiah was forgiven. I think this means that God will use my kindness to enemies to draw them to repentance.*

- *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good... That's what Jesus did for me. He overcame the devil's plan to destroy Him and the world by not retaliating against the persecution brought on Him. Instead, Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross. No amount of evil can overpower good... not in the end. O Lord, please help me to follow Your example.*

*I can look at every single one of these things and see that Jesus modeled them for me. He didn't just do it so that He could be a model. He didn't fake it. He did all these things because that's who He is. The more I present myself to Him as a living sacrifice, the more He will do this work in me. I praise Him that this heart of love, which seems so impossible, IS possible with Him. Philippians 1:6 is my hope I cling to, "And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." O Lord, please help me to believe this and cooperate with You.*