

Slide 1: Love Without Hypocrisy

Slide 2: Intro: From Belief to Behaviour

Slide 3: The Foundation: Authentic, Discerning Love (verses 9-10)

We come today to a passage of scripture—Romans 12:9-16—that acts like a spiritual blueprint for Christian living. What does brotherly love look like in the nitty-gritty?

This section is Paul's manifesto for the transformed life.

He doesn't start with a gentle suggestion; he starts with an immediate, searing command that cuts through all pretense, reflecting not only who we are, but who we are called to become.

Slide 4: The Manifesto of the Transformed Life

In just a few verses, Paul offers a series of radiant directions for living out the gospel—not as lofty ideals, but as daily invitations to embody the love of Christ in our relationships, our communities, and even our enemies.

Paul calls us to let love be genuine, to hate what is evil, and to cling to what is good.

He urges us to honour one another, to serve the Lord with spiritual fervor, and to rejoice in hope even when trials press in. He invites us to practice hospitality, to bless those who persecute us, and to live in harmony with others—not from a place of pride, but from a posture of humility.

This morning, we'll walk slowly through these directives. They form a vision of a church that is not only doctrinally sound, but a church where love is not just spoken but shown.

Where suffering is not ignored but shared. Where strangers become family, and enemies are met with blessing.

This passage serves as a magnificent blueprint for what a genuine, Spirit-led Christian community should look like. **So let's open our hearts to this great text—not merely to understand it, but to be transformed by it.** The theme of the passage is not hard to find: **Love is to govern all our relationships.**

Slide 5: A Love that Governs All Our Relationships

At first glance, Romans 12:9-16 seems to be an unconnected series of staccato commands, a “rag bag” of miscellaneous exhortations. **Nothing could be further from the truth,** for a closer examination reveals that these verses flesh out what love looks like in the Christian life.

Slide 6: A Love that Is Sincere (vs. 9-10)

"Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them" (v. 9a).

Simply put, this literally means **"unhypocritical."** Stop acting. Stop going through the motions.

Stop the feigned warmth and the calculated kindness. God does not want polite professionalism; He wants authentic passion.

It originally referred to an actor who played a certain role on stage, playing a part, wearing a mask. It came to mean anyone who acts contrary to his own true feelings.

It particularly applies to those who put forth the appearance of virtue that they don't actually possess.

We are challenged to look inward and ask: **Is the love I show for my family, and my church truly real?**

Slide 7: A Love that Is Discerning

"Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good" (v. 9b).

Genuine Christian love is not sentimental mush; it's discerning and moral. You can't love what is good without simultaneously hating what is wrong. These two statements are glued together.

Our love for Christ demands a fierce, uncompromising opposition to sin, both in the world and in our own heart. Hold fast to what is good—cleave to it, as if your life depended on it.

Love hates wrong! Think about that for a second. Often we think of love as an ooey-gooey emotion that causes us to lose our sense of right and wrong, **but that's far from true Christian love. We cannot love wrong and love God at the same time.**

Here's another way to put it. Don't ever get over being shocked by wrong. That's hard to do in a world where almost anything goes. **Hold tightly to what is good.**

Slide 8: A Community of Love

"Love each other with genuine affection" (v. 10a).

It's easy to understand why the early Christians adopted this word to describe Christian love. All Christians have been **"born again"** through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Everyone who is saved is saved the same way. God doesn't have three different plans of salvation—Plan A for Protestants, Plan B for Catholics, and Plan C for everyone else.

God's kingdom embraces all true believers, no matter who they are or what church they happen to attend.

We have different personalities, different habits and hobbies, different likes and dislikes. Yet one thing binds us together. **The regenerating power of the Holy Spirit!**

That fact means that there is a special place in my heart for my brothers and sisters in Christ. There is a bond between us that time and distance cannot break. **I owe all of them tender affection and brotherly love.**

What a powerful witness a church makes when the members love one another! When unchurched people are asked what they looking for in a church, the answer is always the same.

They're looking for a caring church. Not just a friendly church or a church with plenty of programmes for the kids, or a worship team contemporary music.

And not just a church where the Bible is clearly taught, important as that is. As good and essential as those things are, they don't touch the deepest heart cry of this generation.

They want to be loved truly and deeply.

The Christian church is to be a community of love.

Slide 9: Outdo One Another in Showing Honour

"Take delight in honouring each other." (v. 10b).

Paul says, let's see who can promote, celebrate, and lift up others the fastest. It's the conscious, joyful choice to put the spotlight on someone else, delighting in their success more than your own.

Pride is the competitive drive to be honoured; Christian love is the humble drive to give honour.

Slide 10: President Ronald Reagan had this saying on his desk: **"There is no limit to how far you can go if you don't care who gets the credit."** Paul would say a hearty "Amen!"

Slide 11: The Engine: Fervent Work and Steadfast Hope (verses 11-12)

Slide 12: Keep Your Spiritual Fervour

"Never be lazy but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically" (v. 11)

Religious **"enthusiasm"** is often derided as nothing but excessive emotionalism.

Paul's words here though have nothing to do with how loud we sing or how much we clap or whether or not we raise our hands when we worship. **Those things are purely secondary.**

Paul is challenging us to put as much effort into our Christianity as we do into our work.

Take a listen to the Amplified Bible translation: *"Never lag in zeal and in earnest endeavour; be aglow and burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord."* The phrase *"be aglow and burning with the Spirit"* refers to a boiling pot. **Serve the Lord with zeal and boiling intensity.**

This verse links our inner fervor to our external service. Paul tells us to be *"aglow with the Spirit."* Our spiritual life should be fueled by a divine fire, not a flicker.

Slide 13: Endure In Affliction

"Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble and keep on praying" (v. 12)

Behind these three phrases lies the hope of our Lord's return. While we wait for Jesus to return, we are exhorted to be patient in hard times, constantly praying, and rejoicing in the hope of better days to come.

This is the fuel tank for the fervent worker. **It's a triplet of Christian endurance:**

To Be Rejoicing in Hope: Our joy is not based on current circumstances but on the guaranteed promise of Christ's return and our eternal life.

To Be Patient in Trouble: Because our hope is confident, we can endure suffering without complaint. Patience is hope's active virtue.

To Keep on Praying: Prayer is the lifeline that connects the hope of heaven to the pain of today.

Slide 14: The Practice: Radical Generosity and Blessing 13-14

"When God's people are in need, be ready to help them" (v. 13a)

On one level it means sharing in the hurts and heartaches of others. On another level, it means opening our wallets and giving so that fellow believers will have their needs met.

When we see a need among God's people, our default posture should be instant readiness. **This is much more than charity.**

It's a commitment to the well-being of the family of faith, to open our hands and our hearts.

Slide 15: Be Generous Here is a true measure of our Christian faith.

The word translated "contributing" doesn't usually refer to money in the New Testament.

When Paul mentions *"contributing to the needs of the saints"* (v. 13a), he doesn't necessarily have in mind the Sunday morning offering.

It's a broader word that means "to share in something as a partner."

God wants His people to identify with the needs of others and make them their own.

Slide 16: Welcome the Stranger

"Always be eager to practice hospitality." (v. 13b)

This command shows up in various places in the New Testament because hospitality was a central mark of the early church. **It refers to "showing kindness to strangers."**

In the first century they didn't have Holiday Inns or Hilton Hotels. When Paul came to Corinth, he couldn't check into the Airport Marriott because it hadn't been built yet.

The few inns they did have were ill-kept and dangerous. Many were little more than brothels and havens for brigands and robbers. As Christians travelled from place-to-place fellow believers willingly opened their homes to them.

"My brother, you are welcome to stay with me."

It's the act of deliberately loving the stranger and the outsider.

It's opening your life, your space, and your resources to those who may not be able to repay you. Hospitality is a spiritual practice that breaks down barriers and builds community.

Slide 17: How Can you Bless Someone Who Has Deeply Hurt You?

Here's what God says!

"Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them. Pray that God will bless them" (v. 14)

This is perhaps the single most impossible command outside of God's grace.

It is the ultimate litmus test for whether the love Paul speaks of is truly a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit in your life.

There will be those who hurt us deeply, leaving scars that last for a lifetime.

Sometimes the attacks come from those closest to us, even from within our own family, often from our circle of close friends, and sometimes from people we thought were our best friends.

There is no escaping this reality. Sooner or later people we loved and trusted will let us down.

We can't predict how or when, but it will happen, and what will we do then?

How do you bless someone when you would rather curse them?

When faced with someone who has mistreated you, ask God to help you say exactly what Joseph meant when he said to his brothers, *"You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good"* (Genesis 50:20).

Slide 18: The Bond: Empathy and Humility (verses 15-16)

Slide 19: Celebrate with the Joyful

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (v. 15)

Eugene Peterson offers this version: "Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down" (MSG). **Here we have the extremes of life.**

Sometimes we are on top of the world. Sometimes we are in the pit.

When your friends are happy, rejoice with them, laugh with them, cheer with them, smile with them.

Share their joy. Don't be a party pooper or a Negative Nelly or a Sulking Sam. **Life is hard enough for all of us.** When those moments of victory come, share their joy.

How sad to go through life as a crotchety, mean-spirited grump who douses water on the happiness of others. **Rejoice with those who rejoice.**

Slide 20: Weep with Those Who Weep.

When our friends weep, take time to weep with them.

Sometimes the best we can do is simply to weep with our friends in the hour of great sadness.

It's so easy to offer empty platitudes "Things will get better." "Everything is going to work out."

By definition you have to walk close enough with people so that we know when they are rejoicing or weeping. **We can't obey this verse long-distance.**

When our friends weep, take time to weep with them.

We all need someone to laugh and to cry with us. If we can't find this sort of friendship in the church, we'll go somewhere else. That's why people end up going to a bar, to find someone who will care about what they are going through. **Cheers Quote.** "Sometimes you wanna go, and they're always glad etc.

That's what brotherly love is all about . . . being there! **Just being there.**

Slide 21: Make It Your Aim to Live in Harmony

"Live in harmony with each other" (16a)

This does not imply total agreement.

The word harmony implies a beautiful symphony, a collection of instruments playing on the same page at the same time. **They don't sound alike and they don't play the same notes.** We don't all look alike or act alike or sound alike. We certainly don't always think alike.

If you doubt that, remember the last church business meeting you attended. Or just listen to the different conversations after the morning service. The church—both local and worldwide—is enriched by a variety of different opinions.

But there is harmony when we understand that the things that unite us, are greater than the things that divide us.

The goal is unity, peace, and shared purpose. **Harmony doesn't mean everyone plays the same note;** it means everyone is committed to the same song, following the same conductor (Christ), even if the instruments are different.

Slide 22: Show Humility – Don't Think you Know it All

"Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. Don't think you know it all!" (v. 16b)

Paul closes this section with a warning against the most destructive force in a community: **pride.**

We can say it more directly. Don't be a snob!

Don't get a big head and think you're too good to hang out with people who are not in your social class.

Believers who think they're too smart, too spiritual, too sophisticated, or too important to fellowship with anyone, **have missed the entire point of the gospel.** Remember what was said about Jesus – **the common people heard him gladly.**

He was no snob. He found time to minister to those whom the religious leaders despised

He reserved his harshest words for such leaders who robbed widows' homes and claimed to be serving God.

He was a true “friend of sinners” who welcomed everyone who wanted to be with him.

This passage lays bare the fact it's one thing to talk about love. It's something else to put it into practice.

Slide 23: So There You Have It - The Foundation The Engine The Practice The Bond

This passage from Romans 12 is not a list of optional niceties; it's the Manifesto of the Transformed Life. It calls us to authentic love, diligent service, radical generosity, and profound humility.

Today I challenge you to pick just one of these verses—and make it your focus this week.

Let's practice this genuine, action-oriented love, living out the Romans 12 manifesto in our homes, our communities, and our church.

Slide 24: The Most Powerful Recommendation.

Slide 25: That Members Love One Another