

**Peace**

*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

Romans 12:18

I had a friend who discovered that he had a very fast-growing cancer. It had been undetected, since there were not any noticeable symptoms. He was a man who loved the Lord and served him so very well. I remember visiting with him in his home shortly before he passed away, just a few weeks after the diagnosis. The person who was with me asked him to talk about death. My friend thought for a moment and replied, “As far as it depends on me, I am at peace with everyone.” I remember thinking at that point what a tremendous testimony that was. It is a testimony of a life lived well. He lived a transformed life in such a way that he had lived peaceably with all and it became his legacy for me. Since then, I have strived to have the same be true for me. Sometimes I have been better at it than at other times. But each step of the way, I long to have the love of God reveal itself through me—not of my own strength but of his. Take time today to consider how the love of God flowing in and through you is revealing itself by the way you live peaceably with everyone. Are you at peace with everyone, as far as it depends on you?



## Saturday, October 24, 2020

**Vengeance**

*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.” 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.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Romans 12:19-21

How does a transformed life—that has embraced and is revealing genuine love—relate in a positive way when it is wronged? Without personal vengeance. Paul reminds the readers that they are beloved. They are dearly loved by God—recipients of his mercy. In view of that mercy, they should allow God to be the One who cares for vengeance. The reminder that they, who were worthy of the vengeance of God, were given mercy would motivate them to allow for the same for those who had come against them. This is so important. When I recall the depth of my own sin and the vengeance that was due me, I am spurred on to allow God to make things right. He alone can rightfully judge every situation. I can extend mercy to people. As one who is beloved by God, I can demonstrate the difference that that makes in a person’s life. As I extend mercy by caring for the needs of even one who has offended or hurt me, I am giving that person a chance to reflect on the difference from how they might react. That will allow them to seek the Lord as they see him in me. In that way, I am heaping burning coals on their head. This seems to indicate that they will feel a shame that may draw them to the Lord. It is not that my goal is to shame them—that would not be loving—but for them to see the amazing, magnificent love of God so that they might be set free. Take time today to consider how the love of God flowing in and through you is causing you to release people to God if vengeance is due. Is there anyone to whom you are having a problem showing the love of God?

  
Pastor Chuck Cervenka

**Transformed living chooses non-hypocritical love.**

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

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 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.” 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.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Romans 12:9-21

Monday, October 19, 2020

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### Genuine

*Let love be genuine.*

Romans 12:9

Please read Romans 12:1-21 today, as well as 1 Corinthians 13. In Romans 12:9, in the original language, Paul makes a statement that literally reads, “sincere love.” It is interesting that in the two places we read today, following a conversation about spiritual gifts, Paul declares how love reveals itself. In Romans, he declares that love must be more than just an act. The original word translated as “genuine” is a word that was used to play a part on the stage. Literally the word means “not hypocritical.” Genuine love is love that is not just an act. It is sincere. It is rooted in the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of a follower of Jesus. It is as we bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the love that God pours into our hearts through him (Romans 5:5) that our love becomes non-hypocritical. More than an act we put on in certain situations, it identifies our lives in every situation. This is what happens as we allow ourselves to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The verses that follow will reveal how this genuine love manifests itself in the lives of believers. While it is a list of exhortations, it can also be a way to test your love to see if it is indeed genuine. They are the same characteristics of genuine love as listed in 1 Corinthians 13. As you go through your day, consider whether your love is genuine. Are you just acting it out when needed, or is it truly the love of the Spirit flowing in and through you?

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

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### One another

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Romans 12:10

There are more than 50 “one anothers” in Scripture, two in this verse. They are significant. They speak to relationship. How do we relate to one another in the body of Christ? We love one another as brothers and sisters—members of the same family. Not only are we members of the body of Christ, we are also members of the same family. Each person who has genuinely been born again and has the Holy Spirit living within them is part of this forever family. We love one another in the way that family loves—genuinely, forever. But Paul goes beyond that. Not only do we have this love for one another, we honor each other competitively, if you will. We seek to outdo each other in honoring! This is not a competition that we usually see playing out, is it? Imagine what it would look like if we sought to outdo each other in honoring people! This is speaking of placing value on people. While Paul is probably not talking about a competition here, it is helpful to think that genuine love reveals itself by valuing other people as brothers or sisters (for believers) or as ones made in the image of God (for non-believers). Love values others, it honors others. Take time today to consider how the love of God, flowing in and through you, is causing you to see each person you meet as valuable. How are you specifically striving to honor others—first in the forever family of God and then in the people you meet?

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

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### Out, in, up

*Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.*

Romans 12:11

Genuine love that comes from a transformed life engages outwardly and inwardly as it focuses upward. There is a lot in this little verse that becomes clearer as we consider the original language. First, it calls us not to be lazy in our diligence to have the love of God that has changed our lives pour out to others. If you are like me, when something is new I can get really excited about it but, as I have it for a while, it tends to become “old hat” and I look for something new—kind of like when the lawn needs to be mowed for the first time in spring and I look forward to putting winter behind and having that fresh mowed grass smell but then, by August, some of my zeal for mowing has been lost! Paul is encouraging his readers not to lose steam in allowing the love of God to flow through them out to others. Then he talks to them about keeping the pot boiling in their hearts. The word for “fervent” is talking about the Spirit of God and his love boiling up inside you, setting you on fire. It is he who draws us into the spiritual act of worship (12:1), which draws us to look up to the object and source of our love—the Lord. It is he whom we are serving as we allow his love to flow in and through us. Take time today to consider how the love of God, flowing in and through you, is revealing itself outwardly, inwardly, and upwardly!

Thursday, October 22, 2020

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### Bless

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.*

Romans 12:14

Genuine love blesses others. We do not see much of this in the world around us. We do not see people looking to bless others. In this world, we see people who are quick to degrade anyone who does not agree with them. We see cynicism and anger, bitterness and contempt. The sides are chosen, and the lines are drawn, and verbal battle takes place. That is not the manifestation of genuine love. Genuine love manifests itself in blessing—even when cursed, even when persecuted. It is the example of Stephen (Acts 7:60). It is the example of our Savior (Luke 23:32-34). In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus calls on us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. This is the love of God. Even while we were his enemies, he came to die for us. Genuine love seeks to bless—everyone. Consider that for a moment. That cannot be done in human strength. It is supernatural to be able to do that. If you find yourself blessing someone who has cursed you, it is an indicator that God dwells within you and that you are being filled with his love and that his love is pouring through you. No gossip, no accusations, no hidden agendas, no bitterness, no animosity, no cursing, just blessing. Take time today to consider how the love of God flowing in and through you is revealing itself by your words and actions. Are you actively seeking to bless others?