

“What Living Sacrifices Look Like”

Romans 12:9-21

*“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good . . .
Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.” (12:9, 21)*

Paul began ch. 12 by telling us how the mercies of God should be seen in our day-to-day life. It begins with a renewed mind following God’s Word to help us discern what pleases Him (v.2). A change in the way we think about God obviously means a change in the way we think about ourselves (v.3) and our relationships towards each other (vv.4-8) resulting in changed actions. While vv.9-21 may seem like a collection of random commands they are borne out of the root command to be living sacrifices by renewing our minds. How does a renewed mind about God and one another look like in day-to-day living – as we relate to each other as well as to an unsaved world?

“Sacrificial Love in Action, Part 1” (12:9-16)

What is the very first statement in v.9?

12:9 “Love must be _____ “ or “without _____.”

Biblical love is a selfless and an unconditional commitment to one another. What characterizes this kind of love?

12:9a “_____ what is evil; _____ to what is good.”

12:21 “Do not be overcome by _____ but overcome evil with _____.”

The word for “evil” can refer to many bad things. Perhaps the simplest way to define evil is by its common use to describe a person.

John 17:15 “I do not ask You to take them out of the world but to protect them from the _____ one.” [cf. 1 John 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18-19; Eph. 6:16; 2 Thes. 3:3]

***What then might be the simplest way to define evil?**

***Along the same line how might we define good?**

The word for “cling” means an extremely close union. What strong word picture do these verses use to help us understand how close to good we should be?

Matt. 19:5

1 Cor. 6:16

Who should we be seeking close relationships with?

12:10 "Be _____ to one another in _____ love."

"_____ one another above yourselves"

This word 'honour' or 'preference' means to go before and lead. How is that a good example of being a living sacrifice?

How else are we to show we are living sacrifices?

12:11 "Never be lacking in _____ but keep your spiritual _____ serving the Lord."

What hinders us from maintaining 'zeal' and 'spiritual fervor' for the Lord?

Vv. 12-13 may indirectly answer why our zeal sometimes wanes because of life's circumstances and the constant needs of people. What else are we to keep doing?

12:13 "Be _____ in hope' _____ In affliction, _____ in prayer. Share with God's people who are in _____. Practise _____."

Why do we need to 'endure' or 'remain longer at prayer'?

How was practising hospitality in Paul's day more of a 'living sacrifice' than perhaps the way we understand it today?

Read 3 John 5-8

v.5 "Dear friend [Gaius] you are faithful in what you are doing for the _____ even though they are _____ to you.

v.6 "They have told the church about your _____. You will do well to _____ them on their way in a manner worthy of God."

v.7 "It was for the sake of the _____ that they went out receiving no help from the _____."

v.8 "We ought therefore to show _____ to such men so that we may work together for the _____."

V. 14 is still connected to the reasons our zeal may wane and our hope diminish. How are we to show sacrificial love here?

12:14 "Bless [speak well of] those who _____ you; bless and do not _____ [speak ill of]."

Whose teaching is Paul echoing here?

Matt. 5:38-48 _____

Vv. 15-16 continue in our need to serve one another.

12:15 "Rejoice with those who _____; mourn with those who _____."

12:16 Live in _____ with one another. Do not be _____ willing to associate with people of _____ position."

“Sacrificial Love in Action, Part 2” (12:17-21)

This last section is still related to our relationship with the unsaved who may persecute us. What are we commanded?

12:17 “Do not repay _____ evil for evil. Be careful to do what is _____ in the eyes of everyone.”

***Be careful” means “think beforehand. How does this help us to not retaliate?**

According to v. 18 who is to take the initiative on maintaining the peace?

12:18 “If it is possible, so far as it depends on _____ live at peace with _____.”

V. 19 says we are not to seek revenge but leave room for “God’s wrath”. This phrase is quoted twice in the Old Testament. Note the context of each.

Lev. 19:18 “Do not seek revenge or bear a _____ against one of _____ people but love your neighbour as _____, I am the Lord.”

Deut. 32:34-35 “Have I not kept this in reserve and sealed it in my vaults? It is mine to avenge and I will repay. In _____ Their foot will slip; they’re _____ of disaster is near and their doom _____ upon them.”

***What might showing kindness do to those who want to harm us? [See 1 Pet. 2:11-12]**

[The Bible verses quoted are from the NIV 1984 edition © International Bible Society]

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