

## Just Checking In #127 Love Generously Romans 12:13-16

July, 2012

*Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."*

*(You can also hear the sermon series on Romans at [www.bbcpa.org](http://www.bbcpa.org) - click on the Sermons link)*

Review from Romans

Paul has taken us on a panoramic tour of man's ruin in sin and restoration in Christ through the first 11 chapters of Romans. We have viewed man's awful misery and God's awesome mercy. God's mercy is underserved, saving, freeing, transforming, and sovereign. It has taken us from being

SINNERS WITH GUILT (Ch 1-3), to being  
SAINTS WITH GRACE (4-5), to being  
SONS WITH GLORY (6-11), and now in chapters 12-16,  
STEWARDS WITH GIFTS.

WE ARE CALLED AND INVITED TO BE INVESTING STEWARDS Chapters 12-16

Stewards of our bodies: Offer them 12:1-2

Stewards of our gifts: Use them 12:3-8

Stewards of our relationships: Bless them 12:9-21

Romans 12:9 – 10 THE BIG FOUR Love, Purity, Loyalty, Harmony

LOVE LOVE must be sincere. Not an act! Not just words! But real, practical, and active.

PURITY Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Absolutely abhor evil and be glued to good.

LOYALTY Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. We will not walk away from our brothers.

HARMONY Honor one another above yourselves. We will show respect and honor for our brothers.

LOVE, PURITY, LOYALTY, HARMONY... as Jesus Christ deals with us, so we are to deal with others.

The rest of chapter 12 shows how these four commands are to be lived out in our day to day lives.

### Love for God – 12:11-12 Love God Fervently

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

### Love for Others – 12:13-16 Love generously

**Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.**

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

**Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another.**

**Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.**

**Financial Generosity** - Share with God's people who are in need.

This is a biblical principle repeatedly taught in the Old Testament, repeated by Christ, and exemplified in the book of Acts as part of the life blood of the church. James repeatedly reminds his hearers of the importance of caring for the needy. We must practice this grace towards needy believers locally as well as globally.

**Social Generosity:** Practice hospitality.

In addition to opening our wallets to the needy, we are called to open our homes to others regularly. It is in opening our homes that we open our hearts and lives to get to know others well, build friendships, and demonstrate love. If the home isn't open, neither is the heart! This grace is an essential attribute of a spiritual leader in both Timothy and Titus. On the opposite point, some tend to miserliness in the wallet, and others in the home. Being generous with money, home, and relationships are all important aspects of demonstrating Christlikeness. The present temptation to be consumed with the artificial interactions of Facebook results with less face time in the home. Beware that tools do not become your masters, and Christ's commands be ignored in this critical area. Our extreme busy-ness can result in excusing our lack of being hospitable as just "needing some time out." All our time belongs to God. Let's invest in others by opening our homes & our hearts.

**Forgiving Generosity:** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Paul now introduces the matter of forgiving generosity towards enemies that he will take up again a few verses hence. A truly generous spirit will manifest itself in all our relationships. It will show in how we respond to the *needy*, the *lonely*, and the *antagonistic*. To bless is to speak well of or to invoke God's blessing on another. When others may curse or slander or revile us, as Christ commanded and modeled, we are to respond with a gentle grace and forgiving love. The martyr Stephen showed such forgiving generosity in the face of lethal hostility. It is in praying God's blessings on those who hate us that we demonstrate a true heart of forgiveness. Do you have someone you need to ask God's blessings on today?

**Sympathetic Generosity:** Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

A generous heart is a sympathetic heart, as it seeks to understand and enter into the heart responses of others. The opposite of sympathetic heart is a self-centered heart. If we are self-centered, we will tend to be envious of those who rejoice, impatient with those who mourn, separate from those we consider "not our kind", all of which is the essence of conceit. If we would be instruments of God's Spirit, we must be Christ centered, and Spirit led in all our responses to those around us... needy, lonely, angry, happy, grieving, or different. May God give us grace to incorporate the gospel in all our relationships, and to not be content until we see this transformation coming to fruition in our responses.

**SELF CHECK:**

- 1) Which is easier for me, to be generous in money or generous in time? Why? What needs to change? How can you implement this change this week?
- 2) Can you think of a time you blessed someone who cursed you? Are there those who today would speak evil of you, that you still speak well of? Are you asking God's blessing on those who reject you?
- 3) Are you a sympathetic person? Why or why not? Who is the most sympathetic person you know? What can you learn from them?

**FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

Matthew 6:3-15  
Matthew 18:21-35  
Ephesians 4:29-32  
Colossians 3:12-13

"Lord God, you robed yourself with humanity and entered our world. You did everything for us that you now command us to do for others. You showed us generosity in our neediness, forgiveness in the face of our hatred, sympathy in every season and suffering of our lives. We long to be like You, O Savior. Transform us. Change our selfishness into selflessness. Cause us to shine like lights in this world so darkened by sinful greed, anger, and bitterness. We ask this that others may see Your love in us and be drawn to You as we live the gospel in our relationships in this broken world. In Your Name alone we pray, Amen. "

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,  
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible  
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,  
spending our time on eternity,  
owning nothing yet possessing everything  
that matters and lasts.  
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.  
Welcome to THE JOURNEY