

JCI #171 April 2016
Just Checking In
Real Love - Romans 12:9-10

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The book of Romans is a mine of deep doctrinal riches as well as super-practical applications of gospel treasures. Having led us deep into the doctrines of man's total depravity, God's sovereign grace, the life-giving power of His Spirit, and His eternal plan and unending love, Paul then leads us into the practical outworking of the Spirit's presence in our lives. We are saved by grace, not works. Yet, the grace that saves us works miracles in our lives. Those miracles are seen most clearly in transformed attitudes, responses and relationships. Paul lists these nine transformative expectations in rapid fashion in Romans 12:9-21.

1 **Love** ... 9a Let love be genuine. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection.

2 **Discernment**... 9b Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

3 **Honor**... 10 Outdo one another in showing honor.

4 **Hard Work**... 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

5 **Hope**... 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

6 **Hospitality**... 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

7 **Humility**... 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

8 **Sympathy**... 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

9 **Harmony**... 16-21 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.

For our brief devotional this month, we will focus our attention on the first heart change brought about by Christ’s grace in our hearts... love for others.

Love ... 9a Let love be genuine. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection.

Love is the defining mark of the follower of Jesus Christ. John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this** all men will know that you are My disciples, **if you have love for one another.**" And John reminded us in 1 John 4:19. "We love because He first loved us!"

We are loved by the Triune God

We are loved by the Father Romans 1:7; 5:8

We are loved by the Son Romans 8:35, John 13:34-35, Revelation 1:5-6

We are loved by the Spirit Romans 15:30 Eph 4:30

His love lasts even when we sin. He grieves but doesn't leave!

We have received that love in our own hearts by His Spirit

Romans 5:5 1 Thess 4:9 taught by God to love one another

We owe that love to others

Romans 13:8-9 Owe no man anything except to love each other -

Romans 1:14 Our continuing debt & unpaid obligation

Paul describes this love with which we are to love others as...

Genuine love - not artificial, pretended 1 Peter 1:22

Pretended love is faking it for the purpose of personal advantage. God's love "seeks not its own" advantage, but sacrifices itself for the sake of the good of another. 1 Cor 13:5

Family love - truly caring, giving, involved, life-long The root word *storge* in philo-storge is a word that describes the protective love of a mother for her child. It is a love that is active, engaged, constant and lifelong.

Brotherly love - loyal, dependable, steady 2 Peter 1:6-7 Heb 13:1

Brotherly love stays true and loyal and doesn't give up. It is reflected in the lives of such friends as David and Jonathan, or Barnabas and John Mark. Regardless of personal cost or past failures, this kind of love remains constant and dependable. It doesn't excuse sin or ignore wrong, but neither does it refuse to forgive or stop seeking restoration. It is the clearest mark of a Jesus follower, according to the Savior's own words: John 13:34-35 "by this you are known as my followers"

To wrap up our brief consideration, we will draw some obvious conclusions about gospel love...

Love knows: you don't love those you don't know. Real love must act on knowledge of the person loved... the knowledge of their real needs. *John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"*

Love cares: you don't love those you don't feel for. Real love has sympathy for the one who is hurting and in need. Feeling is not enough, but doing without feeling is also not enough. We are called to love one another as Christ loves us. *Matthew 20:34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.*

Love acts: you don't love those you don't do for. Real love must have more than knowledge and sympathy, it must do something to meet the need. *1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

Love continues: you didn't love those you stopped loving. Real love lasts. It lasts because God's love isn't bestowed based on the response of the one loved. It comes from the heart of God, not from the one who is the object of that love. Since there was nothing in the one loved that created that love, there is nothing about that one that can destroy it. This is the great distinction between God's love and mere human affection! *1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Love your brothers and sisters in Christ!

You can't do everything for everyone, but you can do something for someone. Do it!

Your family is your greatest personal witness.

Your church family is your greatest community witness.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Self-check

1) As I review the nine characteristics of a true follower of Jesus, which ones are most lacking in my life today?

2) Who has God placed on my heart to demonstrate gospel love to today? How can I do that practically today?

For Further Study:

Review the nine characteristics of a Jesus follower in Romans 12:9-21. Choose one or two to do a further study on in scripture.

"Lord, I admit that my love is not a full reflection of Your love. Your love is sacrificial, costly, constant and compassionate. Far too often my love is surface, token, occasional and obligatory. I ask that You would increase my love for You and therefore for others. Grant me

the grace to live a truly giving life; a life that shows I truly do follow You. I pray in Your changeless and transforming Name, Amen."

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

Living with leaving in view.... John 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