

How do we show forth Jesus' Glory? Jesus shows us His glory through His word. We see Jesus and the glory of His love every time we read or hear His word, or even think about Him. But what about all the people in the world who never read the Bible? How can they possibly see Jesus' glory? One of you just reminded me of the old saying, "*Be very careful how you live; you might be the only Bible your neighbor ever reads.*" That is so true. People may never read the Bible but they read you; they are watching you. So Jesus uses you to show the world His glory. The prophet Isaiah said, "The glory of the Lord is risen upon you," and then he says, "And His glory will be seen upon you." Is. 60:1-2 Jesus also tells us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matt. 5:16. We show forth Jesus' Glory by living an openly Christian life. In chapter 12 of Romans, the Apostle Paul gives us some basic instructions about how to let Jesus' Glory Shine through your life.

Let Jesus Shine Through You!

Today we are going to look at verses 9-16 which describes how we should live with everyone around us. Then next week we will look at verses 17-21 which teach us how to live specifically among our enemies.

Romans 12:9-16

"9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another with brotherly love. Think of others as deserving more honor than yourselves. 11 Do not be lagging behind in zeal, but be fervent in spirit, as you continue to serve the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope. Endure trials patiently. Persist in prayer. 13 Share with the saints who are in need. Be quick to welcome strangers as guests.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; weep with those who are weeping. 16 Have the same respect for one another. Do not be arrogant, but associate with the humble. Do not think too highly of yourselves."

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

The whole Christian life can be summed up in one word—LOVE. God says in the next chapter, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10. That is all that the whole law of God requires, love. God summarizes the law with these words, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. ... And you should love your neighbor as yourself." "God is Love" so if we are going to show His glory in our life, we have to show His love.

The Love mentioned here is *Agape* the highest form of love. This is the definition of *Agape*: "It is the love of clear comprehension and understanding, coupled with a corresponding purpose." That doesn't sound very romantic, does it? It's not! *Agape* is not a romantic love. It is much deeper. We can best understand that definition when we look at God's love for us.

Love is usually based on the perceived value of the one you love. That's why people often say that love is blind. How many times do you hear about a young girl who is infatuated with some guy because he pays some attention to her, and she doesn't see that he doesn't really love her, he just wants to take what he can get from her? Then later she is disillusioned when she finds out his real character.

You don't ever have to worry that God will be disillusioned when He finds out what you are really like, because He had full comprehension and understanding when He set His love on you. He knows all your faults and shameful little secrets. God was not blind to our true nature. He knew exactly what we are. Jesus said, "I am He who searches the minds and hearts." Rev. 2:23

He knows that our hearts are desperately wicked and He still chose to love us.

God's love has a corresponding purpose. His purpose is not to just love us with a sentimental love and overlook our flaws. His purpose is to save us from our sins and recreate us in His image. Even though it cost Him dearly, He loved us and made the greatest sacrifice to rescue us from our sin and make us His own.

That is *Agape* and that is the Love that we are now to reflect and show to the world in our own actions. We are to love one another, not because they have some value or something to offer. Just the opposite. We are to look at their need and make the conscious decision to love them and see how I can supply that need. This kind of love does not come naturally. It is a fruit of faith. It is the result of being loved by God and that love in us will grow as we are more aware of that love from God.

Now Paul urges us, "Let love be without hypocrisy." To really show the glory of Christ, our Love has to be genuine, sincere. That is important first of all because God can see the heart. He knows if we are sincere and honest about our love for Him and our love for one another. But also because other people can tell if your love is sincere or not. You can't show the glory of Christ with a fake love. People will see the insincerity and be turned off rather than drawn to Christ.

Because there are so many false ideas about love, Paul goes on to describe what this true *Agape* love does. He does so by giving us several pairs of virtues that are an expression of this true love.

The first pair is to "Abhor what is evil." and "Cling to what is good." When you know God's love for you and remember how Jesus suffered and died for all your sins, your spirit will abhor what God abhors. We won't want anything to do with the things God calls sin. We even hate our sinful flesh that is still drawn to those sins. The world thinks love means to accept everyone and everything just as they are. The mantra of the world regarding love is "don't judge." Embrace everything that everyone wants to do as good.

This worldly idea of love has infiltrated so many churches and has destroyed the whole message of the Gospel and the message of Christ. The purpose of God's love is to save all people from their sins. When churches today welcome all gays, for example, they are encouraging them to continue in a lifestyle that God says leads to destruction. That is not love!

God does love all homosexuals and so we are to love them also. They are no different than any of us, they are sinners just like we are; sinners whom Jesus loved and died for. The only way to show the Love of Jesus is to lovingly try to lead them to understand that God loves them and wants to save them from their sin, not to encourage them to continue in it. As the old saying goes, we are to hate the sin but love the sinner.

The opposite of abhorring the evil is to cling to what is good. We are to praise the things that are truly good and cling to them ourselves. Paul urges us to think about whatever is good in Phil. 4:8 Let that permeate our mind and heart and then we will do what is good.

The second pair of virtues that are an expression of true love is to "Be devoted to one another with brotherly love. Think of others as deserving more honor than yourselves." When you hear the definition of *Agape* you might think it is very unemotional. You simply decide to show love. But that is not the case. When we make the commitment to love someone, the brotherly love and affection follows. We are to develop that kind of affection for each other. The way to do that is to put others above yourself. Think of them as deserving more honor than yourself. It is that kind of brotherly affection that truly cares about each other and reaches out to help each other that catches the attention of the world around us.

Then Paul addresses our zeal for serving the Lord in verse 11. "Do not be lagging behind in

zeal, but be fervent in spirit, as you continue to serve the Lord.” In the verses just before our text Paul mentions several special gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to individuals to serve in the Church. He urges us to use whatever gifts we have with all our might. Now he reminds us that we also serve the Lord by loving one another. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandment.” Then He said, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” John 15:12. So be fervent in spirit. Love one another with all your heart, even when that is difficult to do, because that is how you love Jesus and serve Him.

Verse 12 couples three things that work together, “Be joyful in hope. Endure trials patiently. Persist in prayer.” Think about that first statement, “Be joyful IN HOPE.” In other words even if your current situation is anything but joyful, you can still be joyful IN HOPE, trusting that God will bless you. Joyful in all the grace of God that gives you a future and a hope, as Jeremiah says. When you are joyful in hope then you can “Endure trials patiently.” And of course being persistent in prayer helps us to endure trials patiently and remain joyful in hope. Again think about how living your life this way gives glory to Jesus. When you endure trials patiently and remain joyful in the midst of them placing your trust and hope in the Lord, that is something people really notice and admire. It shows the people around you how great Jesus’ love is and what it can do for us in our life.

Verse 13 adds another pair of instructions about this love. “Share with the saints who are in need. Be quick to welcome strangers as guests.” Our human nature always thinks of the things we have as being our own, we worked for them and we need to protect them and keep them for ourself. Jesus shows us that everything we have is from God and He gives to us freely so we will share with those in need. Whether they are fellow believers or total strangers we ought to show hospitality to all. As God says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Gal. 6:10 That is what Jesus did wherever he went. When we do the same, we show forth the glory of His love.

Verse 14 says, “Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse.” We will talk about that more next week.

Verse 15, “Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; weep with those who are weeping.” In other words take a genuine interest in other people’s lives and be truly sympathetic.

Verse 16 concludes this portion. Probably above all, such love requires genuine humility and putting others first. Paul says, “Have the same respect for one another. Do not be arrogant, but associate with the humble. Do not think too highly of yourselves.”

As we meditate on these things we all will see areas where we have failed. It shows us how impossible it is for us to keep God’s law perfectly as He requires. This teaching of the law helps us to remain “poor in spirit.” Jesus says that then we are truly blessed because then we fall back into God’s loving hands ourselves. We confess our failures to Him and cling to Christ and be assured of His perfect love.

Rejoice in His forgiveness and be strengthened to love more completely without hypocrisy. To the glory of Jesus name.

Amen.