

Do I Have to Love Him? Rom 12:9-21

In reading my favorite part of the newspaper this week, the comics, I laughed out loud at the Baby Blues comic. In it the little boy has been trying to be nice to his sisters, so Santa would bring him presents. He finds out that mom and dad give presents too and he exclaims in exasperation, "The list of people I have to be nice to just keep growing!!" His big sister replies, "the Holidays are no holiday." I'm guessing there wasn't a lot of sincerity in their being nice.

Have you ever made your children apologize to each other after a fight? Have you ever made up to your spouse or a friend only because you know it's the right thing to do? What's lacking in those situations? Sincerity! How often have we said the words without being sincere?

So many times we do and say things just to get along and keep peace, but we don't really mean it at all. Paul tells us love must be sincere. What does Paul mean when he says that? Let's look at that after our prayer.

PRAYER

I. Creating a Culture of Love

A. Love isn't always sincere

1. We live in a world that uses the word love a lot, but sadly, it lacks sincerity.
2. We say we love our fellow man, but we don't go out of our way to help them.
3. We say we love our spouses, but as soon as the feelings subside, we start looking for the next person.
4. A story is told about a wealthy older man who married a beautiful young woman. One day he began wondering if she only married him for his money, so he asked her a question. "If I lost all my money, would you

still love me?” She looked him in the eyes and said, “oh honey, don’t be silly. Of course I would still love you... And I would miss you terribly.”

5. We laugh, but it has a ring of truth to it that we all recognize.
6. Sincerity goes about as far as the door now days.

B. Turning things around

1. When you read these next few verses, you feel like an episode of Dr. Phil counseling us about relationships.
2. My guess is that Dr. Paul will give us much better godly advise
3. Paul starts off with love must be genuine
4. Paul gives the Roman readers some ideas to create genuine love.
Romans 12:9–10 (ESV) — 9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold

fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

a) Do you remember what word is most often used for love in the New Testament? Agape love. Looking out for what is best for the other.

b) These verses are a practical application of Agape.

C. Abhor the bad, hold fast to the good.

1. In my mind, I think the word Abhor is stronger than hate that many other translations have.
2. The Greek definition is to find repugnant, to hate, to despise.
3. Any way you interpret it, we shouldn't want any part of evil.
4. For most of us, this is difficult, we would much rather cling to the bad and ignore the good.
5. I'm not sure if Paul is referring to good and evil in general, or if he is talking about the good and evil in the relationship we have with other Christians.
6. But either way, the advice is sound.
7. Avoid evil and hold fast to good
8. hold fast to the best of what God calls us to be.
9. hold fast to purity, not sin
10. hold fast to Godly relationships, not evil ones

D. Love one another with brotherly affection

1. The word here is the close relationship of close siblings.
2. genuine love calls us to love each other like a close family.
3. Growing up, Jeff and I usually fought with each other rather than show brotherly love, but as we got into college we became really close. Now we

call each other all the time, look forward to our time together, and feel the loss when we have to be away from each other.

4. God calls us to that kind of relationship with our spiritual family.
5. Your heart lights up when you are around them.
6. Their struggles and joys are your struggles and joys.

E. Outdo one another in showing honor.

1. Ever had a competition to see who could outdo something the other person did? It can get quite incredible can't it?
2. Let's see if this video brings back some memories:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oACRt-Qp-s
3. God says outdo each other in showing HONOR to each other.
4. Another difficult teaching, but one that is a game changer.
5. If we are all more concerned about each other's feelings over our own desires, there would be a whole lot less bickering in churches!
6. I have seen so much damage in the church because we don't honor each other like we should.

II. Genuine Faith

A. The next several qualities of genuine love revolve around our faith.

1. Romans 12:11–13 (ESV) — 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be

constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

2. To have a genuine love, you must have a genuine faith.

3. If you aren't where you need to be spiritually, you won't be able to practice genuine love because agape love comes from our faith.

4. Our faith needs to be zealous and fervent. Two very interesting words used by Paul

a) Zealous means to have eagerness in devotion.

b) Fervor carries the connotation of heating water to the point of boiling.

c) Zealous fervor then would mean that our spiritual life is fully committed to the faith God has given us that it's at a boiling point.

d) We are serve the Lord with everything we are.

5. We are to rejoice in our hope

a) Be excited about the grace God has given you.

b) Little kids are so excited right now. A week from tonight they get ready for the grandest day of their lives.

c) They are rejoicing about the gifts they will receive on Christmas day.

d) Salvation and Heaven are our Christmas day. We need to be rejoicing as we wait with excitement for that day to come.

6. Be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer

a) Not every day is going to feel like Christmas.

b) We're going to have hard days. Days that feel like we are just getting whooped by Satan and his cohorts.

c) Be patient, pray constantly.

d) It will end, and you will win.

7. Paul wraps up this list by showing how faith and love are practiced in our lives.

8. Take care of the needs of our fellow Christians; and open our lives and homes to those who need it.

a) We're pretty good at contributing to the need of the saints.

b) How are we doing at showing hospitality?

B. No place for revenge

1. The next group of verses reminds us that when we are practicing genuine love, there is no room for revenge.

2. Romans 12:14–20 (ESV) — 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 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." 20 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."

1. First, we need to realize we need to make every effort to live in peace with those around us.

2. However, there are times when that doesn't work. There is still conflict and hurt. What do you do then?

3. When I left Northeast, I was devastated by how I was treated by a couple of the elders. I was angry. I was hurt. And I will be honest; I wasn't practicing a genuine love. I wanted revenge. I wanted to hurt them like they had hurt me, and it affected my faith for a while. It took almost a year before I could see either one of those men and not have all that bitter feeling well up in me. It took a lot of prayer and refocus on my part to put my spiritual life where it needed to be to practice genuine love. Until I got

the spiritual aspect of my life together, I couldn't love as God had commanded me.

4. When I wasn't loving like God wanted me to, my faith wasn't as strong as God wanted it to be.

5. Some of you know exactly what I am talking about.

6. It's those times when we have to let God deal with them and trust that he will do the right thing at the right time.

7. You see, it's not about my hurt feelings, it's about our souls.

8. We want to think about the here and now, rather than eternity.

9. We often lose that focus, God doesn't.

10.verse 20 is a quote from Prov 25:21-22. If we practice the love God calls us to do, it will heap burning coals on our enemy's head.

a) A better translation is that it will bring burning pangs of guilt and shame to them.

b) It's the idea of letting God work on their hearts while we work on our hearts.

c) My wife and girls often gets mad at me for telling them to do the right thing when I don't tell someone else to do the same thing. I

remind them that I can't do much about what other's do, but I can make sure my family does the right thing.

11. It's not popular and it's not easy to do the right thing when others won't respond in kind, but that's what God calls us to do.

C. A warning

1. We need to do this because of the warning given in the last verse.
2. If you were in my Sunday class during my last session, this scripture is very familiar to you. We went over every week for 8 weeks!
3. Romans 12:21 (ESV) — 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
4. Don't be overcome by evil. In other words, don't let sin dictate your actions; overcome sin by doing what is right.
5. Practice genuine love.
6. Overcome evil with good.