



# **Welcome to Grace Communion International**

**August 30, 2020**

**SERMON**

**GENUINE LOVE**



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# **SCRIPTURE READING**

**ROMANS 12:9-21 (ESV)**

**Frederick Horne**



**“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.**

**11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”**

**Romans 12:9-21 (ESV)**



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**“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.**

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

**Romans 12:9-21 (ESV)**



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**“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 conceited.**

**17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”**

**Romans 12:9-21 (ESV)**



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**“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.’**

**Romans 12:9-21 (ESV)**



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**“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Ro 12:21 ESV)**

**Romans 12:9-21 (ESV)**



THESE ARE THE INSPIRED WORDS OF GOD

THANK YOU JESUS FOR TEACHING US THAT “MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.”

AMEN



As we consider the words that we have just read today, it is important that we consider the context. (Next slide)

“1 ¶ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

## Ro 12:1-2 ESV



During today's sermon, we are going to consider how to present our bodies as living sacrifices.

We are also going to consider more specifically what the outcome or what it looks like being transformed by the renewal of our minds. We will not have the time to expand on every thought and commandments given in this section, but hopefully, it will be a reminder of the direction God wants our life to take united to Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Certainly, in this world, there are many challenges. As God's people, we are called to discern the will of God. Our minds being renewed will obviously show in our behaviours.

There is an important word in verse one which follows all the previous chapters. That word is **“therefore”** or **“now then”**. These words follow what God has told us in the previous chapters of Romans as he expounded on God's mercies towards us through his sacrifice on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and his subsequent resurrection to give us life in him.

In chapter 12 of Romans, the apostle Paul is inspired to tell us how to live in his grace.

More specifically during the sermon, we are going to consider what Paul is telling us in versus 9–21.

As we consider these verses, there are several things that we must consider not to make it a guilt trip or to fall back on ourselves.

We need to remember that when we are united to Christ, there is no condemnation (8:1). Jesus is our High Priest, the perfect man representing all of us at the right hand of God's throne where he has been given authority and power by God the Father.

Our ability to love comes directly from God. As we saw in the Bible study of 1 John 4. **"We love because he first loved us."** (1 Jo 4:19 ESV). We are able to love others because God's love has been poured in our hearts, as Paul tells us in Romans 5:5. In Christ, we are made new creations.

We also need to remember that righteousness and sanctification are a gift from God. We are not made righteous or sanctified by our behaviour. We live under grace. The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus is our righteousness and sanctification.

We are included in Christ as the adopted children of God. We have been freed to stop serving sin. We are to present our members to God as instruments of righteousness because sin no longer has any dominion over us, since we are not under law but under grace (paraphrase of Romans 6:13-14).

Our ability to live by the commandments the apostle Paul enumerates in these verses comes from God.

They are not idle words. They are words to be taken seriously. They reflect our participation in the love of God. **"Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."** (2 Jo 1:9 ESV)

If you will, these commandments are sub-points expanding the two greatest commandments. **"29 Jesus answered, 'The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.**

**30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”**

**31 The second is this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”  
There is no other commandment greater than these.’ (Mr 12:29-31  
ESV)**

Let us now consider the commandments that are enumerated in this passage of Scripture. We will not go in great details about these commandments for lack of time.

**“Let love be genuine ... (ESV)**

**“Love from the center of who you are; don’t fake it.  
(Message Bible)**

**Romans 12:9**



The apostle Paul describes and defines what genuine love is and looks like in real life. It is not fake love. It is not love working and hiding behind a mask. It is not play acting. The commandments that follow are the expression of what genuine love looks like.

“....Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”

(Ro 12:9 ESV)



Several places in the Bible, we are told that God lives in us. God hates sin. Jesus came to the earth to defeat sin and death and to eradicate its presence from the earth. Jesus had to die in our place to defeat sin. He became what we are, sin, so that we could be what he is, sinless. We will see this full reality at the resurrection of our bodies at his return.

This is the attitude that we are to have toward sin because it's so damaging. The world often sees sin as liberating but it's the complete opposite in its results. Sin enslaves. Sin is living without regards to God.

When we consider any sins, we realize how destructive they are.

All the works of the flesh cause hurt either immediately or in the long run. They all go against the will of God.

**Galatians 5:<sup>19</sup> When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell**

**you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (New Living Translation)**

Any actions, whether done in ignorance or not that goes against God's will has negative consequences. God hates sin but not the sinner. With the mind of God, we are to have the same attitude towards sin. We are to abhor it, hate it, be repulsed by it.

We are to join ourselves instead to good or holdfast to everything that is good as defined by God himself and exemplified by Jesus as he walked the earth.

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Romans 12:10 ESV



I encourage you to read the epistle of first John which expounds greatly on the importance of loving one another.

As God’s people, we are brothers of Jesus. **“For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,” (Heb 2:11 ESV)**

Jesus gladly calls us his brothers. The book of Hebrews addresses believers as “holy brothers”.

This is how Christ sees brothers and sisters who are united to him in faith. Knowing that, how can we despise any one of them. God loves us with our imperfection, warts and all. We are to have brotherly love one for another. This is not love that we see in fractured family but love expressed and lived by Jesus Christ towards us. We are to make allowances for strengths and weaknesses which exist in our brothers and sisters in the Lord, just as these exist in us. In Christ, we are not condemned because of various weaknesses we still have in our flesh as we struggle against sin.

Consequently, we are not to look down on any of our converted brothers and sisters but we are to honour one another highly!

“11 (1) Do not be slothful in zeal,

2- be fervent in spirit,

3- serve the Lord.

12 (4) Rejoice in hope,

5- be patient in tribulation,

6- be constant in prayer.” (Ro 12:11-12 ESV)

6 Commandments in rapid order



1- The Bible has a lot to say about being slothful or lazy. The book of Ecclesiastes tells us how we are to live our Christian lives. **“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.” (Ec 9:10 ESV)**

The Bible has a lot to say about working diligently with our own hands to be able to help others. **“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Ac 20:35 ESV)**

There are so many things that one could say about what the Bible teaches about zealousness. The apostle Paul gives examples about how hard he worked for the churches. He was zealous in his calling of preaching the gospel everywhere he went. We are to imitate Paul as he imitated Christ.

2 – **be fervent and passionate in spirit:** With our ability to communicate worldwide, the proliferation of very violent movies, overwhelming violence happening everywhere, senseless killings, abuses of all types, we can simply

become desensitized, insensitive and numb. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said, **“And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.” (Mt 24:12 ESV)**. We need to take care not to let our love grow cold but as Jesus did, to look at this world with compassion and kindheartedness.

Zeal can certainly be you misapplied. However it will not be misused when we follow what Paul enumerates in the rest of verses 11 and 12.

How do you remain fervent in spirit?

The next commandments tell us how to be fervent in spirit.

3 – **Serve the Lord:** The Bible tells us that we serve the Lord by loving one another with a pure heart

**“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,” (1Pe 1:22 ESV)**

God is not pleased with a tepid, lukewarm, unenthusiastic, halfhearted spirit or attitude. **“15 “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.” (Re 3:15-16 ESV)**

4 – **Rejoice in hope.** We have received the kingdom that cannot be shaken, a kingdom that will last forever. We, the people of God, have the greatest hope that people can have on all the face of the earth –the promise of eternal life and the promise of participating in God’s eternal loving relationship through Jesus our Lord and High Priest.

**‘Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,’ (Heb 12:28 ESV)**

5- be patient in tribulation,

6- be constant in prayer.”

We all go through hard times in our lives. Life can be hard at times. During those times, we are to be patient as we ride those waves praying to our God to give us the strength to always look to him. There are storms in life. We are to picture ourselves as being in Jesus’ boat. He will bring us to the harbour safe

and sound as we remain in the boat, abiding in him.

What Alister McGrath writes about faith is very pertinent here. (next slide)

In the end, faith is about more than the intellectual acceptance of ideas. It is about holding fast to certain things that we believe can be trusted. Early Christian writers compared faith to an anchor. We are like boats, who find safety in the harbour, secure to something and someone safe, reliable and trustworthy. Faith is indeed about trusting God. But it is also about entrusting ourselves to God, realizing that God will always be our place of refuge and peace, our harbour in the midst of life's stormy seas.

From Alister McGrath, *THE LANDSCAPE OF FAITH, An Explorers Guide to the Christian Creeds* page 62)



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**“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 conceited.” (Ro 12:14-16 ESV)**

**Our Relationships with Non-Christians**



*But we can discern a single underlying concern in verses 14–16: the need to live in harmony with other people, both unbelievers (v. 14) and believers (vv. 15–16). We pursue this goal with unbelievers by meeting their scorn and hatred with love; we display the deep-seated harmony that the Spirit creates among believers by making other believers’ joys and sorrows our own.* Moo, Douglas J. Romans (The NIV Application Commentary Book 6) (pp. 411-412). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

As we consider these verses, this is certainly the attitude Jesus had when he walked the earth.

- The Gospels are full of very vivid examples of how Jesus treated unbelievers.
- He fed people by the thousands.
- He healed the sick.
- He had compassion on lepers, people who were completely rejected by society at the time.
- He was accused of associating with sinners.
- In an ultimate act of love, he took all our infirmities and sins and took them in himself on the cross for all of us.

Jesus had a deep caring spirit for all people. This is the attitude we are to have towards people both inside and outside the church as we are united with Jesus as his love is being poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:5).

We don't fall back on ourselves. It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)

The greatest obstacle to applying these commandments in our lives is pride. **"The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate." (Pr 8:13 ESV)**

We are to live in harmony with other people as far as it depends on us. We do not have control over other people's reactions and sometimes even if we want to live in harmony, other parties don't. We cannot force ourselves on the other people against their will. Even if they don't want to live in harmony and repair relationships, we are to treat them well and in Christian spirit whenever God provides the opportunity.

Living in harmony with other people is also not at the cost of going against God's will. We are to obey God rather than men in all situations.

“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.”

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Ro 12:17-21 ESV)



What Paul is describing here is for us to be proactive in the face of evil. If someone does us wrong, we are not to avenge ourselves. We are to leave the vengeance to God.

We are to avoid a tooth for a tooth or an eye for an eye attitude of vengeance, an attitude that comes so easily to us. We are to do good to others. **“38 ¶ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”** (Mt 5:38-39 ESV)

In verse 20, the apostle Paul says something that reflects Jesus’ teaching that if our enemy is hungry, we are to feed him. If he is thirsty, we are to give them something to drink. In doing so, it might help the other person to reconsider their attitude and repent. God desired good for everyone as we read in 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Tim 2:4.

**“who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1Ti 2:4 ESV)**

As we read further in Romans 13, it doesn’t mean that we are to let ourselves be

walked upon when God provides ways to correct the situation. God works through imperfect human authority to deal with crime, injustices and so on. The apostle Paul called upon the fact that he was a Roman citizen to avoid being subjected to mobs who were going to kill him.

Cornelius, a Roman centurion, when he was baptized, was never told to leave his post as a centurion. This is a very wide subject that we do not have time to discuss during the sermon.

However, on an individual basis, we are to have a forgiving attitude towards others and to treat them well when we have occasion.

We are to take the high road if you will to overcome whatever evil we face with good as God defines it.

I know this is a very wide subject that we've covered very briefly. It is my prayer and hope that all of us will be touched by what God tells us through the apostle Paul in these verses.

Let us pray.