

## Study Guide – Sept 3, 2017

### **Theme: Love Without Action Is Not Love Romans 12:9-21**

Paul spent 11 chapters justifying the faith of Jews and Gentiles as one people of faith for the purpose of worshiping one true God. In chapter 12, he gives us a “how to” manual on how we are to act and interact with one another. It’s a guide he offers us to be more God-like in the way we love. Like faith, love is a verb that transcends and transforms both the giver and the receiver of love. The more we practice it, the better we are at perfecting it.

#### **READ: Romans 12**

Last week we saw how verses 1-8 shape us as a gathered church body. We each have our role, our one function in the body of Christ (none of us have all of them). When we combine our gifts together we form something bigger than the self, and work for a common good.

**Q: What do you see as your role in the body based on Rom. 12:4-8?**

**Q: How would you describe yourself within the body based on Rom. 12:9-13?**

You may have noticed that Paul asks so much of us in these few verses. They include hate evil; do good things for others; rejoice in hope; patience in suffering; pray always; give to the needs of others; extend hospitality to strangers; bless your persecutors and those who curse you; rejoice with the happy, cry with the sad; do not be arrogant or claim to be smarter than others; no revenge; give aid to your enemy (water, food, shelter). Why is that? I would argue it’s because we overcome evil with good!

**Q: How might I “pursue hospitality” and look actively for opportunities to meet those in need in my community?**

**Q: When was the last time you prayed for God’s blessing on those who curse God and you?**

**Read:** Proverbs 25:21-22, reread Romans 12:20-21

**Q: What actions could any of your “enemies” cite to show that would show that you have tried to take revenge against them? What about showing how you loved them?**

**Read: John 13:35**

As you can imagine, love was VERY important to Jesus; it compelled Him to give up His life for us! He wants us to imitate Him in how we love others. And we do that by giving up our life. This is hard to do. But luckily we live in a country and in a time where we are free to practice (and fail) at loving others with the goal of one day perfecting it.

Perhaps the best goal to have this week is to identify those relationships where you need to grow in love—it may be a family member, a co-worker, a neighbor, or a person at church. Target one or two specific people, not just everyone in general. Then commit to begin loving them as Christ has commanded. Don't forget to persevere in prayer as you strive and struggle to do so. Good luck.

PRAY: Lord God, you showed us all that love is the greatest gift we could give as well as receive. The love you have shown us through your Son, Jesus Christ, is a perfect example. Fill us with your Spirit so that we may love each other as you love us, even when the world seems to be doing just the opposite. Help us to be the best example of your love as we faithfully represent your holy name. Amen.