

Romans 12.9-13.1 Love in Church, in Suffering, Overcoming Revenge,  
Intro to Romans 13, 171-174  
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[Romans 12.9-13 Exercise of Love within the Church 171]

Romans 12, the *heart* of Romans. A book written to believers—which is obvious in this last section. We continue with the Application of God’s Righteousness in the Church.



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God gives us supernatural enablement in order to be able to function in the body of Christ, 12.3-8, with spiritual gifts. Now we see Righteousness within the church. Christ said, ‘They will know us by our love’. The world will see a distinct characteristic of believers as we exercise love. I have summarized the rest of the chapter with the characteristics of believers as we exercise love. And there are probably a lot of other individual items in the chapter as well, but you can view them as examples or components of the broader category of love. What does love look like? Some of the individual exhortations or encouragements that we will look at are expressions of love.

It is a little harder to outline this section, and is not even easy to diagram. We will talk a little about the grammar. Some of the translators take some liberties and I think they do a good job of trying to communicate the essence of the passages. I think 9-13 is one section which I have called ‘Within the church’ since it does have that emphasis at least as opposed to exercising love outside the church.

I have broken it into two parts. There seem to be three sentences here; I grouped the first two which are a little bit different from the third one. The first, 9-10, I call ‘Essential Exhortations’, and verse 9, Supernatural Love is the first one because that is the focus of three parts in the verse.

12.9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Obviously *love* is the focus. In the English it is posed somewhat as an encouragement ‘let love be without hypocrisy’, as a command or imperative. In the Greek text we have a little bit of a problem in that throughout verses 9 through 13 there is not a single finite verb. There is no verb. This is a little striking, more so in English than in the Greek. In fact you will find a series of *participles*—no finite verb, but at least 10 participles. I counted about 12 nouns with a few prepositional phrases, but no single verb. And the best I can tell the participles take an imperatival idea, ie, it takes the idea of encouragement at least, if not a command. That is the way the translators are taking it and I think that is legitimate.

At the start there are two nouns and the ‘let...be’ has been inserted by the translators to make good sense out of it, and because of the context I think it makes a lot of sense that we have encouragement here to live out something, in this case living out love, and then he focuses on a negative, ‘without hypocrisy’.

Then it is followed by two participles that I think modify the two words that are the main part of the sentence, ‘love’ and ‘without hypocrisy’. They modify this whole idea ‘let love be without hypocrisy’ with ‘abhor what is evil’, ‘cling to what is good’. So we will kind of add onto that.

But let’s take a close look at the *main* thrust of the encouragement here and I think it is put first because this is the priority; in other words, if we are focused on others within the body of Christ and on their needs, and ministering to them—that is what love is all about—rather than to focus on our giftedness and our individuality and our uniqueness, I think that is what God intends is what it means to be a living and holy sacrifice. So, the main thing that anyone should observe should be the exercise of love.

I have chosen to relate many of these verses even though I think some verses add a different dimension or kind of love. But most of the commentators show little or no relationship other than Paul stringing together the list of encouragements and/or exhortations. I think there is probably a closer relationship; I'm not saying that love is the overshadowing feature here, but I have chosen, in fact to see even the other parts that may be distinct as related to this love that we have here, God's ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) love. In 1Corinthians 13 Paul spends a whole chapter dealing with the ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) love and then, once he has kind of established that, he goes back to discussing some of the abuses of gifts. Here are some passages about love. The 9 characteristics or components of ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) love that I am listing include these and others related to the Romans 12 passage.

### God's ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) Love

1. Supernatural - 1John 4.7-12 *7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 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. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.*

We could spend two whole lessons to develop the idea of love being supernatural in every aspect of it. It is from God, as the passage makes clear and God is love. This comes from the word 'agape' itself—the meaning of the word and essence of it.

2. Unconditional - 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. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

The stress here is the unconditional aspect of love. There are OT commands to love—your neighbor as yourself, and Jesus adds a new component to it: love as He has loved. The occasion of these passages from John 13 on to the crucifixion: the night before He is sacrificed on the cross voluntarily, so loving in the way the He loves is an unconditional love—and there are other components in there as well, eg, the supernatural one.

3. Un-hypocritical - 2Corinthians 6.6 *in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,*

1Peter 1.22 *Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,*

The word ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) conveys those aspects but it also specifically talks about an un-hypocritical love ('without hypocrisy' is one word in the Greek text.) The whole chapter of 2Corinthians 6 is useful here. The word translated 'genuine' is the same as the one for 'un-hypocritical/without hypocrisy, as is the translation 'sincere'. These three passages all point to the idea of exercising our gift—and it can be done in a hypocritical way, building oneself up.

4. Hates evil - love sinner

12.9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

But how is it related to abhorring what is evil? Grammatically it is a participle that modifies the main clause and I think there is a direct relationship. And I think we can illustrate it in that un-hypocritical or genuine or pure love does not accept evil. And in relating to one another we don't accept one another's sin but we deal with them and their sin in a loving way.

In our culture, and even within the church, there is this idea that when you love someone you just take them as they are, but a fine line is not drawn between the sin and the sinner: we are to love the sinner, but we can abhor the sin, and the obvious example here is the whole deviant sexual activity that is rampant around our culture. We can hate homosexuality and lesbianism but at the same time we can love the lesbian and homosexual. How to do that is not always easy but that is what this passage is instructing here.

Jesus demonstrated it with the woman caught in adultery. Our tendency, sometimes, is to over-emphasize the abhorrence of it and miss the love aspect. We can love the person and still hate the sin. We can have friendship and be helpful, not even mentioning the subject of lesbianism, eg, and they will raise the issue. And we can keep broadening the issue of sin, identifying everyone as a sinner, not making a distinction, and then sharing the gospel. Evil does damage. God did this with us: loved us sinners. In Proverbs it says that God hates 6 things—no 7 of them; so God hates evil. It may be hard to make a decision in a given situation, but God will lead us.

12.9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Then there is another participle which balances it: ‘cling to what is good’. The word ‘cling’ is the very same word that Paul uses in a husband-wife relationship of cleaving or clinging or the *oneness* idea. So it is a very strong word; Paul uses it to describe that marriage relationship. It is from the word for ‘glue’, the idea of gluing two things together. So bond yourself, glue yourself, intimately cling to that which is good. That’s the balance and you might use Philippians 4.8: seek whatever good is there and ‘camp on it’.

#### IV. Application of God’s Righteousness 12.1-15.13

- A. Application to God 12.1-2
- B. Application to Church 12.3-21
  - 1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
  - 2. Exercise of Love 12.9-21
    - a. Within Church 9-13
      - 1) Essential Exhortations 12.9-10
        - a. Supernatural Love 12.9
        - b. Family Love 12.10

12.10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

‘Be devoted to one another in brotherly love’. We have an interesting combination of words here that are related to love but they are related to a different kind—or at least a different word from ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) in the Greek text for ‘love’. There are two parts here: ‘(be) devoted’ and then again, in the Greek text there is no finite verb. ‘to one another in brotherly love’ he is inserting a little bit of an exhortation that I think is indicated by the participle, a participial phrase that encourages, but no finite verb.

We just have the word for ‘devoted’ and the one for ‘brotherly love’. The first one, φιλόστοργος (fee-lós-tor-gos): the other word for love is at the beginning, φιλέω (fee-lé-o). It is related to the idea of ‘pursuing’ or ‘devotion’ along with the idea of ‘love’.

Then the ‘brotherly love’, φιλαδελφία (fee-lah-del-fee-a), from which is the city of brotherly love. It has the idea of family or love within brothers and sisters or brotherly love. It occurs 5 times, in the noun form.

The verb form, φιλέω (fee-lé-o), is quite common in the NT, 24 times. Most theologians think that it has more of an emotional element to it, more of a family element, whereas the ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) doesn’t have the relationship but a more unconditional aspect to it without necessarily the emotional component—not that it is missing, but that is not the emphasis of the word. The φιλέω (fee-lé-o) words would emphasize more the emotional aspect.

#### Terms

1. Devotion - φιλόστοργος (fee-lós-tor-gos)
2. Brotherly love - φιλαδελφία (fee-lah-del-fee-a) 5x
3. Verb form - φιλέω (fee-léh-o) 24x

We can add another component here, ‘family love’, you might say:

#### God’s agape (ah-gáh-pay) Love

1. Supernatural - 1John 4.7-12
2. Unconditional - John 13.34-35
3. Un-hypocritical - 2Corinthians 6.6, 1Peter 1.22
4. Hates evil - love sinner 12.9
5. Family love - 12.10
  - 1Juan 3.14 *We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.*

All sin is destructive. We want to encourage a person who is converted out of, eg, alcoholism, to flee from that life because it destroys not only the physical, but the spiritual life as well. This is true of whatever the sin may be, eg, pride—one of the things God *hates*. And we are quick to see sins in others, but blind to seeing them in ourselves. So family love, more intimate or emotional relationships—these are the kinds of things to have on display as we minister to one another and have relationship with one another.

12.10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

‘give preference to one another’: it’s actually an adverbial participle modifying the devoting. When you are devoting, then you give preference to them in honor—you elevate them, bless them. The heart of the entire verse is an unselfish love.

#### God’s agape Love

1. Supernatural - 1John 4.7-12
2. Unconditional - John 13.34-35
3. Un-hypocritical - 2Corinthians 6.6, 1Peter 1.22
4. Hates evil - love sinner 12.9
5. Family love - 12.10
  - 1John 3.14
6. Un-selfish - 12.10
  - 1Peter 4.8 *Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*

You could say that an aspect of ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) love is illustrated verse 10 as well in that it is an unselfish love, a love

that seeks the object of love. 1Peter 4:8 says what we have been talking about: it is fervent, active, unselfish, a love that is unconditional, un-hypocritical, and even an emotional love.

Now, maybe you can help me with this. Verses 9 and 10 were kind of stand-alone verses, but the following ones I have called ‘Encouraging Participles.’

- IV. Application of God’s Righteousness 12.1-15.13
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    - 2. Exercise of Love 12.9-21
      - a. Within Church 9-13
        - 1) Essential Exhortations 12.9-10
        - 2) Encouraging Participles 12.11-13
          - a) Diligent Service 12.11

We have one long ‘sentence’ from 11 to 13, a series of participles with no verb and only one noun as part of what we might consider the main grammatical element or the main clause.

12.11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

‘not lagging behind in diligence’: It could stand alone, but I tried to find a relationship to love as well. Diligent service: not lagging behind in diligence. The main idea: an active, opposite of laziness, working love.

12.11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

It is also fervent in spirit; you might say it has some emotion to it, the word having something of the idea of ‘boiling over’, bubbling, burning even. The translators translate it ‘in your spirit’; I think some take it as ‘fervent in the *Holy Spirit*, because it resembles a phrase that Paul uses elsewhere when he refers to the HS. But I think in this context it is right to have it in lower case ‘spirit’ rather than capital ‘Spirit’. At any rate, it is an emotional element to it, even though ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay) love—and I don’t want to say it is more detached—also does not omit the emotional aspect.

12.11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Then another participle: serving the Lord. Now remember the context; we are talking about being in the midst of the body and the

exercise of spiritual gifts. As we exercise them we are diligent in them, in our ministry, in our love, in our relationships, and it’s an excitement about the things that God is doing amongst us, and in the context we are serving the Lord. That is why I call it Diligent Service, trying to summarize all of verse 11.

#### God’s agape (ah-gáh-pay) Love

1. Supernatural - 1John 4.7-12
2. Unconditional - John 13.34-35
3. Un-hypocritical - 2Corinthians 6.6, 1Peter 1.22
4. Hates evil - love sinner 12.9
5. Family love - 12.10 1John 3.14
6. Un-selfish - 12.10 1Peter 4.8
7. Action - 12.11  
1Corinthians 13.1 *If I speak with the tongues of*

*men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

Notice in this passage, I can have *everything* visible, every gift even, but if I don’t have love, I have nothing. This is a kind of contrast: having everything but having nothing.

*4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,*

These are things, as in the rest of the chapter, where it describes what love *is*, it describes it in terms of *actions*. I think that is the focus of 12.11, ‘not lagging behind in diligence’; it is active, fervent in spirit and actively involved in serving the Lord.

- IV. Application of God’s Righteousness 12.1-15.13
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        - 1) Essential Exhortations 12.9-10
        - 2) Encouraging Participles 12.11-13
          - a) Diligent Service 12.11
          - b) Rejoicing in Suffering 12.12

12.12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

We will have opposition I think within the body of Christ and in that context, 'rejoicing in hope'. The series of participles continues.

12.12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

I put these three together, because when you are suffering you need to focus on the future, the hope, on when God releases us from the tribulation and in that hope we are able to persevere in the midst of that tribulation.

12.12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer.

And the essential that we need to keep is devotion to prayer because it is the Lord that rescues us out of tribulation. And He has purpose for our being in the midst of it.

I think these verses do work together and there is some relationship; and we might even say they even relate to love and we might say that love is enduring—hardship, persecution, difficulty. Biblical love does not get wrapped up in self-focus and concern for itself, but it endures even hardship and persecution.

#### God's agape Love

1. Supernatural - 1John 4.7-12
2. Unconditional - John 13.34-35
3. Un-hypocritical - 2Corinthians 6.6, 1Peter 1.22
4. Hates evil - love sinner 12.9
5. Family love - 12.10 1John 3.14
6. Un-selfish - 12.10 1Peter 4.8
7. Action - 12.11 1Corinthians 13.1
8. Enduring - 12.12

1Corinthians 13.8 *Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.*

And in verse 8 it says love remains; it endures in the context of 1Corinthians 13. So we could say that Biblical love is enduring.

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- 2) Encouraging Participles 12.11-13
  - a) Diligent Service 12.11
  - b) Rejoicing in Suffering 12.12
  - c) Meeting of Needs 12.13

And let's look quickly at this: that love is actively meeting needs.

#### 12.13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality

Again participles: 'contributing to the needs of the saints'; you might say it is *costly*. It is going to take commitment in terms of giving up that which we cling to and looking at the needs of the believer as opposed to our own needs. Newell, in his commentary, says:

"To make another's necessities one's own as to relieve them"  
—Newell

#### 12.13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

We have seen the word for Tribulation before. Now this word for 'practicing' also has the meaning of 'pursuing', something that doesn't come naturally, it is something that we work on. So practicing hospitality is making accommodation for those that need it. And in the 1st Century there were no hotels or motels; what was available was usually not very nice and with problems even of immorality.

#### Terms

1. Tribulation - θλίψις (thleép-sees)
2. Pursue - διώκω (dee-ó-ko)

The need and importance of hospitality was not only in the 1st Century but in *our* culture now. We might summarize 11-13: Biblical love is sacrificial and going back to John 13 it is Christ-like. It is the love that Christ has for us: it is sacrificial. An example of that is in John 15.13.

#### Parallel Verses

1. 12.12 - 1Peter 1.6 *In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*  
James 1.2 *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith*

*produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

2. 12.13 1Timothy 6.18 *Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,*

Hebrews 13.2 *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*

### God's agape Love

1. Supernatural - 1John 4.7-12
2. Unconditional - John 13.34-35
3. Un-hypocritical - 2Corinthians 6.6, 1Peter 1.22
4. Hates evil - love sinner 12.9
5. Family love - 12.10 1John 3.14
6. Un-selfish - 12.10 1Peter 4.8
7. Action - 12.11 1Corinthians 13.1
8. Enduring - 12.12 1Corinthians 13.8
9. Sacrificial- 12.11-13  
John 15.13 *"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*

So I have given you 9 components or characteristics, some illustrated by the passage, some of them inherent in the meaning of the word. Biblical love is supernatural, unconditional, un-hypocritical, it hates evil and loves the sinner, has a family or emotional element like family love, it is unselfish, it takes action, it is enduring and finally sacrificial. As an application:

Church involvement is not just attendance but exercise of Gifts and Loving Relationships.

[Romans 12.12-16 & 1Cor 13.4-8 Exercise of Love in Suffering 172]

We have seen various images of what it means to be *In Christ*:

### In Christ

1. Being living sacrifice
2. Not conforming to world - short accounts
3. Being Transformed - walking in Spirit
4. Only way to obey - Romans 12.3-15.13

All of these I think is what is conveyed in Romans 12.1-2. I want to emphasize how important the relationship to God, the relationship of being in Christ, being filled with the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, being

in fellowship—there is no way that we can do the things that are described in the rest of chapter 12 apart from being in fellowship, walking in the Spirit, being empowered.

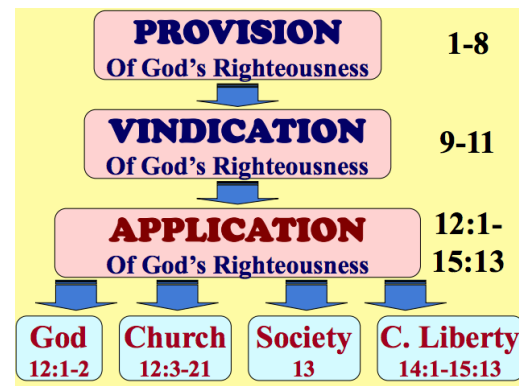
An example in verse 14: how are you to bless those who persecute you? What is our normal and natural response when we are attacked, persecuted? It's not one of blessing, for sure, so it requires that we be in fellowship and walking in the Spirit. Or, in verse 17, how do we never pay back evil for evil to anyone? The same: ...walking in the Spirit, because it is only in the power of the HS that we are able to live that life.

So the Only way to obey, Romans 12.3-15.13, or anything in Scripture, is by being in fellowship, walking in the Spirit, being empowered by the HS. All the images that God gives us are the variety of ways of being that living sacrifice.

I like what an older saint, Robert Chapman says: "Seeing so many preach Christ and so few live Christ, I will aim to live Him."

He was a friend of John Nelson Darby who frequently said, "He lives what I preach."

What we have been stressing in Romans is that good theology is incomplete unless it is lived out. Chapter 12 is about the details of the everyday experience of living out righteousness. We have believed, trusted and been regenerated, but the Christian life is not automatic; it takes the appropriating of the power of the Lord. So we are in the part that I think deals with the church. How does righteousness look in the church? When we complete chapter 12 we will see how it looks in Society (13) and then Paul deals with Christian liberty in 14-15.13.



### IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13

- A. Application to God 12.1-2
- B. Application to Church 12.3-21
  1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8

- 2.. Exercise of Love 12.9-21
  - a. Within Church 12.9-13
  - b. Outside Church 12.14-21
    - 1) In Suffering 12.14-16
    - a) Actions of Blessings 12.14

Outside the Church there are relationships that are difficult, although some of these you may encounter in the church as well.

12.14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Obviously if someone breaks into your house, does damage to your car, or insults you—whether deliberate or accidental, what is the natural response? It is not to bless! That is not what the flesh does, so when you walk in the flesh this does happen. We will get to the passage on retaliation. So, it is not easy to bless those that persecute you. In this verse, which of the two words, θλίψις or διώκω, is used? It is διώκω.

#### Terms

1. Tribulation - θλίψις (theép-sees)
2. Pursue - διώκω (dee-ó-ko)
3. Persecute - διώκω (dee-ó-ko)

So that same word can be used in a positive sense like Romans 9.30, with *pursuing righteousness* or 14.19, *So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.*

It's a pursuit, a positive pursuit.

But can also have that negative connotation where someone can pursue you for bad bad purposes or for evil means. So it is often translated 'to pursue' in order to do damage. That's the word we have here, an evil pursuit in this context, and the reason I point it out is that Paul uses the same word within the same context in two radically different ways. In fact it is used more often in the context of persecution. It is used 44 times and 30 of them are used in this negative sense.

I think everything we have in the chapter are things that are distinct and only capable for the believer. And this is what distinguishes us from the rest of the world, as Leviticus indicates for the Hebrews, and God separated the children of Israel in the way they even ate their food and down to all the minutia. In the church age things that can distinguish us are qualities or characteristics that reflect the Lord Jesus Christ. So these are distinctively qualities or characteristics, and I would say we are not capable of accomplishing them apart from the

empowering of the Holy Spirit. We have an example of Jesus in Luke 6.27 and of Stephen in Acts:

#### Parallel Verses

1. 12.12 - 1Peter 1.6  
James 1.2-4
2. 12.13 - 1Timothy 6.18  
Hebrews 13.2
3. 12.14 - Luke 6.27 *"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*

Not just tolerate them—do good to them. Paul says, 'Bless'. These are overt acts, actions, things that in ourselves we cannot do. But in the power of the HS we can bless those who persecute us. We may be called upon to experience more persecution and this is the Biblical instruction and pattern, the way we are to respond.

Acts 7.60 *Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.*

'Falling asleep' is a euphemism for dying. In his last breath Stephen was blessing those who persecuted him. In fact he called upon the Lord to forgive them. That reflects Jesus on the Cross, when He said, 'Forgive them for they know not what they do.' So this is not an easy thing; it only comes in the power of the HS. And he added to that 'bless and do not curse.' To curse is the normal, the natural. But we are to do the very opposite.

(These are the first finite verbs in the chapter: bless, bless, do not curse.)

12.14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

So love 'bears all things'. What is love?

#### Agape (ah-gáh-pay) Love of God

10. Bears all things - 12.14  
1Corinthians 13.5 *does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

This is a list of the kinds of natural reactions: acting unbecomingly, looking after oneself, keep account of wrongs suffered, be happy—rejoice—in wrongs, ie, in unrighteousness.

Instead, distinctly Christian reactions are evidence of that supernatural love.

- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
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    - 2.. Exercise of Love 12.9-21
      - a. Within Church 9-13
      - b. Outside Church 12.14-21
        - 1) In Suffering 12.14-16
          - a) Actions of Blessings 12.14
          - b) Feelings of Emotions 12.15

12.15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

'Rejoice with those who rejoice' and weep with those who weep. Here are parallel passages that give further insight and reiterate identifying with others, feeling with others.

#### Parallel Verses

1. 12.12 - 1Peter 1.6  
James 1.2-4
2. 12.13 - 1Timothy 6.18  
Hebrews 13.2
3. 12.14 - Luke 6.27  
Acts 7.60
4. 12.15 - 1Corinthians 12.26 *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*  
James 5.13 *Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.*

You might think it is easier to weep with those that weep than to rejoice with those that rejoice, but both of them require the empowering of the HS sometimes in our pride. When others are blessed we might feel left out or maybe jealous, but we are to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those that weep. We identify with them and experience their rejoicing. So God's love not only bears all things but rejoices with the truth.

12.15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

#### Agape (ah-gáh-pay) Love of God

- 10. Bears all things - 12.14  
1Corinthians 13.5-7
- 11. Rejoices with truth - 12.15  
1Corinthians 13.6 ...*but rejoices with the truth*

This brings us to verse 16:

- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
  - A. Application to God 12.1-2
  - B. Application to Church 12.3-21
    - 1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
    - 2.. Exercise of Love 12.9-21
      - a. Within Church 9-13
      - b. Outside Church 12.14-21
        - 1) In Suffering 12.14-16
          - a) Actions of Blessings 12.14
          - b) Feelings of Emotions 12.15
          - c) Wisdom of Humility 12.16

We saw in verse 14 Actions of Blessings, in 15 Feelings of Emotions and now in 16 there is the Wisdom of Humility which is the theme of the four little clauses:

12.16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

'Be of the same mind toward one another.' This is the infinitive (made into a command/imperative by the translators) of the word that we looked at in verse 3 where it talks about thinking and the way we view ourselves, our mental picture of who we are. He is using the same word in a phrase in relation to *one another*. He is not saying that we should think the same things, nor necessarily be the same. He has already talked about the diversity of the body of Christ and how each is unique.

What he is saying, with regard to our attitude to one another, is that we *accept* the differences. We identify with one another, understand one another, recognizing those differences but not allowing them to *divide* us, but having *unity*. Be united because we are we are united in Christ.

12.16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.



And in order to do that we need to continually look at ourselves—because we are, by nature, self-centered, and our tendency is to think more highly of ourselves—and make sure we are not haughty in mind. Not being haughty is to not be self-centered, having a proper view of who we are in Christ...

12.16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

...getting outside of ourselves and associate with those that have the most needs. Avoid the haughty mind.

### Parallel Verses

1. 12.12 - 1Peter 1.6  
James 1.2-4
2. 12.13 - 1Timothy 6.18  
Hebrews 13.2
3. 12.14 - Luke 6.27  
Acts 7.60
4. 12.15 - 1Corinthians 12.26  
James 5.13
5. 12.16 - Romans 15.5 *Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,*  
The same idea of likemindedness.  
Philippians 2.2-4 *make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Expands in some detail what we have in 12.16. Continuing in the passage is the example of Christ in unity and humility and what we are to do: be likeminded in Christ.

12.16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Do not be wise in your own estimation. A separate sentence, somewhat summarizing what we have seen so far. All of these things are *wisdom*, not being self-centered, walking in the Spirit.

### Agape (ah-gáh-pay) Love of God

10. Bears all things - 12.14  
1Corinthians 13.5-7
11. Rejoices with truth - 12.15  
1Corinthians 13.6
12. Not arrogant - Romans 12.16  
1Corinthians 13.4 *Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant*  
Also like 12.16.

It takes the power of HS to live Christian life, to do these actions that we have considered.

[Romans 12.17-21 Overcoming Revenge with Love 173]

The next verse treats the problem of taking Revenge.

- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
  - A. Application to God 12.1-2
  - B. Application to Church 12.3-21
    1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
    - 2.. Exercise of Love 12.9-21
      - a. Within Church 12.9-13
      - b. Outside Church 12.14-21
        - 1) In Suffering 12.14-16
        - 2) Against Revenge 12.17-21
          - a) Elimination of Revenge 12.17

In 17-21 there is a more overt persecution, and how to respond to it. This includes our reaction to national and world-wide changes as well. In general, our natural response is one of revenge.

12.17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Notice not to pay back evil *to anyone*. How do you do this if someone says a bad thing about you or someone cuts you off in traffic, things that come up in a surprising way, at an inconvenient time and it is difficult to think through all the way to how to respond. Oftentimes there isn't time to *think through* a lot; you have to almost instinctively respond. That's why the old nature will not be able to respond properly in the midst of a difficult situation.

Therefore I have a list of 10 ways to respond. Two of them we have to prepare ahead of time before we encounter something like persecution or we face a situation that catches us off guard, a remark that somebody makes, a way that someone responds, or maybe an evil that you see coming, how do you respond? An example would be of Corrie Ten Boon who was being persecuted. She was able to show love to those that were mistreating her sister. It doesn't come naturally and is an example of how we *cannot* do this in the flesh.

### **Getting Revenge** (with humor—not good advice)

- 1- Never go to bed angry. Stay awake. Plan your Revenge.
- 2- Taking revenge is wrong, very very wrong, But very very fun!  
(Better approach)  
Sometime the best revenge is to smile and move on.

Even that advice, though it's good, falls short of the Biblical response because we will see in this passage, that we don't just smile and move on. We actually do things not only to defuse the situation but try to make peace and sometimes that peace is not even possible, but sometimes an attempt is made. Paul has already mentioned some of the things to do or not do, in verses 9 and 16. And here are some other passages: Matthew 5.38-39, 1Peter 3.9 and 1Thessalonians 5.15.

### **Parallel Verses** that teach essentially the same concept of not paying back evil with evil

1. 12.12 - 1Peter 1.6  
James 1.2-4
2. 12.13 - 1Timothy 6.18  
Hebrews 13.2
3. 12.14 - Luke 6.27  
Acts 7.60
4. 12.15 - 1Corinthians 12.26  
James 5.13
5. 12.16 - Romans 15.5  
Philippians 2.2-4
6. 12.17 - Matthew 5.38 *"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 an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.*

Jesus takes an OT passage... Governments must effect justice and it must be fair. Jesus contrasts this with the individual believer who is to leave that justice to God. We are to respond as the whole NT teaches—which is *impossible* for us except for the HS in us.

1Peter 3.9 *not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

1Thessalonians 5.15 *See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.*

### **Doing Impossible!!!**

1. Consistent walk Be prepared ahead of time and part of the preparation is to be walking in the Spirit which gives us the foundation and resources to think through and respond rightly. That is why we study the Word and spend time in prayer—so we have something to draw on in a difficult situation.
2. Emergency prayer And since we have prayed in order to be prepared, in a situation we pray in emergency mode.

12.17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

And not having just the negative, here is the positive: respect what is right in the sight of all men. How does this help? Paul is again getting us outside of ourselves. If someone is about to strike you or has struck you, the flesh is going to want to strike back and we need to get outside of the old nature and think about what this other person needs.

Paul calls us to think of the needs of that enemy, ie, why are they striking out, why are they doing what they are doing? They have deep-seated needs for which God has put me in this circumstance to perhaps help them in some way. So, in that emergency prayer, one of the things to be asked is, 'Lord, what can I do to meet that deep-seated need and how can I turn this whole thing around?' You have to prepare and think it through ahead of time so that when the situation comes you are able to respond the right way.

3. Needs of 'enemy' How God can help you meet the deep-seated need that the person has. That is a hurting person who hurts you. You have to be prepared to respond as Paul says.

### IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13

- |                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| A. Application to God          | 12.1-2   |
| B. Application to Church       | 12.3-21  |
| 1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts | 12.3-8   |
| 2.. Exercise of Love           | 12.9-21  |
| a. Within Church               | 12.9-13  |
| b. Outside Church              | 12.14-21 |
| 1) In Suffering                | 12.14-16 |

- 2) Against Revenge 12.17-21
  - a) Elimination of Revenge 12.17
  - b) Establishing of Peace 12.18

12.18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Paul was realistic, recognizing that some situations are bad and we need to face people who really hate us and we should be prepared to face people who hate Christianity.

12.18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

And there are situations that cannot be resolved, which would be the 'if possible' here, but so far as it *depends* on you or us, we do what we can...to be at peace with all men. I can also think to see if there is anything on my part causing this rift, if it is a small thing, or something causing this deep antagonism, and if there is, part of dealing with it is either asking for forgiveness or acknowledging whatever part I played in it. So that is part of the personal aspect.

#### **Doing Impossible!!!**

1. Consistent walk
2. Emergency prayer
3. Needs of 'enemy'
4. Personal part

12.18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

But it goes even further: be at peace with all men. I think this means that we work at it, we seek it, we don't let it fly—like the internet advice to smile and let it go—we actually try to establish peace. Sometimes we can't because we are actually enemies of the world and we stand in the way of the people of the world and their agenda. But to the extent that we can we attempt resolution.

5. Attempt resolution To the extent that you can

#### IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13

- A. Application to God 12.1-2
- B. Application to Church 12.3-21
  1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
  - 2.. Exercise of Love 12.9-21
    - a. Within Church 12.9-13
    - b. Outside Church 12.14-21
      - 1) In Suffering 12.14-16
      - 2) Against Revenge 12.17-21

- a) Elimination of Revenge 12.17
- b) Establishing of Peace 12.18
- c) Exhortation on Justice 12.19-20

Paul continues with more on justice: never take your own revenge.

2.19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

Then he gives the Biblical reason for this. A parallel passage is 2Timothy 3.12 which tells us that we can *expect* to suffer for our faith.

#### **Parallel Verses** that teach essentially the same concept of not paying back evil with evil

1. 12.12 - 1Peter 1.6  
James 1.2-4
2. 12.13 - 1Timothy 6.18  
Hebrews 13.2
3. 12.14 - Luke 6.27  
Acts 7.60
4. 12.15 - 1Corinthians 12.26  
James 5.13
5. 12.16 - Romans 15.5  
Philippians 2.2-4
6. 12.17 - Matthew 5.38  
1Peter 3.9
7. 12.19 2Timothy 3.12 *Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

12.19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

...but leave room for the *wrath*. This is the way it is in Greek; the New American Standard adds...of God. The commentators debate, but we won't look at all of that. But Paul is saying that we can leave it in God's hands, we don't have to respond wrongly. We can make the effort to bring peace and here I think he is calling on us to trust in the sovereign hand of God and you might include the word 'just' and sovereign hand of God. He knows; he is omniscient and sovereign. He has a plan. In fact He has us in this situation perhaps for this particular occasion for this particular individual. He quotes Deuteronomy 32.35 and part of it says: Vengeance is mine, I will repay—a quote of God Himself.

The word vengeance in our culture is a little bit not understood properly. And in this context we relate it to revenge, but I think there is a distinction even though ‘revenge’ and ‘vengeance’ are the same word, the verb and the noun in Greek, taking revenge and vengeance. I think it is related to justice in the OT and also here. It’s related to effecting justice; not that God is revengeful in the sense that ‘Oh, I’m going to *get* them.’ But God is the one that effects *justice*. He is the one that brings about justice; that’s what the word vengeance actually means. ‘Justice is mine...’

Remember, in the OT there were cities of refuge so that in a ‘fiery’ situation the natural tendency amongst the Jewish people was to take their own vengeance, effect their own justice. But Deuteronomy tells us that God is the one that we trust, and to leave it to Him, especially in an emotional situation.

### **Doing Impossible!!!**

1. Consistent walk
2. Emergency prayer
3. Needs of ‘enemy’
4. Personal part
5. Attempt resolution
6. Trust sovereignty

12.19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. [Deuteronomy 32.35]

The word for ‘take revenge’ here is the verb and ‘vengeance’ is the noun, ie, they are the same word. We think of vindictiveness, all the negative aspects but the Greek word is related to ‘justice’. In other words, never take your own effecting of justice. Now, if somebody strikes us or says an unjust word about us—unfair, not right—our tendency is to try to make things right by effecting justice, ie, harm done requires harm in return. That’s not our job, not what God has called us to do. He has called us to make peace as we say in verse 18; in fact God is the one that effects justice.

So we can even translate it: ‘JUSTICE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.’, ie, I will effect justice. God is not a vindictive, getting-even type of God, but He is a *just* God who will eventually right all wrongs and there will be ultimate and final justice that we anticipate. But while we live in this world, in what we might describe as the devil’s world—he’s the god of *this* world—and in that we need to expect the 2Timothy 3.12 experience of persecution, and along with that, injustice.

Sometimes it is difficult to separate general disapproval from judgment. There is a fine line. A lot of people take our Lord’s words in

the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7, of not judging, and they look at it in an absolute sense. But there are a lot of passages encouraging ‘judging’; in fact we have to be ‘judging’, to have discernment. That what it is all about: separating out right from wrong. It is discerning.

Notice the context there in the Sermon on the Mount: Jesus is talking about *hypocritical* judgment, ie, you have a log in your eye and you are trying to take a speck out of your brother’s eye. That is hypocrisy, ie, you are doing even worse, yet judging the person who is probably rightfully wrong. But you are not in the position to take out that speck because you do not have the proper insight or vision on the circumstance. Yes, there is a fine line—but we are to judge. We judge according to God’s standards and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are not to take our own revenge. God says, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay. There are a lot of passages, but let’s read a few:

Isaiah 13.9 *Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger; To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it.*

There is an ultimate effecting of justice, described here as fury, burning anger, even cruel... What God is saying is that it is very severe: with fury, even with visible expressions of it. ‘burning anger’ = wrath. It is very strong language. This is vengeance. It is eventual and God has expressed it in time as well in some of the past, historical events relating to some of the nations. But this is a strong description of what God will do. This is holy, pure; it is what God *must* do in effecting justice.

Then in 1Thessalonians 1.10...

1Thessalonians 1.10 *and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.*

There is a future wrath and this is to the believer; we wait for the Son. In this context we need to be reminded of this wrath.

2Thessalonians 1.5 *This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ... 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

They were suffering; the Thessalonians were under persecution so he reminds them of this vengeance, this judgment that is coming and this is what we need to be reminded of: we don’t need to effect it but *endure* the injustice and if God is pleased to effect it in our experience immediately then we can praise Him. But we can praise Him anyway because He is going to effect it ultimately.

2Thessalonians 1.6: Again, it is up to God, and only just for Him to repay. That is the effecting of justice and God will ultimately and eventually make all things *right*. That's our hope—and only the believer has that hope. But we need to be reminded of it. And only when we are walking in the Spirit will these passages come to mind.

### Doing Impossible!!!

1. Consistent walk
2. Emergency prayer
3. Needs of 'enemy'
4. Personal part
5. Attempt resolution
6. Trust sovereignty
7. Endure injustice

So, we can attempt resolution, trust the sovereignty of God and maybe even we have to endure injustice—God may not intervene on our behalf at that moment. In fact every martyr experiences the injustice of martyrdom, without an immediate resolution, as they go to be with the Lord. But they go *trusting* that God in fact will effect that justice ultimately.

But He may work in the midst, and I think that there are things that we can do; the passage goes on and quotes another passage, Proverbs 25.21-22:

12.20 “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.” [Proverbs 25.22]

Meanwhile, we do acts of goodness: If your enemy is hungry, feed Him...so we are reminded of what God has in His Word in terms of how we respond. This is wisdom; it takes wisdom to respond rightly: a positive response, doing good. This reminds us of James 1.2 *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials*, and then in verse 5: *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...* This is the wisdom, a positive response, one of goodness.

To apply this, we need to call to memory all of these passages, like the Proverbs one, the Deuteronomy one, the 1 and 2 Thessalonians passages and many others as well—in fact the entire book of 1Peter which is building a resource in your mind and in your soul and in your consistent walk to recall on occasions like this.

8. Remind of the Word

12.20 “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

If he is thirsty, give him a drink... We study passages like these to be prepared to build a resource to build on, to be able to respond in the sudden event. Very practical things.

12.20 “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

...For in so doing overt, real actions, 'you will heap bring coals on his head'. God has already begun working the vengeance part, process of re-paying. An interesting image: there are a lot of commentaries with ideas. One thing is to carry on your own head in a pan burning coals to supply someone else whose fire went out. Or, if you do good, it catches them off guard and it would be like setting their hair on fire. Also, God will bring a fire of judgement if not immediate.

### Doing Impossible!!!

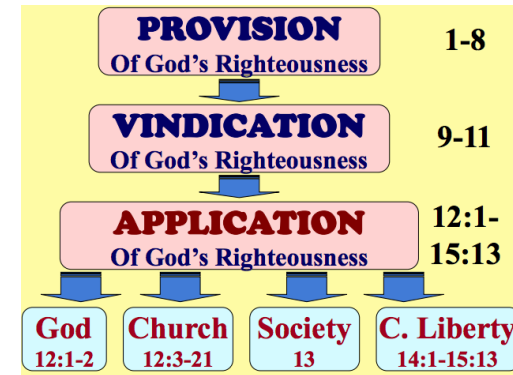
1. Consistent walk
2. Emergency prayer
3. Needs of 'enemy'
4. Personal part
5. Attempt resolution
6. Trust sovereignty
7. Endure injustice
8. Remind of Word
9. Acts of Goodness

We actually do acts of goodness. This is part of the resolution. And if we have occasion, even in a court of law we can plead for leniency if the Lord leads and the occasion calls for it. But certainly forgiveness. And there are a lot of things we can do.

IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
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1) In Suffering	12.14-16
2) Against Revenge	12.17-21

- a) Elimination of Revenge 12.17
- b) Establishing of Peace 12.18
- c) Exhortation on Justice 12.19-20
- d) Emphasis on Victory 12.21

[Romans 13.1 Introduction to Romans 13 174]



And we persist in good acts rather than revenge.

12.21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Already in verse 9...*Abhor what is evil*;

It is the idea of *victory*. Do not be overcome o non-victorious by evil. The word for ‘overcome’ is the one we looked at for *being victorious*, νικάω (nee-káh-o).

12.21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Also verse 17 *Never pay back evil for evil to anyone*. This is the ultimate way that we overcome. Love overcomes revenge. We do it with acts of goodness rather than protecting our own interests or trying to resolve our own injustice.

### Doing Impossible!!!

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Consistent walk    | a pattern of responding in the Spirit    |
| 2. Emergency prayer   | being in communion with the Lord         |
| 3. Needs of ‘enemy’   | how can I help and/or share gospel       |
| 4. Personal part      | do I need to rectify my part in it       |
| 5. Attempt resolution | if possible, do something to resolve     |
| 6. Trust sovereignty  | accept God’s plan, allow for His wrath   |
| 7. Endure injustice   | leave revenge to God, to effect justice  |
| 8. Remind of Word     | be prepared with the Word as resource    |
| 9. Acts of Goodness   | not standing in the way of God’s justice |
| 10. Persistent good   | overcome with good/love continuously     |

These are the ten items for having the right response to overcome revenge, especially as our culture continues to deteriorate. We need to apply all this to our own lives. It may not resolve immediately; it may take time, or ‘if possible’, it may never be resolved. The offending party may be so deep in their own sin and self-centeredness that they never want to resolve the situation, but that does not prevent us from continuing and persisting in good.

This is the impossible—the Christian life. How to respond in the midst of persecution. We may be called upon to respond in this way as our culture continues to degenerate and fall further and further from the Lord Jesus Christ.

It takes the power the Holy Spirit to live the impossible Christian life.

Chapter 13 is another subdivision in our main division of Application of God’s Righteous. What does righteous look like lived out to God: it is like the sacrifice of the animal—giving our life over to God allowing Him to use us in whatever means He would desire.

Within the church, the application that we just finished, it looks like the expressing of *gifts*, the exercise and living out of gifts as people minister to one another in their gifts and in a variety of ways expressing *love*, those two aspects—the love aspect extending all the way to those who are actually persecuting us.

And now Paul is going to apply God’s righteousness to a broader circle, you might say, outside of the church in society in general and he starts a discussion in relationship to *government*. It is submission. It ‘looks like’ submitting to the authority. It’s very broad, doesn’t mind what kind of government, dictatorship, totalitarian or if a republic.

### IV. Application of God’s Righteousness 12.1-15.13

- A. Application to God 12.1-2
- B. Application to Church 12.3-21
- C. Application to Society 13
  - 1. Submission to Authority 13.1-7

13.1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Every person = soul, ψυχή (psu-kháy), every soul. It is kind of a Hebrew idiom or at least a common usage of the word in the 1st Century, in the Greek language, referring to *the whole person*. And then it is modified with ‘all’ or ‘every’. I think it is put at the beginning to

emphasize a little that there are no exceptions, this is the general rule. Like a default settings on a computer, this is the default setting for every circumstance. The general command is that every person be *in subjection* to the governing authorities. We will exegete this because it is timely in our circumstances, its difficulty and because this principle applies not only to relationship to government but it is broader, particularly verses 1 and 2 in terms of *all* authority. ‘For there is *no* authority except from God and those which exist are established by God’. Very strong, clear passage, not complicated, but again impossible to fully implement in our various relationships. It would include the authority that God has set up within the family, within the church, in employment with respect to employers or master slaves. Or, I think the immediate context, 13.1-7, is primarily the application to government.

### Overview

1. Roman Empire Context: in order to realize that it doesn’t matter what government a person is under—this applies. Broad based, default position: this is what is expected of the believer, those that are regenerated, have the Spirit of God, know the Lords Jesus Christ. This is what our responsibility is and what God expects of us. There are some parallels of the Roman Empire of the 1st Century with our culture, but we will also stress the idea that it doesn’t matter what culture.
    1. Roman Empire Government
    2. Roman Empire and its treatment of Jews
    3. Jewish attitude toward Roman Empire
    4. Church and Judaism Relationship
    5. Romans 13
  2. Romans 13 Context within the book
  3. Romans 13 Overview with brief outline:
- IV. Application of God’s Righteousness 12.1-15.13
- A. Application to God 12.1-2
  - B. Application to Church 12.3-21
  - C. Application to Society 13
    1. Submission to Authority 13.1-7
    2. Love of the Citizens 13.8-10
    3. Motivation for Alert Living 13.11-14

Submission to Authority, particularly government authority, 1-7  
 Love of the Citizens—notice he goes back to the concept of love, but in a different context, 8-10.

Then closes with Motivation for Living Alertly, 11-14, and we need to be discerning and alert in the culture in which we live, using wisdom.

### 4. Romans 13 Principles

Then I want to deal with some major principles that will be developed from the passage; for example, a little extended study on the importance of authority, the Biblical *doctrine* of authority itself. And the passage brings out the origin and basis of it right there in the 1st verse. We will talk about the need of submission on our part.

The passage also talks about the role of government: what is the design God has for government, what is His *intention*, the Biblical design for it. Not many governments fulfill the plan that God has for them, but that has nothing to do with the nature and character of God, but it’s good to know the role of government as well. And we want to spend some time on: When it is impossible to obey? Are there circumstances when we have to say ‘No’? We have some Biblical examples in the OT, such as Daniel, and also some in the NT that give us a little bit of guidance in the book of Acts. We might even, if we have time, discuss the place of *activism*, and to what extent are we to exercise political activism.

13.1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

A reminder: It takes the power of the Holy Spirit to live the impossible Christian life!