

A Church With Open Arms (3)

Love Without Hypocrisy

Romans 12:9–21

Introduction: After talking about spiritual gifts, Paul immediately starts talking about spiritual love. He does essentially the same thing in 1 Corinthians. First Corinthians 12 he discusses spiritual gifts, and then chapter 13 begins, in effect saying, “*You may have every gift imaginable, but without love you are nothing.*” Jesus said in John 13:35 “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” And that raises an important question: *What does Christian love actually look like?*

I. The purity of genuine love: (v. 9)

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

A. Love must be genuine, not staged.

Hypocrisy - pretending to be something you have no intention of becoming. (Lk. 22:47-48)

1. Don’t love like Judas – (1 Jn 3:18)

2. Love does not merely say something, it demonstrates something (Rom. 5:8)

B. Love must be holy, not sentimental

“Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

1. Paul puts love and hatred in the same verse.

2. Genuine love loves what is good so deeply that it hates what destroys the people it loves.

a. *Cling to what is good!* (1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:15; Jn. 1:14)

Love without truth becomes sentimentality. Truth without love becomes brutality.

II. The practice of genuine love: — vv. 10–13

A. Devoted affection — v. 10 “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love...” (That’s family language) (Rom 12:5)

B. Deferring Honor — v. 10 “...in honor giving preference to one another.” Or “Outdo one another in showing honor” (Phil. 2:3)

C. Diligent Service — v. 11 “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” (Love has energy – Love serves!) (Col 3:23)

D. Durable hope — v. 12 “Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.” (Real love keeps showing up even in hard seasons).

E. Demonstrated hospitality — v. 13 “Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.” (Genuine love sees needs and meets needs) (Heb. 13:2; 1 Pe 4:9)

III. The pressure on genuine love: (vv. 14–18)

A. Persecution — v. 14 “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” (Mt 5:44; Lk 23:34; Ac. 7:60)

B. Participation — v. 15 “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

Sometimes weeping with those who weep is easier than rejoicing with those who rejoice. You know why? Because their sorrow usually doesn't threaten our ego.

C. Pride — v. 16 “Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.”

(Phil 2:5) If Jesus could kneel and wash feet, there is no one beneath us.

D. Provocation — v. 17 “Repay no one evil for evil.”

Here's the problem with getting even: To get even with somebody who has acted badly, you usually have to come down to their level. (1 Pe 3:9)

E. Peace — v. 18 “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Just as to have conflict, there must be two sides - Peace requires participation from both sides. *Make sure the problem isn't on your side.*

IV. The power of genuine love: (vv. 19–21)

A. Refuse retaliation — v. 19 “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves...”

You can release the offense because you are held by God. (Deut. 32:35)

B. Respond with mercy — v. 20 “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink...” (Don’t hurt your enemy – help them. Don’t merely refrain from evil – actively do good). (Lk 6:27; Prov. 25:21–22)

C. Reverse the Evil — v. 21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Hold on to good. Do good. Use good to defeat evil). (1 Pe. 2:23; Rom. 5:10)

Conclusion: *Where is your love being tested right now?* (Eph. 4:32; 1 Jn 4:19) The gospel always brings us back to mercy.

A church with open arms is created when people who have received the open arms of Jesus begin opening their arms to others.

“Lord, don’t let evil change me into something that doesn’t look like Jesus.”

Genuine Christian love overcomes evil with good.9