

Romans 12-2 **August 20, 2012**

We have come to chapter 12 of Romans and left our study after verse 9 where we are instructed to love really and truly, without a hidden agenda. We are also instructed to hate or abhor evil; and cling to what is good.

We have reached the time in this world foretold by the prophets when evil is called good and good is called evil. If you are a believer and you know your bible then you will know what is good that you are to cling to and what is the evil you should hate.

It sounds a bit radical to talk about hating evil but the bible is full of examples of God's hatred of evil. When we hate evil we are becoming more like God.

In Proverbs we have a passage, Proverbs 6:16-19, six things God hates. "There are six things which God hates, seven which are an abomination to him; haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies and one who spreads strife among brothers".

I want to be on God's side so if He hates these things so will I. First of all; haughty eyes or some translations read "a proud look". They say the eyes are the windows of the soul and I believe you know exactly what haughty eyes look like. So for us, let us avoid pride those haughty eyes and ourselves.

Secondly God hates a lying tongue. Remember Jesus told us that lying comes from Satan, the father of all liars. Our Father, God, is the Truth, John 14:6. Hate lying lips enough to not let your lips lie. One way to do this is to love the truth, Jesus is the Truth.

Third thing God hates is "hands that shed innocent blood". We all know that murder is a gross sin, but shedding innocent blood is even more so and what blood is more innocent than the baby in the womb. Our country has allowed upwards of 50 million Americans to be slaughtered in the womb. We must pray for those desperate women who make this life altering choice of abortion and the deceived doctors to perform it.

The fourth thing God hates is a "heart that devises wicked plans". We are to use our minds and our imaginations to think of good things. Renew your mind with the word of God daily to avoid this evil in your life.

The fifth thing God hates is "feet that make haste to run to evil". We are to hate all evil courses of action and not join in with them.

The false witness who lies is the sixth thing God hates. Beware of standing before a judge and giving false testimony. We have seen this done on TV and it almost treated as a joke, friends, and God hates it.

The last thing mentioned is the person who sows discord among brethren. This is the person who turns one person against another for any number of motives. This happens in families, it happens in churches and God hates it. What can be a worse testimony than a church that argues and divides?

Moving on from Proverbs we can see in the book of Isaiah God's hatred of false worship. That is people who come to worship Him without the slightest idea of obeying Him, hypocrisy.

We know that God hates false religion. Some say that one religion is as good as another but how can God overlook the person who turns his back on the sacrifice of Jesus for their sin and determines to make their own way to heaven.

Let's hate what God hates and cling to what is good. If we are going to be like God we must be against sin. But we have to make an effort to hold on to what is good, it will slip away very quickly unless we act to avoid compromise. We cannot afford to ignore evil; the saying is still true; the only thing needed for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing.

Cling to what is good in your church, God's Word. So many churches today have decided they know better than God and have no use for the truth of His Word. In fact, there is a famine in our land for the Word of God. The very place where people should be fed the life saving manna of God's Word is letting people starve.

In our culture, in our churches, in our homes, friends, I challenge you and me to hate what is evil and cling to what is good.

Romans 12:10-13

In verse 9 Paul said "let love be without hypocrisy" and now he is going to tell us how that can happen.

Did you ever think that salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is for after you die, that it is a guarantee against hell? It that and oh so much more. Think of it like this; salvation has a relationship to our past, our present and our future. The sins of the past, which separated us from God and would have paved our way to hell for all eternity have been forgiven, the guilt of them removed, because Jesus was our substitute and on the cross He paid the price for all my sin and guilt and yours too. We no longer face eternal separation from God because of our past. We are on our way to heaven to live with Christ forever with Him. So our past and our future are secured.

What about our present? Granted this life is fleeing, our life on this earth is limited, the bible says four or five score at most, but it is being lived moment by moment. Today is the most important day, Jesus commanded us to live in today and not worry about tomorrow. Remember our God is outside of time; it is always today for Him.

Here are our instructions for living the Christian life today. We naturally long for love and to belong to a group so God has filled us with Himself, that emptiness is gone and we have a group, He has placed us in the body of Christ. Do you remember the old hymn that said "bless be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love, the fellowship of kindred hearts is like to that above"? That is God's plan for us. To bind us together in love for each other the tie being Jesus Himself. That oneness among believers is the answer of God the Father to the prayer of Jesus in John 17:22-23.

Among believers who are bound together in that oneness there will be compassion and encouragement, which is love without hypocrisy. Does any other religion you know of promote this love and oneness, which our heavenly Father knows we need and desire? Have you ever heard of any religion besides Christianity building hospitals, sending food and help to far away lands, praying for each other?

Romans 10:11

What is your diligence quotient? Are you diligent in your job or other responsibilities? Friends, we are not to be lazy, and the bible has plenty to say about that, plainly stated, it is sin for a Christian to be lazy in their jobs, in their homes. We cannot afford to be lazy in our spiritual life; spiritual laziness will lead to spiritual defeat. Did you ever consider tithing your time? One author has said there are 96 periods of 15 minutes in a day, so a quarter of an hour is approximately one percent of your day, so 10% (a tithe) is two hours and 24 minutes. Not many give anything close to this amount of time to bible study and prayer. I am not trying to make you feel guilty, just giving you something to think about. True confession, I am not in the habit of tithing my time either but after this lesson I am going to make some different plans.

Are you fervent in spirit? What does that mean? The RSV bible translates this "aglow with the Spirit". Do you radiate the Presence of Jesus Christ? Here is a definition of these thoughts; The glow of the Holy Spirit is the warmth of the soul touched by the love of Christ." DG Barnhouse.

What about serving the LORD? As a believer everything we do should be in service to the LORD. If you are a student, your study habits should reflect Jesus. In athletics play the games as unto the lord, just think of Eric Liddle in CHARIOTS OF FIRE, he was an Olympic runner who put God before everything, he ran to the glory of the Lord, rather than for his own glory. Another question, is there anything in your daily activities that could not be done "as unto the LORD"? Better rethink those things.

Listen to the way that DG Barnhouse summarized this verse; "you may be the president of a wealthy company, you may be incurably ill, but as a believer you will never be lazy, you will be aglow with the Holy Spirit; and you will be truly serving the LORD".

Friends, ask the LORD to begin today to help you live your life in obedience to these commands. This is your present moment, today is the important day, this is living life as a believer. Remember, Paul began all these instructions with the command that we are to love honestly, live it out daily.

Romans 12:12

Friends, do you know that life lived to the glory of the LORD is the only life with any hope at all? God even promises His children to give us "hope and a future". We do not have to travel to the darkness of some third world country where there is worship of the devil and other idols, no look around you here in Loudonville. Many are held in the grip of a Christless eternity and they are without hope here and in the future. Where does hope come from? The Psalmist said: My hope in You God". Psalm 39:7. You, God are my hope Psalm 71:5. God is our hope, listen to this from 1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." What can you say but hallelujah? This is the answer to your despair, sadness, and anxiety. All the psychiatrists, tranquilizers, happy pills in the world can never give you hope. Hope is supernatural; it comes from God our Father. Rejoice in the hope you have.

One more thing, did you notice that our hope is for today and it is also for our future? Something more that only our heavenly Father can provide. Christ is risen so our hope looks beyond this life to the next one. We are free from the bondage of the fear of death. Consider 1 Corinthians 15:19-20 "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied but now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep". First fruits means the first of many to follow, the first of all believers who will soon follow in resurrection.

Now let's wrap up this discussion of hope with this; we understand that our hope in Christ delivers us from the bondage of the fear of death while we live and carries us through eternity. But also it is the basis of our confidence daily. If you listen to the evening news, the bad news, friend you will be come depressed and despairing. Listen to the good news. This world will be renewed, we have a great and certain hope for a wonderful future, promised by a God Who cannot lie and Who has the power and ability to make His promises all come true. Turn to God now, He is our hope.

Let's talk about that last part of verse 12, continuing in prayer. Prayer is conversation with God. You must know Him to talk with Him. The only thing required for prayer is a relationship with Jesus Christ, if you have this, you can be sure God will hear you. Prayer is not memorized phrases repeated over and over; prayer is a conversation of the heart. He is constantly with you, in you and upon you and listening to all you say if you have received Christ as your Savior and LORD. We are commanded to pray without ceasing.

If you have never come to the time when you were willing to admit your sin and ask forgiveness, to give your life to Christ in repentance and have been rewarded with a clean new life then friend, the only prayer God is going to hear from you is your calling out for mercy and salvation. How do I know this? Because we are instructed to come to God through the Way, Jesus Christ, and if you do not come through Him and in His Name your prayer will not get to the Father.

If you are ready right now to enter into that relationship through the new and living Way, then admit to God that you are a sinner, ask Him to forgive you and cleanse you from your guilt and sin. Ask Him to be your Savior and your LORD. He will do it. When you agree with Him that you are a sinner and that you need a savior, you will receive among other gifts, hope and a future but also a heavenly Father who will guide and direct you every day of your life.

If you have been born again to that sure and certain hope, He will hear you when you call.

Romans 12:13

Here we see that the normal Christian life consists of being concerned for others. Our God has given our possessions to us and we are to be ready to share our resources as God directs us.

Do you practice hospitality? That word hospitality literally means love to strangers".

Friend, this means that as a believer we are to be eager to show love to non-believers as God directs.

Hebrews 13:2 says "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares". Isn't that an amazing thought?

Romans 12:14

Have you ever been persecuted for your stand for Christ? That haughty, pitying look directed at you because you are so "naïve" as to believe the bible or maybe it has been more direct. Here we are told be patient with this kind of behavior, God knows it is painful especially from loved ones. We never know whether our loving reaction will be the thing that wins a lost friend or family member.

Pray for those who persecute and bless them, that is leave vengeance to the LORD. Do you remember James 1:2 "count it all joy my brothers when you fall into all kinds of testing. And why should we?"

Here's the answer; because the testing of our faith produces endurance/tenacity and when that endurance has its perfect result we will be lacking nothing."

We are being refined and purified by the trials of this life and when the process is complete we will be like Jesus. Do not lose heart when you suffer the trial of persecution, it is working in you to bring a desired end.

Romans 12:15

Now what about this command to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep? Just look at Jesus life; He began His public ministry at a wedding, no doubt rejoicing with the families celebrating this happy occasion and even providing the wine. Look how Jesus reacted to the death of His friend Lazarus, the bible says "Jesus wept" John 11:35. We often read of Jesus being filled with compassion. We are to comfort others as much as possible when they suffer; we are to bring encouragement and hope. This is the beauty of being part of the body of Christ, rejoicing and weeping with others and having other believers offer us the same comfort in our need.

Romans 12:16

This is another way of saying, "don't be a snob" Doesn't this go back to verse 3 of this chapter where we are told to "not think too highly of ourselves". Jesus is our example, look at Philipians 2:6-9 "Have this attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped or used, but emptied or laid aside His privileges and taking form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross". Jesus is our example. Humility should characterize the believer.

Romans 12:17-21

More in our instructions on how to get along with people, the Holy Spirit is teaching us here about the relationships of true believers. Live peacefully with all men, be of the same mind. If you think God believes this is easy for us, notice He adds, "as much as possible". Wanting our own way is the first and

foremost trait of the human being and the one that makes living at peace with each other difficult from the home to the office to the school to the government to the world. However, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation". That is for us believers, we are new inside where change takes place and we must submit to the refining process that will come with it. That growth will produce the ability to compromise and live at peace.

We don't need to take revenge; God is going to settle everything in the end.

We end our study here today, God is good and we can trust Him. I pray He will richly bless you.