

## Epistle to the Romans, 12:9-21

### Marks of True Christians

Jesus said: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." *Jn 13:34-35*

### Grammar note

In Romans 12:9-21 active verbs, both imperatives and participles, occur in the Greek present tense, which normally implies continual or oft-repeated action.

**9** Let love be genuine.

~ Love (is) genuine.

- Love: regard, interest, esteem (seldom emotional).
- Genuine: *An-hypo-kritos*, not behind a mask.

"The wisdom from above is ... without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy" (James 3.17).

**Grammar note:** Verbs in 9b-13 are participles describing genuine love.

... hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good;

- Hate: Loath, abhor
- Evil: *Ho ponéros*, 'the pernicious.' "Deliver us from the evil one." (Matt. 6.13).
- Hold: *Kolláō*, stick like glue.
- Good: *Ho agathos*, suitable for purpose, beneficial.

**10** love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.

- Love: *Philadelphia*.
- Affection: *Philostorgos*, devoted. (Only here in the Bible.)

**11** Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord.

- Zeal: *spudé*, speed.
- Ardent: enthusiastic, excited.
- Serve: as a slave.

**12** Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer.

- Hope: Expecting.
- Patient: *hypo-menō*, remain under.
- Persevere: Persist.

➔ Why does God require us to keep on praying when we want quick results?

**13** Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

- Contribute: *koinōnēō*, share or hold in common. Historically, churches collected funds to support their poor members: widows, slaves, & disabled.
- Strangers: Traveling evangelists.

**Grammar note:** Verbs in 14b-19 are participles describing how to bless others.

**14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.

- Bless: *Eulogèō* (eulogize), say something kind in return.
- With: Meta, "the company within which something takes place" *BDAG*

**16** Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly;

- Live: Lit., 'thinking (about) the same things' (at least part of the time).
- Lowly: 1. "being of low social status," 2. "being servile in manner," 3. "being unpretentious." *BDAG*

Do not claim to be wiser than you are. **17** Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

- Do not: Negative, present, imperative = Stop it!
- Evil: "harmful or injurious" *BDAG*
- Thought: "Provide for, consider."
- All: Romans, Jews and Christians.

**18** If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

- All: Individuals and communities.

**19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." *Lev. 19:18*

- Wrath: Only God can avenge fairly.

**20** Instead, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." *Pro. 25.21-22a*

- Coals: Metaphore of keeping someone alive by providing warmth and fuel for cooking food. One carried coals in a clay pot on their head (safest place).

"You you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you" (*Pro. 25.22*).

**21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- Overcome : Conquer, vanquish, defeat.
- Evil: Crime, harm, moral wrong.
- Good: Moral quality.

➔ This is the basic Christian response to most offenses. Quietly forgive and seek a way to show undeserved grace. Then God will always intervene.