

## Romans 12:9

Chapters 12~16, Paul is writing to the “*Church of Jesus Christ*”, for the purpose of giving practical instruction on how we, (*the church*), are to live in *this world*. When we CAME to faith in Christ, we LEFT this world. By responding to those two words of Christ, “*follow me*,” we have embarked on a *brand new life*, one that takes us in a totally different direction than this world is headed. To help us in our new walk, Paul gives some very practical instruction, things that will result in our being the “*light*” that God has called us to be in this “*dark*” world. The Church should be best described by that of a lighthouse, in that it shines its light in darkness, to steer all those around it from impending danger. If it were not for the lighthouse, ships would crash into the rocks, and perish. The same is true of the church, people all around us are headed for certain destruction, they’ll perish if they do not turn from the path they are taking...thus, it becomes vital that we shine brightly.

(Vs 3) Paul begins his instruction by exhorting us to walk in a *Spirit of Humility*... We are to walk *humbly* before men. Which is in contrast to that of *pride and arrogance*. We are not to be like Israel, who walked in a spirit of pride. As a result of the righteousness, which resulted from their adhering to the Law, they became “*puffed up*,” it resulted in them seeing themselves *as superior* to those around them. Israel thought they had lived in such a way that had earned them God’s favor, contrasted with that of the Gentiles who hadn’t, but rather deserved the wrath of God. What Israel perceived to be “*light*,” was nothing more than self-righteousness produced by the Law, and rather than helping those around them, they judged and condemned them. As followers of Christ, we are to *walk with a humble spirit* before men...we are to SEE ourselves *as no better* than those around us, but rather as a people who have been spared from God’s wrath simply by the Grace and Mercy found in Christ.

Having given us the “*right mindset, and right heart attitude*,” Paul declares that rather than walking filled with self, we are to walk in the spirit of God.

(Vs 4~8) *Spiritual Gifts*... It is through humbling of ourselves, that we become fit to be the servants of God. Here Paul exhorts, that rather than walking in our own power and strength, we are to set them aside and walk in the power of the spirit. I am convinced, that herein lies the reason we are not seeing mighty moves of God as was in the old days. I believe much of what we see today is nothing more than the works of men, rather than the display of the power of God in men’s’ lives. We are to walk in humble dependence on the spirit of God.

We are to walk with *humbleness of mind*, walk in the “*power of His might, the spirit*...”

Now here in verse 9, Paul says we are to walk in a *spirit of Love*...<sup>9</sup>Let love be without dissimulation...

Here in 9~21, Paul points to various aspects of our lives that we must be careful to express this genuine love. Love for the Truth, love for each other, love for His work, love for our enemies... *Practical things* that are to be *common practice* in our day to day lives so that our lives will give witness to love without dissimulation...“**Dissimulation**” is another word for *hypocrisy*. Paul says we are to walk in this world, in a spirit of Love, a love that is pure, without hypocrisy... This world should be able to know what *real love* is, by looking to the church. *Our lives* ought to be characterized by a *genuine, sincere* love.

God forbid...that our lives be characterized by “*hypocrisy*.” *Hypocrisy* describes the act of being *insincere*, something that is *not genuine* or *real*. *Hypocrisy* describes the “*acts*” of a *hypocrite*. The term *hypocrite* literally translates “*actor*,” it refers to someone who *plays a role*, someone who *wears a mask*... Someone who *plays a part*...someone who is *two-faced*. Depending on where they are determines who you see.

*A hypocrite is someone who is not himself on Sunday...*

Meaning that he has to “*dress up*” on Sunday, as *a worshiper of God*...but then on Monday, he changes back to the *worldly man*. On Sunday, he declares he loves God, but his life reveals that he loves this world.

Paul exhorts those of us, who make up the body of Christ, that we do not manifest such hypocrisy, but rather, we are to live our lives in a genuine, sincere love of God... We are to practice what we preach.

Paul tells us, **we do this by...** <sup>9b</sup> **Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.**

In the midst of this sinful, dark world, the church is to be a shining example of *truth* and *righteousness*. We the church, are to take a clear stand on what is right and what is wrong. A deep abiding love for what is right, what is good, and what is pleasing in God’s eyes should characterize God’s people. We must never forget, that what we accept and advocate, becomes the “*Standard*” you might say. Our lives are to bear witness to what God says is right and what God says is wrong.

It would be extremely hard (if not impossible) to convince the fornicators and liars of this world of their need for Christ, if we who proclaim Christ are committing fornication and are lying! The same is true with adultery, with thieves, homosexuals, lesbians, and on and on. We must send the clear message, not only by mouth, but in practice. The message of the church, both in word and deed is to be that of warning men to turn from their sin, by turning to Christ! We must warn the world, that unless they turn, they will perish!

In the midst of this sinful, dark world, the church is to be a shining example of *truth* and *righteousness*. Tragically, in our day, there is *very little difference* between the church and the world. The church has become so much like the world, that it has lost its influence in the world. Which is the very thing that Paul is warning against here in this passage! When the church becomes like the world, this world loses all respect for the church. The world watches as the church proclaims to be the people of God, yet, they see little or no difference. They watch as we go to church on Sunday, yet live like the rest of the world on Monday...losing all respect for the message the church proclaims!

God’s people should be characterized by a deep LOVE for TRUTH and RIGHTEOUSNESS, along with a deep hatred of what is evil and wrong...

<sup>9b</sup> **Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.**

Paul deliberately chooses these two terms for the reason of their stark contrast... You would be hard pressed to find two more opposite words, which seems to be what Paul is trying to express here.

**Abhor**... *to detest utterly: to abhor, to hate...*

**Cleave**... (“glue”); *to glue, that is, to stick, to cleave to, to join (self to).*

To truly love what is good, one must hate what is bad. ***Abhor*** and ***Cleave*** are totally opposite words, just as are *evil* and *good*. Good has no part of evil, and evil has no part of good. Something is determined evil, because of the absence of good. Something is determined good because of the absence of evil.

As being the “*Church of Jesus Christ*,” we are to show the world what God expects, by living pure, genuine, sincere lives, worshiping God in spirit and in truth, presenting our lives as living sacrifices unto God, living for Him...abhorring that which is evil, **BY** cleaving to that which is good.

In the midst of this sinful, dark world, the church is to be a shining example of *truth* and *righteousness*.

Tragically in our day, many churches are changing to accommodate the lifestyles of men and women. They call these “*Seeker Friendly*” churches. They don’t want to offend anyone, anyone is accepted, etc. They think they are showing LOVE to the world by lowering the standards, to accommodate any and all into the church. They perceive that to not accept them, is unkind and “*Unchristian*” like... Which is just the opposite of what is really true. Their problem stems from their lack of love for truth, and ignorance to the scripture. By lowering the standard, by accepting lifestyles that God calls wrong, they are destroying men’s lives. Because it sends the message, you can live how you want too, and still go to heaven when you die. Which is not true! God’s call is that all men repent from sin, turn from their evil ways...

Both Paul and Peter tell us, that Judgment must begin at the house of God. What’s that mean preacher? Simply that, sin is to be judged among God’s people, it must be dealt with and corrected. No so among the world, they will not undergo judgment unto they stand before the judgment seat. But sin MUST be dealt with in the church. Reason being, that the message of the church remain pure, that the world might look to the church and KNOW that God will judge sin!