

# Let Your Love Be Genuine

## Romans 12:9-13

Most Christians know Romans 12:1-2: *“I appeal to you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

A Living Sacrifice: **The call to the Christian is to daily place your life on the altar of service to God in his mission to bring the gospel to the nations.**

This is not intuitive. It requires a radical shift in our natural proclivities to serve and to protect ourselves. We need transformation by the continual renewing of our minds.

In Romans 12, Paul charges Christians to offer their lives as a living sacrifice by:

- a. Eagerly using the gifts God has given you within the body (Romans 12:2-8)
- b. Loving each other genuinely as the people of God (12:9-13)
- c. Loving your enemies and those who treat you unjustly (12:9-14)

Today, we are going to look at loving each other genuinely as the people of God.

**What does genuine Christian love look like? It’s not intuitive.**

“Many Christians today are being subtly shaped by an ethical principle that originates not from Scripture, but from a pagan code of conduct; also adopted in the Wiccan Rede: “An ye harm none, do what ye will” (or, “If you do no harm, do as you please”). This mindset may sound noble, but it falls far short of the biblical standard. Christian ethics are not built on the avoidance of harm alone; they are rooted in wholehearted love for God and neighbor (Matthew 22:37–40), joyful submission to the lordship of Christ, and the pursuit of holiness in every area of life (1 Peter 1:15–16).” – Jacob Daniel

**Christ’s love for us creates a radically different way of loving than the way the world loves.**

Gospel-produced love is radically transformative. The gospel continually transforms how we think about and go about loving one another as believers. It has changed our thinking.

- I. **Genuine Love is Jealously Protective: The Gospel Produces a Love That Hates Sin and Holds Fast to What Is Good (12:9)**

**“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”**

Love is jealous because God is jealous for his people.

Exodus 34:14 “(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)”

“Jealous” does not mean envious. It means protective. God is jealous for his people. He is protective of them. He calls them away from those beliefs or practices that are lies and are destructive.

Genuine or sincere love hates anything that is harmful. Particularly, anything in my heart that is impure or unjust or unkind in the sight of God towards others that might do what is wrong.

A picture of God’s jealousy:

Luke 17:1-4 “And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

“Paul does not treat love and hate as opposing virtues but as complementary. Genuine love is never sentimental tolerance; it carries a fierce intolerance toward evil that destroys God’s image-bearers.”

**John Piper:** *“Good and evil don’t change, we change. Our hearts can cling to things because we desire them, and our hearts can reject things intensely because we don’t desire them. Paul says, Here is good, and here is evil. Now bring your emotions and your will into conformity to what is objectively there. When you face the objective evil: hate it. And when you face the objective good, embrace it.”*

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and

my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

**II. Genuine Love is Intentionally Expressive. The gospel produces a love that is clearly communicated for the building up of the brethren. (Romans 12:10)**

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

One of the marks of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is that we genuinely love one another. Not only that, we are compelled not just to inwardly feel affection for one another but also the desire to encourage and build one another in that love. Genuine love wants others to experience the love of Christ that God has placed in our hearts.

*“Alas! How could I truly love a disciple of the Lord, while I was at enmity with the Master? How was it possible that one of the dear children of God should find a place in my unrenowned, unsanctified heart? I would not, neither need I, represent myself as worse than I was! I always respected you, but it was with a respect painful to myself. I had eyes to see the holiness and beauty of a Christian character, but neither a will to imitate it, nor a heart to be pleased with it. The light of the Father of lights, shining in His elect people, is too much for the feeble sight of a child of wrath, whose delight is to walk in darkness. Blessed be the God of my salvation, who in His due time, and in His own appointed way, has enabled me to love the brethren, and hereby given me evidence of my adoption into His blessed family!” William Cowper*

**Brotherly love indicates a purity of love: We love like family.**

“Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.” (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

**Genuine love seeks to build up by going out of its way to honor others.**

“Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence,  
but a false witness utters deceit.

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts,  
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” (Prov. 12:17,18)

### **III. Genuine Love is Eager to Serve: The Gospel produces zealous fervent servants of the Lord.**

“Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.” (12:11)

**The Battle:** “Do not be slothful in zeal.”

**The Ambition:** “Be fervent in spirit.”

**The Breakthrough:** “Serve the Lord.”

**We need our focus to be on Christ so that our fuel will come from Christ.**

“We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.” 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

### **IV. Genuine Love is Tenaciously Hopeful: The Gospel produces people who believe strongly that Christ reigns triumphantly.**

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”

- a. **Rejoice in hope** – The reality of the cross, resurrection, reign and return of Jesus Christ fills us with a truth based joyful optimism that overflows into all of life.
- b. **Be patient in tribulation** – When a person believes that Christ works everything together for good, they can wait through tribulation because God is always up to something in ways that we couldn’t imagine.
- c. **Be Constant in Prayer.** Genuine hope in Christ drives consistent depended upon Christ.

Amy Carmichael’s prayer:

“From prayer that asks that I may be  
Sheltered from winds that beat on Thee,  
From fearing when I should aspire,  
From faltering when I should climb higher,  
From silken self, O Captain, free  
Thy soldier who would follow Thee.

From subtle love of softening things,  
From easy choices, weakenings,  
(Not thus are spirits fortified,  
Not this way went the Crucified,)  
From all that dims Thy Calvary,  
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Give me the love that leads the way,  
The faith that nothing can dismay  
The hope no disappointments tire  
The passion that will burn like fire,  
Let me not sink to be a clod,  
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God."

V. **Genuine Love Cares Deeply and Practically: Genuine Love is Moved to Care for Both the Saints and the Strangers.**

"Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." (12:3)

The word for hospitality means "love of the stranger".

The culture we live in seems to be increasingly xenophobic. We fear the stranger. Culture doesn't love strangers and pulls in a self-protective, self-interested mission killing mindset.

**The gospel calls us to genuinely act in love towards those who are the people of God and for those who are potentially the people of God.**

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:9-10