



Principles For Practical Christian Living

July 6, 2025 Romans 12:9-21

(video 1:02:30)

Well one sermon's over. How about another one, huh? Turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 12 and the time that we have left as we pick up in Romans 12:9-21. There was a wonderful saint of a bygone era by the name of Robert C. Chapman. He lived in England, and I imagine nobody knows who he is today. He was a friend of a man by the name of J.N. Darby, John Darby, and that may be a name that is familiar to some of you. Darby was the leading proponent of the Plymouth Brethren and is looked upon as the modern-day author, if you will, organizer of dispensational theology and dispensationalism, I should say. An early leader of the Plymouth Brethren, Darby's writings greatly influenced a man by the name of C.I. Schofield, and you may have heard of C.I. Schofield in the Schofield Reference Bible. I first cut my teeth in the first few months of being a new believer in Christ on a Schofield Reference Bible. C.I. Schofield founded the Central American Mission and later founded Dallas Theological Seminary, an institution that I'm sure most, if not all, of you have heard of. Well, in any event, this man, Chapman, a friend of Darby, Darby wrote this about Chapman: *On one occasion, seeing that Chapman's life goal was not formulated yet, Chapman decided that since so many preached Christ and yet so few lived Christ, Chapman declared, "I will aim to live Him."* And Darby went on to say of Chapman, *He lives what I teach.* Can you imagine that? A man of God saying that you live what he preaches and teaches. William Arnot, A-R-N-O-T, another name that probably isn't familiar to many, it was said about William Arnot, I love this: *His preaching is good. His writing is better, but his living is the best of all.*

Wouldn't it be great if they could say that about all of us? Do you know what? That should be a bad case of the normals for every believer in Jesus Christ. We are celebrating the Fourth of



July, Fourth of July weekend. What are we celebrating? Well, we're celebrating our freedoms. So what do we say? We're celebrating our American way of life. And when you come to Romans chapter 12:9-21, what you really have are principles for the Christian's way of life. The first 11 chapters of Romans, as we've said, is all of theology, all the mercies of God that we have been privileged to live through and experience. And having done that, as with all theology, as with all teachings about God, they have a goal. And that is to what? To live a godly life, to live to the glory of Almighty God. And so when you come to Romans chapter 12, like I've said in the past, some people think it's an add-on to the first 11 chapters. It's the point, it's the goal. That's where Paul has been trying to get to. What's he say? In light of all these mercies, what do you do? You do the ultimate sacrifice. You humble yourself before Almighty God, you repent of your sins, you give your life to Christ. Meaning what? **Therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, present your body, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship**, that all in commitment to Christ.

Now that you're in the family of God, what's the first thing you do? Verses 3 through 8. You use your giftedness to edify those within the body of Christ. Well, okay, but how do I know what my giftedness is? And remember we pointed out 1 Corinthians 12:11. Your giftedness is you. The Holy Spirit delivered them as He will, gifts as He will, individually according to His will. And that word individually there in the Greek, remember, was *idios*. We get the word idiot from it. What's an idiot? Somebody who's not in his right mind. Well, in a very real sense, that's exactly what we are. We're not in our natural mind because we want the mind of Christ. We want to lose our natural mind and replace it with the mind of Christ. They asked one well-known, and by the way, this is not an unusual concept in terms of this obedience to the word of God and conformity to the word of God and this shopping list of principles that are laid out for us here in Romans 12:9-21. 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul says this, familiar truth: **Having**



therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. This is exactly what all teaching from the word of God encourages us to do. Ephesians 2:4-10, what's he do? He starts out in verse 4 of Ephesians [2], telling us how God, *being rich in mercy, has blessed us with all these mercies in the heavenly places* and so on, and then he ultimately gets down to verses 8 and 9 where he says, *by grace you've been saved through faith; it is not of yourself, it's a gift of God; lest any man should boast, etc.* And then he gets to verse 10, which is the payoff, and what's he say? ***We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works...***

One pastor said he was approached one time after a sermon by a young man, happened to be in the Navy, who was visiting his church, and the young man said, how can I know that I'm definitely born again? How can I know that I'm a Christian? How can I know that this thing is real, that it wasn't just a momentary raising of my hand or walking an aisle when I was 12 or whatever? I love what this pastor said. He said there's only one way you can really know for sure. What's that? The way you know, and the only way you know, *Look at your life and see what's there. And if you have experienced justification, that meaning being made right with God, there will be an outflowing of sanctification. That is, he says, a living pattern of righteousness and holiness, and though you don't see it all that you would like to see of that holiness, and you don't do it perfectly, you do see some of it there, and it is the expression of the deepest desire of your heart.* What's the deepest desire of your heart? That you might live a godly life, that you might be pleasing to God, that you might live in accordance with the word of God. Do you have that desire in your heart? If you don't have that desire in your heart, you do not know Christ, because the Spirit of God indwells His children, and as we've said a gazillion times over in Philippians 2:12, ***He***, that person of God in the person of the Holy Spirit that indwells you, ***is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*** And if you don't have the



will, you don't have the Spirit of God, because God is not a schizophrenic, and Almighty God's Spirit will cause you to desire to want to please Him. By the way, Dean Kruchikowsky, you asked me some time ago, I didn't forget, when we got into faith versus works, and religious denominations, and actually religious heretical systems that teach the word of God plus good works, which all cults do, for the most part. He said, well, are you going to hit on faith and works and the relationship of the two? Because so many of those groups always go to James 2:14-26, faith without works is dead. And those verses of scriptures that I just hit on underscore it big time in the sense that the works flow from a heart that is already born again and desires those. The good works are a process of sanctification. And sometimes people get caught up and they say, well, my goodness, it says in Philippians 2:12, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Doesn't that tell you right there you got to work? Well, the problem with that is that Philippians is written to believers, and in Philippians 1:27, he, well, I should just read it for you, in Philippians 1:27, he says point blank, ***Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, ...*** You know what that is, by the way, Carole Nelson, you always laugh when I leave you and I say, "act like a Christian". Not just Carole, I say that to everybody, but I say, "Act like a Christian." That's actually biblical. Act yourself in a manner worthy of the name of Christ. But he's writing to believers. And what he's talking about there is he's saying in context, not only when I'm with you, sort of policing your conduct, Paul says, but even when I'm not around. As you've obeyed in the past, keep on obeying. And notice he says, work it out with fear and trembling. Fear, like God's going to drop a brick on me, no. Because God has implanted that love for Him already in your heart, you don't want to do anything that would break the heart of one you love so much. That's the fear of the Lord that prompts obedience, at least a major aspect of it. And remember, you love Him, why? Because



He first loved you. In what way? A greater love than this is no man, that he would lay down his life for his friends.

Okay, so we get to Romans chapter 12:9, reverentially wanting to do what's right. But the question then always comes up, okay, I'm willing to cleanse myself. I'm willing to live in righteousness. I want to live to the glory of God. He's planted that desire in my heart. Doesn't He give me some instructions, though, as to what that looks like? Ah, yes, because once you've committed your life to Christ, Romans 12:1-2, and once you have started using your spiritual gift, what is it? Is it mercy? Is it helps? Is it exhortation? Is it preaching? Quit worrying about the label. Whatever you sense God's good pleasure laying on your heart to do for His glory, just go do it. Your spiritual gift is you. Everyone's got a different mixture of them, and therefore it's you. But when you're doing that and living life that way, aren't there some specific principles to strive for that He wants? And the answer, of course, is yes. He wants to conform us to the living Word of God, Jesus Christ. And the way He does that is by conforming us to the commands and principles and precepts set forth in the written Word of God. And starting in Romans chapter 12:9, through the end of the chapter, he basically gives us what I described before as a grocery list, if you will, of principles, commands to follow and abide by and to do.

Now, I want you to know that there's an outline here with this. In Romans 12:9, he gave us three attitudes, if you will, and they basically, these apply to us, you. They're personal. Then, however, when he goes on to 10-13, he's going to give us some character qualities and attitudes and conduct to develop in our life that applies to the family of God in general. Now, they still apply to us in some way. They circle back. He sort of backs up and hits some more things to us personally, but he broadens the application in verses 10-13 and gives us some things with regards to our attitude towards those in the family of God. Then, in verses 14-18,



he widens the circle some more. He still talks about our personal attitudes. He still talks about some things that we have to have and do with regards to people within the family of God. Then he broadens it to those outside of the family of God in verses 14-18. And then, in verses 19-21, he really enlarges the circle completely where he's got some things for our own attitude, some things towards the family of God, some things towards those outside the family of God, and even those outside the family of God in this fourth category who are our direct enemies in verses 19-21. And how we are to act towards all of them.

Now, we saw the personal ones. We beat it to death, really, in verse 9. ***Let love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil, cling to what is good.*** It's agape love there. We talked about it being without hypocrisy, loving in spirit and in truth. We talked about abhorring what is evil and all the things that are sinful and wrong and morally reprehensible. And that was what got us off on a discussion of false religions and cults, and one in particular for the last several weeks. And then clinging to what is good, which is literally striving to do what is good.

Well, what is the good? Here we go. Now, he's going to put flesh on that first one. If you got those attitudes, now let's talk about what your attitude needs to be towards yourself in some situations, but primarily towards the family of God. What are they? Well, here we go. There's some more set forth in verse 10. ***Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;*** Okay, let me just stop right there. ***Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.*** That phrase there, *devoted to*, interesting, interesting word. It's the word *philos*. It's the word that means a warm, affectionate love. But it's a combination of two words, *philos*, a warm, affectionate love, and another word is compounded with it, *storgos*. That's another kind of love, but that's the love that flows from a natural affection. See, there's an agape love, a love that I have for Jonathan because I just want to express agape love and love him as



what's best for him, agape, the purest form of love. Then there's another type of love that I would have for Jonathan if he were a fleshly, earthly brother of mine, meaning a part of my physical flesh and blood family, that would be storge. And then there's philos, which is a love I would have for him (and do have for him) because he is in the family of God, if you will, okay? And so what he's saying there, it's really emphasizing a huge statement. Starting off with everything in your relationship towards anybody else in the family of God, he says love them with a loving, affectionate family love. In other words, he says love them twice in two different ways to make a third overarching point. It's absolutely have a warm, affectionate, loving, family kind of love, the same love you'd have for your child, same love you would have for your brother or sister in your earthly family, have the exact same affectionate family kind of love for one another. It's over the top. It's love on steroids. And that's what he underscores here. You know that this happens in the body of Christ. By the way, when we go through these 25, 28, 29, however many there are, depending on how you want to slice and dice them all the way to the end of the chapter, as we go through this, some of this, like I said weeks ago, you're going to be encouraged. You're going to say, you know what? I see that in my life. I need to have more of that, but I sort of see that in my life. Some of it, maybe you're going to be a little bit convicted. You're going to say, oh, thanks, Lord, for pointing that one out to me because I see an area in my life where I need to ask for Your grace. I need to develop that more in my life. But I guarantee you, if you don't see several of these going on in your life, you need to be concerned about where you are, meaning within or without the family of God.

The word of this first one, have a deep, affectionate, loving family kind of love. Haven't you been in situations where maybe you've been on a trip, maybe you've just been right here in the valley, and you got placed in a situation around a bunch of strangers and you found out that they were believers in Christ, or several of them, or maybe just a few of them, or



believers, genuine believers in Christ? Didn't you notice an affinity? Did you notice a bond there? Did you notice a relationship there that you couldn't quite put your finger on, but you just felt at home? That has happened to me a gazillion times. That is an example of exactly what that's all about. This is a love that's not built on attraction. This is not love because somebody is beautiful physically or they have something that you lust or desire or are physically attracted to. This is a natural affinity that you have because they're in the same family as you are. And he says this is something that we need to develop.

The classic example of this one is how one commentator was saying how his son was in an athletic endeavor, his oldest son, and he woke up the next day sore and tired and bruised from the athletic event he'd been in the day before, and he was in quite a bit of pain, and he went off to go back to high school that morning. But when the pastor who wrote this, the father, walked into that son's bedroom, he saw a note on his son's dresser, and he could tell that the note was from his five-year-old daughter to his son. And he opened the note, and the note went on to say, Dear Mark, I'm so sorry that you're in pain and so on and so on. I know that as your sister I can really be a brat at times, and I want you to know that I am so sorry for all the times I've been a brat, and I also want you to know that I'm praying for you, and I hope that you get over your pain, love, and she signed her name. And I thought to myself, that is the classic example of what needs to go on in the family of God. Mark and I might have a dispute. We might have a problem. He may do something that offends me, and I'm really bothered by it. I may have done something that really offends him, and he's really bothered by it, and he may be struggling to get over it. But you know what? We're brothers in Christ, and he can deal with some feelings towards me, or I can deal with some feelings towards him, but he better not say anything bad about Mark. Somebody, you know, it's the old, we may, I can remember on family trips being in the backseat of the car. We may fight like cats and dogs



in the backseat of the car with my brother, but when we got out on the playground, nobody else better say anything bad about my brother. And that's sort of the way it is in the family of God. We need to have one another's backs. You know why believers in Christ, a believer in Christ should never nurture a grudge? But the main reason why a Christian cannot let an offense or a slight go and still carries a grudge against another believer in Christ, the number one reason is that individual needs to go back and refocus on how much he has been forgiven himself by Almighty God. What's it say at the end of chapter 4 of Ephesians, (4:32) And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, get this, this is always my go-to verse, it seems like, when I do weddings, ***be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another***, how? As much ***[just] as God in Christ Jesus has also forgiven you***. All the relationships in the family of God and all these ones that he's going to build on throughout the rest of this passage, start off obviously with your being a genuine believer. Start off with your sensing the Lord's good pleasure as you exercise the giftedness which God has impacted you on in terms of your service to the body of Christ. But then it grows out from there towards others in the body of Christ and it always, always starts with an agape, a *philostorgos* type of love for those in the family of God.

Well, I just glanced at my watch and I realize Brian should come up and probably lead us in a closing hymn, but as Brian does that, let me just say one of the most powerful illustrations I ever saw of this forgiving attitude and of this humble heart that extended love and grace towards others within the family of God who have wronged you. I saw a man one day literally verbally berated, abused, excoriated unmercifully by someone, you did it, you're this, you're this, and on and on and on and on and on, none of which in my understanding was well founded. When that guy got done verbally beating this guy up, the man's response was so gracious, so humble, so kind, the angry man walked away. The man's friend turned to him



and said, there is no way in the world I could have done what you just did. And I love the godly man's response. He said, "Neither can I". What'd he mean? He didn't do it. It was the Christ that is within him, prompting him to respond in that manner.

We are just getting started in a series that I would call out of this chapter, The Christian Way of Life. Let's pray. Father, as we draw our worship time to a close, there are fellow believers and others over near San Antonio, over in central Texas, whose way of life from a physical standpoint will never be the same again. Father, we pray that from a spiritual standpoint, they will somehow, some way, by Your grace and mercy, live to make sense out of all of this. I think of the dear couple that visited our church years ago, whom we had the privilege of meeting, whose van caught fire on a freeway outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and they watched their five children burn to death. And yet walked into this church and many other churches years later with a winsomeness and a love for You that could only be described as the way it should be; supernatural. Father, whatever is going on in our lives and the lives of those we love, sickness, disease, calamities, financial, physical, emotional, tragedies, fires and floods from a fallen creation, we know that You are sovereignly in control of every bit of it. Not one thing was lost, not one life was terminated that You did not sovereignly ordain would come to pass, and You have a reason for all of it. May we humbly bow before You, the sovereign God of the universe, and may we strive to give You the glory. We ask it all again in the matchless name of the great physician. We ask it all again in the matchless name of the author and finisher of our faith, of the ancient of days, of the Alpha and the Omega, of the one who literally created the world and gave us life physically and gave us life spiritually. We ask it in the name of Yourself and the person of Jesus, our Christ, and all God's redeemed people said amen and amen.