



Loyalty Matters

Romans 12:10

¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.



Here is the BIG IDEA in this lesson:

True Christian love is both genuine and discriminating.

Introduction:

Chapter 12 of the book of Romans marks a shift from the theological (*Chapters 1-11*) to the practical (*Chapters 12-16*). As with most of Paul's letters, he characteristically begins with the doctrinal, as if to say, this is why we are *who* we are. Always remember, the amazing fact that explains the Christian is not his color, his character, or even his creed; but rather, it is the saving work of sovereign grace in his life. (*Cf. John 1:12*)

Once the Apostle establishes this theological fact in our minds, he wonderfully shifts to the practical—and in doing so, he says in essence: *Because these things are true of us, this is the kind of person you should be.* The religious person says, "Do this and you will be a Christian!" However, the Apostle says, "If you have life in Christ, you will do these things." First, there is *our position* before God, then *our practice* before men; *our wealth* in Christ, then *our walk* in Christ; *our standing*, then *our living*. This is always the biblical order.

The theme of the first 11 chapters of Romans is *justification by faith*. Now Paul answers the question, "**How does a justified-by-faith person live?**"

The answers that he gives in this chapter are perfectly summed up in one of his other letters: justifying faith is always *"...faith working through love"* (*Gal.5:6*). The love of God that brought salvation in Christ (*Rom.5:8*) calls for a loving response toward others that is much different than sentimental affections. James Boice says that this love *"is both genuine and discriminating."*⁷

⁷ James Boice, *Romans Vol.4*, p.1597

True Christian love (“agape”) looks a *certain way*. The Apostle spells it out beginning in 12:9-13. He teaches us ten things about how faith expresses itself or functions through love:

1. The *purity* of love—“*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.*” (v.9)
2. The *faithfulness* of love—“*not lagging behind in diligence...*” (v.11a)
3. The *earnestness* of love—“*...fervent in spirit...*” (v.11b)
4. The *genuineness* of love—“*...serving the Lord.*” (v.11c)
5. The *buoyancy* of love—“*rejoicing in hope...*” (v.12a)
6. The *endurance* of love—“*...persevering in tribulation...*” (v.12b)
7. The *devotion* of love—“*...devoted to prayer*” (v.12c)
8. The *unselfishness* of love—“*contributing to the needs of the saints...*” (v.13a)
9. The *large-heartedness* of love—“*...practicing hospitality.*” (v.13b)

The tenth evidence of how faith works through love is found in verse 10, “*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.*”



Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

A. There are **two imperatives** (commands: *what we are to do*) and **two indicatives** (instructions: *how we are to do it*) found in verse 10. What are they?

1. The imperatives
2. The indicatives

The word “**devoted**” means *great love, loyalty, and enthusiastic zeal*. Name at least two things to which people are generally devoted. Why?

“*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...*” means that *we are to possess and express a natural, warm, family affection that brings us together*. In other words, we do not base our commitment to one another upon what we *like*, but what we *share*—which is the same life!

The command is that we be devoted to one another; loyal. How? We do this in brotherly love—with warm, kind, family affection. (Cf. *John 13:34; 1 Thess.4:9; Heb.13:1; 2 Pet.1:5-7*)

B. Look carefully at Romans 12:10 again. There are two practical implications (to suggest without stating directly). What are they?

- Hint #1: Who is to be devoted?
- Hint #2: How often?

C. How do we express this?

- First, by learning to see your brothers and sisters for *who they are*, not for *who they should be* (1 John 3:1-2)
- Second, by applying *the principles of preference* (Rom.12:10b)

The verb “**give preference**” is one word in the Greek (“*proegoumenoi*”), which means *to lead the way for others*. Charles Hodge points out, “it normally means *to go before, or to lead, hence, to set an example...so the idea would be—to set an example for others by honoring and respecting one another.*”⁸

D. What are the principles of preference?

1. Read Philippians 2:3-4. **Be ready** to give place and honor to someone else. Don’t wait around for people to recognize your contributions and praise you. Instead, be alert to what others are contributing and honor them. (Cf. Rom.13:7; 1 Pet.2:17)
2. Read Luke 14:7-11. **Be humble** by refusing to advance yourself or your own cause.
3. Read Luke 14:12-14. **Be generous** without expecting the recipient to pay you back. Give love without expecting repayment. Hospitality that is given, not exchanged, is the best kind of hospitality.



Application: Making Truth Stick

For the true Christian, service and meeting the needs of others is not an option. It is the appropriate response to the call of Christ to follow Him. In short, we, as a church, are not to worry about the chairs of honor; rather, we are to make chairs available to those who are looking for a place to sit—even for those who think there are no chairs for them.

Think about it. The question is not, “What can I do to receive something back?”, rather, “What can I give to meet the needs of others?”

Being a doer of the Word (2 Tim.3:16)

1. What did I learn (“teaching”)?
2. Where do I fall short (“reproof”)?
3. What do I need to do about it (“correction”)?
4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life (“training”)?

⁸ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on Epistle to the Romans*, p.396

Answer Key

Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

A.

1. be devoted and give preference
2. in brotherly love and in honor

B.

- we all are (mutual)
- all the time (continual)

© February 20, 2018 The Church at South Mountain

Previous versions: January 6, 13, 15 2018

You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred.

Any exceptions to the above must be approved by The Church at South Mountain.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:

© The Church at South Mountain. Website: casm.org

While all reasonable attempts have been taken to trace the literary and biblical sources used by the author, due to the nature of some of the original materials (old audio/radio or live preaching events), some have been impossible to locate. Any information regarding the origin of any unreferenced statements or quotations is welcomed and will be included in the next revision of the study.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible: 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.