

## **Romans 12:9-12 Answers** **Marks of a True Christian, Part A**

**Review:** The last section of Romans is generally about Service (Ro 12-16). In Romans 12-13, Paul detailed our service in relation to God (12:1-2), other believers (12:3-16), our enemies (12:17-21) and the government (13:1-14). Romans 1-11 is the “what”. Romans 12-16 is the “so what”. If you really believe Romans 1 – 11, then *this* (Ro 12-16) will be true in your life. Romans 1-11 is the foundation and Romans 12-16 the superstructure.

**Key Text:** The driving text for this whole section is **Romans 12:1-2**. We are studying what it looks like to present our bodies as living sacrifices that are transformed through renewed minds. Thus Romans 12:9ff lists some of the marks of a true Christian.

-----

**\*\*\*\* Approximately how many different applications are found in 12:9-13?** There are approximately thirteen calls to action. This paragraph is one of sheer application!

**Does each of these stand alone or can you detect groupings (12:3-13)? How so?** They are arranged in couplets or triplets.

### **Genuine Love**

**According to 12:9a, what should be true of our love?** It should be genuine.

**When you think of love, what do you think of? What is love (12:9a)?** Love in 12:9 is from *agapé*, defined by the lexicon as love (BAGD, p. 5). In noun form it was used four times previous in Romans to describe God’s love; this is the first time it is used in noun form to refer to our love.

This particular Greek word for love was also used to refer to the common meal eaten by early Christians in connection with church meetings, for the purpose of fostering and expressing love. Arguably, it was co-terminus with Lord’s Supper (BAGD, p. 6).

In English, love is defined as a profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person; a feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection, as for a parent, child, or friend (dictionary.reference.com). However, biblical love is much more than a feeling; it is also a volitional commitment to another person’s good (even when feelings wane).

**1. How is genuine love different from disingenuous love (12:9a)?** A love that is not genuine would be a love with feigned affection or one with impure motives. Genuine is from *anupokritos* (505); *an* means not and *hupokritos* (basis for hypocrite) was originally a theatrical term used to refer to a stage actor who played the part of someone else; during these plays the actor held up a mask over his own face (he was two-faced). Thus, without hypocrisy, free from insincerity (BAGD, p. 76).

**Application:** If our love is to be genuine, we need to test our motives to be sure they are pure and not selfish or manipulative or ulterior.

**2. What should you do if you realize your love is not genuine (12:9a)?** Part of the starting point for the cure is realizing there is a problem. Since God has commanded us to love one another, we have the capacity to do so. We must pray and ask God to fill our hearts with genuine love for others and then act on faith.

ESV 1 **John 3:10** . . . whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

ESV 1 **John 3:14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.

ESV 1 **John 3:23** And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

ESV 1 **John 4:7-8** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

ESV 1 **John 4:11** . . . if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

ESV 1 **John 4:21** . . . this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Following the command to let our love be genuine comes several groupings of participial clauses. The grouping, a pair, is found in the rest of 12:9:

### Evil & Good

\*\*\*\***According to 12:9b, what attitude should we have toward evil and evil?** We should abhor evil and cling to good.

Interesting: In 12:9a Paul said to love then immediately he said to hate (abhor)! Paul did not present love simply as an ideal, but he put it into a living context (Harrison, X, p. 132).

**What does it mean to abhor something (12:9b)?** It is from *apostugeo*; *apo* means away (distance) and *stugeo* means to hate; maybe the idea is to hate something and so be repulsed by it, putting as much distance as you can between you and the hated object. Abhor is a good translation since *ab* means away from and *hor* forms the root of horror and means to bristle or tremble; the definition of abhor is to regard with disgust and hatred.

**Do you actually abhor evil or do you tolerate it or are you apathetic toward it?**

**3. If a person abhors evil, what would that lead him to do (12:9b)?**

**We are to abhor evil but hold fast to what is good. What does it mean to hold fast to something (12:9)?** “Hold fast” translates the Greek verb for glue (*kollao*); be glued to what is good!

**4. What standard have we to determine good from evil (12:9b)?** Happily God has not left us guessing! The Scriptures shine the light of God’s holiness on our thoughts and actions.

ESV **Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

ESV **1 Timothy 1:8-11** Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Verse 10 contains the next paring:

### **Love & Honor**

\*\*\*\***According to 12:10, how should we love one another?** We should love one another with brotherly affection.

**Why the seeming repetition here (12:10) from 12:9a?** In 12:9, Paul probably means we should have a genuine love for our fellow man in general since in the very next verse he tells us specifically to love one another (within the body of Christ).

#### **Word Studies:**

“Love” (12:10) is from *philadelphia* (5360); *philé* means love and *adelphia* means brother (from the same womb).

**Synonyms:** Though *agapé* and *philé* are nearly identical, some have suggested *agapé* is more of a conscious commit to another person (volitional) whereas *philé* is more of a feeling (natural affection).

“Brotherly affection” (12:10) is from *philostorgos* (5387); *philé* means love and *storgos* is yet another word for love (family love between siblings or between parents and children; it is family affection). We are metaphorical brothers and sisters.

**Application:** The relationship that should describe people in the same church is the tender and intimate affection between members of the same family (Cranfield, p. 631). We are to have kindly affection for each other. Wuest pointed out that kind and kindly is related to kindred/ kin folk (Wuest, I, p. 214).

**5. What are some tangible examples of loving someone with brotherly affection (12:10a)?**

We would be courteous to him, sensitive to his feelings, try hard not to offend him, show him care and concern, take interest in him, etc.

**Observation:** Three different Greek words for love are found in this passage: *agapé*, *philé*, *storgé*. The first two are virtual synonyms. The last is more the idea of familial affection (where you treat each other well even if you don't agree).

**What should characterize the honor we show one another (12:10b)?** We should be falling all over each other in showing the other honor. Instead of a sales contest we are to have an honor contest! The NASV says, "give preference to one another in honor." The KJV says "in honor preferring one another."

**What does it mean to honor someone (12:10)?** Honor is from *timé* (basis for the name Tim). The root idea of *timé* is to establish a value for something and set a price for it. To honor someone is to value them as a person. We take extra care to protect the things we value.

**How does one honor the other people in his church (12:10)?**

ESV **Leviticus 19:18** You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

ESV **Philippians 2:3** . . . in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

**6. If we held a contest in our church to see who outdid everyone else in showing honor, who would win (12:10b)? Would you?** In a healthy church it should require a photo-finish to determine a winner.

Verse 11 contains a triplet:  
**Zeal & Fervor & Service**

\*\*\*\***What should be true of our zeal (12:11a)?** We are not to be slothful in zeal. A transformed mind does not grow slack (Cranfield, p. 633). We must beware a deadening spiritual inertia (Harrison, p. 133).

**What is zeal (12:11a)?** Zeal is from *spoudé* and means haste, earnestness, diligence, effort. English synonyms include ardor, love, fervor, fire, devotion, enthusiasm, eagerness, keenness, relish, gusto, vigor, energy and intensity.

**In what area are we to have zeal (12:11a)?** We are to have zeal (earnestness, diligence) in everything we do. We are to be people of industry and accomplishment. Do not be slothful! This is to be true of the quality of our work, our house-keeping, our child-training, etc.

ESV **Ecclesiastes 9:10** Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might . . .

**What is an antonym for zeal (12:11a)?** The opposite would be apathy or indifference.

**7. Would other people in our church describe you as a person of zeal or a person of apathy?**

**What does it mean to be fervent in spirit (12:11b)?** Fervent is from a Greek word that means to boil (*zeo*, 2204). Notice that the word spirit is not capitalized; if correct, it does not refer the Holy Spirit. Fervency of spirit (lower case s) suggests an inner attitude of motivation. It is the opposite of being half-hearted, ho-hum, lackadaisical or apathetic. It is very similar to not being slothful in zeal.

**8. With respect to what are we to be fervent in spirit (12:11a)?** See 12:11b. Perhaps the answer lies in the next mark of a Christian: we are to be fervent in serving the Lord.

However, the ESV's alternate translation is with a capital S, referencing the Holy Spirit. We are to be fervent in the Holy Spirit. Chrysostom taught the way to avoid being slothful in zeal is to be fervent in the Holy Spirit. We are to be boiling with the Spirit, on fire with the Spirit. Calvin wrote, "It is the fervor of the Spirit alone which corrects our indolence" (Cranfield, p. 634).

**According to 12:11c, who are we to be serving in all we do (work, play, family, etc., 12:11c)?**

We are to serve the Lord. Having the perspective that we are serving the Lord is very important.

ESV **Colossians 3:23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men . . .

**9. Truth Test: Do you serve the Lord or do you serve yourself? How would others judge who you serve?**

ESV **Joshua 24:15** . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Verse 11 contains the next triplet:  
**Rejoice, Be Patient, Keep Praying**

\*\*\*\***What attitude should describe our demeanor (12:12a)?** Our attitude should be that of rejoicing.

ESV **Philippians 3:1** . . . rejoice in the Lord.

KJV **Philippians 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

**10. Christianity was an illegal religion. The church in Rome was soon to face the wrath of Nero. Yet Paul said they had reason to rejoice. Based on 12:12a, what reason do we have to rejoice?** See 5:2. We rejoice because we have true, genuine hope!

ESV **Romans 5:2** . . . we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**11. How should you define biblical hope (12:12)?** Biblical hope is confident expectation, not blind optimism or wishful thinking.

**Example:**

ESV **Acts 16:22-25** The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into . . . the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God . . .

ESV **Romans 8:18** . . . I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

**Perspective:** When someone asks how you are doing and you say “Fine,” prophetically speaking you really are fine in Christ, no matter how bad things are at the moment!

**Song:** “Rejoice, The Lord is King” by Charles Wesley.

\*\*\*\***How should we deal with tribulation (12:12b)?** We should endure tribulation with patience.

**What is tribulation (12:12b)?** Into every life a little rain must fall! The Greek word is *thlipsis* (2347), the root of which means to press. Our English word tribulation is from the Latin *tribulum*, a heavy drag used in threshing that exerted downward pressure. Thus, it has to do with affliction.

**12. What kinds of things cause God’s people tribulation (12:12b)?** See 8:22-23. We all suffer due to other people’s sins, due to the effects of the curse and due to the fact we belong to Jesus.

ESV **Romans 8:22-23** . . . the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

ESV **2 Timothy 3:12** . . . all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted . . .

**Now, tell me again: How are we to react to tribulation (12:12b)?** We are to be patient in tribulation.

**Word Study:** “Be patient” (12:12b) is from *hupomeno* (5278); *hupo* means under (as in hypodermic) and *meno* means to stay or remain. Thus, it means to remain under (in this case, pressure or tribulation). It means you don’t cave in, you don’t give up.

**13. In medicine there are good patients and bad patients. (Doctors are said to make terrible patients). When it comes to tribulation, are you a good patient or a bad one? If bad, what can help you be a better patient?** We need to have perspective: hope and pray.

\*\*\*\***What word should describe our prayer life (12:12c)?** Distressed by the world’s afflictions, we should be constant in prayer. Aquinas pointed out the intimate connection between prayer and all the things mentioned in these verses (Cranfield, p. 637).

**14. Does the word constant describe your prayer life (12:12c)?** (*Rhetorical*).

ESV 1 Thessalonians 5:17 . . . pray without ceasing . . .

**15. Why is prayer an integral part of the Christian life (12:12c)?** It should be as natural as breathing. Through prayer we commune with God, we talk with Him, we tell Him our desires and fears and we praise Him for His presence in our lives.

**Reality:** That Paul needed to urge believers to be constant in prayer indicates that it is easy, with all the busyness of life, to be lax in prayer. We are to make prayer a habit.

### So What?

**16. Romans 12:9-12 contains pure application. It is all “so what”! Which of the many marks of a Christian do you need to polish up on most?**

\*\*\*\* = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
- You can hear this lesson being taught at [www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF](http://www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF).

Stephen E. Atkerson

www.NTRF.org

01/11/15