

(12:9) - LET LOVE BE WITHOUT DISSIMULATION. ABHOR THAT WHICH IS EVIL; CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD - Salvation by God's grace in and by Christ is more than a profession of faith. It is also a dynamic power within us by the Holy Spirit to guide, inspire, and energize us for obedience as willing, loving bondslaves of Christ. We are to serve Christ and one another, not to earn salvation, but because He has freely forgiven us of all our sins by His blood and justified us before God by His righteousness imputed. This is the motive for obedience. Our hearts must be established in and with the love and grace of God in Christ to know that we are assured of salvation, with all its blessings and benefits, because of what Christ accomplished for us on the cross as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer.

"Let love be without dissimulation" - **"Dissimulation"** is **"hypocrisy."** The Godly love that the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts in the new birth is to be genuine and without hypocrisy (**Rom. 5:5-10**). It is love in deeds consistent with the truth that glorifies God in Christ (**1 John 3:18**). Any expression of love that denies or hides the truth is a spurious love, even self-love, but not Godly love. This love is established in our hearts when the Spirit shows us our sin and then reveals the glory of Christ in our salvation by His obedience unto death (**cf. 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 4:10**). No sinner has this love by nature. It is the gift of God by the Holy Spirit through the Lord Jesus Christ. This love is not based on feeling, outward appearance, or common interests in the things of this world. It is love by God's sovereign choice (**Rom. 9:11-13**). God chose to love His elect in Christ. Christ has proven that love by dying for our sins and living for us. This is God's unconditional love towards us because we are sinners. But it is His love for us conditioned on Christ Who satisfied His justice in our place.

In God's love for us, there is no consideration of worthiness in the objects of His love. None of us deserve or have earned God's love. We are to seek to imitate this unconditional love. Although our love is not what it should be, knowing Christ's love for us and having that love shed abroad within our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we do love Christ, and we do love our brethren. This love can show itself to be genuine in many ways, from the smallest act of charity, such as giving a thirsty brother a drink of water, to the greatest act of self-sacrifice, such as dying for our brethren (**1 John 3:16-18**). And, of course, we know that for any of us to give our lives for our brethren, it would take a special measure of God's grace and power to enable us in such love. The main evidence of this love is that, by the grace of God, we stand united with our brethren in the faith and in the cause of Christ against the world (**1 John 3:11-15**).

"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" - Although we who are born again by the Holy Spirit still have within us the remaining power and influence of sin, we do have God the Holy Spirit within Who has given us spiritual life, knowledge, and desires. There still remains within us a big part of ourselves that still loves evil. This is sometimes in the Scripture called the **"flesh"** (**Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16-21**). But, by the grace of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we also have the Holy Spirit Himself and the **"fruit of the Spirit"** (**Gal. 5:22-26**). The Spirit gives us a desire to be like Christ and to follow Him. We must fight the warfare of the flesh and the Spirit. We must cultivate within ourselves a hatred of all that is evil and cling to all that is good - that which glorifies God, exalts Christ, edifies our brethren, and promotes the salvation of sinners. This shows us that we are to **"abhor"** (hate) **"evil"** in any form, whether it is the immorality of the world or the false religions of the world (**Psa. 119:104,128**).

(12:10) - BE KINDLY AFFECTIONED ONE TO ANOTHER WITH BROTHERLY LOVE - Brethren in Christ are members of the same spiritual, eternal family. Our relationship in Christ is to be one of kindness, love, and, above all, devotion. We are to be devoted to one another because we

are all devoted and united to Christ. We are to love one another **“with brotherly love,”** a family love that springs from Godly love and binds us together in God’s Word in Christ (**Rom. 12:9; 1 John 3:14-17,23; 4:7-11**). This love mainly evidences itself in mutual love of Christ in the truth of the Gospel, loyalty to and unity in Christ and His truth in the Gospel, endeavoring together to keep the bond of unity and peace among us, praying for and forgiving one another, and helping one another in spiritual and physical needs.

IN HONOUR PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER - Brotherly love is promoted by believers literally giving preference to one another in honor. This means we should **“go before”** or **“lead the way”** in seeking and giving honor, not to ourselves, but to others. This kind of attitude can only be attained by the grace and power of God within us. We understand that we have no honor in and of ourselves. We are here to honor Christ, not to honor men. However, in seeking to honor one another in earthly matters, we promote honor to Christ and love to brethren (**Php. 2:1-10**). Self-seeking, self-promoting people do not honor Christ and only cause division among brethren.

(12:11) - NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS; FERVENT IN SPIRIT; SERVING THE LORD - Our Lord said, **“I must be about my Father’s business”** (**Luke 2:49**). Believers are not to be **“slothful in business,”** i.e., lagging behind in diligence in the things of the Lord, in seeking to be conformed to Christ, in worship and study of His Word (**2 Tim. 2:15**), in edification of the church, and in evangelizing the world. We are to be **“fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”** - We are to seek to be zealous for the glory of God in Christ and in serving the Lord with gladness as we are motivated by love, grace, and gratitude.

(12:12) - REJOICING IN HOPE; PATIENT IN TRIBULATION; CONTINUING INSTANT IN PRAYER - **“Rejoicing in hope”** emphasizes the motive for obedience and service that inspires our zeal for God. We rejoice in the hope of glory because Christ is our hope (**1 Tim. 1:1**). We have real expectation of complete salvation and final glory because of the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this hope we have in Christ that causes us to be **“patient in tribulation,”** i.e., endure in faith even under trials, and **“continuing instant in prayer,”** i.e., be steadfast in prayer. All of this is connected because it all centers around our salvation by God’s grace in Christ.

(12:13) - DISTRIBUTING TO THE NECESSITY OF SAINTS; GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY - **“Distributing”** is the same root word used for **“fellowship,” “sharing,”** and **“communicating”** with brethren in Christ. We are to help our suffering brethren, especially those whose who suffer over their testimony of and identification with Christ, with all that they need. **“Given to hospitality”** - This is not speaking of social visits with each other, even though we as brethren ought to be sociable and hospitable with one another. We ought to try to enjoy each other’s company and spend time with one another. Here, however, the word literally means **“love of strangers,”** or **“befriending strangers.”** Paul is not saying we should allow every stranger we meet into our homes, but we should be ready and willing to receive and help those we may not know personally but have some confidence that they are brethren in Christ (**Heb. 13:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:9**). **“Strangers”** was a term sometimes used to describe believers in the world (**Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11; 3 John 5**). When we receive and help brethren in need, we are **“fellowhelpers in the truth”** (**3 John 8**). This does not mean any person who shows up unexpectedly and claims to be a Christian. The Lord has not made us to be fools, and the standard of receiving a person as a brother or sister in Christ begins with **“the doctrine of Christ”** (**2 John 9-11**). But do not be like a man named **“Diotrephes”** who, when the Apostle John sent brethren to the church where Diotrephes was a leader, refused to receive them because he saw them as rivals to his own preeminence (**3 John 5-10**).