



## Sermon Discussion Questions

August 11, 2024

*Unconformed*

# TRANSFORMED LOVE

Romans 12:9-21

### 1. Opening Discussion Questions: (in a group setting you may only want to choose one)

- a. We are just finishing another Olympic Games. Share what you consider to be a great act of sportsmanship during the games (or any other earlier sporting event). The worst unsportsmanlike conduct you witnessed? How were those acts viewed by others? Which do you think will be remembered the longest?
- b. Continuing with the Olympics theme, commentators often focus on the years of preparation and the long hours spent training each day. Which athletes or sport most impressed you with their commitment? In your opinion, what motivates an individual to be so dedicated? What do you think they have given up for their sport?
- c. There are many great stories of people demonstrating exceptional hospitality. In your personal experience, what would you consider the greatest act of hospitality you have seen? How did it affect those receiving it? What has been the most egregious act of inhospitality you've seen? How did it affect the individual denied hospitality?

### 2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. Love God With Transformed Love
  - i. Love God through devoted service
  - ii. Love God through difficult circumstances
- b. Love Other People With Transformed Love
  - i. Love other believers the way Jesus does
  - ii. Love non-believers the way Jesus does
- c. Love Enemies with Transformed Love
  - i. Be transformed in your interactions with enemies
  - ii. Overcome evil with good.

### 3. Study/Discussion Points:

#### a. *Sunday Afternoon*

- i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
- ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
- iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
- iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
- v. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?

- vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

**b. Monday:**

- i. Read Romans 12:9-21 several times using different versions if available.
  - 1. How would you describe this passage?
  - 2. What are the two (or three) major themes?
- ii. When Paul wrote there were no chapter and verse designations and certainly no paragraph title between verses 8 and 9. Go back and read verses 6-8 and then continue with verses 9-13.
  - 1. If Paul uses verses 6-8 to tell us “How” we are to use our spiritual gifts what is he emphasizing about our use of spiritual gifts in verses 9-13?
  - 2. Do you think Paul believed a Christian could use his/her spiritual gifts incorrectly or for the wrong purposes? Do you think they can?
  - 3. Paul provides the same emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. Compare verses 6-13 with 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:7. What similarities do you see? What differences?

**c. Tuesday: Loving Christians**

- i. Read Romans 12:9-13 and make a list of the commands found in these verses.
  - 1. What relationship or commonality do you see in the items on your list? Are there any commands that seem to be out of place?
  - 2. Which command do you find most difficult to apply in your own life?
- ii. According to the first sentence of verse 9 what kind of love should we have? In your own words describe what you think this should look like in the church.
  - 1. The Greek word translated as “genuine” (ESV) or “sincere” (NIV) is *anhypokritos*. Even though you probably don’t know Greek, what English word do you think we get from it (the prefix “an” simply means “not” or negation)?
  - 2. Read these verses: 2 Corinthians 6:3-6; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 1:22-23; and James 3:17.
    - a. Based on these verses what qualities need to be “sincere”? If we are commanded to be “sincere” about them what must be true of at least some other people's expression of these qualities?
    - b. The kind of love Paul is talking about is “agape”. What is your understanding of this form of love? Agape is the love described in John 3:16. Do you think it would be possible to truly have this kind of love without being sincere? If we claimed to have such love but were not sincere, what would we be?
- iii. The most common reason people give for not wanting to become a Christian is that “Christians are all hypocrites”. What does that suggest about our obedience of this first command in verse 9?

*d. Wednesday: Loving Christians*

- i. Read Romans 12:9-13 again today. Yesterday we looked at the first command “to love sincerely”. How do the remaining commands amplify on the first?
- ii. Why does loving others mean hating what is evil (v 9)? What happens when we think loving someone means never opposing them?
  1. How would you respond to folks who say that Christians should always love and never hate? What are some proper applications of hatred in our lives?
  2. What are some of the modern-day practical examples of “hating what is evil” and “clinging to what is good”? How will our society respond to us if we really live in such a manner?
- iii. Specifically, who does verse 10 tell us we should love (it may be helpful to read the verse in several translations)?
  1. How are we to show (demonstrate) that love?
  2. In what should we prefer one another? Give examples of how we can/should do this at LRBC.

*e. Thursday: Loving Christians*

- i. Read Romans 12:9-16. Meditate on each of the commands/instructions.
- ii. How do you define the terms “zeal” and “fervent in spirit” (or “spiritual fervor”)?
  1. How do they relate to serving the Lord?
  2. Give examples of the difference between people who are diligent/fervent and those who are not.
- iii. Consider the three phrases in verse 12. How do they relate to each other? Which one do you feel is most important? Which enables us to do the others?
  1. Compare this passage to Luke 18:1 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. What are the common features?
  2. What are some of the times you have been tempted not to pray but should have been steadfast in prayer?
- iv. What do you consider to be the difference between “caring for another Christian’s needs” and hospitality?
  1. How do you think Paul’s definition of hospitality might differ from a contemporary American definition?
  2. What are some examples of how we might “care for another Christian’s needs”? Provide “hospitality”?
- v. Verse 14 introduces the topic of persecution. Why do you think Paul included it at this point? Can/does persecution ever come from other Christians?

*f. Friday: Loving Enemies*

- i. Read Romans 12:17-21 and Matthew 5:38-48.
  1. How does Jesus' teaching in Matthew provide the foundation for Paul’s practical implementation instructions in Romans 12:17-21?

2. By bracketing the passage with the twin instructions about how we should respond to evil in verse 17 and verse 21, what would this seem to say about those instructions in between?
  3. Compare verse 17 with 1 Thessalonians 5:15 and 1 Peter 3:9
    - a. Although similar, what is the unique teaching of each passage?
    - b. Which is most encompassing? Which provides the clearest reason for obedience?
  - ii. In verse 9 we were told to hate evil. How does this relate to verses 17 and 21? If we repay evil with evil, what are we compelled to say about our obedience of the command in verse 9?
  - iii. In Matthew 10:18 Jesus tells us no one is “good” and Psalm 53:3 expands on that by saying “everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.” Given these truths what enables us to overcome evil with good?
- g. **Saturday:** Loving Enemies
- i. Read Romans 12:17-21 again today but focus specifically on what it teaches about how we are to respond to those who hurt us.
  - ii. Read these verses about revenge; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 32:32; 1 Samuel 24:12; Proverbs 20:22 & 24:29. What are we doing when we try to do what God has claimed as His prerogative?
    1. If we try to do good just so we can “heap burning coals on his head” what are we actually doing? If we do so, what would it say about our actual obedience to the first command in this passage (verse 9a)? What have we become (see paragraph c. ii. 1. above)
    2. How would you respond to someone who said: “I am not paying them back; I just don’t want to have anything to do with them.”? What is fundamentally wrong with such an attitude?

#### 4. **Application:**

- a. Read the entire focal passage, Romans 12:9-21, slowly while meditating on how the individual commands and instructions apply to your life. Make a list of those where you find a need for improvement and beside each place at least one step you can take to help you grow in that area. In the spirit of verse 10, you may want to consider swapping lists with someone and mutually assist each other by providing accountability.
- b. These verses summarize the core of Christian living. If we love someone the way Christ loves us, we will be willing to forgive. If there is someone you have not forgiven now is the time to do so.

#### 5. **Prayer Points:**

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications – Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19