



## Sermon Discussion Questions

August 25, 2024

*Unconformed*

# WAKE UP!

Romans 13:8-14

### 1. Opening Discussion Questions: (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)

- a. Song titles such as “Love is Blue”, “Can’t Help Falling in Love With You”, “All I Need is Love”, and “I Will Always Love You” illustrate our culture's diverse views of *love* as they are expressed in music. What is your favorite love song? Why? Does that song accurately represent your view of love?
- b. “Love makes the world go around” expresses a view of how powerful love is in our lives. Other than God’s love, what is the greatest example/demonstration of love that you have ever heard of?
- c. Are you a conformist or a nonconformist? In high school did you try to fit in with a particular group of students or did you try to stand out by adopting a unique style of your own? Did that tendency carry over into your adult life?

### 2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. Love Your Neighbor!
  - i. Genuine neighbor love fulfills the person-to-person rules and commands.
  - ii. You have many opportunities to love your neighbor!
- b. Live Urgently!
  - i. Be woke (for Jesus)!
  - ii. What does it look like to be woke for Jesus?
- c. Put On Christ!
  - i. This isn't the time for sinful, hypocritical Christianity!
  - ii. Put on the Lord Jesus

### 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. Begin this week's study by reading and meditating on Romans 13:8-14.
  1. What are the main themes/topics that Paul is addressing in these verses?
  2. What command or instruction from this passage strikes you as the most important? Which would you consider to be the most difficult command for you to follow in your own life?
  3. What relationship would you see between this passage (Romans 13:8-14) and last week's study about our role in and relationship to governments (Romans 13:1-7)?
    - a. How do you see the instructions about "owing" in verse 7 being expanded in verse 8?
    - b. What is your reaction to the idea that we owe it to others to love them? How does this go against the common view of love?
- ii. In Romans 12 and 13 Paul has progressed from first providing instructions about how we should live with our fellow Christians, then how we are to live under governing authorities, to now talking about how we are to live within our society.
  1. Why is this the most challenging of the three areas?
  2. Read Jeremiah 29:4-7.
    - a. How did God instruct the Israelites to live when they were taken into captivity and found themselves in a completely pagan society?
    - b. How would these instructions to the Jews serve as an example of how we should interpret Paul's instructions?

c. ***Tuesday:***

- i. Read Romans 13:8-10 in several different translations meditating particularly on verse 8.
  1. Some Christians believe that the first part of verse 8 applies to all areas of life, including our finances. In that view being in debt is a sin.
    - a. Do you agree or disagree with such an interpretation?
    - b. Read Exodus 22:25-27, Nehemiah 5:1-11 and Matthew 25:27. What do these passages suggest about our financial indebtedness?
  2. Read John 13:34-35, Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 John 3:11-18, and 1 John 4:7-21.
    - a. Why is love a "debt" that can never be repaid?
    - b. To whom is it owed? How and to whom are partial payments made?

d. ***Wednesday:***

- i. Read Romans 13:8-10 in several different translations meditating particularly on verse 9.
  1. Compare verse 9 with Matthew 7:12, 22:37-40, and Mark 12:28-31. How does Paul's instruction serve as guidance for implementing what Christ taught?
  2. Loving our neighbor in this manner is sometimes considered a New Testament idea. How does Leviticus 19:18 clearly show that it was always what God intended with His law?
  3. In your own words, how does loving others fulfill the law?

4. Christians frequently point to verses such as Romans 6:14-15 to make the point, correctly, that we are saved by grace and are not under the law. How does this verse show that even though Paul taught that we are saved by grace he still felt that we had an obligation to obey God's commands?
- ii. The last part of verse 10 quotes the Leviticus 19:18 command to "love your neighbor as yourself."
  1. If we are going to obey this command as God intended what is a necessary prerequisite? If we are not doing that would obedience have any meaning?
  2. In many circles self-love is depicted as somehow wrong and only self-serving. Why can this not be true? Why is the opposite, low self-esteem also a hindrance to obeying this command? If you are focused on the well-being of others, what will it likely do to your self-image?

*e. Thursday:*

- i. Today start your study by reading the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:3-17 and/or Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Then read Romans 13:8-10 meditating especially on verse 9.
  1. Which of the final six commandments – those which deal with how we relate to one another – did Paul leave off his list of examples in Romans 13:8? Why do you think he did so?
  2. Compare Paul's list to the one Jesus provides in Luke 18:20 in response to the ruler's inquiry about how to inherit eternal life. What does this suggest about how we should view the completeness of such a list? How does Paul deal with this issue in his list to prevent us from becoming legalistic?
- ii. The commands Paul lists are presented as things we should *not* do (negatives) but the summary command, "Love your neighbor as yourself" is a positive action. Read the Old Testament Commandments and the New Testament teachings listed below that are related to it. Then identify at least one (more where possible) positive way(s) the New Testament teaches us to love our neighbor which goes beyond simply avoiding the prohibited act.
  1. Adultery: Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27-32, and Ephesians 5:21-33
  2. Murder: Exodus 20:13 and Matthew 5:21-24
  3. Stealing: Exodus 20:15, Luke 6:29-38, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, and Ephesians 4:28
  4. Coveting: Exodus 20:17, Luke 12:22-34, Luke 16:13, and Philippians 4:11-13

*f. Friday:*

- i. Read Romans 13:8-14
- ii. Think about the exercise you did yesterday when you had to identify positive actions of love. Why are such positive actions so much more difficult for us than just avoiding a prohibited action?
  1. What insight do Jeremiah 17:9 and Mark 7:21-22 provide to help you answer?

2. What does Paul tell us in verse 14 that we must do to comply with his teaching? Compare verse 14 with what Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10, and 2 Corinthians 5:17.
3. Given all of these texts what can we conclude is necessary if we are going to love others as ourselves (see Philippians 4:13)?
- iii. Romans 13:11b can be a troubling verse if we allow ourselves to understand it to be saying that our salvation is a progressive process – the Bible teaches that our salvation occurs fully in a moment at the point of time when we believe and repent – so what does Paul mean when he says it is nearer (see Romans 8:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11, Hebrews 9:28, and 1 Peter 1:5)?
- iv. Because of our “approaching salvation”, Paul tells us to do several things. Explain each of these phrases in your own words after considering the associated passages:
  1. Romans 13:11 – “wake up from your slumber” with 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8
  2. Romans 13:12 – “put aside the deeds of darkness” with Matthew 6:23, Ephesians 5:8, and 1 Peter 2:9
  3. Romans 13:12 – “put on the armor of light” with Ephesians 6:10-18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8
  4. Romans 13:14 – “clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” with Romans 8:29

*g. Saturday:*

- i. In verse 12 we are told to “put on the armor of light”. Read the description of our armor Paul gives in Ephesians 6:10-17. How will this armor help us accomplish what Paul commands in Romans 13:13?
- ii. The contrast between darkness and light is a recurring theme in the Bible. Read John 12:36, Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5, 1 John 1:7, and 1 John 2:10. How do these verses support Paul’s teaching in the focal passage?
- iii. Paul ends the chapter by telling us to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. What do 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:24, and Colossians 3:10 teach us about putting on Christ?
- iv. Paul also tells us to “not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.” How does Philippians 4:8 tell us we can do this?
- h. **Application.** This week, spend part of your quiet time each day considering how you can better love your neighbors – especially those who are not Christians. Try to avoid generalities and develop actions you can take concerning specific individuals, families, and groups in your neighborhood.

**4. 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