

Why is the Church Important?

Read: Romans 12:9-21

Main idea: As Christians, we must live a life in line with God's revealed truth, which includes living in harmony and showing grace towards everyone, especially those in the church.

Key Verses: "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all." (12:16-17 ESV)

Key Principles:

- Living each day in worshipful response to God is the logical response to the mercy God has shown us in Christ.
- We will be changed as we learn to think according to God's will—clinging to what is good, actively using our gifts for the benefit of the body, and showing love toward all people, without hypocrisy.
- As Christians, we must bind ourselves to what is good, living a life in line with God's revealed truth.
- Because of God's undeserved kindness to all of us in Christ, the genuine love of God for us in the gospel is to be shown toward everyone (12:18).
- Reflecting on God's mercy toward us should renew our thinking toward those we naturally push away, to the point we seek to serve even our enemies (12:20).

Discussion:

1. Look at the list of commands in Romans 12:9-21. Why are Christians called to pursue these behaviors? How does that help the church as a whole?
2. Which of these commands do you find are the most difficult to obey? Why?
3. Our total devotion to God has radical implications for our relationship with everyone around us, particularly in the body of Christ (12:5). What are some specific ways you struggle to live in harmony with others? What would it look like for you to take practical steps of repentance?
4. According to Romans 12:9-21, we are told to bless—and not curse—those who persecute us and not repay anyone evil for evil. What should our response be to the sinful actions of others?
5. How do verses 19 and 21 clarify (and limit) our role?

Prayer:

- Focus on the grace of God in the gift of the body of Christ and fellowship of believers.
- Pray:
 - o Thank God for the unity of the body Christ and the encouragement to be built up.
 - o For a transformed mind so that we can be instruments of peace to everyone.
 - o For forgiveness for the ways that we have been vengeful in words and deeds.

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Romans 12:9-21

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| I. | The Church helps you to <u>love</u> others <u>sincerely</u>. | 12:9-13 |
| 1. | <u>Hate</u> what is evil. | 12:9 |
| 2. | <u>Honor</u> others. | 12:10 |
| 3. | <u>Serve</u> the lord. | 12:11 |
| 4. | <u>Rejoice</u> with hope. | 12:12 |
| 5. | <u>Care</u> for believers. | 12:13 |
| II. | The Church helps you to <u>bless</u> others <u>graciously</u>. | 12:14-16 |
| 1. | Be kind in what you <u>say</u> . | 12:14 |
| 2. | Be kind in what you <u>do</u> . | 12:15 |
| 3. | Be kind in how you <u>think</u> . | 12:16 |
| III. | The Church helps you to <u>live</u> with others <u>peaceably</u>. | 12:17-21 |
| 1. | Always <u>do</u> the good <u>thing</u> . | 12:17-18 |
| 2. | Always <u>trust</u> the good <u>God</u> . | 12:19-20 |
| 3. | Always <u>pursue</u> the good <u>end</u> . | 12:21 |

NEXT WEEK:

We Have Failed

Matthew 26:57-75