

Sermon Title: The Transformed Life is a Model of Christian Love, Part 1

Sermon Text: Romans 12:9-21

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to model the lifestyle of Christian love in ethical conduct.

Sermon Proposition: There are 4 aspects of modeling Christian love in ethical conduct.

- I. The **personal** dynamics of Christian love. V.8
- II. The **Church family** dynamic of Christian love. Vv.10-13
- III. The **social** dynamics of Christian love. Vv.14-18
- IV. The **enemy** dynamics of Christian love. Vv.19-21

Introduction: The supreme New Testament virtue, which focuses on the need of the object of love, and seek to do what is best for the object of this love, and do what is necessary to meet the need of the object of this love.

Matthew 22:37-39; Galatians 5:22; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 4:16; 1 Corinthians 13

Self-discipline becomes an important characteristic to develop in the Christian life. To manifest that which God makes possible for the Christian, requires self-discipline on the believers behalf.

“Only the disciplined mind can think clearly and be used of the Lord to properly understand and present His truth to the world. Only the disciplined mind can effectively evaluate and challenge the world’s ideals and standards in the light of that truth. By the same token, only disciplined Christian life can be a persuasive and effective example, both within the church and before the world.

Simply put, self-discipline is the willingness to subordinate personal desires and objectives to those that are selfless and divine, to subordinate that which is attractive and easy to that which is right and necessary. (**Hebrews 5:12-14**)

It is as absurd as it is unbiblical to believe that anyone can live a faithful, fruitful Christian life on mere good intentions and warm feelings for the Lord and His work. The Christian life is an accountable life, and by definition, accountability is based on specific principles and standards. For the Christian, they are the divinely-revealed principles and standards to which God holds each of His children. It is because we are accountable that the Lord disciplines us when we disobey His Word and ignore His will.” [John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 9-16*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, pp.180-181.]

I. The **personal dynamics of Christian love. V.8**

A. Christian love must be **demonstrated** without **hypocrisy**. V.9a

Paul considers love such an assumed Christian virtue, that he doesn’t even exhort the Roman Christians to love but to make sure that the love we already have is “genuine.” That our love is not fake or pretense, with ulterior motives, that is for personal gain. Nor can it be an emotion that does not conform to the nature of God who is the very definition and illustrator of love and who has loved us.

2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

1 Timothy 1:5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith,

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

1. Hypocrisy and Christian love are incompatible. Christian love is to be demonstrated purely and sincerely without self-centeredness or guile. The word for hypocrisy finds its origin in Greek theater, describing a character who wore a mask. The term, as used in the New Testament normally described an unregenerated person.

(**Matthew 6:1-2, 5, 7, 16, 24, 32, 33**)

Authenticity - “I remember hearing Lorne Sanny of the Navigators, years ago, ministering on the campus of the Air Force Academy, where officers in the making are being trained – so much competition, so much peer pressure. One of the young men who got a Bible class going was very much involved in its success, and it seemed as though month after month the whole thing revolved around him. And he continued to keep it going by pushing and motivating others to be involved. Finally the group grew, and he was the acknowledged leader of the group.

On one occasion early one morning as Lorne was talking with the group about the importance of devotion and time with God, he said, ‘Young man (called the leader’s name), tell us about your walk. Tell us what it is that keeps your heart warm.’ The young man blinked a few times through tears and looked around, and against the pressure of the moment he said, ‘Sir, I don’t have any time with God.’ He said, ‘As a matter of fact, I’m a fake.’ And he admitted in front of the whole group that he was simply driven by this need to be known and viewed as the leader, when in reality there was no authenticity behind it.” [Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1998, pp. 40.]

2. Authentic Christian love.

(Mark 12:28-34; John 13:31-35; 1 John 4:9-11; Romans 5:5-8; Philippians 2:1-5)

B. Christian love must **detest** what is **evil**. V.9b

Genuine love, love without hypocrisy detests what is evil. Abhor or detest would be translated “to hate exceedingly,” ([ἀπο]στουγούντες) makes the verb emphatic.

1. Requires cutting off evil doers. **Jude 23**
2. Requires making no covenants with evil. **Psalms 101:1-8**
3. Requires eliminating wickedness from our lives. **Matthew 18:7-9**
4. Requires fear of the Lord to hate evil.

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.

Amos 5:18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Evil must be something we hate with a passion, that is equal to our love for God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and one another. When we as believers allow this strong passion to hate evil to be the direction of our lives, then evil can be resisted. But if we are detesting evil, what is it we must hold on to?

C. Christian love must **cling** to what is **good**. V.9c

Genuine love, love without hypocrisy, love that detests evil, therefore clings to what is good. The “cling” can be used to refer to the intimate union that is to characterize the marriage relationship. Paul is teaching that “genuine” Christian love is not a directionless emotion, or something that can only be felt but not demonstrated. Love is not “godly love” produced by the Holy Spirit in and out of believers leads a person to do something evil or to avoid doing what is right, as defined in God’s Word. These characteristics of love demonstrated a transformed renewed mind, leading to a transformed renewed life.

Psalms 1; Philippians 4:6-9 Provide some key principles for clinging to that which is good.

1. What not to do in order to cling to what is good?
 - a) Don’t walk in the council of the ungodly.
Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
 - b) Don’t stand in the path of sinners.
Psalms 1:1 Nor stands in the path of sinners
 - c) Don’t sit in the seat of the scornful.
Psalms 1:1 Nor sits in the seat of the scornful

2. What should we do in order to cling to what is good?
 - a) Find our delight in the Word of God.
Psalm 1:2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
 - b) Meditate on the Word of God day and night.
 - c) Walk in the Spirit.
Galatians 5:24-25 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
 - d) Pray without ceasing.
Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
 - e) Live at peace with God
Philippians 4:7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
 - f) Focus on what is good according to God.
Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things.
 - g) Attach yourself to and follow "godly examples."
Philippians 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Conclusion: This type of discipline takes time. Yet time will mean nothing if you are not committed and focused in the right direction. The church can only be as healthy as each individual part. The community can only be impacted by each individual contributing to the health of the whole body. The body can only impact the society when it is healthy.

Charles H. Spurgeon – "Baptist minister of London, England, had a pastor-friend, Dr. Newman Hall, who wrote a book entitled *Come to Jesus*. Another preacher published an article in which he ridiculed Hall, who bore it patiently for a little while. But when the article gained popularity, Hall sat down and wrote a letter of protest. His answer was full of retaliatory invectives that out-did anything in the article which attacked him. Before mailing the letter, Hall took it to Spurgeon for his opinion.

Spurgeon read it carefully then, handing it back, asserted it was excellent and that the writer of the article deserved it all. 'But,' he added, 'it just lacks one thing.' After a pause Spurgeon continued, 'Underneath your signature you ought to write the words, "Author of *Come to Jesus*."'

Two godly men looked at each other for a few moments. Then Hall tore the letter to shreds. [Charles Swindoll, *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1998, pp. 41.]