

Scripture Text

Romans 12:9-10

Context

In Romans 12, Paul shows us the response that the grace of God must result in the Christian life (v1-2). We are to give our bodies to serve the body of Christ (v3-8). We do so out of genuine love for one another (v9-10).

Observation and Meaning

- Read Romans 12:1-2. How do these verses help us to understand and apply the “practical theology” of the rest of this chapter?
- Romans 12:9a tells us that love must be genuine and without hypocrisy. Briefly scan through Matthew 6 and 7 and observe how Jesus speak about hypocrisy. What is at the root of the hypocrisy of mere outward behaviours (Matthew 6)? Why are we prone to judging others, and how is that also hypocrisy according to Jesus (Matthew 7)? In contrast, what do these tell us about the genuine love in the church family?
- Romans 12:9b requires genuine love to “abhor” or hate what is evil. Does the text assume we naturally hate evil and desire good? Why is that so? How is hating evil an important aspect of genuine love?
- Read Romans 12:10. Observe the use of highly emotive language. How does this verse shape our view and expectation of relationships in church?
- Think about the affection and honour we received from God through Christ. How does the gospel change how we treat and feel about one another in the church family?

Big Idea

The gospel of God’s love for us means we now relate to one another with the genuine, affectionate and honouring love of Christ.

Connecting to Bible Storyline

God’s love is a consistent theme throughout the whole bible. He sets his affection on his people (Deuteronomy 10:15) and has loved them with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). Jesus came into this world because of love (John 3:16), and he commanded all his disciples to love one another (John 13:34).

Applications

- What are some struggles we have in loving others? How does this passage challenge us?
- Genuine love is rooted in objective good and evil. How do we love those in church who are blindly or wilfully sinning against God? How do we love and encourage one another towards holding fast to what is good?
- What are some ways we can develop deeper brotherly affection for one another? How would that transform the way we spend our time with one another?
- List some practical ways we can grow in honouring one another with genuine love. How does preaching the gospel to ourselves regularly help us to achieve them?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. “for”, “if”, “therefore”), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author’s purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?
What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?
Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God’s word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good “heart” questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.