How to Show Love When It's Hard January 2, 2022

*Romans 12:9-21 Series: Navigating Our Differences with Unity*

For 30 years I have tried to see the face

of Christ in those with whom I differed. – Henry Benjamin Whipple

Intro: War brings out the worst in almost everyone

1. Look for needs to meet
2. Focus on others, not yourself

v. 9 *Let love be genuine.*

v. 10 *Love one another with brotherly affection.*

v. 10 *Outdo one another in showing honor.*

v. 13 *Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

1. Your faith is supposed to feed your love not your fight

v. 11 *Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.*

v. 12 *Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*

1 John 4:11 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

* When our society becomes divided, why is it easy to forget that we’ve been called to be a people of love?
* There are many things we can’t do in the pandemic. What are some things that can be done to show love?
* How do the encouragements to hope, patience, and prayer relate to showing love in hard times?

1. Hold your opinions in humility
2. Trust that God’s right; don’t assume that you are

v. 16 *Never be wise in your own sight.*

Proverbs 3:7 *Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.*

1. Put yourself in other people’s shoes

v. 15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice …*

v. 15 *weep with those who weep*

1 Corinthians 12:26 *If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

1. Don’t pull back because ‘you’re right’

v. 16 *Live in harmony with one another.*

v. 16 *Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.*

1 Peter 5:5 *Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

* What are some indications that you might be “wise in your own eyes”?
* What are some ways that you might become more understanding toward a person you don’t agree with?
* Why does pride often lead us to pull away from others with whom we disagree?

1. Learn to bless your enemies
2. Take revenge off the table

v. 9 *Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*

v. 14 *bless and do not curse them*

v. 17 *Repay no one evil for evil …*

v. 19 *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God …*

1. Look for ways to do good to your enemies

v. 14 *Bless those who persecute you …*

Matthew 5:44 *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you …*

v. 17 *give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all*

v. 18 *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

v. 20 *To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink” …*

v. 21 *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

1. Keep Jesus and eternity in view

v. 19 *… for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

Genesis 50:19 *But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?”*

v. 20 *for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head*

Luke 23:34 *And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*

Acts 7:60 *And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

* What are some subtle ways that Christians can be vengeful?
* How does God’s vengeance help us to be forgiving?
* What are some ways that you can bless someone that you disagree with?
* Why do you think Stephen prayed for Jesus to not hold the people’s sin against them in stoning him?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Romans 13:1-7

Notes