

(9) Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

(14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 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. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

(19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written,
“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 32:35)

(20) To the contrary,

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” (Proverbs 25:21, 22)

(21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good!

Think on These Things

- 1) How can we as Christians show sincere and genuine love for others? V.10 speaks to our church fellowship. What two commands does Paul give for church relationships?

Opinion question. The opposite of genuine is fake, and of sincerity, insincerity! We must not be fake or insincere in our relationships with others (in or out of the church). Be real. Show honest concern for others. Take actions to care for them.

a) For our church, care for and love others as family (brotherly affection); and b) lead the way among the congregation in honoring and valuing each other openly in our gatherings.

- 2) For each matter identified, what is the command?

Laziness – **Do not be slothful (lazy). Work with zeal and excellence in what you do.**

Serving the Lord – **Be fervent (enthusiastic) in your spirit when serving God.**

Having hope – **Rejoice and be glad for the hope within you! (Heb. 6:18-19)**

In difficult trials – **Show patience in tough times --- and PRAY!**

Contributing to the needs of the saints – **Meet church member needs in a hospitable way!**

When persecuted – **Offer blessings for the people going after you. Don't curse them....**

Being with people in high or low times of life – **Rejoice with people when they are happy, and sympathize with people burdened by struggles and pains. Don't isolate from them...engage!**

- 3) From vs.16-18, restate in your own words the instructions --- as far as it rests with you --- that lead to “living in harmony with one another” and “living at peace with all men.” (Also see v.3)

Answers will be personalized. A suggestion: Willingly associate with the ‘unimportant’ folks wherever you may be (all work is honorable). Don’t think too much of yourself; embrace humility and a respectful attitude in life. Don’t do to others WHAT they do to you, but what you wish they would have done for you. Focus on living decently and treating others well so that people will admire and respect your Christian life --- even if they disagree with you!

- 4) In v.19, what is the verb used for us letting God take care of righting undeserved wrongs done to us? Do you find this hard to do?

Avenging (defending) ourselves and our families is the personal reaction we want to take, but God says, “Vengeance is mine.” He asks us to trust and defer to Him. It can be hard to simply keep this only as a matter of prayer between ourselves and God; feelings can be quite intense.

- 5) Can you think of anyone in your life you would consider your “enemy”? How are Christians expected to treat such people? Do you think they’ll ever get their come-uppance? How should you handle your own attitude?

Personal response question. If anyone comes to someone’s mind, the biblical teaching is to extend kindness and consideration to these people. We want to overcome their evil by doing what is good. As with vengeance above (Q4), we must leave it up to God to reach or discipline them as He sees fit. If we can embrace it, an attitude of “It’s up to God” can be calming, leaving it to Him to address by conviction or correction --- now or later. Father knows best!!

- 6) V.21 should be a clear distinction between Christians and non-Christians. It marks a stark difference from an eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth attitude, or, modernly speaking, doing unto others before (or ‘what’) they do to you (a scriptural perversion)! Paul says don’t be overcome by evil. What is the mantra for Christians (the last phrasing)?

OVERCOME evil with good!

- 7) Which of today’s commands do you find most challenging to you personally? Would you be willing to share why?

Personal question for your members. Use it as a very short review, perhaps revisiting an earlier (deep) discussion. This might lead to lifting someone up in prayer who struggles with a specific instruction, or the sharing of some practical ways to handle difficult situations.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: