

Romans 12:9-16 The Gospel and Relationships.

“Above all the grace and the gifts that Christ gives to his beloved is that of overcoming self.”

– *Francis of Assisi*

Romans 12 v1-2 is one of the most famous passages in Scripture. The phrase “the mercies of God” is a short hand phrase for all that God has done for us i.e. the gospel.

Because of what God has done for us we are called to present our bodies in service to him. The rest of the chapter details what this service looks like. The strange thing is that it is a list of instructions on how we should serve one another.

Apparently we serve God by the way we treat each other. Our relationships are the sphere in which we serve God.

Rom. 12:9 ¶ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;

1. How is love ever false?
2. It seems redundant to tell us to hate evil and hold fast to what is good. How do we see people in our modern culture setting an example of not hating evil? How does this destroy relationships?

Rom. 12:10 love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.

3. Love is shown differently in different relationships (spouses, children, siblings). How is it shown amongst our fellow Christians? What is meant by outdoing one another in showing honour? What are three ways we could do this for each other at Springwood?

Rom. 12:11 Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.

4. We could take this verse as a command to never sleep in or be lazy at work. What is it really calling us to do however? How do we know when we succeed in zeal and being ardent?

5. Now read the following verses as one block. What stands out to you as the point that Paul is trying to teach us?

Rom. 12:12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Rom. 12:13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Rom. 12:14 ¶ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

Rom. 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Rom. 12:16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.

6. This list of behaviours could just be read as general good advice for how we should all get along. What is the deeper motivation that Paul has given for why we should so treat each other **regardless of what we might ordinarily deserve**.

Within each human heart is a deep desire to be loved. Our culture seeks this with a passion through romantic delights and relationships. What is the alternate vision that Paul here sets out for our relationships and the desire to be loved? How well do we do as a Church in meeting this need we each have?