

Romans 13:8-14

Fulfilling the Law of Love

Sunday Morning May 16, 2010 Pastor Stuart Fraser

- I. Introduction:** In this practical part of the book of Romans we have seen Paul exhort believers to be in a right relationship with God (**12:1**), a right relationship with the world (**12:2**), a right relationship with believers (**12:3-8**), a right relationship with all people (**12:9-21**), and a right relationship with human government (**13:1-7**).
- **Matt 7:12** – “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”
- II. Love Fulfills the Law (vv. 8-14)**
- A. The Debt of Love (v. 8)**
1. Paul has just been speaking about paying taxes (**vv. 6-7**), and the admonition to “owe no one anything” keeps the focus on financial issues.
 2. This verse is sometimes used to show that Christians shouldn’t ever borrow money, but neither the OT nor NT forbids borrowing.
 - **Ex 22:25** – “If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.” (**Ps 15:5**)
 - **Lev 25:35-36** – “Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor...then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. Do not take *usurious interest* from him...”
 3. Lending and borrowing were legitimate processes and common in Ancient Israel.
 - **Matt 5:42** – “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”
 - **Luke 6:35** – “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great...”
 4. The one debt we are to continually be paying off is our debt to love one another.
 - Origen – “the debt of love remains with us permanently and never leaves us. This is a debt which we pay every day and forever owe.”
 - Leon Morris – “We can never say, ‘I have done all the loving I need to’ [This is because] love is a permanent obligation, a debt impossible to discharge.”
 - “God’s laws are not just moral rules or abstract mandates, they are rules of love.” (Sproul, *Romans*, 226)
- B. The Design of Love (vv. 9-10)**
1. By committing adultery, stealing, murdering, and coveting we don’t show we love others, we demonstrate that we love ourselves.
 - **Phil 2:3** – “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind *regard one another as more important than yourselves...*”
- C. The Demands of Love (vv. 11-14)**
1. Wake up From Slumber! (**vv. 11-12a**)
 - Paul is calling Christians to awaken from their spiritual unconsciousness, unresponsiveness, and inactivity, concerning spiritual matters.

- **Eph 5:14** – “Awake, sleeper...arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you”
 - **Col 4:5** – “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.”
 - **Eph 5:15-16** – “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, *making the most of your time*, because the days are evil.”
 - **Titus 2:11-13; Heb 10:24-25; James 5:7-8; 1 Peter 4:7-8**
 - Jonathan Edwards Resolution #5 – “Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable ways I possibly can.”
2. Throw Off Sin! (**vv. 12b-13**)
- “Lay aside” (*apothometha*) – the idea of forsaking, renouncing, and repenting.
 - **1 John 3:3** – “everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
 - **Eph 4:22-23** – “put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...”
3. Put On Christ! (**v. 14**)
- Gentile unbelievers in Antioch of Syria were the first to call Jesus’ followers Christians (“little Christ’s”), but they did it mockingly (**Acts 26:28**).
 - We are to put on the same attitude, heart, passion, and lifestyle as Jesus.
 - **Gal 2:20** – “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

III. Conclusion: What are some practical ways we can discharge our debt of love?