



FIRST LIGHT CHURCH

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Date: 5/14/23

Series: My Next Step

Text: Romans 12:9-13

BIG IDEA: When we follow Jesus, we walk in His steps.

ICEBREAKER: How has a mom left a mark on you? It could be your mom or another mom in your life.

CONTEXT: In Romans 12, Paul gets really practical on how believers are to live in light of the Gospel. Paul tells us that because of God's great mercy and love towards His people, they in turn live a counter cultural kind of life. God gifts and empowers His people to live lives that reflect Him.

PASSAGE: Have a volunteer read Romans 12:9-13.

DISCUSSION:

1. What does genuine love look like?
2. How can moms hate what is evil as it pertains to motherhood?
3. What good can moms cling to?
4. What would it look like to outdo one another in showing honor?
5. What can keep you from having passion and living with purpose?
6. What kind of impact would it have if you focused on living out verse 12?
7. How is generosity at the heart of verse 13?
8. Why is it important for Christ followers to use their resources (money & home) to show love to others?

APPLICATION:

9. If you're a mom, how do these verses challenge you as a mother?
10. If you're not a mom, what from this passage most challenges you in your walk with Jesus?

K4 CONNECTION:

As we live out our Christian faith, it should make a profound impact on those around us. We don't just live quiet and kind lives. We live a radically different kind of love marked by genuine love. It's God's love for us, in us, and through us that makes an impact on those we come in contact with. Love, honor, patience, prayerfulness, generosity, and hospitality should mark every single Christ follower. As we live these out in our community, may God restore more people back into His family!

CARE AND PRAY:

- Pray for our mothers and the moms at First Light and in our community.
- Share any prayer requests with one another.

COMMENTARY

[v.9] From here to 13:10 (the final mention of love in this section) Paul can be thought of as paralleling what he writes in 1 Corinthians 13. There he described what love is. Beginning here in Romans 12, Paul describes what love looks like when lived out by the Christian.

“Let love [agapē] be genuine” can be thought of as the heading for all of the exhortations to follow. They are phrased as commands in English; in Greek (until v. 14) they are participles—“abhorring what is evil, holding fast to what is good,” and so forth. Whatever form expressions of love may take, those expressions must respect the moral dimension of each situation. An act of love that commits evil is a contradiction in terms. Love grasps “what is good” and clings to it tenaciously.

[v.10] Paul’s indirect exhortations continue; perhaps he is here exercising the first gift listed in verse 8. Agapē love (v. 9) between believers takes the form of philadelphia (“brotherly affection”). They express this affection with true devotion, not objective detachment. An emotional bond is implied; something is wrong when believers feel less care for each other than they do for their household dog or cat.

“Outdo one another” (proēgeomai; the word occurs only here in the NT) does not suggest conceited one-upmanship but exemplary behavior, honoring others in service in ways that lead others to do likewise. This is Paul’s expectation for Titus when he writes, “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works” (Titus 2:7).

[v.11] While zeal can be misguided (10:2), as a component in expressing love (12:9) it is indispensable. Slothful love suggests dead formality, going through the motions, which would be hypocrisy. “Fervent” suggests inner intensity showing itself in what might appear to be extreme; Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet (expressing his love; John 13:1) is an illustration. “Serve the Lord” renders the participial expression “serving the Lord”; when this is the explicit motivation, action is heartfelt (because the Lord infuses it by his Spirit) and focused and attains its goal.

[v.12] Paul’s writings contain the verb for “rejoice” over two dozen times. The noun for “hope” occurs thirty-six times. Here hope is the sphere, and perhaps the cause, for rejoicing to take place. Love can promote a buoyancy, a confidence in God, that equates with hope and facilitates joyfulness.

“Tribulation” (Gk. thlipsis) has already featured in a sequence including “sufferings” (thlipsis) in 5:3 and leading to hope (5:4) associated with God’s love. In many parts of the world currently, as sporadically through the history of the church, Christian confession brings tribulation that demands courageous patience, which could also be translated “perseverance.” Consistency in prayer is called for frequently in Paul (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 1 Tim. 2:1) and modeled as well (Rom. 1:10; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:2). A sign of the presence of God’s love (cf. comment on Rom. 12:9) is when His people are found fulfilling the desire to pray.

[v.13] In the early church association with Christ could cause social ostracism, including loss of livelihood (e.g., Heb. 10:32–35). As Paul composed Romans, he was in possession of a large sum of money (the Jerusalem collection) destined for the relief of impoverished Jewish believers in Judea. Offerings for the needy, especially needy believers (Gal. 6:10), are an expression of God’s love. “Seek

to show” could also be translated “earnestly pursuing”; sharing meals and lodging with strangers was part of the culture of the early church in many locations (Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3 John 5–8). This can also be understood as honoring Jesus’ call to meet the needs of the hungry and thirsty (Matt. 25:31–46).

Commentary taken from the ESV Expository Commentary Romans 12:9-13

WHERE’S THE GOSPEL

“Let love be genuine” (v. 9) may be the heading under which to understand the rest of this chapter, and perhaps beyond. Love combines with faith and hope (see 1 Cor. 13:13) to describe the highest fulfillment of God’s saving Word to His people (see Rom. 13:8–10). Genuine love, produced by the gospel through which God’s love is “poured into our hearts” (5:5), detests evil and pursues good (12:9). It spawns mutual affection in the church and promotes others (v. 10). It is zealous, fervent, and selfless for the Lord’s sake (v. 11). In the most difficult of circumstances, love overcomes through hope, steadfastness in suffering, and prayer (v. 12). It is open handed and open hearted to others and their physical needs (v. 13).

These things describe the love shown to us by the Lord Jesus Himself in the Gospel. To love genuinely is to live compassionately toward others in the way that Jesus Himself has already treated us.

Commentary taken from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible Romans 12:9-13