

HUG THY NEIGHBOR

Romans 12:14-21

"Have you hugged your _____ today (or lately)?"

...a child... ...your dog... ...your dad/mom...

What's in a hug?

HUG—A VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE & AFFECTION FOR OTHERS.

God's people ought to be known for love & affection

We're considering *Implications* of the Gospel

If God loves *us* so much, *how should we respond?*

- * By giving Him our life—1-time gift—living sacrifice
- * By living for Him, transformed mind set; new lifestyle.
- * By serving Him enthusiastically. Finally, ...

If God loves us so much, appropriate response: love people He loves.

We're FAMILY! Loving each other; easier said than done.

Next chapters deal with **hard lessons** from God's Word

Not hard because passage is hard to understand.

"I'm not nearly so concerned about parts of Bible I can't understand, as parts I understand full well & don't DO!"

No issue stirs greater controversy than issues of love & submission => ***"You can't live that way!"***

This is NOT how normal people live! *That's the point!*

God's people, are SUPPOSED to be different!

God's family trademark: love for one another.

7 "HUGS" we ought to give people around us:

7 commands: How we show love 12:14-21

1st 3 "hugs" => Love for God's people 14-16

1) Bless your enemies 14

"Bless those who persecute you; bless & do not curse."

When someone hurts us, we show love seeking their *welfare*, NOT their *downfall*.

Sermon on the Mount: Matt. 5:43-48

Their leaders: love your neighbor; hate your enemy.

Christ: love *your enemy*! Seek his welfare; pray for him

Today's legal swampland: **"I've got my rights!"**

"I don't have to take that!" => Children sue parents

Students sue teachers Employees sue employers

2) Identify with one another 15 *"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."*

Call to identify with others in sadness or joy.

Difficult: rejoice for enemies when they triumph

Their success causes jealousy and frustration!

When enemy suffers, we feel *satisfaction*—*We're vindicated!*

Not kind of love we ought to show for God's people.

We should seek *welfare* of others.

They give account to God for *their* actions

WE ought to love *them*; seek *their* welfare.

3) **Concerning 3rd command** 16 *"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."*

4 commands tied together—deal with one topic.

[Skip 3rd blank for a moment—let's look at the pieces!]

What we think, as important as what we do.

"Live in harmony with one another"

=>Lit. *"think the same thing concerning one another"* =>

Seeing others as you see yourself-

NOT thinking exalted thoughts about yourself;

Associate with poor, humble people

Don't evaluate people based on what they own.

= world's filter, not God's! He doesn't choose by wealth!

Don't be wise in our own eyes-*"don't be conceited*

We become enthralled with our ideas & abilities.

=> **3) Stop exaggerating our importance! 16**

What brings joy of gratitude: receiving what we *don't* deserve.

When that happens, humility replaces pride.

[Last 4 "Hugs"] Show Love for All People 17-19

Do good to people who mistreat us =>

14 *"Bless those who persecute you."*

1) Don't repay evil for evil 17a

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil"

No shortage of people to mistreat us! How do we respond?

1 Pet. 2:21-23 *"Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin, & no deceit was found in his mouth. ²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."*

Jesus is example. *Who ever suffered more than He?*

Christ never responded by returning similar treatment,

with evil speaking, nor with threats. *What did He do?*

He entrusted His case to the Just Judge.

If Jesus is willing to suffer injustice, shouldn't we?

2) Do what's right 17b

"Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody."

WE should do right, whether anyone else does or not!

Not just avoid temptation to repay mistreatment with evil, love obligates us to seek best for others.

Don't repay evil with evil; seek best for all 3)

Live in peace with everyone 18 *"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

No distinction; attempt to live in peace with everyone.

Our efforts don't *always* produce peace;

sometimes people don't respond appropriately.

Do everything possible on our part to keep peace

When others don't respond, that's their problem, not ours.

4) Don't seek revenge 19 *"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay, says the Lord."*

Instead of seeking vengeance,

leave repayment in God's hands.

Our reaction: *fight back*, seek vengeance.

"I'll show them who they're playing around with."

God says: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

He's in charge of justice; He repays in His time.

God repays everyone fairly.

We have to learn that! ***It's not our place to avenge.***

"It is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord!"

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION OF LOVE 20

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Love seeks good of those who hurt/offend us.

2 ill. suggest how to demonstrate love.

If he's hungry, give him something to eat.

If he's thirsty, give him something to drink.

=> If he has some other need, meet that need!

***WE should do what's right.** Do good to those who hurt us*

***Don't let their sin drag us down** (to their level). Do right!*

What will be the result of that response to our enemy?

We pile coals of fire on his head.

"Coals of fire" hasn't been defined with certainty.

Woman with ornery husband went to pastor. Minister asked, "Have you tried heaping coals of fire on his head?" "No, I **haven't** done **that**, but I **have** used **hot water!**"

Doing good, more effective than physical blow!

Produces more permanent result than personal attack.

=> SUMMARY 21

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

World says: *"Do unto others BEFORE they do unto you!"*

Possible to win conflict with enemy, and lose battle.

Conflict isn't between 2 people; real battle is *spiritual!*

Best way to win battle: *conquer evil by doing good.*

Harry Fuhrman: "My grandpa raised chickens. Occasionally some disappeared. Their neighbors had chicken the next day. My grandma wanted to tell them off. Grandpa had a better plan. He had her prepare 2, take savory dish, & present it with a smile. Last time!"

Love wins, even if those who hurt us don't change!

Don't be defeated by evil; Defeat evil doing good

Triumph is to win the enemy; *not to defeat him.*

John Witmer: Old sergeant asked how he came to Christ. "Private in my company was Christian. Rest of us gave him hard time. One night he came in tired & wet from sentry duty, kneeled beside his bunk to pray. I threw my boots at him & hit him in side of head. He kept praying. Next a.m. I found my boots by side of my bed, beautifully polished. I decided I wanted his Savior!"

God's people known by our love—NOT by getting our way –but by LOVE!

Is there someone WE ought to "hug" today?

Do we need to polish someone's boots?