

**September 20th, Membership Rules**  
**Part 3 in the series 'A New Community'**

**What were some things from last Sunday's message that resonated with you?**

**Was there anything you wrestled with?**

Read Romans 12:9-13

**9** Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. **10** Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. **11** Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12** Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. **13** Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

**What do you think Paul means when he writes "love must be sincere in verse 9? What would you say is the difference between sincere love and an imitation of love?**

**What do you make of the lack of specificity in verse 9, "Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."?**

A. Talk about how we are to hate all evil, not only the evil perpetuated by those we count as our enemies.

**In verse 10, Paul says "Honor one another above yourselves." What would you imagine that to look like?**

**Reread verse 11. How might we ensure we aren't lacking in zeal?**

A. Zeal, fervor, enthusiasm, energy... are all produced in part by monitoring and managing your daily routine. Serving the Lord is something we must choose to do. It's important to spend time with God as a part of that routine.

**Reread verse 12. The ESV translation says, 'be constant in prayer'. What do you make of Paul's choice to include this command with the other two commands in the verse?**

A. Prayer is something we consciously choose to do. To be "joyful in hope" and "patient in affliction" sound like things that are outside of our control. Paul doesn't necessarily frame

them that way. Discuss how we might go about changing our outlook on difficult situations. Discuss how the Holy Spirit can help us if we let Him change us (talk about sanctification).

**Reread verse 13. Why do you think hospitality is so important?**

Read Romans 12:14-21

**14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. **17** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **18** 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." **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." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**To curse someone means to wish something bad would happen to them. To bless someone means to pray something good would happen to them. Why should we bless those who persecute us?**

Note: Perhaps explain to the group that if you are in a dangerous situation, you don't need to stay there in order to fulfill the command 'Bless those who persecute you'.

**Why do you think so many people do not want to "associate with the lowly"?**

**For many people, their primary concern in life is to be highly esteemed by others- to have a high status. Why should this not be the case for a Jesus follower?**

**What would you say it looks or feels like to "be overcome by evil"?**

**So, according to verses 19-21, we are to overcome evil with good. By what virtue then, do you think we are to accomplish what Christ has called us to do here on earth?**

A. Love

Read John 15:12-14

**12** “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you.

**How do these words of Jesus help magnify or emphasize the verses we read from Romans?**

- A. As Christians we are to live sacrificially- “**13** Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **17** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all... **19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves...**20** To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink...



