

Romans 12:7-9 Commentary

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Romans 12:7 [if service](#), in his [serving](#); [or](#) he who [teaches](#), in his [teaching](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: eite diakonian en te diakonia, eite o didaskon (PAPMSN) en te didaskalia,

Amplified: [He whose gift is] practical service, let him give himself to serving; he who teaches, to his teaching; ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; if it is teaching let us give all we have to our teaching; ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: "or serving, exercise that gift within the sphere of service, or teaching, within sphere of teaching."

Young's Literal: or ministration -- 'In the ministration!' or he who is teaching -- 'In the teaching!'

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION

God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith

Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work "[Jensen's Survey of the NT](#)"

RESOURCES RELATED TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- See a Summary Chart on Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual Gifts are discussed in

- Ro 12:6-note, Ro 12:7-note, Ro 12:8-note,
- Ep 4:11- note, Ep 4:12-note, Ep 4:13-note, Ep 4:14-note, 1Pe 4:10-note, 1Pe 4:11-note
- 1Co 12:1-14ff,

Miscellaneous Messages

[The Perfect Church by Robert Morgan](#)

Messages by Steven Cole (all in Pdf)

- [Ephesians 4:7-10 Christ's Purpose for His Church](#)
- [Saved to Serve](#)
- [Serving the Savior](#)

Messages by S Lewis Johnson

- [1 Corinthians 12:1-11 The Issue of Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-11 Unity and Variety of the Gifts](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-26 The Church -- Body of Christ](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:27-31 Exercise of Gifts in the Body](#)

Messages by John Piper (he is not a cessationist)

Cessationism... is the view that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, such as healing, tongues, and prophetic revelation, pertained to the apostolic era only, served a purpose that was unique to establishing the early church, and passed away before the canon of Scripture was closed (comp. 1 Cor. 13:8-12 with Heb. 2:3-4). It is contrasted with **continuationism**, which is the view that the miraculous gifts are normative, have not ceased, and are available for the believer today. (Source:Theopedia)

- [1 Corinthians 12:1 Spiritual Gifts](#)

- [Romans 12:1-8 We, Though Many, Are One Body in Christ](#)
- [Romans 12:1-8 Using Our Gifts in Proportion to Our Faith, Part 1](#)
- [Romans 12:1-8 Using Our Gifts in Proportion to our Faith, Part 2](#)
- [Romans 12:3-8 Using Our Gifts in Proportion to Our Faith, Part 3](#)

Messages by John MacArthur (he is a cessationist- [Is cessationism biblical?](#))

- [Marks of a Healthy Church - Selected Scriptures - 8 Sermons](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 1](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 1 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1 The Counterfeit Background of Spiritual Gifts - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1-11 The Gifts of the Body, Part 1](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1-3 The Importance of Spiritual Gifts - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:2-3 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:2-3 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 2 Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 The Source of Spiritual Gifts - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 The Source of Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 3 Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Apostles and Prophets - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Apostles and Prophets](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:8-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Speaking Gifts - Study Guide](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:8-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Leadership, Serving & Giving - SG \(drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:8-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Leadership, Serving & Giving](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Mercy, Faith & Discernment - SG \(drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Mercy, Faith & Discernment](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:10 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Miracles - Study Guide](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:10 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Miracles](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Healing- 1 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Healing- 2 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Healing- 2](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts, Part 3](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-13 Spirit Baptism - Study Guide](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-13 Spirit Baptism](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18, 24, 28 One Body, Many Gifts- 1 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18, 24, 28 One Body, Many Gifts- 1](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:15-31 One Body, Many Gifts- 2 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:15-31 One Body, Many Gifts- 2](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-27 The Body of Christ](#)

Multiple articles on Spiritual Gifts (K. Boa, B. Deffinbaugh, J. Walvoord)

[Bible.org articles on Spiritual Gifts](#)

Wayne Barber sermon series (discussion of spiritual gifts)

- [Romans 12:1 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 1](#)
- [Romans 12:2 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 2](#)
- [Romans 12:3-5 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 3](#)
- [Romans 12:5-8 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 4](#)
- [Romans 12:1-8 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 5](#)

Ron Ritchie (series on Spiritual Gifts)

- [Good Stewards Of God's Spiritual Gifts](#) 1 Peter 4: 1-10
- [The Benefits Of Spiritual Gifts](#) Romans 12: 1-8
- [The Joy Of Spiritual Growth](#) Ephesians 4: 7-13

- [The Proper Use Of Spiritual Gifts](#) 1 Corinthians 12: 1-30
- [Expressing Our Spiritual Gifts With Love](#) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- [Order Out Of Chaos](#) 1 Corinthians 14
- [Ron R. Ritchie's List of the Spiritual Gifts](#)

Ray Stedman from his book "[Body Life](#)"

- [All God's Children Have Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gift](#)
- [According to the Power](#)
- [How the Body Works](#) (spiritual gifts)

Ray Stedman - other messages on Spiritual Gifts

- [Romans 12:3-8: The Body at Work](#)
- [Romans 12:3-8 Who Am I, Lord?](#)

IF SERVICE, IN HIS SERVING: eite diakonian en te diakonia:

- Isaiah 21:8; Ezekiel 3:17, 18, 19, 20, 21; 33:7, 8, 9; Mt 24:45, 46, 47; Luke 12:42, 43, 44; Acts 20:20,28; Col 4:17; 1 Ti 4:16; 2 Ti 4:2; 1 Peter 5:1, 2, 3, 4
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#)- Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:6-7 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:8 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#)- John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-12 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 2 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#)- John MacArthur

Service (1248) (**diakonia**) (Click study of diakonia) which refers to menial & mundane activities, such as waiting on tables (related word "diakoneo" Acts 6:2) or caring for household needs—activities without apparent dignity in man's eyes but not in God's eyes!

Since such **service** necessarily involved dependence, submission, and constraints of time and freedom, the Greeks regarded **diakonia** as degrading and dishonorable which was in marked contrast to Paul's attitude & frequent use of this term to describe his ministry (cf Ro 11:13;15:31; 2Co 4:1;5:18; 6:3; 1Ti 1:12). The person who has the gift of **service** has a servant-heart.

If service in his serving - The point is that one should stay within the sphere of their spiritual gift -- continuously serving (present tense) in the sphere of your gift of serving.

Ray Stedman says that the gift of "**service**" is "the ability to see things that need to be done & do them" and he goes on to give this example "I thank God for those who have the gift of service here in this church. We have one man... who, whenever an announcement is made that something needs to be done, is always there on the spot. It doesn't make any difference whether anybody else shows up or not -- he is there & he gets something done. And, may I say, that is one of the most effective and powerful testimonies for Christ in this church. The person concerned may not be able to preach a sermon (I am sure that he would feel that he couldn't), but his life is a continual testimony to the reality of Christ living in him. He is one of the most effective ministers for Christ in this whole church." What a testimony to the glory of God. ([The Body at Work](#))

Wayne Barber adds that **diakonia** describes "a person who has the heart of serving and it doesn't matter how much credit he gets for it. The word "deacon" ([diakonos](#)) means minister, but the root of all ministry is servanthood and willingness to do whatever it takes, especially according to the gifts that God has given to you. So a person who is a faithful servant is a person you can trust, a person you can put your confidence in, a person who doesn't mind not getting any recognition & doesn't mind rolling up their sleeves so that the greater work of getting the Word out, the greater work of the prevailing ministry of the Word might take place. I didn't set this up... I love the people who are willing to come alongside and be selfless and willing to do whatever is necessary so that God's work might take place.

Wuest has this informative note (specifically commenting on the preceding preposition "**en**" = "**in**"): The word "ministry" is in the

locative of sphere. The exhortation is that the one who renders service should render service in the realm or sphere in which God placed him and for which He gave him that gift. Moule says of this word, "Almost any work other than that of inspired utterance or miracle-working may be included in it here." Godet says; "An activity of the practical nature exerted in action, not in word." As to teaching, it is aimed at the understanding, with reference to exhortation, at the heart and will (Vincent). Both words are in the **locative of sphere**, the idea being that the one who is given a teaching gift **should remain within the exercise of that gift**, and the one who has been given the gift of exhortation, **within the exercise of that gift**. It is a wise man who **stays within the sphere of service** for which God the Holy Spirit has fitted him, and does not invade some other field of service for which he is not fitted. (Wuest's Word Studies) (Bolding added)

Related Resource:

- **See study of meaning and significance of locative of sphere**

Isn't it fascinating that the Spirit inspired Paul to place "**diakonos**" right in the middle of the somewhat more "showy" gifts of "prophecy" and "teaching"! How difficult and dysfunctional it would be to exercise the gifts of prophecy and teaching without the assistance of those members of the body who faithfully "wait on the tables" so to speak.

OR HE WHO TEACHES, IN HIS TEACHING: eite o didaskon (PAPMSN) en te didaskalia

- Dt 33:10; 1 Sa 12:23; Ps 34:11; 51:13; Eccl 12:9; Mt 28:19; Jn 3:2; Acts 13:1; Gal 6:6; Eph 4:11; Col 1:28,29; 1 Ti 2:7; 3:2; 5:17; 2 Ti 2:2,24
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:6-7 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:8 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-12 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 2 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur

Teaches ([1321](#)) (**didasko** from **dáo**= know or teach; English = didactic; see study of related noun **didaskalia** and the adjective **didaktikos**) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting with aim of giving understanding. In the 97 NT uses of **didasko** the meaning is virtually always to teach or instruct, although the purpose and content of the teaching must be determined from the **context**.

John MacArthur writes that **didasko** "refers to the passing on of information-often, but not necessarily, in a formal setting. It focused on content, with the purpose of discovering the truth-contrary to the forums so popular among Greeks, where discussion and the bantering about of various ideas and opinions was the primary concern (see Acts 17:21). Synagogue teaching, as illustrated by that of Jesus, was basically expository. Scripture was read and explained section by section, often verse by verse. ([Matthew 1-7 Chicago: Moody Press](#))

In another source **MacArthur** writes that **didasko** (and related words) "In all the various forms, the root meaning carries with it the idea of systematic teaching or systematic training. It is the word that is used to refer to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. The gift of prophecy could be a one-time proclamation of Christ, but the gift of teaching is a systematic training problem to take a person from one point to another. What is the curriculum for the teacher? The Bible, the Word of God. The gift is to teach systematically the truth of God. It can be used with men—one on one, one on two, one on three, one on five thousand. It can be used with women—one on one, one on two, one on three, one on five thousand. It can be used by a lady in a little group of children. It can be used by a mother to a son. It can be used by a husband to his wife. It can be used in any conceivable way that the Spirit of God desires. It is the ability to pass on truth in a systematic progression so that someone receives it, implements it, and a change of behavior takes place. In fact, it is a gift that belongs to a lot more of us than we realize." (MacArthur, J. Spiritual Gifts. Includes index. Chicago: Moody Press)

In Scripture to **teach** means to pass on the truth about the Word of God, the God of the Word and the faith of the saints, with the goal of influencing the understanding and stimulating obedience to the truth taught and resultant Spirit energized transformation and Christ-likeness. The essence of a disciple in fact is that he or she is a learner. The teacher teaches and the disciple hears and processes what is heard so that this truth affects his or her innermost being. Ultimately the purpose of didasko is to shape the will of the one taught.

Didasko means to teach a student in such a way that the will of the student becomes conformed to the teaching (doctrine or precepts) taught. Teaching that Scripture finds significant is not that which just conveys information but teaching that produces transformation ("be transformed" - see notes on Romans 12:2) and reproduction of disciples who "walk (Live) in a manner worthy of the Lord." (Col 1:10-note). Note that just because someone is placed in a position of teaching does not necessarily mean that person has the gift of teaching. Not only is that person frustrated and they are not efficiently building up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12-note).

Kent Hughes comments that "**Teaching** differs from **prophecy** in that it instructs the mind, whereas prophecy is addressed more to the heart and will. **Teaching** is more concerned with knowledge, **prophecy** with revelation. The teacher is to apply his all to the task.

Dr. Barnhouse asks some piercing questions of those who have the gift of **teaching**: Have I listened to His voice? Have I laid my own reason in the dust before Him in order to take it again, enlightened by Him, for use in my work? Have I been spiritually alert and dependent upon the Holy Spirit? Have I gone again and again to the Word of God to refresh my own soul before speaking to others? Have I tried to live what I preach? Have I acknowledged my sins when the Lord showed them to me, and repented of them? Have I recognized moment by moment my utter dependence upon the Lord? Have I been lazy? Have I been diligent? Have I insulted the Lord by feeding His sheep with ill-prepared food?" These questions should cause all teachers (and all of us no matter what our gift is) to "think soberly" about the use of their gift.

Romans 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: eite o parakalon (PAPMSN) en te paraklese: o metadidous (PAPMSN) en aploreti, o proistamenos (PMPMSN) en spoude, o eleon (PAPMSN) en hilaroteti.

Amplified: He who exhorts (encourages), to his exhortation; he who contributes, let him do it in simplicity and liberality; he who gives aid and superintends, with zeal and singleness of mind; he who does acts of mercy, with genuine cheerfulness and joyful eagerness. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

NLT: If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. (NLT - Tyndale House)

Phillips: and if our gift be the stimulating of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it. Let the man who is called to give, give freely; let the man who wields authority think of his responsibility; and let the man who feels sympathy for his fellows act cheerfully. (Phillips: Touchstone)

Wuest: or he who exhorts, within the sphere of exhortation, the one who distributes of his earthly possessions, in the sphere of an unostentatious simplicity, the one who is placed in a position of authority, with intense eagerness and effort, the one who shows mercy, with a hilarious abandon.

Young's Literal: or he who is exhorting -- 'In the exhortation!' he who is sharing -- 'In simplicity!' he who is leading -- 'In diligence?' he who is doing kindness -- 'In cheerfulness.'

OR HE WHO EXHORTS IN HIS EXHORTATION: eite o parakalon (PAPMSN) en te paraklese

- Acts 13:15; 15:32; 20:2; 1 Corinthians 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:25; 13:22
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:6-7 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:8 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-12 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 2 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur

NEB renders it "and one who has the gift of stirring speech should use it to stir his hearers."

NLT gives a good sense of what Paul means "If your gift is to encourage others, do it!"

The main point Paul is making is "stay within the sphere of your gift".

If your gift is exhortation, then by all means "exhort" and don't waste your time and energy trying to exercise the gift of mercy which you do not possess. Obviously this does not mean one is never to exhibit mercy, but what it means is that mercy is not that person's specific spiritual gift. Stay within the bounds of your gift & do it faithfully, fervently & for the Lord. This basic principle applies to each of the spiritual gifts.

Related Resources:

- [Spiritual Gifts Chart](#)
- [Teaching - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Teach; Teacher; Teaching - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Teaching - The Topical Concordance](#)

If **teaching** provides guidance for what people ought to do, **exhortation** helps them achieve it. Phillips calls the gift of exhortation "the stimulating of the faith in others." Luther says that "**teaching** is meant for the ignorant and **exhortation** for those who know". **Teaching**, however, is not simply doctrinal instruction but includes guidance in ethical conduct with the avowed goal being that of a changed life as well as an informed mind. Jesus connected teaching and obedience (Mt 28:20).

H. C. G. Moule insists that **teaching** "first passes through the teacher's own soul **into** his own life" before it is given to others."

Teaching has in mind instruction, while **exhortation** encourages people to practice what they have been taught. Both are necessary for a healthy Christian life. Those who are taught but not exhorted become "fat sheep" who only take in and never live out the Christian life. Those who are exhorted but not taught become excited and active, but have no depth or understanding as to what they are doing, and will burn out quickly or work in wrong ways. **Exhortation** is the gift of stirring up the saints to desist from every form of evil and to press on to new achievements for Christ in holiness and in service.

Exhorts (3870) (**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** [**word study**] = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action.

- [Exhortation - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Exhortation - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- [Exhortation - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Exhortation - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Exhortation - Charles Buck Theological Dictionary](#)

Vincent - Exhortation (is) Aimed at the heart and will.

Kent Hughes illustrates the root idea of **parakaleo** "to come alongside and encourage" with the following example: "I see this exemplified every time my church has a roller skating party, and the parents put their little ones on skates for the first time. Mom and Dad skate with their child, holding on to his or her hands, sometimes with the child's feet on the ground and sometimes in the air. But all the time the parents are alongside encouraging... [exhortation] is a wonderful gift, and we are to place it at Christ's feet and be willing to be worn out in its use."

John MacArthur as usual has a wise word on this passage noting that "The **gift of exhortation** encompasses the ideas of advising, pleading, encouraging, warning, strengthening, counseling and comforting. At one time the gift may be used to **persuade** a believer to turn from a sin or bad habit and at a later time to **encourage** that same person to maintain his corrected behavior. The gift may be used to **admonish** the church as a whole to obedience to the Word. Like the gift of showing mercy (see below), exhortation may be exercised in comforting a brother or sister in the Lord who is facing trouble or is suffering physically or emotionally. One who exhorts may also be used of God to encourage and undergird a weak believer who is facing a difficult trial or persistent temptation. Sometimes he may use his gift simply to walk beside a friend who is grieving, discouraged, frustrated, or depressed, to give help in whatever way is needed. This gift may be exercised in helping someone carry a burden that is too heavy to bear alone... In summary, it might be said that, just as prophecy proclaims the truth and teaching systematizes and explains the truth, exhortation calls believers to obey and follow the truth, to live as Christians are supposed to live—consistent with God's revealed will. In many servants of Christ, all of these abilities are uniquely and beautifully blended. (Page 173 in [MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago:](#)

[Moody Press](#))

Ray Stedman adds that "Frequently this (the gift of exhortation) is given with the gift of teaching, but it is a different gift entirely. The gift of exhortation is the capacity to move the will, to warm the heart, to impel to action." ([The Body at Work](#))

HE WHO GIVES, WITH LIBERALITY: ο metadidous (PAPMSN) en haploteti:

- Ro 12:13, Dt 15:8, 9, 10, 11,14, Job 31:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, Ps 112:9, Pr 22:9, Eccl 11:1,2,6, Is 58:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, Mt 6:2,3,4, 25:40, Lk 21:1, 2, 3, 4, Acts 2:44, 45, 46, 4:33, 34, 35,11:28, 29, 30, 2Co 8:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,12, 1Th 2:8, 1Pe 4:9, 10, 11
- **liberally** - 2 Corinthians 1:12; 8:2; 11:3; Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#)- Steven Cole
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Wuest translates it "the one who distributes of his earthly possessions, in the sphere of an unostentatious simplicity."

Gives is not the usual Greek verb for giving, **didomi**, but is the intensified verb **metadidomi** (3330) which conveys the added meaning of sharing & imparting that which is one's own. Paul used this verb in (Ro 1:11 "impart") explaining to the Roman believers that when he came he would "**impart** some spiritual gift to" to them.

For additional insight study all 5 uses of metadidomi in the NT -Lk. 3:11; Rom. 1:11; 12:8; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 2:8

All Christians are expected to contribute -- this is a sign that you have received: Jesus said "freely you received, freely give," (Mt 10:8).

All Christians, without exception, if they really know the Lord, will give. But there are some who have a special gift of giving, and, by the way, it is not always the rich people either. Sometimes the very poorest people have the gift of giving, and, even out of their poverty, they find ways to give. They give cheerfully and gladly to bless the heart.

Liberality (572) (**haplotes**) is used in a moral sense to describe sincerity, absence of hypocrisy or exaggeration. The root word (**haplos**) means singleness (not having a double motive) and came to convey the idea of single mindedness, openheartedness, and then generosity. This word then carries the idea of sincere, heartfelt giving that is untainted by affectation or ulterior motive.

Thayer adds that **haplotes** is the virtue of one who is free from pretence and hypocrisy, and who exhibits openness of heart manifesting itself by benefactions & liberality.

A related word **haplos** (574) is used in (James 1:5) translated "**generously**" which is the way God gives... and so it should be with His children.

William Barclay - There is **sharing**. Sharing is to be carried out with simple kindness. The word that Paul uses is **haplotes**, and it is difficult to translate, because it has in it the meaning both of simplicity and of generosity. One great commentary quotes a passage from The Testament of Issachar which perfectly illustrates its meaning. "And my father blessed me, seeing that I walked in simplicity (haplotes). And I was not inquisitive in my actions, nor wicked and envious towards my neighbour. I did not speak evil of anyone or attack a man's life, but I walked with a single eye (literally, with haplotes, of my eyes). To every poor and every afflicted man I provided the good things of earth in simplicity (haplotes) of heart. The simple (haplous) man does not desire gold, doth not ravish his neighbour, doth not care for all kinds of dainty meats, doth not wish for diversity of clothing, doth not promise himself length of days, but receiveth only the will of God. He walketh in uprightness of life and beholdeth all things in simplicity (haplotes)." There is a **giving** which pries into the circumstances of another as it gives, which gives a moral lecture along with the gift, which gives not so much to relieve the need of the other as to pander to its own vanity and self-satisfaction, which gives with a grim sense of duty instead of a radiant sense of joy, which gives always with some ulterior motive and never for the sheer joy of giving. Christian sharing is with haplotes, the simple kindness which delights in the sheer pleasure of giving for giving's sake. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

- [Liberality - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

- [Liberality - Torrey's Topical Textbook](#)
- [Liberality - Nave's Topical Bible](#)
- [Liberality - Charles Buck Theological Dictionary](#)
- [Liberality - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)

The Christian who gives with liberality gives **of** himself, not **for** himself. He does not give for thanks or recognition, but for the sake of the one who receives his help and for the glory of the Lord. This is where Ananias & Sapphira failed (Acts 5:1-11) When someone who is called and gifted to be a giver stops giving **with liberality** (tense is present = habitually, continuously gives), they will often see their resources dry up (cf Ananias & Sapphira!) - having forgotten why God has blessed them. Don't be like the man who gave only once a year—\$10 which he placed in the pastor's hand saying, "This is for the church." He wanted to make sure he got credit for his generous gift! And don't be like the man who stood up in a church meeting and said "I want to give \$100 anonymously". That's not giving with openheartedness and generosity.

Parenthetically, as Paul taught in (2Co 8:5) (speaking of the impoverished church in Macedonia) if you first give yourself to the Lord (cp Ro 12:1 "present your bodies... ") as the Macedonian believers did, you will have little difficulty giving "with liberality" to His body. You will recognize that all that you are & all that you have is a result of the "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." (2Co 8:9) and you will give generously, willingly, sacrificially, even supernaturally (2Co 8:3), out of your love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

John MacArthur - Would that all Christians with this gift not only would minister it cheerfully but also regularly and consistently. There would be far fewer needy who have to depend on a godless, impersonal government or social agency. And if Christ's people patterned their lives after His gracious example, far more people would hear and respond to the saving gospel that meets their deepest need.

Moule - Here, of course, no special office, but special opportunity, is in view. Every Christian would, more or less, be a giver; but the wealthier Christians would have peculiar responsibility in the matter. Lit. in simplicity. A derived meaning of the Gr. word, in connection with giving, (and so here,) is liberality, openhandedness; the opposite to the doubled, closed, hand of the niggard.—Same word as 2 Corinthians 8:2; 2 Corinthians 9:11; 2 Corinthians 9:13, (where lit. "liberality of distribution"). ([Romans 12 Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#))

HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE: ο προισταμενος (PMPMSN) εν σπουδαι:

- Ro 13:6; Genesis 18:19; Psalms 101:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Acts 13:12; 20:28; 1Cor 12:28; 1 Th 5:12, 13, 14; 1 Timothy 3:4,5; 5:17; Hebrews 13:7,17,24; 1 Peter 5:2,3
- with diligence Ecclesiastes 9:10
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:6-7 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:8 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-12 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 2 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur

Wuest = the one who is placed in a position of authority, with intense eagerness and effort.

Leads (4291) (**proistemi** from **pro** = before, over + **histemi** = place, stand) literally means to put over or before and describes one who is "standing before or over." The figurative sense means to exercise a position of leadership (Ro 12:8, 1Ti 3:4-5). To place in a position of authority or superintendence. To lead, to preside over to conduct, to direct, to govern, to superintend or to take over the direction of the people.

According to the TDNT **proistemi** also conveys the ideas of to be a protector or guardian, to give aid, to assist, to care for or to be active in helping.

The following nuances found in secular Greek are **NOT** found in the NT uses -

- Causal in these tenses, as also in pres. and aorist middle = to set before or in front, 2. to set over others, c. gen., Plat.

II. Middle voice, mostly in aorist = to put another before oneself, choose as one's leader, Herodotus: c. genitive., = to take as one's leader, Plat.

2. to put before one, put in front, Herodotus., etc.

3. metaphorically = to put forward as a pretence, use as a screen, Demosthenes.; c. genitive = to use one thing as a pretext for another, Id.

4. to prefer, value one above another, Plato.

Friberg on **proistemi** - intransitively in the NT; (1) middle put oneself (responsibly) at the head, lead, direct, rule (1Ti 5.17); (2) active, of a protective leadership care for, help, give aid (1Th 5.12); (3) of responsible preoccupation with something devote oneself to, engage in, strive for (Titus 3.8)

In (1Co 12:28) Paul refers to the same gift by a different name, "administrations" [kubernesis - see A-7](#) which is related to the word used of a pilot (or shipmaster) who steers a ship in (Acts 27:11, Re 18:17-[note](#)) which gives us an excellent word picture of the meaning of "administrations".

The related derivative noun form **prostatis** means not only a leader but was also used by Plutarch for the Latin patronus, a patron, a defender of a lower person. The word denoted those in Athens who were the patrons, who had the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of resident strangers and aliens who were without civic rights. Thus gifted leaders also protect and care for those they lead.

Proistemi - 8x in 8v - Usage: engage(2), have charge over(1), leads(1), manage(1), managers(1), manages(1), rule(1). There are only 5 uses in non-apocryphal Septuagint - 2Sa 13:17 ("**attended** him"); Pr 23:5 (Lxx = returns to the house of his **master**); Pr 26:17 (Lxx = **makes** himself the **champion** of another's cause); Isa 43:24 (Lxx = but thou didst **stand before** me in thy sins); Amos 6:10 (Lxx = to the **heads** of the house)

Romans 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-note But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and **have charge over** you in the Lord and give you instruction,

1 Timothy 3:4 He must be one who **manages** (presides over) his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

1 Timothy 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to **manage** his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

1 Timothy 3:12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good **managers** of their children and their own households.

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who **rule** (describes the elder as one who "stands before/over" the body, the church) well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

Comment: Elders are given authority in order to manage church affairs. Though churches give authority in different ways, according to their polity, the point is that elders are to have authority.

Titus 3:8-note This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to **engage** (Busy oneself with) in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

Titus 3:14-note Our people must also learn to **engage** in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

Wayne Barber - If you have a room full of people with the gift of leading, can you imagine presiding over that room? But then again, it wouldn't be that way because it is Holy Spirit directed; it is Holy Spirit empowered. It is the gift of being able to take a stand in front of somebody and say, "This is what we are going to do, let's go."

Swindoll - The one who has the gift of leadership thus stands before other believers to guide them and to assist them in their spiritual development.

Leads with diligence - If you are a leader, you know that it is easy to become discouraged and feel like giving up, but you must persevere, not by "just going through the motions" but with eagerness and zeal (both of these words being synonyms for **diligence**) .

Diligence (4710) (**spoude** from **spseudo** = hasten, make haste) refers to eagerness, earnestness, willingness or zeal. It denotes quick movement or haste accompanying the eagerness, etc, in the interest of a person or cause. Thus **spoude** can refer to swiftness of movement or action and means haste or speed (like our expression "in a hurry"). It can refer to an earnest commitment in discharge of an obligation or experience of a relationship. **Spoude** was often used in Greek and Roman literature and found on inscriptions in reference to extraordinary commitment to civic and religious responsibilities, which were frequently intertwined, and also of concern for personal moral excellence or optimum devotion to the interests of others.

Spoude primarily speaks of an **attitude** which is associated with or leads to an **action**. It conveys the ideas of doing something hurriedly (Mk 6:25, Lk 1:39) (but not ineptly) with earnest effort & intense motivation. Clearly the gift of leadership precludes procrastination & idleness. If you're a lazy leader it's possible the pressure and disappointments of leadership have caused you to "crawl off the altar". You need to go back to (Ro 12:1) and remember that you are not your own but that you have been bought with a price to glorify God in your body, by exhibiting diligent leadership and that one day you will give an accounting for your **stewardship** ([or here](#)) of His gift (Mt 25:21, 23, Ro 14:12, 2Co 5:10).

Whether this gift is possessed by church officers or by members who direct such things as Sunday school, the youth group, the nursery, or a building program, the gift of leadership is to be exercised with carefulness, constancy, and consistency.

Stedman adds that the **gift of leadership** is "the capacity to plan or execute and organize & it is of tremendous value -- not only in the actual organizing of the church, but in planning conferences & meetings & in setting up special projects, missionary enterprises, etc. If God has given you this gift, by all means get to work with it! ([The Body at Work](#))

HE WHO SHOWS MERCY WITH CHEERFULNESS: o eleon (PAPMSN) en hilaroteti:

- Deuteronomy 16:11,14,15; Psalms 37:21; Isaiah 64:5; 2Cor 9:7
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:6-7 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:8 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-12 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 2 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur

Way paraphrases freely - "If you come with sympathy to sorrow, bring God's sunlight in your face. "

Wuest says "the one who shows mercy, with a joyous abandon."

Mercy with cheerfulness - Paul's point is that we are to show mercy with gladness not sadness. Now let's be honest for we are know how difficult it can be at times to show mercy but here Paul charges us to even be cheerful when we demonstrate mercy! The perfect example of mercy without cheerfulness is Job's "comforters" who poured even more gloom on Job's circumstances.

It should be abundantly clear that mercy with cheerfulness is a supernatural transaction and is only possible as we are strengthened in our inner man by the Holy Spirit. This enablement is not to be ministered grudgingly or out of a sense of duty, but with cheerfulness. Paul's addendum of **cheerfulness** is no small matter. As everyone who has suffered knows the attitude of the fellow believer can make the difference between the "mercy" being a help or a hindrance. As someone has well said there are some saints who can bring a sunbeam into a sickroom, while others bring a noxious aroma of doom and gloom. Better to not even bring that type of "mercy"!

Mercy (1653) (**eleeo** [word study] from **eleos** [word study] = mercy) is the verb form and means to show mercy, compassion or help. **Showing mercy** is not merely expressing a **feeling** for the misfortunes of others (even if that expression includes sympathy) but even more on point it is an active desire to remove those miseries. The person with this gift actively shows sympathy and sensitivity to those in suffering and sorrow and has both the willingness and the resources to help lessen the other's afflictions. A right attitude (Spirit controlled, with His fruit) is crucial to ensure that the gift of mercy is a genuine help, and not simply a discouraging commiseration (the feeling of sorrow, pain or regret for another in distress) with those who are suffering (Pr 14:21, 31 Lk 4:18, 19).

The **present tense** calls for these Spirit filled saints to continually demonstrate the grace of mercy in thought, word and deed.

Eleeo is used 29 times in the NT (note 6 uses in Romans) -

Mt. 5:7; Mt 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 18:33; 20:30, 31; Mk. 5:19; 10:47, 48; Lk. 16:24; 17:13; 18:38, 39; Ro 9:15, 18; 11:30, 31, 32; 12:8; 1Co 7:25; 2Co 4:1; Phil 2:27; 1Ti 1:13, 16; 1Pe 2:10

Eleeo is used about 72 times in the Septuagint -

Gen. 33:5, 11; 43:29; Exod. 23:3; 33:19; Num. 6:25; Deut. 7:2; 13:17; 28:50; 30:3; 2 Sam. 12:22; 2 Ki. 13:23; 2 Chr. 36:17; Job 19:21; 24:21; 27:15; 41:12; Ps. 6:2; 9:13; 25:16; 26:11; 27:7; 30:10; 31:9; 41:4, 10; 51:1; 56:1; 57:1; 86:3, 16; 119:29, 58, 132; 123:3; Prov. 12:13; 14:21; 17:5; 19:17; 21:10; 22:9; Isa. 9:17, 19; 12:1; 13:18; 14:1; 27:11; 30:18f; 33:2; 44:23; 49:10, 13, 15; 52:8, 9; 54:7, 8; 55:7; 59:2; Jer. 6:23; 7:16; 12:15; 30:18; 31:20; 42:12; 50:42; Lam. 4:16; Ezek. 5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:5, 10; 24:14; 39:25; Hos. 1:6f; 2:1, 4, 23; 14:3; Amos 5:15; Zech. 1:12, 17

Easton's Bible Dictionary writes that **mercy** is "compassion for the miserable. Its object is misery. By the atoning sacrifice of Christ a way is open for the exercise of mercy towards the sons of men, in harmony with the demands of truth and righteousness (Ge 19:19; Ex. 20:6; 34:6, 7; Ps. 85:10; 86:15, 16). In Christ mercy and truth meet together. Mercy is also a Christian grace (Matt. 5:7; 18:33, 34, 35).

ISBE - "Mercy" is used of man as well as of God, and is required on man's part toward man and beast (Dt 25:4; Ps 37:21; 109:16; Prov 12:10; Dan 4:27; Mic 6:8; Mt 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"; Mt 25:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46; Lk 6:36, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful"; Lk 10:30 f, the Good Samaritan; Lk 14:12, 13, 14, 15, 16; James 3:17). In the New Testament "mercy" (eleos, usually the Septuagint translation of checed) is associated with "grace" (charis) in the apostolical greetings and elsewhere. **Trench** points out that the difference between them is that the freeness of God's love is the central point of charis, while eleos has in view misery and its relief; charis is His free grace and gift displayed in the forgiveness of sins--extended to men as they are guilty; His eleos (is extended to them) as they are miserable. The lower creation may be the object of His mercy (eleos), but man alone of His grace (charis); he alone needs it and is capable of receiving it (Synonyms of the New Testament, 163 f).

To demonstrate **mercy** is the gift of what one might call consolation or encouragement -- the ability, as Isaiah so beautifully puts it, "to speak a word in season to him who is weary," (Is 50:4). Solomon writes that

A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word! (Pr 15:23)

Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprove to a listening ear. (Pr 25:11, 12)

Paul writes that believers are to...

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29-note)

Mercy then includes the ability to encourage in the time of special need (Pr 15:23), to come into a home where things are upset and difficult, and say just the right thing (Ephesians 4:29-note).

The gift of mercy includes such philanthropic activities as feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and caring for the aging, all of which are to be done cheerfully. Why cheerfully? Because those who downcast and in need of mercy clearly have troubles enough and do not need of "merciful helpers" who carry out this ministry as if it were an inconvenience or an overwhelming burden to them.

Here are **Nave's Topical** cross references on **mercy**-

- 2Sa 22:26; Ps 18:25; 37:25, 26; 85:10; Pr 3:3, 4; 11:17; 12:10; 14:21, 22, 31; 20:28; 21:21; Ho 4:1; 12:6; Micah 6:8; Mt 5:7; 23:23; Lk 6:36; Ro 12:8; Col 3:12, 13; James. 2:13
- Instances of
- The prison keeper, to Joseph, Gen. 39:21, 22, 23.
- Joshua to Rahab, Josh. 6:25.
- The Israelites to the man of Beth-el, Jdg. 1:23, 24, 25, 26.
- David to Saul, 1 Sam. 24:10, 11, 12, 13, 17.
- See also - See: [God, Mercy of; Kindness](#).

Cheerfulness ([2432](#)) (**hilarotes**) (This is the only NT use) used only in this verse. Although the Eng. word "hilarious" is derived from the related word **hilaros** ("God loves a cheerful giver" 2Co 9:7) hilarious does not convey the correct meaning of hilarotes. The word denotes a happy, glad or cheerful state of mind and not one overcome with laughter or mirth, or one humorously affected.

- [Cheerfulness - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Cheer; Cheerfulness - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

Vincent defines **hilarotes** as "the joyfulness, the amiable grace, the affability going the length of gayety, which make the visitor a sunbeam penetrating into the sick-chamber, and to the heart of the afflicted."

Ray Stedman exhorts all of us in the body of Christ worldwide "Now, these gifts are not limited to those in the professional ministry, to just the so-called "clergy." It would be horrible if they were. The whole ministry is the work of the whole body -- that is what the Scripture teaches. All of us together have gifts of the Spirit which we must exercise -- and the whole body falters and fails if you aren't doing your part in exercising the gifts that God has given you... find them out & use them, because, if you are not using the gift that God has given you, you are robbing Christ of His right to be in you what He wants to be. You are robbing Him of His inheritance in the saints {cf, Ep 1:18-note}, and hindering Him from the work which He longs to see accomplished. The point that the Apostle Paul is making here is not so much to give us a list of what the gifts are, but that, no matter which gifts we have, we need to put them to work for God. **What he is saying is: Get with it! Wholeheartedly enter into this. Unreservedly give yourself to the ministry of the gifts you possess. Make this your calling. Make this your reason for existence -- that you might find occasion to exercise your gifts! Then, you see, the work of Christ will prosper.** If you have the gift of teaching, then you ought to be teaching. You have no business sitting in the pew continually, without a ministry of your own... Find an avenue of teaching, in the home, in the Sunday School, in the church -- somewhere. Call some folks together (you'll find someone who has the gift of listening) and then start there... Paul says. Get with it, in other words. Get involved. Start using the gifts that God has given to you." ([The Body at Work](#)) (Bolding added)

Stedman goes on to explain the mark of Spirit energized ministry: "The mark of whether it comes from the Spirit or of the flesh is that it be done in the wholehearted, unrelenting participation of the Spirit. That is, it never ceases. Why is this the mark? Because these gifts can be exercised in the flesh, and they can be a fair imitation of the real thing -- for a while. But there is one thing about the imitation: If it isn't patted on the back and ministered to, or given full credit, or public recognition, it stops! The mark of the ministry that is in the flesh is that it just flashes up for a while, and, as long as it has the public center of attention, it goes ahead. But as soon as that fades, it quits. On the other hand, **The mark of the ministry of the Spirit is that, regardless of whether anyone says anything or sees anything, it keeps right on going!** That is because it is unto the Lord. You can't continue with the perennial enthusiasm that you show without having discovered the secret of resting on the indwelling life of Jesus Christ. That is why this wholehearted, continual service is the mark of a Spirit-filled ministry. It is the mark that you have discovered the fountain of living waters, and, therefore, out of your own inner being there flows rivers of living water and blessing to others. It is the mark that you have the secret of a life-time of fruitful service -- twelve months out of the year the fruit of the Spirit is evident in your life because you have learned how to really live in the fellowship of an ungrieved Spirit, in the smile of the Lord Jesus, and delighting the heart of the Father. That is the secret of real, wholehearted participation in these ministries." In the words of Major Ian Thomas, "This is a life not explainable in terms of human personality, but it is explainable only in terms of God." ([The Body at Work](#)) (Bolding added)

John Owen (Who is he? See John Piper's [Reflections on the Life & Thought of John Owen](#)) wrote that spiritual gifts are "that without which the church cannot subsist in the world, nor can believers be useful to one another and the rest of mankind to the glory of Christ as they ought to be. They are the powers of the world to come, those effectual operations of the power of Christ whereby His kingdom was erected and is preserved"

MacArthur ([Romans 9-16. Moody Press](#)) sums up this section by adding that: "Although we obviously must pay attention to our gift, we can never faithfully exercise it by focusing on the gift itself... We can serve Christ only as we become like Christ & we can exercise the Spirit's gifts only as we present ourselves as living sacrifices & submit to His continuing transformation & sanctification of our lives."

A Truck Driver's Hands

We have different gifts, . . . if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Romans 12:6, 8

Today's Scripture & Insight: Romans 12:3-8

The news came as a shock. Having already survived prostate cancer, my father had now been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. To complicate matters, my father is my mother's full-time caregiver, attending to her own chronic illnesses. With both parents needing care, there would be some difficult days ahead.

After flying home to be with them, I visited my parents' church one Sunday. There, a man named Helmut approached me, saying he'd like to help. Two days later, Helmut visited our home with a checklist. "You'll need some meals when the chemotherapy starts," he said. "I'll arrange a cooking roster. What about the mowing? I can do that. And what day is your rubbish collected?" Helmut was a retired truck driver, but to us he became an angel. We discovered he often helped others—single mothers, the homeless, the

elderly.

While believers in Jesus are called to help others (Luke 10:25–37), some have a special capacity to do so. The apostle Paul calls it the gift of mercy (Romans 12:8). People with this gift spot needs, rally practical assistance, and can serve over time without getting overwhelmed. Moved by the Holy Spirit, they're the hands of the body of Christ, reaching out to touch our wounds (vv. 4–5).

Dad recently had his first day of chemotherapy. Helmut drove him to the hospital. That night my parents' fridge was full of meals.

God's mercy through a truck driver's hands. By: Sheridan Voysey ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What spiritual gifts do you have? (If unsure, check out Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12; and Ephesians 4:7–13.) How are you using them to serve others?

Heavenly Father, help me to be filled with Your mercy, so that I might serve those in need powerfully and cheerfully, revealing who You are.

A. B. Simpson's beautiful hymn expresses what the true attitude about our spiritual gifts & all the rest of our lives should be:

Once it was the blessing,
"Now it is the Lord.
Once it was the feeling,
Now it is His Word.

Once His gifts I wanted,
Now the Giver alone.
Once I sought healing,
Now Himself alone.

Romans 12:9 Let **love** be **without hypocrisy**. **Abhor what is evil**; **cling** to **what is good**. (**NASB: Lockman**)

Greek: e agape anupokritos. apostugountes (PAPMPN) to poneron, kollomenoi (PPPMPN) to agatho,

Amplified: [Let your] love be sincere (a real thing); hate what is evil [loathe all ungodliness, turn in horror from wickedness], but hold fast to that which is good. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: Don't just pretend that you love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Stand on the side of the good. (NLT - Tyndale House)

Phillips: Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine break with evil and a real devotion to good (Phillips: Touchstone)

Wuest: Love, let it be without hypocrisy. Look with loathing and horror upon that which is pernicious. Stick fast to that which is good (

Young's Literal: The love unfeigned: abhorring the evil; cleaving to the good;

LET LOVE BE WITHOUT HYPOCRISY: e agape anupokritos:

- 2 Sa 20:9,10; Ps 55:21; Prs 26:25; Ezek 33:31; Mt 26:49; John 12:6; 2Cor 6:6; 8:8; 1 Th 2:3; 1 Ti 1:5; James 2:15,16; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8; 1John 3:18, 19, 20
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
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- [Romans 12:8 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#)- John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-12 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 2 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#)- John MacArthur

Don't just pretend that you love others: really love them (TLB)

Don't let love be a mere outward show. (JNT).

Let love be genuine (GWT).

Don't just pretend that you love others. (NLT)

Love (26) (**agape**) (for more discussion see notes on **1Co 13:4**) in the NT usually refers to unconditional (as in this verse), sacrificial, supernatural love, that quality of love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that love which God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and (to praise of the glory of His amazing grace - Ep 1:6-note) that quality of love that God's Spirit enables us as His children (Jn 1:12, Ro 8:16, 17-note) to manifest (see fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22-note). Do not "try" to "manufacture" this love, but instead learn daily (even moment by moment) to "die" ("to self", cp Mk 8:34, Lk 9:23, Ro 6:11-note, Ro 6:12, 13-note, Ro 6:14-note Ro 7:5, 6-note, Col 3:5-note, Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13-note, Ezekiel 36:27 = a promise associated with the New Covenant) that you might manifest this supernatural Christ-like love (cp Ep 5:1,2-note) to a lost, dying world (Eph 2:1, 2:2-note, Ep 2:3-note) in which even natural love is growing cold (cp "unloving" in 2Ti 3:3-note, Ro 1:31-note, cp Jesus' admonition regarding love in the last of the last days = Mt 24:12). (See **John Piper's** related sermon = [The Greatest of These Is Love - Dying As a Means of Loving](#))

It is not surprising that Greek literature throws little light on its distinctive NT meaning. Biblical **agape love** is the love of choice, the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice) and not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that true **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation.

Agape is volitional

Phileo is emotional

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35).

Agape is God-like love motivated and energized by God (Romans 5:5-note, Gal 5:22-note) and which loves regardless of the circumstances, a deliberate love that decides (enabled by the Spirit and grace) it will keep loving even if it is rebuffed and a love that centers on the needs and welfare of the one loved and will pay whatever personal price is necessary to meet those needs and foster that welfare. We are challenged to live out this highest form of love and to do so with the highest sincerity. How could this be possible except that it be a supernatural endowment?

Our love is to be genuine, not counterfeit. Don't pat another believer on the back and say something that you don't mean. What does this non-hypocritical love look like? Counter to what many seem to believe, it is not "soft" on evil. In **context agape** abhors evil and clings to good. The mark of love is to hate evil and to hold fast to what is good.

When one recalls that Paul paused in his discussion of spiritual gifts in his letter to the Corinthians to inject a chapter on love (See 1Cor 13:4-5, 6-7, 8 - see notes 13:4 13:5 13:6 13:7 13:8), it is altogether fitting that he should follow his presentation of spiritual gifts here in Romans with the same emphasis. The whole of the believer's conduct, in fact, should be bathed in love. If he fails to love his brother, doubt is cast on his professed love for God (1Jn 4:19, 20, 21).

Without hypocrisy (505) (**anuopkritos** from **a** = negative prefix meaning without + **hupokrinomai** [see below] = to pretend, this Greek verb being a combination of **hupó** = under, indicating secrecy + **krino** = to judge) is literally without play acting, without playing the part or without hypocrisy.

Webster (1828) = **Hypocrisy** = The act or practice of a hypocrite; a feigning to be what one is not, or to feel what one does not feel; a dissimulation, or a concealment of one's real character, disposition, or motives; especially, the assuming of false appearance of virtue or religion; a simulation of goodness.

Anuopkritos - 8x in the NT - Ro 12:9; 2Co 6:6; 1Ti 1:5; 2Ti 1:5-note; Jas 3:17; 1Pe 1:22-note. Notice that **anuopkritos** is used as an adjective to modify **love** (2Co 6:6; 1Pe 1:22-note), **faith** (1Ti 1:5; 2Ti 1:5-note), and **wisdom** (James 3:17).

Anupokritos describes that which is unhypocritical, genuine (faith, love and wisdom in Scripture) and without show or pretense (pretense = a claim made or implied and especially one not supported by fact).

W E Vine has this note on the related root word explaining that a **hypocrite** (hupokrites) was "a stage-actor; it was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to speak in large masks with mechanical devices for augmenting the force of the voice; hence the word became used metaphorically of a dissembler, a hypocrite." ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#))

- [Hypocrisy - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Hypocrisy - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Hypocrisy - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Hypocrisy - Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- [Hypocrisy - Charles Buck Theological Dictionary](#)
- [Hypocrisy - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Hypocrisy - Nave's Topical Bible](#)
- [Hypocrisy - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)

A **hypocrite** is therefore an actor. Timothy's faith was not an act but was completely genuine, unhypocritical and without pretense or deceit.

Marvin Vincent explains that the related word **hypocrite** (hupokrites) is "From **hupokrino**, to separate gradually; so of separating the truth from a mass of falsehood, and thence to subject to inquiry, and, as a result of this, to expound or interpret what is elicited. Then, to reply to inquiry, and so to answer on the stage, to speak in dialogue, to act. From this the transition is easy to assuming, feigning, playing a part. The hypocrite is, therefore, etymologically, an actor." ([Greek Word Study](#))

In summary **anuopkritos** means "without a mask" and thus unfeigned, sincere, genuine, free from deceit, authentic, undisguised, without pretense or sham, "without dissimulation" (KJV) (dissimulate = hide under a false appearance). As alluded to above, in classical Greek drama, the **hypokrites** was the play actor who projected an image but hid his true identity behind a mask. Metaphorically and morally, a **hypokrites** (a hypocrite) is anyone who pretends to be something he is not.

The related root word **hupokrisis** (word study) meant stage playing, acting (histrionics) and hence came to mean acting a part in life, etc. The Christian's loving behavior should not be acting a part or wearing a mask, but an authentic expression of a renewed mind and a transformed life (Ro 12:2-note). A believer's love must be completely sincere, without hypocrisy, play-acting or ulterior motive.

The NIV renders it as "'Love must be **sincere**.'" Our English word **sincere** comes from the Latin word **sincerus**, which means "without wax" which stems from a practice of the early Roman merchants who set their earthen and porcelain jars out for sale. If a crack appeared in one, they would fill it with wax the same color as the jar, so a buyer would not be aware that it was cracked. But astute buyers learned to hold these jars out in the sun, and if the jar was cracked, the wax would melt and the crack would be revealed. So the honest merchants would test their wares this way and mark them sincerus -- "without wax". The word literally reflects what the Greek says here, "Let love be without hypocrisy."

Hypocrisy is exceeded in evil only by unbelief. The consummate hypocrite in Scripture, Judas, was also the consummate egoist. He feigned devotion to Jesus to achieve his own selfish purposes. His hypocrisy was unmasked and his self-centeredness was made evident when he betrayed Jesus for the thirty pieces of silver.

Love with hypocrisy is an oxymoron and is not real love at all. Sadly much of what masquerades as "love" in the Christian community is laced with the arsenic of hypocrisy.

A believer's love should not wear a mask, but should be genuine, sincere, and unaffected. Words are cheap... true love is costly... it costs death to self. Don't deceive with words but love with action. In a world where much that looks real is not real, love in the family must be the real thing expressed in action, not merely in words (1Jn 3:18)

Christian love is to be shown purely and sincerely, without self-centeredness or guile. However it is not love which simply manifests itself in affection for everything -- that is sentiment. Nor is it love which cuts everyone off in an attempt to be rigidly faithful to the truth and is harsh, unyielding, and difficult -- that isn't love. Love is a balance. We are living in an age in which this is the very spirit of the times -- to project an image, to pretend you are something that you are not. All the world system holds that up before us, through the media of television, internet, movies, music, advertisements, etc. Our society actively encourages to be something we are not. Thus even believers can deceive themselves into thinking they have love for people they neglect. Paul tells us that we must get beyond pretense—we must sincerely love.

Hughes writes that "If we claim the commitment of Ro 12:1, 2, we must love without hypocrisy. This is not optional! The Scripture repeatedly sets this requirement before us. "Above all, love each other deeply" (1Pe 4:8-note). "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1Ti 1:5). "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (Jn 13:35).

Stedman adds that "Sham love, of course, comes from the flesh. It comes from that pretender that is down inside all of us that wants to be thought well of even though we really are not worthy of it. And so we easily succumb to this desire. But true love, as we have been seeing, comes from the Holy Spirit. (Ro 5:5-note). True love is manifested by learning from the Word of God how you should behave in a certain situation, and then, depending on the Spirit of God to give you the strength to do it, moving out and doing that very thing. That is the way you love -- by acting in obedience to what the Word tells you by the power of the Holy Spirit within you. Ro 12:9, 10, 11, 12, 13 set forth love as it is manifested in the family of God, the church. Ro 12:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 describe how Christian love looks when it is out in the world. ([The Body at Work](#))

ABHOR WHAT IS EVIL: *apostugountes* (PAPMPN) to *poneron*:

- Ps 34:14; 36:4; 45:7; 97:10; 101:3; 119:104,163; Pr 8:13; Amos 5:15; Hebrews 1:9
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:6-7 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:8 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
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Ps 34:14 Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it.

Ps 97:10 Hate evil, you who love the LORD, Who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

Ps 119:104 From Thy precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

Ps 119:163 I hate and despise falsehood, [But] I love Thy law.

Abhor (655) (*apostugeo* from *apo* = from + *stugeo* = to hate) (used only in Ro 12:9 in NT and not at all in Lxx) expresses a strong feeling of horror or bitter hatred regarding evil and implies loathing, abhorrence and disgust. The preposition (*apo*) serves a twofold purpose emphasizing the idea of separation and intensifying the meaning of the already strong verb *stugeo*, which by itself means to hate or to shudder with horror. *Apostugeo* is in the **present tense** which calls for continual vigilance to separate ourselves from evil. The only way to accomplish this exhortation is to daily surrender to the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit (cp Ro 8:13).

Abhor is in the **present tense** so this phrase might be paraphrased as "keep continually detesting evil." **Beloved of God the Father, are you detesting or are you "tasting" the fruit which appears so sweet but is ultimately painfully bitter? Remember to rely on the truth in Romans 6-8 to empower your ability to abhor! Don't try to do this in your own fleshly strength, because our fallen flesh will not detest but will desire!**

Adam Clarke says that *stugeo* is related to "Styx... a feigned river in hell by which the gods were wont to swear, and if any of them falsified this oath he was deprived of his nectar and ambrosia for a hundred years; hence the river was reputed to be hateful, and *stugeo* signified to be as hateful as hell.

Since the topic of abhorring evil is discussed so frequently in Scripture, consider meditating on some of the parallel cross references that follow that God's Spirit might renew your mind and give you a holy hatred of all that is evil & detestable to a thrice Holy God -- Job 1:1,2:3,28:28, Ps 34:14, 36:4, 37:27, 45:7, 97:10, 101:3,119:104,163, Pr 3:7,8:13,16:6; Amos 5:15, Heb 1:9, 1Th 5:22, 1Pe2:11, 3:11.

Believers are to express their hatred for evil by a withdrawal from it, separating from it, putting some distance between the evil and all the while harboring a God ordained intense loathing for it because we understand the corrupting, destructive potential that it can have on a "living sacrifices." Those who desire to be men & women after God's own heart will make abhorring & clinging (be careful though to focus first on clinging to Christ, His Word, His Spirit's power & then the abhorring will be almost like a reflex.

Avoid focusing on a list of do's and don'ts and becoming legalistic for the flesh loves "laws" as [Ro 7:5note] clearly teaches) their

daily practice like David (a man after God's own heart [Acts 13:22]) in **Ps 101:3**"I will set **no worthless** (**belial** = another name for Satan!) **thing before** my **eyes**; I **hate** the **work** of **those who fall away**; It shall not **fasten** [same word **kollao** used below for "cling" - stick like glue] its **grip** on me."

Evil (wicked, bad) (**4190**)(**poneros** from **poneo** = work or toil, **Robertson** says the idea is that labor is an annoyance, bad, evil; Noun **poneria** derived from **poneros**) means evil including evil, malignant character, pernicious (see Webster 1828 definition below), that which is morally or socially worthless, wicked, base, bad, degenerate. **Poneros** denotes determined, aggressive, and fervent evil that actively opposes what is good. **Poneros** is not just bad in character (like **kakos**), but bad in effect (injurious)! **Poneros** describes evil in active opposition to good. It means not only evil in its nature but viciously evil in its influence and actively harmful. **Poneros** used to describe Satan (no **poneros** = "Evil one"), the god of this age, who is corrupting man and dragging him to destruction. This denotes someone who is not content in being corrupt themselves. They seek to corrupt others and draw them into the same destruction!

Webster on **evil** - morally reprehensible, sinful, arising from actual or imputed (Ed: We all have Adam's "bad character" imputed!) bad character or conduct (Ed: Bad character always precedes bad conduct, the latter being the most visible manifestation of the former), causing discomfort or repulsion, offensive, causing harm, pernicious, deficient in quality in a physical sense and thus worthless (Mt 7:17-18). Webster's 1828 Edition on evil = 1. Having bad qualities of a natural kind; mischievous; having qualities which tend to injury, or to produce mischief. Some evil beast hath devoured him. Gen. 37. 2. Having bad qualities of a moral kind; wicked; corrupt; perverse; wrong; as evil thoughts; evil deeds; evil speaking; an evil generation. Scripture. 3. Unfortunate; unhappy; producing sorrow, distress, injury or calamity; as evil tidings; evil arrows; evil days.

Webster's 1828 edition on **pernicious** = PERNI'CIOUS, a. [L. perniciosus, from pernicius; perneco, to kill; per and nex, necis, death.] 1. Destructive; having the quality of killing, destroying or injuring; very injurious or mischievous. Food, drink or air may be pernicious to life or health. 2. Destructive; tending to injure or destroy. Evil examples are pernicious to morals. Intemperance is a pernicious vice.

Spurgeon commenting on **Psalm 101:3** wrote

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I will neither delight in it, aim at it or endure it. If I have wickedness brought before me by others I will turn away from it, I will not gaze upon it with pleasure. The psalmist is very sweeping in his resolve, he declines the least, the most reputable, the most customary form of evil -- no wicked thing; not only shall it not dwell in his heart, but not even before his eyes, for what fascinates the eye is very apt to gain admission into the heart, even as Eve's apple first pleased her sight and then prevailed over her mind and hand.

I hate the work of them that turn aside. He was warmly against it; he did not view it with indifference, but with utter scorn and abhorrence. Hatred of sin is a good sentinel for the door of virtue. There are persons in courts who walk in a very crooked way, leaving the high road of integrity; and these, by short cuts, and twists, and turns, are often supposed to accomplish work for their masters which simple honest hearts are not competent to undertake; but David would not employ such, he would pay no secret service money, he loathed the practices of men who deviate from righteousness. He was of the same mind as the dying statesman who said, "Corruption wins not more than honesty." It is greatly to be deplored that in after years he did not keep himself clear in this matter in every case, though, in the main he did; but what would he have been if he had not commenced with this resolve, but had followed the usual crooked Policy of Oriental princes? How much do we all need divine keeping! We are no more perfect than David, nay, we fall far short of him in many things; and, like him, we shall find need to write a psalm of penitence very soon after our psalm of good resolution.

It shall not cleave to me. I will disown their ways, I will not imitate their policy: like dirt it may fall upon me, but I will wash it off, and never rest till I am rid of it. Sin, like pitch, is very apt to stick. In the course of our family history crooked things will turn up, for we are all imperfect, and some of those around us are far from being what they should be; it must, therefore, be one great object of our care to disentangle ourselves, to keep clear of transgression, and of all that comes of it: this cannot be done unless the Lord both comes to us, and abides with us evermore.

To paraphrase **Major Ian Thomas** "You can't. God never said you could. But He can. And He always said He would!"

Another "**blameless, upright**" man named Job (Job1:1) was continually "turning away from evil." Read (Job1:1) in **context** and you will see the "secret" of why & how Job was enabled to continually turn away from evil.

Finally note Peter's similar warning in (1Pe 2:11-note) where the Greek word for **abstain** (see study **apechomai** or **apecho**) is the same one used by the Septuagint writers to translate "turning away" in Job 1:1.

Peter admonishes us "[Beloved](#), I [urge](#) you as [aliens](#) and [strangers](#) to [abstain](#) (present tense - continually, middle voice - you initiate the action & participate in the results or effect thereof) from [fleshly lusts which](#) (present tense = continually) [wage war](#) (Gk word [strateuomai](#) gives us English strategize or strategy! Ponder this truth) [against](#) the [soul](#)". (see note 1 Peter 2:11) (Study Topic "Pilgrims & Strangers" - [TTT](#)).

Remember that it is **Jehovah Mekeddeshem**, the God Who sanctifies you or makes you holy Who Alone is able to motivate, energize & empower our walk of holiness. **Click** for discussion and notes on the liberating truth found in the awesome name of God, **Jehovah Mekeddeshem**.

Believers are to be continually repulsed ("abhor" is present tense which means this is to be our lifestyle or habitual practice) by all that is evil. Barclay says that our only "security against sin lies in our being shocked by it" which is partially true.

The best way to be shocked by evil is to keep setting your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth (Col 3:1-note, Col 3:2-note), fixing (see word study on fixing - [aphorao](#)) our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith (Heb 12:2-note) not on the evil (see [Fix Your Eyes On Jesus - 44 excellent meditations](#) by Ann Ortlund). The constant bombardment of our senses through TV, newspapers, magazines, movies, and books with immorality, violence, and perversion make it difficult to be shocked by anything. Tragically, many Christians regularly entertain ("embalm") themselves with sheer ungodliness, perhaps rationalizing that, simply by being a Christian, they are somehow immune to the corrupting, degrading effects of sin.

Clarke says believers should

Hate sin as you would hate the hell to which it leads.

It has been said that what believers need is to see the infinite beauty of holiness & the infinite damnability of sin (cf Isa 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 5, 6). Paul's point is that believers cannot just passively ignore evil, but must actively and aggressively oppose it and speak out against it & flee from it (1Ti 6:11; 2Ti 2:22-note).

Unfortunately what we often hate is not the evil per se but the consequences of the evil. Genuine hatred of evil engenders avoidance of evil. We cannot flirt with sin and escape falling into it. Refusing to be enticed even by the first, seemingly harmless attractions of sin (cf Ro 13:14-note), the righteous man delights "in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night" (Ps 1:2-note).

In his **Essay on Man**, **Alexander Pope** wisely observed that,

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Genuine love is God's kind of love, which hates what is evil (cf 1Co 13:6 -note) - relentlessly. Genuine love never varies, is without shadow of turning, never compromises with evil, never pats it on the back and says, "This is going to be all right; let's forget about it." Genuine love never does that. It does not reject what is good, nor does it ever call good "evil".

All the verbs in (Ro 12:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21) which call for "living sacrifices" are in the **present tense**, indicating a call to continual practice or a lifestyle manifested by these actions. God seeks in the believer not just a single virtuous act but a continuing quality of life

CLING TO WHAT IS GOOD: kollomenoi (PPMPN) to agatho:

- Ro 12:2, 21, 13:3,16:19
- Acts 11:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 3:10,11
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Romans 12:6-8: Humility in Exercising our Gifts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:9-10: Sincere Love](#)- Steven Cole
- [Romans 12:6-7 Ministry of Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
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- [Romans 12:9-21 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 1 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#)- John MacArthur
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- [Romans 12:9-12 Brick by Brick - Duties of Practical Christianity 2 - Study Guide \(click dropdown menu\)](#)- John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 6:13+ "You shall **fear** ([yare](#)) only the LORD your God; and you shall **worship** ([abad](#)) Him and **swear** by His name.

Deuteronomy 4:4+ "But you who **held fast** to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you.

Deuteronomy 11:22+ "For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and **hold fast** to Him,

Deuteronomy 13:4+ "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and **cling to Him**.

Joshua 23:8+ "But you are to cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.

Acts 11:23+ Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord;

Hodge - The words rendered to abhor (*apostugeo*) and to cleave to (*kollao*) are peculiarly forcible, and express the highest degree of hatred on the one hand, and of persevering devotion on the other. The latter word, in the active form, properly means, to glue, and in the middle, to attach one's self to any person or thing. ([Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))

In the exhortation section of First Thessalonians Paul warns the previously idol worshipping (1Th 1:9-note) Gentiles to...

Examine (*dokimazo* in the present imperative = command calling for continual attention) everything (**How much?**) carefully (**How?**) ; **hold fast** (*katecho* also present imperative) to that which is good **abstain** (*apechomai* or *apecho* also present imperative) from every (**How much?**) form (even the "form" or suggestion of, cp Ep 5:3-note) of evil. (1Th 5:21, 22-note)

Cling ([2853](#)) (*kollao* from *kolla* = glue) means literally to glue, cement, join or fasten together and thus to unite (someone with or to someone or some thing). To fasten firmly together. **Kollao** is used to describe **joining** oneself to a harlot in a sexual union in (1Co 6:16).

As with **abhor** note that **cling** is in the **present tense** which calls for this to be the believer's lifestyle. The only way to accomplish this exhortation is to daily surrender to ("cling to") the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit (cp Ro 8:13).

Kollao is used by John idiomatically in Rev 18:5-note to describe the sins of Babylon **piled** up or reaching to heaven. The picture John paints is that of sins greatly increased. I sense a potential play on words here - compare the fleshly desire of the first inhabitants of Babel in Ge 11:3, 4! God-hating men will finally get the desire of their heart, a "tower" that reaches to heaven! But fittingly it will be a "sin city tower", not a sacred tower! O, the inveterate **deceitfulness of Sin!**

Kollao can mean to attach oneself to a master in a job means to hire oneself out as a servant ("the prodigal son" in Lk 15:15).

In Acts 8:29 **kollao** refers to join to a chariot which signifies to accompany.

Kollao as used in Ro 12:9 by Paul is not in the **active voice** which means to join or glue two things together but is in the **middle voice** (Note: some say passive voice) which means "attach **yourself** closely" (middle = "reflexive" = emphasizes "yourself" = you initiate and participate in the effect/result) to everything that is good. The picture inherent in Paul's use of the **present tense** is that of continually entering into close contact with that which is good (cp continually filling you mind with or thinking "good" thoughts = Php 4:8-note). Keep yourself continually cemented or glued to that which is good (this will also be a good deterrent from evil!).

One of the most familiar uses of **kollao** is in the description of the **marriage covenant** (see **Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage**), where the man is charged to leave and **cleave** (Ge 2:24 uses the derivative verb **proskollao**) or "stick like glue" to his wife (Mt 19:5, cp the **"counterfeit cleaving"** in 1Co 6:16, 17!). **Try the following exercise for a powerful illustration of the impact of divorce**= Glue a picture of a husband and wife together. Allow to dry. Then separate the two who have been "glued" together. What do both pictures look like now? The case against divorce which God hates rests on the results reaped!

David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22, 1Sa 16:7) illustrates Paul's charge in Romans 12:9...

Psalm 101:3 I will set no worthless thing (Hebrew = Belial, a word used in the NT [2Co 6:15] as an apropos name for Satan! Woe!) before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not **fasten its grip** (Hebrew = *dabaq* = cleave; *Lxx* = *kollao*) on me (Young's Literal = "It adhereth not to me.").

Comment: What a vivid picture! Evil is like "Velcro" which fastens tight a shoe or a jacket! Sin will cleave like leprosy. Sin is like a leech, that sucks the spiritual "life blood" from one's soul! Abhor it continually!

In modern Hebrew (in Israel today) the verb dabaq means "to stick to, to adhere to."

Spurgeon: I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes (Ed: This parallels Paul's charge to "abhor what is evil"). I will neither delight in it, aim at it or endure it. If I have wickedness brought before me by others I will turn away from it (**Read** Pr 3:7, 8:13, 14:16, 14:27, Neh 5:15, Job 28:28, Ps 34:11, 12, 13, 14-note, Ec 12:13,14, 2Co 7:1-note), I will not gaze upon it with pleasure. The psalmist is very sweeping in his resolve, he declines the least, the most reputable, the most customary form of evil -- **no** wicked thing; **not only** shall it not dwell in his heart, but **not even** before his eyes, (**Dear Christian brothers, let us read the next words soberly!**) for...

What fascinates the eye is very apt to gain admission into the heart!

(cp Pr 5:3, 4, 7, 8-note, Pr 5:22-note, Pr 6:25-note, Pr 7:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27-note. **See** the tragic confession [noting especially the progression] of Achan in Josh 7:19, 20, 21 = "saw... coveted... took... concealed" - **The pathetic progressive pattern of many a secret sin!**), even as Eve's apple first pleased her sight and then prevailed over her mind and hand (**Read** Ge 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5 which is culminates in Ge 3:6).

I hate the work of them that turn aside. He was warmly against it; he did not view it with indifference, but with utter scorn and abhorrence.

Hatred of sin is a good sentinel for the door of virtue.

There are persons in courts who walk in a very crooked way, leaving the high road of integrity (see **Integrity - A Few Thoughts**); and these, by short cuts, and twists, and turns, are often supposed to accomplish work for their masters which simple honest hearts are not competent to undertake; but David would not employ such, he would pay no secret service money, he loathed the practices of men who deviate from righteousness. He was of the same mind as the dying statesman who said, "Corruption wins not more than honesty." It is greatly to be deplored that in after years he did not keep himself clear in this matter in every case (1Sa 11:1,2,3,4,5ff), though, in the main he did; but what would he have been if he had not commenced with this resolve, but had followed the usual crooked policy of Oriental princes? **How much do we all need divine keeping!** We are no more perfect than David, nay, we fall far short of him in many things; and, like him, we shall find need to write a psalm of penitence (Ps 51:1ff) very soon after our psalm of good resolution.

It shall not cleave to me. I will disown their ways, I will not imitate their policy: like dirt it may fall upon me, but I will wash it off, and never rest till I am rid of it.

Sin, like pitch, is very apt to stick.

In the course of our family history crooked things will turn up, for we are all imperfect, and some of those around us are far from being what they should be; it must, therefore, be one great object of our care to disentangle ourselves, to keep clear of transgression, and of all that comes of it:

This cannot be done unless the LORD both comes to us and abides with us evermore.

Kollao - 12x in the NT - Mt 19:5; Lk. 10:11; 15:15; Acts 5:13; 8:29; 9:26; 10:28; 17:34; Ro 12:9; 1Co. 6:16, 17; Rev 18:5.

NAS = associate(3), cling(1), clings(1), hired(1), join(1), joined(2), joins(2), piled(1).

Matthew 19:5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE **JOINED** TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH '? **19:6** "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God **has joined together** (suzeugnumi - aorist active indicative = pictures a past supernatural event, something that God did the moment they said "I do!"), let no man **separate** (present imperative with a negative)

Comment: As noted above, it is interesting that in the next verse (Mt 19:6) Jesus uses the verb **suzeugnumi** (only other use of this word is Mark 10:9) which literally means "to yoke together" or to make a pair (good picture of a husband and wife!) Clearly when two people marry, they in effect put their necks into the same yoke (actually God brings about this effect) and it follows that they should stay together the rest of their lives.

One could paraphrase Mt 19:5 as the man "shall be glued to his wife!"

Luke 10:11 'Even the dust of your city which **clings** to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

Luke 15:15 "So he (the "prodigal son") went and **hired** himself **out** ("joined himself") to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

Acts 5:13 But none of the rest dared to **associate** with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.

Acts 8:29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and **join** this chariot."

Acts 9:26 When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to **associate** with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

Acts 10:28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to **associate** with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

Acts 17:34 But some men **joined** him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; **cling** to what is good.

1 Corinthians 6:16 Or do you not know that the one who **joins** himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 17 But the one who **joins** himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him

Zodhiates: The union of a man with a woman as his wife is a wonderful earthly mystery (Eph. 5:31, 32). It is the union not of two bodies alone, as is the case with a prostitute, but of two human beings, a male and a female, and this includes their spirits and souls in addition to their bodies. The apostle Paul calls this a mystery demonstrating the greater mystery concerning the union of Christ and the church.

Comment: Note that in 1Cor 6:16 the believer is "glued" to the Lord. The passive voice for "joins" indicates that this supernatural attachment (union, oneness) is brought about by someone other than himself. Indeed it is the Spirit of God Who "glues" the believer to the Lord (cf 1Jn 4:13). **Zodhiates** goes on to add "This is an initial attachment to Jesus Christ that involves the power of the Holy Spirit making the man a sheep of the Great Shepherd. He becomes cognizant and obedient to the voice of Christ and receives eternal life. He is placed in the charge of God the omnipotent Father from whose hands no one can detach him (John 10:27-29). No wonder the apostle Paul considers the earthly marital union as an example of the greater mystery of the union of a human personality with the Lord (Eph. 5:32)."

Albert Barnes: The union with Christ is more intimate, entire, and pure than that can be between a man and woman, and that union should be regarded as sacred and inviolable. If all Christians regarded this as they should, how would they shrink from the connections which they often form on earth!

Revelation 18:5-[note](#) for her sins **have piled up** as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Kollao - 27x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)** - Dt. 6:13; 10:20; 28:60; 29:20; Ru 2:8; 2Sa 20:2; 1 Ki. 11:2; 2 Ki. 1:18; 3:3; 5:27; 18:6; Job 29:10; 38:38; 41:16, 23; Ps. 22:15; 25:21; 44:25; 63:8; 101:3; 102:5; 119:25, 31; 137:6; Jer. 13:11; Lam. 2:2; 4:4. Below are a few of the OT uses of this picturesque verb kollao...

Job 29:10 The voice of the nobles was hushed, and their tongue **stuck** to their palate.

Ruth 2:8-note Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but **stay** here (KJV = "abide... fast"; Lxx = kollao) with my maids.

In Deuteronomy 6 note which Hebrew verb the **Septuagint** translators chose to render with **kollao**!

Deuteronomy 6:13 "You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall **worship** (Hebrew = **Abad** = NAS renders abad as "**worship**", ESV, NET render abad as "**serve**"; **LXX** = **kollao**!) Him and swear by His name.

Comment: What's the truth in Dt 6:13 that should motivate abhorring evil and clinging to good (God)? Is it not a healthy, holy, fear (reverential awe, a sense of dread that I might behave in a manner that displeases my Holy Father)? Rightly directed fear stimulates rightly motivated choices (conduct) (see Job 1:1 and note what follows "fearing God"!; see also 1Pe 1:17-note)

Deuteronomy 10:20 "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and **cling** (Hebrew = dabaq = cleave; Lxx = kollao) to Him, and you shall swear by His name.

Deuteronomy 28:60 "He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid, and they will **cling** to you.

Psalms 63:8 My soul **clings** (Hebrew = dabaq = cleave; Lxx = kollao) to You; Your right hand upholds me.

Comment: The proper preparation for abhorrence of evil is to hold fast to the ultimate good, God!

C H Spurgeon: My soul followeth hard after thee, or is **glued to** thee. We follow close at the Lord's heels, because we are one with Him (cp **The Oneness of Covenant**). Who shall divide us from His love? If we cannot walk with Him with equal footsteps, we will at least follow after with all the strength He lends us, earnestly panting to reach Him and abide in His fellowship. When professors follow hard after the world, they will fall into the ditch; but none are ever too eager after communion with the Lord.

Samuel Chandler: The primary sense of followeth hard after is to glue together; from thence it signifies figuratively to associate, to adhere to, to be united with; and particularly to be firmly united with strong affection... The psalmist, therefore, means that his soul adhered to God with the warmest affection, and longed to offer up his sacrifice of praise in his sanctuary.

Alexander Pringle: My soul cleaves after Thee, as do things which hang by another; the root is of so great frequency in Scripture, as of enquiry amongst critics; it imports here the posture of David's spirit, and speaketh it close to God; and so depending upon him, as nothing could loosen it from him: Satan's subtlety, Saul's cruelty, his own personal loss and indemnity, are not all of them of any force or dexterity, to cut asunder or untie the Gordian knot of this unity. The cleaving of David's spirit was a gluing of the Lord's spirit: a marriage of the Lord's making is altogether incapable of the devil's breaking. **It is no wonder David's words report him so much devoted to God, seeing with the same breath they speak him supported by God** (Your right hand upholds me)

John Gibbon: My soul cleaves after thee. As if he had said, Go, lead on, my God! Behold, I follow as near, as close, as I can; I would not leave any distance, but pursue thy footsteps, step by step, leaning upon thine everlasting arms, that are underneath me, and following thy manuduction.

William Jay: The soul's following, and following hard after God -- What means this? Surely it intends much more than a languid, inert inclination; or "the desire of the slothful which killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour." It evinces an intensesness of concern that quickens and rouses the man into life and earnestness; that draws his very soul along with it; that reconciles him to every needful exertion and sacrifice, however trying; and urges him to persevere, whatever difficulties or discouragements he meets with in his course. And sometimes the distance is long, and the progress up hill, and the road rough, and the weather unfriendly, and enemies would thrust us back; and sometimes we lose sight of Him, and ask those we meet: "Saw ye Him Whom my soul loveth?" and when we spy Him again, He seems to advance as we advance, and when we gain upon Him and get nearer, He seems to look back and frown, and tell us to retire. The exercises and feelings of Christians in the divine life will enable them to explain these allusions. Who among them all has not, like the Jews, been sometimes "discouraged because of the way?" Who has not resembled Barak's adherents -- "Faith, yet pursuing?" Who has not frequently said, My soul followeth hard after thee?

HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS: The soul's pursuit after God. It follows, In desire. In action. Earnestly. Quickly. Closely. The soul's support. Thy right hand upholdeth me, the arm of strength. In doing and bearing.

Psalms 119:25 My soul **cleaves** (Hebrew = dabaq = cleave; Lxx = kollao) to the dust; Revive me according to Your word.

Spurgeon comments: **My soul cleaveth unto the dust.** He means in part that he was full of sorrow; for mourners in the east cast dust on their heads, and sat in ashes, and the Psalmist felt as if these ensigns of woe were glued to him, and his very soul was made to cleave to them because of his powerlessness to rise above his grief. Does he not also mean that he felt ready to die? Did he not feel his life absorbed and fast held by the grave's mold, half choked by the death dust? It may not be straining the language if we conceive that he also felt and bemoaned his earthly mindedness and spiritual deadness.

There was a tendency in his soul to cling to earth which he greatly bewailed. Whatever was the cause of his complaint, it was no surface evil, but an affair of his inmost spirit; his soul cleaved to the dust; and it was not a casual and accidental falling into the dust, but a continuous and powerful tendency, or cleaving to the earth.

But what a mercy that the good man could feel and deplore whatever there was of evil in the cleaving! The serpent's seed can find their meat in the dust, but never shall the seed of the woman be thus degraded. Many are of the earth earthy, and never lament it; only the heaven born and heaven soaring spirit pines at the thought of **being fastened** to this world, and bird limed (entangled) by its sorrows or its pleasures. [Full note](#)

Psalm 119:31 I **cling** (Hebrew = dabaq = cleave; Lxx = kollao) to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame!

Spurgeon comments: I have stuck unto thy testimonies, -- or I have cleaved, for the word is the same as in Ps 119:25.

Though **cleaving** to the dust of sorrow and of death,
yet he **kept fast hold** of the divine word.

This was his comfort, and his faith **stuck** to it, his love and his obedience **held** on to it, his heart and his mind **abode** in meditation upon it. His choice was so heartily and deliberately made that he **stuck** to it for life, and could not be removed from it by the reproaches of those who despised the way of the Lord. What could he have gained by quitting the sacred testimony? Say rather, what would he not have lost if he had ceased to **cleave** to the divine word? It is pleasant to look back upon past perseverance and to expect grace to continue equally steadfast in the future.

He who has enabled us to stick to Him will surely stick to us!

Here is an **OT Septuagint** use of **kollao** which is the anti-thesis of the habitual behavior Paul is calling for in believers who have presented themselves to God as living sacrifices (Ro 12:1-note)...

Nevertheless, he ([Jehoram/Joram](#) the son of [Ahab](#) - 2Ki 3:1,2) **clung** (Hebrew = dabaq = cleave; Lxx = kollao) to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin; he did not depart from (2 Ki 3:3)

In marked contrast to [King Jehoram](#) above, another king, [Hezekiah](#), is also described with the verb **kollao** but in the same sense as used by Paul here in Romans 12:9...

(**Context** = 2Ki 18:1, 2, 3, 4, 5) For he **clung** (Hebrew = dabaq = cleave; Lxx = kollao) to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. (2Ki 18:6)

Comment: What a great OT illustration of Romans 12:9 and of the "fruit" reaped from such action (see the fruit in 2Ki 18:7, 8, cp a similar principle in Ezra 7:9, 10-note) . **Dear brother or sister in Christ which king (Jehoram or Hezekiah) best describes your behavior (your choices, your thoughts, words, actions) the past few weeks?**

In light of the above contrast between two Jewish kings, it is utterly mind boggling to read the record of the wisest king of Israel (!)...

1Ki 11:2 (**Context** = 1Ki 11:1) from the nations (pagan, godless, idol worshipping Gentiles) concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you (Literally = "you must not go into them, and they must not go into you"), for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." (Literally Hebrew reads "Surely they will bend your heart after their gods.") Solomon **held fast** (Hebrew = dabaq = cleave; Lxx = kollao) to these in love. (**And what was the fruit from clinging to that which was evil instead of abhorring it?** See 1Ki 11:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. God is not mocked! Solomon would reap the bitter fruit of failing to abhor evil and cling to God, see this eternal, immutable principle in Gal 6:6, 7, Ho 8:7)

The Christian must cleave to what is good and not let go. Grip God's truth in Romans 1-12 and then rely on it and let it hold you fast! Cleaving begins by becoming united (kollao) with Jesus Christ (1Co 6:17).

Our attachment to **"what is good"** is to be like the devotion illustrated by the bond of marriage. (Ge 2:24 where related verb [proskollao](#) is Greek word translating "cleave"). To **cling** to what is good then is to be "wedded" to it. Total commitment allows neither time nor inclination to go courting evil (cp "make no provision" in Ro 13:14-note).

Hate and **cling** are particularly strong and express the highest degree of hatred on the one hand and of persevering devotion on the other.

As servants of Jesus Christ, we are to bind ourselves to what is good (agathos), that which is inherently right and worthy. As Paul has already explained, the key to finding and following what is good is in not being "conformed to this world, but [being] transformed

by the renewing of [our] mind, that [we] may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Ro12:2). As we separate ourselves from the things of the world and saturate ourselves with the Word of God, the things that are good will more and more replace the things that are evil.

The message here is clear: there can be no neutrality in the moral realm. We cannot hide behind some alleged moral or cultural relativism. Good and evil objectively exist in God's own nature and in God's law. Christians must take a clear and unequivocal stand against the evil and for the good.

Facts of the Matter - Newell Hillis - Devotional from February 7: Clinging To The Lord Your God

" You are to cling to the Lord your God." – These were Joshua's parting words to wayward Israel, just before his death. (Joshua 23:8)

CLING: " To hold fast to something, as by grasping, sticking, embracing, or winding around". As a wet raincoat would CLING to your back. As a person on the verge of death would CLING to life. "To remain attached in thought or practice". " To follow close after, pursue hard; to resist separation".

Jesus put it this way: " If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself... and **keep close behind me.**" (Luke 9:23a+ – Phillips)

CLINGING conveys the sense of desperation: That there is no other viable option

QUESTION: ARE YOU CLINGING TO CHRIST? Or to:

- Your bank account?
- Your reputation?
- Your capabilities?

SELF SUFFICIENCY is the arrogant assumption that I can go it alone... without God. CLINGING is the humble acknowledgment that I must be intimately connected to God for life to make sense and to be worth living. In Joshua's admonition to CLING to God he gives this warning:

" If you ever go back and CLING to the rest of these nations (i.e. the world and its values)... (they) shall be to you as: A snare and a trap... A whip on your sides... Thorns in your eyes... until you perish from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you." (Joshua 23:12)

QUESTIONS:

1. Are you CLINGING to Christ?
2. Or do you have it so together that you can go it alone?
3. If so, are you willing to pay the price of independence?