

Romans 12:9-13

PREVIOUS

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Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Part 6

by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

Have you ever heard the seven last words of the dead church, "We never did it that way before"? Have you ever heard that phrase? We are not talking about the dead church in chapter 12. We are talking about the church that is alive in Jesus Christ, appreciative of His grace and surrendered to His power. I have another phrase, "We never saw it that way before."

I want to tell you, when you come out of 11 chapters of the marvelous grace of God, you begin to realize that the only logical thing to do is bow down before Him and give yourself back to Him. He gave Himself for you. Let your life become a vessel, just something He can live His life through. It is then that you start seeing things in a different way.

I want to say one more time, until you are surrendered to Christ, until the Word of God is renewing your mind, transforming your behavior, you are still in the fog. But when you start living like you are supposed to live the fog begins to lift. You get to see for your very own self what was there all the time. All of a sudden, you see the church as a body and you see yourself as an important functional part of that body. You are spiritually gifted. Now these spiritual gifts are different than talents and abilities. God, being the sovereign God that He is, certainly orchestrates them all together. But we are talking about what the Holy Spirit brings when He comes to live in your life. He gifts you, and the gift that He has given you is to enable the body to grow up into

unity and of the faith and to become that picture, that image of Jesus living His life on this earth through the bodies of people that are surrendered to Him.

Paul says in verse 9, "**Let love be without hypocrisy.**"

Really it is "love without hypocrisy." That is the statement. Now, the love the Holy Spirit produces in you and me, when we are surrendered to Him, is a love that must house all the service gifts that we have. Everything we do for one another has to be done out of love. There is no ministry; there is no anything if this love is not there. This love is the signal that we are living under grace; that God truly is working in and through our lives. And this love will be without hypocrisy.

The word "**hypocrisy**" (**anuopkritos [word study]**) there means without any pretense, without any dissimulation. In other words, there is no put on with this. It is pure. It is right. It is God's love being manifested in you and in me.

Now in Romans 12:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, Paul frames a thought. It is like a chain with different links all the way down. There are about 15 participles, if I counted correctly, from verse 9-13. The next full verb comes in verse 14. I think he is describing this love without hypocrisy with the participles that he sort of hooks on to it down through verse 13. The whole thought here is relationships in the body of Christ—how we treat one another. We know we are gifted differently and we are going to serve one another through those gifts, but what is it that houses all of that service? What is the house that all those gifts live in? It is this love without hypocrisy.

What is it like? Well, it says in Ro 12:9, "**Abhor what is evil.**"

The word "**Abhor**" (**apostugeo**) there is a present active participle, meaning that it sort of hooks on to the main thought there. "Abhor" means to detest with horror. In other words, you tremble at the thought of.

The word "evil" is the word **poneros**. There are two words for evil. There is the word **kakos**, and the word **poneros**. This second word is the word that means evil that is injurious to somebody else. It is a relationship word. In other words, when I am filled with the Spirit of God, He is manifesting love which is the fruit of His Spirit, Galatians 5:22-note;. This love will be without hypocrisy and this love will cause me to tremble and to abhor with horror that which would be injurious to someone else in the body of Christ. I can't even tolerate it.

It is kind of like being in a smoke-filled room if you are allergic to smoking. You begin to suffocate in that room. The very thought that would cross his mind that would cause him to be injurious to somebody else literally suffocates him. He can't stand it because the love of God will not allow it.

At the same time he clings to that which is good. The word "cling" is the word for glue. It is a present passive participle. Passive means that you are forced. The love that is being manifested in you glues you to that which is good. And the word "good" is **agathos**, which is another relationship word. It is the antithesis to the word that we just looked at. It means that I am glued to the attitude that whatever I do for you or for whoever out of the gifts that God has given is done for your best benefit, your spiritual help. It is a benevolent word. It is a beautiful word.

Now this is what **love without hypocrisy** does. There is no hypocrisy in it, therefore, it abhors what would hurt somebody intentionally. At the same time, it is glued that which does good for them.

Now, let's focus it in verse 10. Now Paul puts it right into context so that we can understand it. He says in verse 10, "**Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.**"

The word "**devoted**" is a beautiful word. The word "**devoted**" there comes from two Greek words. One word is **philos**, and the other word is **storge**. Now those two words are gorgeous words. **Philos** means friendly love, loving as a friend. **Storge** is another word for love. You rarely ever use it in the New Testament, but it is a very special word. It is the word for a Mother to her children, a brother to a sister, a Father to a Mother. It is a family word. Even people without Christ have this. Remember, Paul told Timothy in the last days people will be unloving. The word is **astorgos [word study]**. It comes from "**a**", without, and **storge**, this kind of family love. Do you wonder where abortion comes from, folks? God's Word has already told you it is going to be that way. Women will not even love their own children. This is what the word means.

He says, "**Be devoted to one another.**" Then he says, "with brotherly love" (**philadelphia [word study]**). We have a city in America, Philadelphia. It is supposed to be the "City of Brotherly Love." That is what the word means.

Now here is what Paul is saying. I believe it just simplifies the whole matter. He is saying that you begin to see the body of Christ like you have never seen it before. You begin to see the congregation that you are a part of

as never before. You begin to realize you are all a part of the spiritual, eternal family of God. All of a sudden I see you as my brother and my sister in Christ. You see me as your brother in Christ. And all of a sudden the congregation is not just a group of people who come to hear a message, but the congregation, even the church world-wide, becomes your brother and your sister in Christ. Whether they are black or white or whether they speak English or another language doesn't matter. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

Folks, listen to me. When we get to heaven, there are not going to be buildings like we have built down here. Now certainly God will have some things built, but we are not talking programs, buildings or denominations. It is just going to be people. That is going to be your family in heaven with you forever. Automatically it begins to change the way you start treating one another. The fog has lifted. I have a family that is world-wide.

Oh, how overnight this would cure some people who say, "Well, I had a bad family growing up." Well, friend, if you are born again, you are in the greatest family you could ever be in. You have a Lord Jesus who died for you on the cross and you are going to live with God forever. You have every spiritual blessing God could have ever given in Christ Jesus and you are a part of the family of God. You can't see this unless you are living a surrendered life. You can't understand the wealth and the meaning of this unless you are letting your minds be renewed by the Word of God. Your character has to be transformed by the Holy Spirit of God. Then the fog lifts. Then you see the family for what it is.

Look over in 1 John. I want to show you something about this family. In the family of God, world-wide and locally, you are going to have different degrees of maturity. We have already studied how this family has different gifts. It is going to look different and act different, but it is also going to have different degrees of maturity. Look at 1John 2:13.

"I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning"

These fathers are the older, mature ones who have walked with God for a long period of time. He continues, "I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one." These are the ones in the prime of their life. They have learned to obey God and not their flesh. They are walking in victory. These are the younger men. Then he says,

"I have written to you, children, because you know the Father"

The word for children there is [*paidion*](#) a child who needs help and nurture and discipleship.

There are a lot of people like that in the family of God. Of course, you can study Romans and some other books and find out that there are even some who are so immature they don't even want to be right with God. You have all kinds of degrees of maturity.

Let's say that I came over to your house, and let's say you have three children of different ages. Here comes little Tommy. He is four years old. Now he is in the family, but he doesn't know a whole lot and he sure is into a lot of mischief. Then over here you have Suzie. She is 12 years old and she is growing up. Then you have 16-year-old Sally and she is a little older, a little more mature. Then you have Mama and then you have the Daddy. You have different levels of maturity in that family. Now you treat one a little differently than you treat another. You don't always treat them the same, as the book of Proverbs even teaches us in our families.

So the Holy Spirit of God who lives in us opens our eyes and helps us to realize that we are all gifted differently. We are all in the same family, but there are going to be different degrees of maturity. He will give us the discernment of how to treat each one where they are and how to minister to them. It is that kind of love that permeates the family of God. You see the family like you have never seen it before.

Years ago we had a situation in our church when I almost wanted to put up a sign that read, "Adult Nursery." We were having some trouble. We didn't have enough nursery rooms, and we had to give up some Sunday School classes. Some of the adults acted actually more immature than the kids in the nursery. I just wanted to put a sign up that read, "Adult Nursery I, Adult Nursery II, Adult Nursery III."

You have that kind of situation in the family of God. You begin to recognize this. The Holy Spirit of God prompts you to love the people in the family, even if they are less or more mature than you are and are gifted differently. You begin to love and serve one another in that respect. We are a family. We are the family of God. And you cannot see it until you are living with the fog lifted, surrendered to Christ, the mind of God, renewing your mind, transforming your character.

I want to show you what living in this family is all about, what this love without hypocrisy is all about. Let's look at it and look at these participles as they come in to help us explain and help us understand what is going on.

First of all, there is the urgency of showing this kind of love. In verse 10 after saying, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love," he says,

"Give preference to one another in honor"

Now here comes the participle. The word **"give preference"** is a present participle and it frames the thought. Now, it comes from two Greek words. One means before, **pro**, then the word **hegeomai** means to take the lead.

Do you mean to tell me that in the family of God where there are different gifts and different levels of maturity that I am to take the lead in serving and loving others? I don't wait for them to love me or to serve me? That is exactly right. It is the Spirit of God in you. Now this is not a preacher making you do this. This is the Spirit of God in you leading you and motivating you to take the lead. Don't wait on somebody to come to you. You go to them.

Oh, how this could solve hours of counseling with people who say, "Nobody loves me in the church. Nobody has been kind to me. Why, I went to that church and nobody spoke to me." Folks, do we understand what Paul is saying? If we are filled with the Spirit of God, you are not worried about who does or doesn't speak to you. What you are concerned with is who you can speak to. Who can I love? Who can I serve? That is the whole thought here. Take the lead in showing love to others.

When I went to college, I was just as lost as everybody else as far as not knowing anybody. I was lost on a campus. I just didn't have any friends on campus. The President of the school that I went to did a smart thing. He called all the freshmen into the auditorium at one time. It was a huge class of freshmen. He said, "Now, freshmen, everyone of you who are in here feel all alone and you want to have a friend. If that is the way you feel, raise your hand." Well, everybody raised their hands. Then the President of the college said, "If you want a friend on this campus, if you want many friends on this campus, then don't wait for them to come to you. You show yourself friendly. You be a friend to somebody else and you will have friends on this campus from now on."

That is exactly what the Apostle Paul is saying right here in Romans 12. You see, you have to go back to verse 1. When you present your body a living sacrifice, then whatever agenda you had is dead under the blood at the cross and now it is His agenda and now you take the lead in it. Who is it that I can show love to today? Who is it that I can serve today? Oh, folks, if we could just see this. This is where the joy comes in your life. This is the thrill of walking with God, when you take the lead in loving others in the body of Christ.

Well, Paul goes on in that verse and says,

"Give preference to one another in honor"

The word "honor" there is the word **time**. It is the word that means to put them higher than yourself. The Apostle Paul says almost the same thing in Philippians 2:3-note.

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself."

Now he doesn't say, don't look out for your own personal interest, he says,

"Do not merely look out for your own personal interest but also for the interest of others"

When we are living surrendered lives, we are actually looking for people who we can love and serve every day of our life. The very moment that those words, "But nobody loves me," are framed in our mouth, the Holy Spirit of God just shuts that down and gives you that renewed attitude to go love somebody else. You go serve somebody else. You have been loved, you have been served by God. Now let this love in you be transferred to somebody else. Take the lead in loving other people.

How do you go about doing it? He goes on to say in verse 11,

"not lagging behind in diligence"

There is no participle here. Lagging behind is okneros—don't be lazy, don't fall behind. Proverbs 6:6 says,

"Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise."

Proverbs 6:9 says,

"How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?"

You see, what Paul is saying here is don't be lazy about this.

I think that is what has happened to the church in the 20th century, myself included. Folks, every one of us are guilty of this. We are lazy about it. We would rather sit around and pick out, "Well, such and such isn't doing this, and such and such is not doing that." God says, "I don't care about them. What are you doing? Take the lead. Stop worrying about what somebody else is not doing. You be what you ought to be." I tell you what. That is where your joy is. It is gone when you start looking at others and what they are not doing. It is there when you are busy doing what God says. The word "diligence," spoude, means with great urgency and without delay.

Well, Paul moves on. The contagious attitude of showing this kind of love just pops right up. Go ahead in verse 11 and he says,

"fervent in spirit."

There is your participle. The word "[fervent](#)" there is the word zeo, which means to boil. The word for "spirit" is the word [pneuma](#), and here it has to do with one's attitude. I like what he is saying here. He is saying, "Listen, when you are filled with the Spirit of God, surrendered to Him, the Word of God renewing your mind, all you have on your heart and your mind is Him and people; and you are fervent in your spirit." The word "[fervent](#)" means to boil like a pot of water that is just getting ready to boil. That boiling is getting ready to boil over and affect everybody around you. Don't you like to be around somebody like that, someone who just walks with God? He doesn't have to talk it, he lives it. And every time you are around them, you can just sense, "I want something like that inside of me." Folks, every one of us can be that way. It is that boiling inside that is causing something to spill over on the outside—zeo, fervent in spirit.

Go over to Acts 18:25 and you find a very similar example to show you that what is going on in the inside here. It spills over in your attitude. And oh, how contagious this in the body of Christ. Verse 25 of Acts 18 is speaking of Apollos. Apollos was a wonderful man of God. Verse 25 says,

"This man [Apollos] had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John."

He only had a little bit of information. Priscilla and Aquilla gave him more. But the thing was, he was so fervent in spirit that it caused him to teach and to speak the things of God.

Over in Slovenia there was a fellow named Shasha. I can't wait until one day he comes back to Chattanooga. He has been here. He came over to our church. While he was here he picked up a tract which said, "How to Get to Heaven from Chattanooga." Shasha was overwhelmed by the Word of God here. He learned how to study. He found out that Jesus Christ was his sufficiency and that the Christian life was not him working for Jesus but Jesus working through him, that he could be a vessel dead to self and Christ could overpower and use his life.

I want to tell you, it set this man on fire. He went back to Chernovsky in Muldova and took the word "Chattanooga" in that little tract out and put in the word "Chernovsky." He said they need to know how to get to heaven from Chernovsky. He ran off 15,000 copies, then he went out to the area where they had their apartment buildings. He got a bullhorn out there and he began to make all the racket you have ever heard in your life. People started coming out of the apartments looking around to see what in the world was going on. He said, "Who out here wants to know how to go to heaven?" Everybody started saying, "What is this guy doing?" He gave out tracts to 15,000 people there in those apartment buildings. There was just something burning inside of him that just motivated him to do something like that as the Holy Spirit led him.

When he shared at our conference, I thought to myself, "Lord God, build a fire inside of me like you have done inside that man." He didn't have time to sit down and worry about what is and what isn't. He was busy about the things of his God. He is like a water pot boiling over, fervent in spirit, aglow for God. That is what Paul said. Your whole attitude changes. You talk about being contagious in the body of Christ, do we ever need people in the body of Christ to stop sitting and soaking and saying, "God, use me, use me. You have gifted me, now use me." Start looking for people you can love and you can serve. I promise you, those old feelings of "nobody appreciates me" and "Woe is me, I don't have any friends" are going to disappear in the dust when you start getting serious about what you say with your mouth but very rarely live with your life.

When you see what Jesus has done for you, you give yourself back to him. I can hear Him saying, "Are you listening, Wayne?" Lord, I am listening. Then let Him build a fire inside of you. It is so contagious in the body of Christ.

Well, just keep right on following the text. It is a beautiful picture here of what he is doing. Paul continues, "not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Now that "serving the Lord" is very key here to understanding the thought. As you are ministering to others, not lagging behind, taking the lead, fervent in spirit, remembering that you are serving the Lord. This is the motivation of showing this love.

I want to tell you something. With different levels of maturity in the body of Christ, you have some who are here still walking after the flesh and they just won't get right in the body of Christ. They are miserable, but they are there. You have others who are more mature. You have different levels of maturity. When God puts on your heart to love people, He doesn't discriminate as to which ones you love. You love who He points you to. He brings them in your path. It has been my personal experience, and probably yours, that some of the people He puts in your path are not the ones you would have chosen to love. There are going to be some of them who are going to throw it right back in your face.

It's just like when you are raising children. Sometimes you have children who could care less about what a parent is saying, but you are commanded under God to love that child. You take whatever you need to take but you love that child. That is the way it is. But the thing you have got to remember is all the time you are doing that, you are serving the Lord. That is the beautiful picture here and I want to show you.

Oh, folks, if you could just see this. When you come to that place when you say, "God, I want to be used. God, Your Word told me that I have a gift; and, God, I want that gift to be used. How can I use it?" God is not going to worry you so much with your gift. God is going to say, "Okay, you want to serve Me? You serve Me by serving others. I have given you a gift to do it with. I have given you the love that surrounds that gift. Now get with it. Get with it. Take the lead. Don't lag behind. Don't be lazy. Be fervent in spirit. You begin to serve others. But when you are serving them, remember, you are really serving Me."

That is a comforting thought, folks, because sometimes people will take what you do for them and throw it right back in your face. You have to say, "Lord?" And He is going to say, "I know. I know. Keep right on doing what you are doing. You are loving Me by loving them. That is the whole key in the Christian walk." You see, that is the way it is in a family, you just keep loving because you are loving God. That is the motivation for doing it and that is loving God.

Let's go back. Filled with the love of Christ which is without pretense. Detesting with horror anything that would be injurious to others in the body. Glued to that which only does things which would benefit others. Focused on treating others in the body as family and taking the lead in showing this brotherly love. Not in any way becoming lazy in this matter. Feeling the urgency, like being a pot of water ready to boil over in your attitude to serve others. Motivated by the fact that everything you do to serve others is in reality serving God.

But I want you to see the persistency that is involved in this. Look at verse 12. There are three things there that sort of frame a thought. He says,

"Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer:"

Now let's think about this for a second. First of all he says, "rejoicing in hope." The word *rejoice* means to take gladness and joy out of what you are doing. The word "hope" has a definite article behind it. Now some people would say the hope means that all the time you are serving the body, all the time that you are fervent in your spirit, serving the Lord, you are at the same time looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ because the hope is there. Well, certainly that is a broad context. That is the whole cake in this thing. Let's just cut out a slice. The more narrow meaning is that as you love that brother who is not very loveable, but you are serving God in doing it. As you love him, you are taking joy in doing good for him and you are rejoicing in your expectation of what that good is going to do in his life somewhere down the road. I believe that is what he is saying.

Now, folks, don't give up on people in the body of Christ. Every one of us has been in those valleys. Every one of us has been in those times in our life when we are just in the fog. We went back in the fog. We got out of the Word, and we weren't surrendering. Don't stop loving those people. They are not going to receive it very well. Write that down. They are not going to receive it very well. They will throw it right back in your face. But remember, you are serving God. Rejoice in the good that you want to come from your loving and serving that ungrateful individual who is a member of the family of God.

I can remember one particular place I served. They had a lady who worked on staff there as secretary who nearly drove me nuts. She would talk to you from the time you got in the office. I mean, you couldn't shut her up. I called to tell her something on the phone and 30 minutes later I was just asking God to show me how to

end this conversation.

There was a picture of Jesus hanging in that particular office that I worked in at that time. One day this particular individual came in to me and just began to talk. I was busy. I had things to do. I started to tell her that and it was like the Holy Spirit of God was saying, "Okay, big boy, I am testing you. I want to see where you really are. Are you willing to sit here and listen to this little lady?" I was thinking, "No." But as I chose to do that, I remember looking over her shoulder and seeing the picture of Jesus and the thought hit me, "I am really not doing it for her as much as I am doing it for Him. And I am going to rejoice that somehow this is an act of kindness it is going to effect her in the future. When I leave after this is over with, I am just going to praise God for the good I believe He is going to do in her life because I was willing to let Him love her through me at that particular moment that day."

Now that is it right there. Folks, if you could choose the people that you showed this love to, it would be a piece of cake. I mean, I have known a lot of people who at their funerals sometimes I wanted to say, "The Lord giveth. Yes, sir, the Lord took away." I was kind of glad. I have had a list for years. Sometimes I have even asked God, "God, why did you take this person? Why didn't you take this person? If you will just ask me, I have a whole list of people. If you will go on and take them, we will have a wonderful time down here." You know, you feel that way sometimes.

I know he is talking about those kinds of people because look at the next phrase that he brings up. He says, "*rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation.*"

It is "**the tribulation**", by the way. There is a definite article ("*the*"). Somebody says, "Oh, no, I thought we weren't going through the tribulation." We are not going through the Great Tribulation (cp Mt 24:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21). But the definite article is used here. Now what is he talking about?

Persevering (hupomeno [word study]) is the word that means to bear up under, just like you would in a family, with a rebellious child or whatever. You would bear up under, persevering.

The word "tribulation" is **thlipsis [word study]**. It means crushing pressure. Oh, I want to tell you, folks, just to be in the family of God you have to understand something. There are going to be people in the family of God who just don't enjoy being there. And you are going to start trying to love them and serve them and they are going to give grief to you. But persevere, bear up under.

Why is it "the tribulation"? I think he is talking about the crushing pressure that is uniquely identified to believers when they start seeking to live godly lives, when they start seeking to be what God wants them to be. It is unique just to the believer. You are going to go through it. I am going to go through it. Bear up under it.

I was preaching this very same passage to those precious pastors over in Slovenia. They were there from ten different countries. After I finished the message, they just starting making a bee-line to me. It was so precious. They put their arms around me and said,

"Oh, you understand. It must not be any different in America"

I said,

"It is not. Flesh is just as rotten in America as it is in Slovenia"

You are going to deal with people who just won't get right with God. What do you do? You keep on loving them. You keep on serving them. You rejoice in the good you believe God is going to do. Bear up under whatever it is they throw back at you. Bear up under it.

The last thing he mentions here in that verse is,

"devoted to prayer." (proskartereo [word study])

Now some people are going to say that is a beautiful passage on just praying all the time. No, let's narrow it to the context. Friend, in the body of Christ, with the different degrees of maturity and different gifts, etc., you are going to have those kinds of people. And they are going to cause you such grief that you are going to want to tell somebody else about it.

When you go through that, as you are trying to rejoice, if you are not devoted to prayer, you use your mouth to do other things. Have you ever found out how easy it is to criticize somebody in the body who is obviously wrong and who is obviously not walking in the Spirit and who is obviously a real fly in the ointment, if you want

to say it that way? Have you ever noticed how easy it is to talk about them? But have you ever noticed how hard it is to talk about him when you pray for him?

Now listen to me, have you ever noticed how hard it is to talk about him when you have spent time praying and talking to God about him? It is almost like the Holy Spirit of God shuts your mouth and says back to you, "If you are going to love this person, you are not loving them because of what they do back for you. You are loving them because of Jesus. You are loving them because of His love in you. You are not expecting anything from them at all anyway. So, keep your mouth shut. Just keep praying for them. But for the grace of God, you would be just like them. Just keep praying for them. Just keep praying for them."

"Devoted to God in prayer."

I wonder, let's just say that you could write down on a list the people in your church that you would like to change and all the things that are wrong with everybody else in the body of Christ. Just go ahead and write it down on your list. Then you come to Romans 12 and God says, "Okay, all those people you just wrote down, you are going to have to love. You are going to have to serve them out of your gift that God has given to you. You are going to have to rejoice in the fact that as you love them, of the good that you hope someday will happen in their lives. As a matter of fact, you are not to lag behind in doing this. You are to take the lead in doing this. And you are to bear up under whatever they throw back at you. You are to consistently remember to be devoted to prayer, pray about them, pray for them, constantly lifting their names before God."

That lifts your mind above that old rotten flesh and helps you begin to realize that somewhere down the road, God is going to get through to that brother and you are going to be able to help him. You are just going to keep on loving him. Because folks, listen, relationships so often are trampled on at the expense of somebody being right or wrong. And it never should be that way. When we get to heaven, it is just going to be people. That is all that is going to be there. We are a family and we are to treat one another in that way.

Well, let's come on down to the last part of this. The unselfishness of it is found in verse 13. He says,

"contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality."

You notice he didn't put this until last. That word, "**contributing**" is the word **koinoneo** [word study]. It means to participate.

The word for "needs" is **chreia** [word study] which means the necessities of the saints. That is an incredible thing that happens to you. When you start loving, even the unlovable, bearing up under whatever they throw back at you, rejoicing in the good you believe God is going to bring out of that, devoted to prayer so you are not talking about them, you are talking to God for them, what happens is, you start noticing needs in the body of Christ like you have never seen them before. And all of a sudden, you just want to participate in meeting the needs of the body of Christ.

That doesn't mean just in a local setting, the body of Christ is world-wide. The body of Christ are people who speak Romanian, people who speak whatever language they speak in Slovenia. They are all over the world. You begin to understand needs. How do you understand them? God brings them up before you. Something in your heart says, "I want to be a part of doing something for those people." That is when the giving, that is when the missions begins to just bloom and flower in the body of Christ. It didn't start here. It started over in Romans 12:1 (note) when Paul exhorts his readers to

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice."

This is one of the end results of that. You begin to see need and you just want to give whatever it is that you have.

A few of years ago, we were having a conference when the war was real heavy over in Bosnia and Serbia and all that area. One fellow got up and he told about the needs of the Christians over in that area. We took up an offering from the people who were attending there. Now we are talking about Eastern Block countries. These precious people started coming up with tears in their eyes saying, "How can I give to this offering? I want to give to my brother and my sister over there in Serbia." They would bring everything that was in their pockets. They would pull out this little tiny bit of money, that when you added it up it wouldn't be \$10 in our currency. That is all they had and they said, "Can we give to the offering for the Christians over there in Serbia that we know?"

You see, folks, we are not going to learn to love people outside the church until we learn to love people inside the church. The only way to love people inside the church is to love God with all your heart, with all your soul

and with all your body. Present yourself to Him. Then God in you turns on a love without pretense and that love without pretense is what does the good. It is what does the work. Contributing to the needs of the saints is something He begins to form and motivate within your heart