

Romans 13:11-14

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Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Part 12

by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

The Apostle Paul seems to be doing something in chapter 13 that he has done earlier in the book of Romans. He is pointing to the motivation of **why we ought to live like we live**, why we ought to be doing all of these things that he has been telling us in Romans 12:3-21. The motivation is an event we are looking forward to one day. Colossians 1:27 says, "Christ in us, the **hope** of glory." There is a **hope** inside of a believer.

Now, "**hope**" in Scripture is not something that is uncertain. It is something that you can take to the bank. It is something that you know because God said it. It is a certainty. It is an expectation with which you live. Paul is saying this ought to be a motivating force in our life.

In Ro 13:11-14 he is talking about the same thing. Let's look at it:

And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

There is someone coming. There is an event that is yet to happen. The **day** of our **salvation** is **nearer** than when we were first saved. **He is saying that with every breath we take, every step we take, and every day we live, it is drawing us closer to something happening.**

I would like to remind you that he has already talked about this in the book of Romans. It is something that should be on the heart of every believer every day, every hour, every minute. It is the fact that Jesus is coming again one day. What a glorious event that is going to be. Look at Romans 8:18. This event was planned before the foundation of the world. God is working in our lives and He is accomplishing this event. He is coming for His church one day. It says, "**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**" There is a day coming when God is going to come and reveal Himself to us.

Do you remember what John says about that in his epistle? He says, "**When we see Him we shall be like Him**" (1Jn 3:2) That day is coming, folks. Eye hath not seen, ear has not heard. That is promised in God's Word. (1Cor 2:9) He is coming one day.

Paul goes on in Ro 8:19 and says, "**For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.**" The word for "**son**" there means fully-grown, matured sons of God. We are not there yet. When I look at my life and think of the inconsistencies of my walk, I wonder, "God, I am Your masterpiece?!" (Eph 2:10 = **poiema = masterpiece**) But you see, when we were saved, a process begins. He is conforming me in the image of Christ Jesus. We are in the quarry and He is chipping and honing off the rough edges. God decided this before we were ever born. Before we ever drew breath, God had this as His purpose. He is maturing us. But one day He is going to finish the process.

One day the Lord Jesus is going to come for His church. I believe that with all my heart. That is what 1Th 4:17 teaches. **Harpazo** is not a noun. It is a verb, and it means to be irresistibly taken up to meet Him in the clouds. When we see Him, we are going to be overwhelmed by Him. We are going to look at ourselves and say, "God, God, this is what You were doing? Now I understand. You were making me like Yourself." That is coming one day, folks. That is what we have to look forward to. That is the **hope**. Every morning you wake up you should ask yourself, "Is it today?" That motivates you. John says in 1 John if you have this hope in you, then you will purify yourself. (1Jn 3:3) It causes you to live differently when you have this hope.

Ro 8:20 says, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope [even the creation is suffering because of sin] that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Our destiny is directly attached to the destiny of creation. Ro 8:22 continues, "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit [believers], even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." A time is coming when this body is going to be shed and if it is not shed, it is going to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

It says in Romans 8:24, "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." Now, folks, you need to understand that salvation is in three tenses. Romans 3:21 through Romans 5 is past tense salvation (see **Three Tenses of Salvation**). I was saved from the penalty of sin when I put my faith into Jesus. I was justified. Justified means that you have been acquitted of a crime. The Lord Jesus did not drop the charges. He took them upon Himself. That is what God did for us. The moment I put my faith into Jesus He reckoned that to my account. I have been saved from the penalty of sin.

But the next tense is the present tense. I am being saved from the power of sin. That's found in Romans 6-8. My body is a body of sin. But He teaches me there to present the members of my body unto Him unto righteousness and to remember that victory is something that He has already given me in Christ. I can live in that victory if I simply am willing to surrender to Him. Daily we are learning how to have power over the body, how to have power over sin.

Then there is the future tense of our salvation. One day the event that he is talking about in Romans 8 will take place. **We shall** be saved. From what? Not the penalty, not the power, but the presence of sin. The presence of sin is in this body that we live in. That is why Romans 6:6 calls it a **body of sin**. Now, that expectancy for what is coming, the reality, spiritual reality is more real than anything else in which we live. That spiritual expectancy and reality ought to motivate us to live like we live.

That is what I believe he is talking about in Ro 13:11-14. Paul commands them, teaches them, instructs them, and then he comes back to the motivation of why we ought to be living the way we live. We are not like other people. God lives in us (1Cor 6:19-20). We are sanctified and set apart for His use and His purpose (Titus 2:14).

TIME TO WAKE UP!

There are three things he tells us here that I hope will mean something to you.

First, he tells us that it is time to wake up. He is writing to the Roman believers, but we also know that the Word is profitable to us. He is telling us it is time to wake up.

A few years ago I was teaching Daniel and we were discussing Daniel 12 and the details that are sealed up until the end times and the Jews will profit from them at that time. God knew the times when all this was going to happen. He knew it, and nobody else needs to know it. When it is time, He will unlock it. It is like an alarm clock. It is already set and it will go off when God says it will go off.

Wake up! Wake up! What does it take to wake you up? The Apostle Paul is telling the believers in Rome, "You had better wake up." Look at the text here, take it apart and see what it can say to you. He said, "And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed." Now remember, the motivating factor for all that he has commanded us from Romans 12:1 through Romans 13:10 is that every breath we take draws us nearer and nearer to this event.

Folks, you can talk about the grace and the mercy of God all you want to, but remember something, there are consequences to choices. Every day we live is pushing us one day closer to either death, and seeing Him face to face, or the time when He comes for His church. One of the two. We have that to look forward to in the future, so therefore, the Apostle Paul is trying to wake them up to this truth.

He says, "And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep." The word **knowing** there is **eido**. It is a word that usually means intuitive knowledge. It is not something that you have to be taught. It is something that the Holy Spirit gives you when He comes to live in you. It is in the **perfect tense**. Perfect tense means something happened in the past and because it happened in the past, I am in a state of being now. The state that I am in is that I have a *knowing* inside of me. There is a **hope** inside of me. I know that one day I am going to see my Lord face to face, either when I die or when He comes for His church. I know one day I am going to see Him face to face.

What do we know? We know the time. Now the word for "time" is an interesting word. There are two words for time. When I take my watch off and look at it, it is the word *chronos*, chronometer. The word *chronos* means when you measure time. That is not the word used here. The word used here is *kairos*. It means season or opportunity. What you have got to see is that when you are born again, something starts and it goes on for all of eternity. But down here on this earth, either He will come for you or you will die and you have an opportunity. There is an occasion of life for you now. You live from here to here. You can't go back and relive those days. You can't go back and relive those choices. You cannot do that. Every day you are drawing nearer and nearer to the time that He is coming for you, until the time that this occasion, this season, this opportunity is going to be over.

We also know that we have the occasion of His coming to build into that. So the Apostle Paul is saying, "Listen, you believers, you know that. You are not down here forever in the situation that we are in now. You are in this world, you are aliens, you are strangers, but you have been saved. God lives in you. Now wake up. You know the opportunity. You know the season. You know the times. You realize that every day is pushing you closer to eternal events that we have not seen yet and we have not experienced."

The fact that Paul is talking about the coming of Christ as this event in this time period and not only the opportunity we have here is apparent in the last phrase of the verse. He says, "for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed." I have already told you that salvation, *soteria*, is the word that means safety, deliverance, preservation from danger or destruction. We know it is not the past tense of that word because we have already seen that. We know it is not the present sense of the word, we are experiencing that. It has to be the future tense of our salvation. We, as believers, intuitively know there is a day coming and because of that we seize the opportunity that we have now. We are not going to be able to relive these times. And folks, it is getting nearer and nearer. The day draws closer every breath that we take.

Now I don't know about you, but I am not that old. But I tell you what, it is coming to a day and a time in my life that I am just sick of playing around, playing games and making stupid choices. The Apostle Paul is trying to say to these people, "Will you wake up!" It is not just going to church on Sundays. I am glad everybody does. It is not just going to church on Wednesdays. It is not one or two things you do during the week. This is your life! This is eternal! God lives in you! Wake up! He is coming! You don't have these days again. "Live each day to the very fullest," is what he is saying. Understand the urgency of the hour. It is time to wake up.

He said that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep. The word "sleep" is the word *hupnos*. It is used here metaphorically of spiritual sleep. Now I want to talk about spiritual sleep for a minute. When we are asleep, we are dull of hearing. We can have conversations that would appear to some people as being intelligent, but yet we have never heard what was said. I will give you an example of that.

When I was growing up, we lived three doors down from the bus stop, the city bus stop. Well, the bus driver liked me. He would wait

on me every morning because he knew I was going to be late. He would stop there and just start blowing the horn. I came running out of my house, and everybody could tell I hadn't combed my hair or hadn't brushed my teeth. I mean, I had just literally gotten out of bed and grabbed stuff. When I would get on the bus, everybody would clap.

My Mama would tell me that evening, "Son, I don't understand you." I fussed at her from the time I got out of bed. I would say, "Where are my clothes? I have to wear something." She would say, "They are right there on the bed." I would jump into them. Then that evening, Mama would say, "Wayne, don't you recall what happened this morning?" I would say, "No, what happened?" She would say, "I came into your room and talked to you. I even asked you what you wanted to wear and took it out as you told me and laid it on the bed." I had absolutely no recollection of that conversation at all. Because when you are asleep, you are dull of hearing. You may think you remember, but you don't.

That is why the author of Hebrews says, "You should be teachers by now, but you are not, you are dull of hearing." That is why James said, "You know, if you are not a doer of the Word of God, you have deceived yourself. You have deluded yourself. You think you know the truth. You came to church. You said you heard it, but you didn't hear it. You were asleep." When you are asleep you are dull of hearing.

Not only that, but when you are asleep, you are in another world of dreams. What kind of world are you living in? Are you living in a dream world? Do you think that somehow you are not going to be accountable for all these truths that you are hearing from the Word of God one day? Do you think that you can just live the way you want to live and do whatever you want to do and it is all going to be okay? What kind of dream world are you living in? When people are asleep, you see, they are not in reality.

When you are asleep you are also vulnerable to danger. I love to read stories about bear attacks; a big bear grabs somebody and just eats them. You know, one of the things I have found, there is a pattern in those stories. In those stories, the time the bear would get the people was not when they were up, not when they were sitting around the campfire, but when they went to bed. Because when you go to sleep, you see, you are open to all the dangers around you.

A lot of people are spiritually asleep. They don't understand the dangers that are around them. As a matter of fact, they live as if they don't even care. They live as if they have never heard and yet they will call themselves Christians.

Friend, listen, you need to wake up. That is what Paul is saying. Wake up. Come out of your spiritual sleep. Understand the urgency and understand the seriousness of what God is saying. Once you have awakened, he has something else to say. He says, "Get dressed." That is what you do, isn't it? You wake up and get dressed.

Look at verse 12: "The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." Now the term "night" here refers metaphorically to spiritual darkness and moral darkness. We are living in a time of the night when the prince of the power of the air, the prince of darkness, controls this world. Here we are as children of light living in a time when the night has been dominant. It is darkness all around us. That is why we are in spiritual warfare. It is not one time a week. It is all the time. The moment I breathe I am in spiritual warfare because I am an alien and a stranger in a world that is in darkness, you see. Paul says the night is almost over. There is the dawning of the day.

Have you ever been real sick? Have you ever noticed that when you are sick, it is worse at night than it is in the daytime? Sometimes at 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning I have held our children and I have been praying, "Oh, God, let the sun come out, let the day dawn." Somehow I had expectancy that when the day dawned somehow it would be better.

When I was growing up, my Daddy was my best buddy. He started me fishing when I was about six years old. He would tell me during the week, "Wayne, I am going to take you fishing this week." I would say, "Dad, I am so excited." The night before was just the longest thing I have ever lived through in my life. I was up at 1:00, at 2:00, at 3:00 and 4:00. You have seen that commercial on television. That little boy comes in, wakes his daddy up and says, "Daddy, Daddy, why are you asleep? You promised me that you were going to take me." The Daddy said, "I know, son, I know. But it is 3:00 in the morning." The little boy goes, "Oh." He turns to walk down the hall and he says, "I will be back in ten minutes." He is already dressed and ready to go.

Do we understand what Paul is saying here? The night is almost gone. The day is coming. Now wake up! Get dressed! There is something to get ready for. What do we wear? If we are going to get dressed, what is it that we wear? He says in verse 12, "Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." That term "lay aside" is *apotithemi*. It means to take it off like a garment. It is the exact word that is used when Stephen was stoned. They took their garments off and laid them at the side of Saul, who later became the Apostle Paul. He stood there and watched Stephen being stoned. It is a word that means "take that garment off and put another garment on."

Now understand what he is saying here. In Colossians 3:9-11 the Apostle Paul says that you have already taken off the old man, and you have already put on the new man. But in Ephesians 4:22 he is saying something a little different. He says, "that, in reference to your former manner of life [In other words not the old man, but the lifestyle that was there when you were dead in sin],

you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

Now what Paul is saying in Ephesians is, "Stop living as if the old man is alive. Wake up, man. Get dressed." The clothes that you put on have to be put on inwardly not outwardly. When Romans 12:2 is a part of your life, when you are surrendered, when you are lovingly putting your body into His hands and saying, "God, use me as a vessel," at that very moment the Spirit of God dresses you in the cloak of righteousness and you start living differently because of what God has done in your life. He says stop living as if the old man is still alive. Romans has told us that it is already dead. Colossians says you have already taken it off. So therefore he says stop living as if it is still alive.

So back to Romans 13. He is saying take off that old lifestyle. Then he says, "Put on the armor of light." Now I love that. In other words, he is saying, "Put on Christ." Look at verse 14 if you don't believe me. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ." A couple of years ago when I taught Ephesians I hadn't studied Romans. I wish I had because now I could jump back and say when you put on the garment, you are really putting on Christ. I said it over and over again, but I forgot that it is right here in Romans 13:14.

Now, what is the first thing you are going to think about when you put this garment on? Paul says it is the armor of light. Back in Ephesians I said the garment in chapter 4 is the armor of chapter 6. I said if you are living the surrendered life, that is your weapon against Satan. You don't have to get up in the morning and put on all this stuff. But when you are dead to self, alive unto God, saying yes to Him, you have put on Christ and Christ is your armor. The word for "armor" means the weapons used in warfare. If you want to defeat the devil, then you just live a surrendered life. The weakest demon can defeat half of us; but they have to run from Christ in us. When you have a surrendered life, it is not you anymore, it is Christ in you. It is the armor of light in the midst of all the darkness that is around you. In the midst of the night that we live in, put on Christ. He is your armor of light. Light, my friend, puts out darkness. Darkness does not put out light.

So the Apostle Paul says now, "Wake up, wake up, wake up. Don't you know that every day that is going by you don't get back? You have an appointed time and if it is not to die, then it is going to be an appointed time when Christ is going to come for you. Do you know that is in the future? This hope is in you. And because it is in you, stop living your own way. Live His way. Put on the armor of light." When we are dressed in Christ, when we are totally surrendered to Him, we are totally protected from the onslaught of the darkened world around us. That is what he is telling us to do.

Now, how do you do that? How do you put on the Lord Jesus Christ? Verse 14 actually is Romans 12:1-2 said in a different way. He says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." The phrase "make no provision" is present middle imperative. Don't ever at any time be doing this. Middle voice means don't let a preacher have to tell you to do it. Make up your own mind. It is your choice. Imperative, it is a command. So, he says, "Never, ever at any time make provision for the flesh."

The term for "provision" is the word *pronoia*. It comes from the word *proneo*, which comes from *pro*—before, and *noeo*—to think. Here is the idea. You are going on a trip and you are packing. You are getting ready. You are making provision for what you are going to need. You spend some time and think it through. You see folks, sin is not something you do. Sin starts with an attitude. When Romans 12:1-2 is not in my life, then immediately what I am doing, without realizing it, is making provision for my flesh. I have thought beforehand and I am making sure that whatever I do somehow accommodates my flesh. Paul says never at any time make provision for your flesh.

How many times in my life have I chosen not to surrender to Christ? That means I immediately start making provision for my flesh. Do you have a simple problem in your life today? Write this down. Somehow you have not understood Romans 12:1-2 and you are making provision for your flesh daily. That is why you are living back under the power of sin one more time. Don't make provision for the flesh. That is the way you put on Christ. Instead of making provision for the flesh, you make provision for Him.

Verse 14 goes on to say, "in regard to its lusts." The word "lusts" there is always in the plural. Remember, lusts are not just in one area. They are in many areas. "Lusts" stands for the desires that this old sinful body has. The Apostle Paul asks, "Do you want to put on Christ? Then stop making provisions to obey the lusts of your flesh. Instead, make provision to obey and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the way you put on the Lord Jesus Christ. And the garment that you will have on is an armor of light. It is a lifestyle. It is going to show up. People can see that you are under control of the Holy Spirit of God. So therefore, you are in control of your life.

So first of all Paul says, "Wake up!" Secondly he says, "Get dressed!" And thirdly he says, "Go to work." Oh, we don't like to hear that, do we? Wake up, get dressed, go to work. Look at verse 13. I want you to see this. He says, "Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy." Now, he doesn't necessarily tell us what to do in one sense, but he tells us how to go about it. All of the phrases that he mentions here are just symptoms of a person being out of control. They are symptoms of a person who has made provision for his flesh. If these are in

your life, it is very obvious you don't understand Romans 12:1-2. No wonder. You haven't figured out yet the message of grace. Grace is God's enabling you to do what He commands you to do. The key is, you have got to learn to surrender to Him, then Christ takes over. Then it is His life in you living through you and the garment of the lifestyle is that which is produced by His Spirit. It is not something you can do yourself. You have got to learn to not make provision for you flesh, but make provision for Him.

Paul says we are to "behave properly as in the day." The word "behave" is the word peripateo; peri means around and pateo means to walk, to walk circumspectly. That is why it is called "behavior" because it is in every step you take, every place you go and everything that you do. Let us behave properly.

The word "properly" means that which befits your character. In other words, you behave so as your character is seen, what you are as a believer. It is not just on Sunday and Wednesday, folks. It is on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. It is living where you are so that your behavior is proper. It fits what God has done in your life. If you put on Christ, then there is a behavior out there that is different than what it was before.

You may go to lunch after church on Sunday. A lot of times you will go into one of these restaurants and order beans. They will serve you peas and they are cold. I want to tell you something. The way you respond to that waitress has a lot of say about which garment you are wearing. It has a lot to say whether you have made provision for the Spirit or you have made provision for the flesh. I have talked to some waitresses who have told me that I would not believe the way people act in those restaurants on Sundays after already having been to church. Do you know what I say back to them? "Well, they are just sound asleep. They are in a dream world. They don't even understand what this thing is all about. They get up on Sundays because it is the thing to do. They go to church and then they are gone. They have no concept of the urgency of the hour, the seriousness of the commitment and the fact that they are to live in a manner properly, behave properly to that which befits the character."

Well, Paul gives three phrases here that show when flesh is out of control. That is what he is showing: If I am under control, I am in control. But if I am not under the Spirit's control, I am out of control. First of all he says, "not in carousing and drunkenness." That is interesting. I have seen this several times in Scripture. They had the same thing back then as we do today except we call it "partying". The actual word, komo, comes from the worship of a false god by the name of Bacchus. They would get really drunk. Drunkenness was always associated with it. Why? Because you are under the control of alcohol instead of under the control of the Holy Spirit of God. Paul even uses that analogy in Ephesians 5:18 when he says do not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit of God. A bunch of men would go out at night totally inebriated and go from house to house and wake up the whole neighborhood acting like idiots. That is why he says, "Don't let this be a part of your life. That is flesh that is out of control."

Then the second thing he mentions here and it is very clear, "not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality." The word "sexual" is really not the word there. It is implied in the word "promiscuity," koite. It doesn't take you long to figure out what that means. It means actual sexual contact of some type, perverted or not, when a person is lying down. It has the whole idea there. Let none of this be a part of your life. It is talking about a perverted sense of that. It is talking about something that is illicit. It is something that God would not ever allow His people to do. It goes right along with sensuality. The word "sensuality" is the word aselgeia, which means absence of restraint: to live as if you have a right to do it. To use this kind of stuff as license and then come to church and act like you know Christ in your life. That is a person out of control. That is a person who either doesn't know Christ or has made provision for his flesh for so long he doesn't even have a clue about what it means to walk with the armor of light.

One of the dangers that we have, folks, is to rationalize what we do. In other words, if you are not living under the authority of the Holy Spirit of God, in the Word of God, then you are going to tend to become your own god, even with sincerity. You are going to sin but somehow you have taught yourself to rationalize that sin and somehow feel like it is okay. That takes you to the next step, and all of a sudden the walls that were there that would keep you from going so far all begin to be torn down, but you are still coming to church and you are still praying and you are still singing, but you are not living with the garment of Christ on, you are not living surrendered to Him. As a result then, your whole life falls apart. You have got to be very, very careful. There is no license for us to live in any kind of sexual misconduct. What Paul is showing you is this is flesh out of control.

The third thing he shows you is "not in strife and jealousy." The word for "strife" is the word eris. It means to contend with someone, to constantly be at odds with others. The word "jealousy" there has the idea you even enjoy doing it. You are looking forward to it.

I want to tell you something, as long as the night is here, it is going to get worse in our world. It is not going to get any better. But remember, when you see a believer act that way, that is a person who hasn't got Romans 12:1-2. They don't have a clue what Christianity is. To them it is nothing more than just coming to church a couple of times a week.

Paul says, "Wake up, get dressed and go to work." The only kind of works that God wants out of us is the kind that comes from the relationship which His Holy Spirit produces in our life. If these things are seen as flesh out of control, then you are going to be a person who is not under the control of the Holy Spirit of God. I don't know what to say to you except, "Folks, wake up!" I can't wake you up. But God is trying to wake you up. You think you have all that time. I hear people all the time say, "Well, I am just going to

wait. One day I am going to get right with God." Oh, that is probably the stupidest thing you could say. Do you think you have hold of your life? God is the one who is trying to tell you, "You had better wake up. Time is getting shorter, shorter and shorter."