

Gems Of Advice

"Let love be without hypocrisy, abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be ye tenderly affectioned one toward another; in honor preferring one another; in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints, given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:9-13). This section of Romans 12:9-21, is a rich treasury of godly, goodly advice. Since the apostle has urged the brethren to be transformed from the world by the renewing of their mind; the advice in these thirteen verses are rich in declaring what it means for one to be renewed in his mind. Let us consider the first five of these verses.

"Let love be without hypocrisy." Peter urged, *"love one another from a pure heart fervently"* (1 Pet. 1:22). We are warned against a *"feigned love"* (1 Pet. 1:22). A love without pretense is a love of deeds done unreservedly, uncomplainingly and impartially. *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth"* (1 Jn. 3:18).

"Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." How sad that with so many the reverse of the exhortation is true: they love the evil and hate the good! Evil men hate the light because their deeds are evil (Jn. 3:20). Amos wrote, *"Hate the evil, and love the good"* (Amos 5:11). The Psalmist wrote, *"Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way"* (Ps. 119:104). Because Jesus *"loved righteousness and hated iniquity,"* so must we also (Heb. 1:9).

"In love of the brethren be ye tenderly affectioned one toward another." Jesus said, *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another"* (Jn. 13:35). Early Christians sold their possessions and brought the funds received to the apostles that they might make proper distribution among those needy. *"The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common"* (Acts 4:32). What a wonderful spirit this was, truly a worthy example for men in all ages. Just as *"we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities"* so must we be merciful and conscious of the brethren, unashamedly weeping with them when they weep. *"In honor preferring one another."* By this the writer means we possess humility of mind that lets the other lead the way; that we give deference to each other.

"In diligence not slothful ..." We should take to heart the earnestness of singing *"to the work; to the work ..."* There is a world to be won; souls to be

saved and the night is coming on! Whatever our hands find to do should be done with all our might for we do not know that we shall ever have opportunity to pass this way again. *"Fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."*

"Rejoicing in hope." We must be ready to give answer for our hope, for hope maketh not ashamed (1 Pet. 3:15; Rom. 5:5). Christ is our hope: all our expectations of a future resurrection rest upon his resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3). We grow older and life becomes a burden for us. We long, *"not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal might be swallowed up of life"* (2 Cor. 5:4).

"Patient in tribulation." We are steadfast, knowing as worthies did of all, that we have a better possession and an abiding one. So, amidst the trials of life, whatever their nature be, we wait steadfastly. As we wait for the redemption of our bodies, we *"continue steadfastly in prayer."* We need God's mighty hand to comfort us; to assure us; to strengthen us. So we lean heavily upon Him, knowing that He is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls and He will give us safe passage through the trials which life offers to us.

Yet, though life does become heavy, we do not forget others. We *"communicate to the necessities of the saints."* God has blessed us, so we share these blessings with our brethren who are not so fortunate as we. We do not neglect to show hospitality for who knows that we may perchance *"entertain angels unaware"*?

What provoking appeals the apostle makes in this section of Romans! May they awaken us to our blessings; remind us of our responsibilities and provoke us to the end that we may be a little help to our fellow-travelers on our journey to eternity!

Jim McDonald