**Week of August 19, 2018**

**Roman 12:9-21**

**Love in Action**

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

14Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28262a)] Do not be conceited.

17Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28265b)] says the Lord. 20On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
    if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12%3A9-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28266c)]

21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Understanding of the Scripture**

If the truth is told, most of us that profess that we are believers in Jesus Christ (Christians) struggle with this scripture. When it comes to the concept of love we use it very sparingly and only for a select few people. In today’s scripture Paul was writing to the Church in Rome that had both Jew and Gentile believers which meant each group had its own way on thinking which was in most cases contrary to the teachings of Jesus. So, what is Love? It can be defined as an intimate deep feeling for someone (and unfortunately sometimes some thing) in which the person cares deeply for the well being of that individual in manner that does expect such feelings to be returned as a condition of such admiration nor does one look to be compensated (material positions in return for such admiration) for such care. We all like to believe that this how we love but sometimes our actions may not demonstrate that. There is an old saying that reads actions speak louder than words. Paul in the scripture is showing the readers what that action should look like. However, it is more than just actions. Those actions must have true meaning and be sincere. Paul states that in demonstrating love it most be sincere. When one is sincere there is no bad motive tied to their actions. Our love should make us hate or shun evil and look to do what is good as it relates to one another. This mean you may hate a person’s actions, but you shouldn’t hate the person. True love will drive you to deny yourself for another person. On earth we always say that there is nothing like a mother’s love. This refers to the sacrifice and commitment a mother does in making her life secondary toward that of her child even to the point of dying for that child. This is not to say that fathers would not do the same but it hard to compare what a mother goes through in the nine (9) months of nurturing and caring for the child before the child even makes its first breath once birthed. They are one and the mother through her actions prior to birth and after birth are sincere and pure. Paul says that our character in Love should have zeal, joy, faith, prayer, hospitality and never-ending thirst to look to help those who are in need regardless of race sex, color, national origin or belief. How often do we pray and bless those who persecute or look to harm us? We should look to rejoice with those who rejoice and morn with those who are morning. We should set our sights on being in harmony through love with all. The challenge for us is that we all have an evil or bad side to us. If someone harms us we often look to get them back or even wish or hope something bad happens to them. Our own pride gets in the way and boost us to do things that are out of character with God (Love). God has stated that vengeance is mine. It is not up to us to seek vengeance on others but for us to pray for them and through love seek to help them in true sincere love. You can not overcome evil with evil but only with Love. Remember as 1 John 4:7-8 says “***Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”***

