

LESSON 10

CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR

Romans 12:1-21, Galatians 6:1-10

Introduction

Paul had set forth the doctrines of sin and salvation. He had shown that all men are sinful and subject to the power of evil which rules this world. He had also pointed out that salvation through faith in Christ is the only means to conquer the carnal nature and sin and to become righteous. Although he did not discredit the Law as holy and good, he actually took the opposite position to that of the Pharisees by showing that the Law is ineffective in establishing a right relationship to God.

Paul had shown how it is possible by faith to live righteously. It remained for him to explain what the attitudes and actions are which characterize the Christian life. There is a standard of behaviour for the Christian which can be achieved when his life is controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Christian actions and attitudes must characterize his relationship to God and to his fellow-man.

Genuine Worship

Romans 12:1-2

At the centre of Christian behaviour is a new kind of worship. Worship to the Jew had meant taking sacrifices to the Temple and attending the synagogue. Worship for pagan Gentiles meant special festivals and sacrifices to idols.

Worship is closely related to service. One aspect of worship is comprised of bowing down before God in submission. Another aspect of worship is to honour God by loyal obedience. With the temple services as the background to his statement, Paul appealed to the Romans to offer their bodies not in death but as living sacrifices to God. He made the appeal on the basis of what God had done for them through Christ. This section opens with "therefore" or "on the basis of what I have been discussing". Because of God's love and mercy to them, their proper response should be to offer their lives in God's service.

Man's relation to God and his fellow-man must be characterized by Christian _____ and _____.

(actions and attitudes)

Jewish worship involved taking sacrifices to the _____ and attending the _____.

(Temple, synagogue)

Christian worship involves _____ and loyal _____ to God.

(submission, obedience)

Paul did not ask for the blemished and sinful life but for a holy life (set apart to God's service and righteousness) which is acceptable to God.

A life which expresses worship in service cannot be lived according to this world and under the control of the evil power. The life must be renewed and transformed by a new way of thinking (v.2). The new way of thinking includes a recognition of personal inadequacies and a total reliance on God. The old way of thinking relies on self and follows self-interests and desires. The new mind of trust in God puts God's will and purpose to the test and proves that they are good and acceptable and perfect.

Actually Paul commanded the Roman Christians not to pattern their lives after this age (v.2). The wisdom of this age or of the princes of this world would come to naught and was different from the wisdom to be spoken among God's people (1 Cor.2:6).

The rulers of this age do not understand the wisdom of God (1 Cor.2:8). The gods or rulers of this world blind the minds of unbelievers in order that they will not understand the glorious message of Christ (2 Cor.4:4). Christ has been exalted above all the rulers and powers and authorities of this age and also of the age to come (Eph.1:21). This present age is evil and its ruler has been judged and condemned (Gal.1:4; John12:31). Although Christians must live within the environment of this age, they are not to conform to its ways but are to be ruled by a new mind which guides the life in doing the will of God. The transformed life is possible only by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

Attitudes Towards Self

Romans 12:3-8

Humility (12:3)

Man cannot help but have exalted opinions of himself with regard to his capabilities and place in life. What man thinks about himself will affect his relationship to others and to God. The greatest Christian virtue with regard to self is humility. Some societies identify humility with weakness, but true Christians follow their Lord in genuine humility. Christ who is equal with God emptied Himself of that dignity and humbly assumed the role of a servant (Phil.2:6f.). He submitted to shameful condemnation and death as a criminal in order to do the will of God. His humility is the example for the Christian in daily life. Paul encouraged the Roman Christians not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think (v.3).

A life of acceptable worship is no longer under the control of the _____ but it is totally reliant on _____.

(evil power, God)

The transformed life is possible only by the power of the indwelling _____.

(Spirit)

Are these statements true or false?

Humility is the greatest Christian virtue regarding self. _____

Humility is a sign of weakness. _____

Christ set an example of humility. _____

(true, false, true)

Christian humility is based on the recognition that individual abilities are gifts from God and not creations of the individual. Paul reminded the Corinthians that they had no grounds on which to boast, for their abilities and superior qualities were received from God and were not the accomplishments of man (1 Cor. 4:7). As a person thinks soberly about himself, he recognizes that he cannot claim credit for what he is. Neither should he despair of what he is not because God has made him for a purpose in life.

His sober thinking or judgement should consider the "measure of faith" (v. 3). This measure of faith denotes the spiritual power given to each Christian for the discharging of his special responsibility. His spiritual power is an endowment from God. Man's responsibility is to use the endowment faithfully and not to neglect it.

The analogy of the body (12:4-8)

Paul's analogy of the human body to describe the relation of Christians in the Church is similar to 1 Corinthians 12:14-26. The Corinthian analogy emphasizes the relation of the Christian to Christ and to the gifts with which Christ has endowed him. The Roman analogy stresses the relation of individual members one to another (vv. 4-5). The emphasis is on the diversity of members and the different qualities and functions of the members. In verse 5, Paul stressed the interdependence of the members of the body of Christ. The human body would be vastly inadequate if it were composed of only two or three members. The hands are important but they cannot function very effectively as feet. The eyes are of great value but they would be poor organs for hearing. In the Church, there are many members with different capacities and abilities. Each member is responsible for contributing to the well-being of the entire body. All have gifts which differ according to God's grace (v. 6). A person does not determine which gift he will receive. He does not deserve any gift; therefore, it must be bestowed on the basis of God's unmerited mercy and goodness. He should be grateful for whatever gift God has given him and use it faithfully in God's service for the benefit of the Church. Prophecy is listed first, but the gifts are not necessarily in order of priority. However, Paul did place prophecy next to apostleship in 1 Corinthians.

"Prophecy" must be exercised "according to the proportion of faith" (v. 6). Again Paul spoke of faith not as man's trust in God but as a degree of spiritual power given to each Christian. A prophet is one who speaks to the Church concerning God's voice and will. The measure or proportion of faith

Christian humility is recognizing that individual gifts are from _____ and not _____ of the _____.

(God, creations, individual)

Paul used the analogy of the _____ to describe the relation of _____ in the _____ in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12.

Match the emphasis on the gifts with its Scripture reference.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <u>_____</u> Romans 12:4-8 | 1. The relation of the Christian to Christ and to the gifts. |
| <u>_____</u> 1 Corinthians 12 | 2. The relation of individual members one to another. |

Underline the correct words in the following sentences.

A person (does, does not) determine which gift he will receive. He (does, does not) deserve any gift.

All gifts are bestowed on the basis of God's unmerited _____ and _____.

(human body, Christians, Church, 2, 1, does not, does not, mercy, goodness)

Prophecy is the gift of speaking to the _____ concerning God's _____ and _____.

(Church, voice, will)

he has received determines the level of inspiration or depth of insight he has and the degree to which God makes His will and purpose known to and through him. It is obvious that preachers have varying degrees of ability. The effectiveness of their prophetic role depends largely on the measure of faith with which they have been endowed. However, some preachers are not diligent in the exercise of this gift. They fail to give themselves to study and prayer.

"Service" or "ministry" came to be associated with the work of deacons. They ministered to those in need. "Teaching" was the special function of the Rabbis in the synagogue and became associated with the work of the pastor in the Church (Eph. 4:11f.). Teachers were concerned with the doctrines of the Church and were responsible for preparing the saints for ministering. "Exhortation" is related to prophecy but apparently was a separate function on occasions. It emphasized a call for decision rather than the proclamation of God's Word.

The one who "gives" is illustrated by Barnabas who had property which he made available to meet the physical needs of the poor. Contributors were instructed not to make a display of their liberality for the praise of men, like Ananias and Sapphira, but to give freely without calling attention to their generosity. He who "leads" is actually one who gives aid (v. 8). A leader is not one who tells others what to do but one who sets the example by becoming involved in the undone task. His diligence causes him to be the first to undertake the job. Certain members were given the ability and responsibility of showing acts of "mercy". Apparently they were to help the sick and the hungry. They were encouraged to be cheerful in their ministry.

Some Christians do not use the spiritual gifts with which they have been endowed because they have never discovered them. Others are aware of their spiritual gifts, but are dissatisfied with them because they have evaluated them as unimportant. Dissatisfaction often causes Christians to attempt to function in areas of responsibility for which they have not been spiritually endowed. The attitude one has towards himself, his abilities, and the gifts, will determine his effectiveness in the service and worship of Christ. The attitude of humility will lead to a cheerful acceptance of the gift God has bestowed upon a person and the faithful exercise of it. Thus the Church is strengthened and Christ is glorified.

Service or ministry is the gift of ministering to those in _____.

The gift of exhortation is similar to _____ but emphasizes a call for _____.

The gift of teaching is the special function of the _____.

(need, prophecy, decision, pastor)

Giving is the gift of making property available to meet the physical needs of the _____.

The gift of leading is to set the example by becoming involved in the _____ task.

Mercy is the gift of helping the _____ and the _____.

(poor, undone, sick, hungry)

You have just studied seven gifts as recorded in Romans 12:4-8. Can you list them?

Action Towards Others

Romans 12:9-21

Humility should characterize the attitude of a person towards himself and love should characterize his actions which affect others. Humility leads to cheerfulness whereas pride leads to envy and dissatisfaction. Actions based on love result in joy and peace.

Genuine love is more than an attitude; it must be expressed in actions. Love in word is not real love; it must be expressed in deeds. God is love, and He gave His Son. God could not be love without expressing it in giving. The act of giving is an integral part of love; it must be expressed in benevolent deeds (v. 9). Love is not to be hypocritical; that is, it is not to be pretended. All is to be done in love (1 Cor. 16:14). This is possible because the indwelling Spirit produces the fruit of love (Gal. 5:22). Love does not submit to evil but overcomes evil with good.

The Christians are to abhor evil and break with it, but they are to hold fast to the good. Natural love of kindred, "brotherly affection", is to represent Christians as bound by a family tie. Christians are to love their brethren in the faith as though they were brethren in blood (v. 10). "In honour preferring one another" means to consider better or esteem more highly the other person. Phillips suggests that it means "to let the other man have the credit". Unbecoming characteristics of Christians are to seek credit for themselves and to blame others for their failures. Christians are not to be slack and undependable in business (v. 11). They are to be fervent or "aglow with the Spirit" as they do their work for the Lord.

The countenance of the present life is not to be determined by dwelling on immediate circumstances. Joy comes by contemplating the hope we have in Christ (v. 12). Tribulations will mark the life of the Christian, but patience comes by knowing that tribulations will come to an end and eternity will be spent with God. Victory in the midst of present evil can be gained by continuing in fellowship with God through prayer. Paul faced difficult and trying times during his missionary journeys, but he always found victory through prayer.

Christians should share with needy saints even as they provide for their own needs (v. 13). In the body of Christ, Christians are members one of another. The relationship is so intimate that when one suffers, the other members suffer also. They should pursue hospitality at all times. In Paul's

What should characterize one's attitude towards himself? _____

What should characterize one's actions which affect others? _____

(humility, love)

Love must be expressed in _____, meeting the needs of others.

What is the source of love? _____

(deeds, the indwelling Spirit)

Romans 12:10 teaches Christians are to love their _____ in the faith as though they were their blood _____.

"In honour preferring one another" means to consider _____ or esteem more _____ the other person.

(brethren, brethren, better, highly)

day, many Christians were banished and persecuted. The more fortunate Roman Christians should not have needed coercion but should have sought opportunities to exercise hospitality.

The relation of the Christian is not to be limited to other Christians of the fellowship. He is to bless (speak well of) those who bring misery to his life (v.14). Paul may have had in mind the suffering and loss in Rome brought about by official persecution under Claudius. The instruction to bless the persecutor instead of curse him recalls the words of Jesus (Matt. 5:44).

It may be easier to have compassion for those in need than to rejoice with those who experience good fortune. The genuine affection of a family enables its members to rejoice when honours and good fortune come. Likewise, when sorrow comes to one member of a family, all share the sorrow. The Church should have the kind of relationship in which the joy and sorrow which come to one will result in joy and sorrow for all (v.15).

Again Paul warned against pride (v.16). He instructed the Christians to be attracted to the lowly things and allow themselves to be guided by them in the determination of their conduct. Instead of the pastor demonstrating his superiority as leader, he should be attracted in attitude towards the most indigent and lowly members of the Church. Christians are not to set their minds on lofty things or positions, but they are to be borne away from these by sympathy for the humble and needy.

The Christian is not to return evil for evil (v. 17—cf. Matt. 5:39). Rather he should take thought beforehand of what is noble in order that his actions will be controlled not by a spirit of revenge but by a spirit of what is right. If others will allow him, he should live at peace with all men (v.18). The actions which proceed from the Christian should lead to peace and not agitation and strife.

Man is not to take vengeance into his own hands for that is the prerogative of God (v.19). "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense;... for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut. 32:35). The Christian is to follow the opposite action of helping his enemy rather than hurting him (v.20). Bruce suggests that the original force of the admonition may have been, "Treat your enemy kindly, for that will increase his guilt; you will thus ensure for him a more terrible judgement, and for yourself a better reward—from God."¹ Paul changed the statement

¹F. F. Bruce, Romans, p.230.

Romans 12:16 teaches Christians should avoid _____ by being sympathetic towards the _____ and _____, rather than setting their minds on _____ things or positions.

(pride, humble, needy, lofty)

Romans 12:20 teaches the Christian is to _____ his enemy rather than to _____ him.

(help, hurt)

slightly to mean that if one treats his enemy kindly, he will make him ashamed which will lead to his repentance. By so doing, a person gets rid of an enemy by turning him into a friend: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (v. 21).

Practical Applications of the Spiritual Life

Galatians 6:1-10

Helping others in need (6:1-6)

Paul had stated the basic principle of Christian conduct: the Holy Spirit in control of the life of the convert will produce fruit. The specific application of Christian love in relation to a brother who has fallen into sin is not to criticize and condemn but to help (v. 1). To walk in the Spirit means to restore the fallen. If a man is caught in the act of wrongdoing, his life needs to be mended (restored). This can be done only by one who himself is controlled by the Spirit, for he recognizes that he too would be guilty of doing wrong if the carnal nature regained control of his life. Since he recognizes his own danger of falling into sin, he does not feel superior and, therefore, expresses a spirit of meekness or gentleness.

The person who feels superior to the fallen Christian will likely criticize him rather than help him return to the straight path. He should be on guard himself, because he will be tempted and will probably fall into sin also.

Some Christians carry heavy burdens and need the understanding and support of other Christians (v. 2). When a Christian appears to be doing wrong, others who tend to judge may not understand the circumstances of that person unless they have been sharing the load of his burden. To share with those in spiritual need—assist them when they are burdened—is to fulfil the law of Christ (v. 2). The law of Christ is the law of love (cf. Rom. 13:8). A person needs more than sympathy when trouble comes. He may be pressed down under the burden of wrongdoing, fear, anxiety, weariness, and physical ailment. Many of these burdens will not be detected except by the very sensitive Christian. If a person is left to bear a heavy burden alone, he may fall into sin. This is often the case of the alcoholic. Genuine love, the law of Christ, is expressed by the sensitive Christian who extends a helping hand before the brother, who is struggling under a burden, falls.

Paul wrote the Romans not to think of themselves more highly than they ought. He warned the Galatians that "if a man think himself to be some-

Paul taught that if one is kind to his _____, he will make his enemy _____ and will lead to his _____.
(enemy, ashamed, repentance)

Galatians 6:1 says that one who walks in the Spirit will restore a _____ who has _____ into _____.
(brother, fallen, sin)

Galatians 6:2 teaches that a spiritual Christian will help those in spiritual need who carry heavy _____.
(burdens)

thing, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (v.3). A person who thinks highly of himself is likely to neglect burden-sharing. His feeling of self-importance may cause him to think he is superior to the frail and weak brother who bears burdens or he is too busy to have time to help others. In either case, he is in error. The day will come when he will be in need of help from someone much more important than himself, even God.

Paul suggested that each person should measure his conduct and achievement in the light of his own situation and not in comparison to others (v.4). Frequently, a man compares his achievement with those who have had less opportunity. The result is an exaggeration of one's own work and a depreciating of that of another. When one evaluates his accomplishments in the light of his potential, he discovers that he always comes short.

Verse 5 appears to contradict Paul's statement in verse 2. Perhaps Paul meant in verse 2 that a man should help the burdened because of love. Nevertheless, every man has a responsibility in life to which he must face up. He should not shirk his duty by shifting the responsibility of life's ordinary pursuits to others. One who is not willing to carry his own responsibilities or burdens overloads others on whom he places his burdens. If he carries his share of the load, he can expect Christian friends to assist him with the extra burdens.

Religious instruction was very important in the early Church (v.6). Some teachers spent so much time in instruction that provision needed to be made for their support. Those who are taught the Word (the Gospel) should share in the support of those who teach. Jesus stated "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). The true pastor-teacher does not preach or teach for money; however, if he devotes all of his time to teaching and ministering, he is unable to support himself. Congregations do not think in terms of "hiring a preacher" but of "sharing in his support" to enable him to devote more time to teaching and ministering.

Instruction from the harvest (6:7-10)

Paul commanded the Galatians to "stop being deceived" (v.7). Paul may have been rebuking the Galatians for their stinginess in supporting their teachers mentioned in verse 6. His application of the great spiritual principle he introduced, however, is broader than the matter of supporting teachers. He warned that a man cannot disregard God and His commands without paying the consequences: "God is not mocked" (v.7). Man cannot escape the consequences of ignoring God who is his Creator and has a right to make demands of his life. "For

One who thinks too highly of himself is likely to neglect _____ - _____ because he considers himself _____ or too _____ to help.

(burden-sharing, superior, busy)

While Galatians 6:2 teaches one should help the _____ because of _____, Galatians 6:5 also teaches every man has his own _____ which he should not _____.

(burdened, love, responsibility, shirk)

Paul's immediate teaching concerning reaping what one sows may have been a rebuke of the _____ for their _____ in supporting their teachers. Paul's broader teaching was that man cannot disregard _____ and His _____ without paying the _____.

(Galatians, stinginess, God, commands, consequences)

whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" is a reference to judgement in which every man must give account of himself to God. The more immediate reference may be to this present life in which man's personality and character conform to his actions—evil actions result in a distorted character. If a person spends his time disregarding others or sowing contempt among others, the day will come when he becomes the victim of contempt.

Paul explained that if a man lives according to the desires of his flesh, he will eventually reap the rewards of corruption and condemnation (v. 8). The life of flesh disregards one's need of God and his responsibility to God while focusing on matters of self-interest. The day will come when God's mercy is no longer available to the guilty sinner. On the other hand, "he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (v. 8). The person who is sincere about pleasing God and living a righteous life will heed seriously what Paul taught concerning the indwelling Spirit. He will seek to have the Holy Spirit control his life which will result in righteous acts and everlasting life.

The person who sows to the Spirit will "not be weary in well doing" (v. 9). Well-doing means to help anyone who is in need of anything whether the need is physical or spiritual. It takes no effort to do nothing about the needs of others, and many prefer "no-doing" to "well-doing". There is the possibility of a person becoming weary in well-doing. He who is consistent in well-doing will not be disappointed, for eventually (in due season) he shall reap the harvest of his efforts. Sometimes, the fruit of the harvest is not ready until eternity. At other times, a person reaps in this life some of the fruit of his labour. The abundant harvest belongs to those who do not lose heart.

The season of sowing is the time to do good unto all men (v. 10). Paul had already mentioned a number of good things to do: (1) the restoration of a fallen brother; (2) the bearing of one another's burdens; (3) the sharing of material possessions with teachers; and (4) performing untiring service. Whenever an opportunity of kindness, beneficence, or mercy arises, Paul exhorted the Galatians to take advantage of it by doing good. He gave a special admonition to give attention to them who are of the household of faith. Christians are responsible for taking care of one another, just as members of a family are responsible for meeting the needs of one another. Parents take care of children during their infancy, and children are responsible to provide for their parents during their old age. The family circle is the first place to express Christian love. The Church composes a spiritual family and requires filial responsibility in meeting the needs of members.

Man's personality and character conform to his _____. One who sows contempt among others will reap _____ for himself.

(actions, contempt)

List the good things Paul had already mentioned which give evidence of sowing in the Spirit.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

In Galatians 6:10, Paul adds giving attention to those of the household of _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. How does Christian worship differ from Jewish worship? _____

2. What is required for acceptable worship? _____

3. What is the basic Christian virtue with regard to self and what is its basis? _____

4. What are the emphases on the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:4-8? _____

5. What determines the gift an individual will receive? _____

6. List the gifts and briefly describe each. _____

7. What is the nature and source of love? _____

8. Explain the meaning of Romans 12:10. _____

9. Explain Romans 12:16. _____

10. What was Paul's meaning in Romans 12:20? _____
- _____
11. According to Galatians 6:1-2, in what ways should a spiritual Christian help his brother? _____
- _____
- _____
12. Why does a person who thinks highly of himself fail to help others? _____
- _____
- _____
13. Explain Galatians 6:5. _____
- _____
- _____
14. Give Paul's immediate and more general references to the spiritual principle of reaping what one sows in the flesh. _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
15. What are the activities which Paul mentioned that give evidence of sowing in the Spirit? _____
- _____
- _____

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

1. Read pages 106-111 in The Epistle to the Romans by Hunter.
2. Explain Paul's understanding of Christian ethics.
3. Explain Romans 12:18.
4. Interpret Galatians 6:2, 5.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Read pages 225-230 in The Epistle of Paul to the Romans by Bruce and pages 40-41 in Galatians to Colossians by Hunter.
2. Explain Romans 12:1-2.

3. List the parallel teachings in Romans 12:3-21 and the Sermon on the Mount.
4. Give the original meaning and Paul's adapted meaning of Romans 12:20.
5. Interpret Galatians 6:2, 5.

Seminar Discussion

1. What is Paul's concept of the source of motivation and basic nature of Christian conduct?
2. What are some practical ways of putting Romans 12:10 into practice?
3. What teachings of Jesus did Paul parallel in Romans 12?
4. Does verse 5 of Galatians 6 contradict verse 2 of the same chapter?
5. What was Paul's principle of the harvest, and what are specific applications of it in your society?