



### Introduction

So how is your vision? Remember to look at the instructions in Romans 12 "in view of God's mercy". As we continue on in Romans 12, we don't want to get caught up in a list of rules. We want to be affected by mercy and grace so that Godly living naturally flows out of us. Paul is simply giving us instruction of what Godly living looks like.

As I have talked with many in this memorization project, a common theme keeps running in our conversation. The idea is that this passage is so rich for Christian living, so rich in understanding and so rich in instruction. What a blessing to hide it in our hearts? It has wealth untold for us!

Recently someone shared an old hymn with me that I had never heard or seen before. The words of "*Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart*" struck me deeply and I have been reading them often. One of the verses describes not asking for all kinds of supernatural occurrences but simply to "take the dimness of my soul away." George Croly wrote the words to this old hymn back in 1854. Although a loving follower of Jesus, he felt he had a dimness of soul. I can relate.

I know that as I live my life for Christ in this world, my soul (mind, will and emotions) can get dim. A worldly cloud can settle around my eyes, causing my vision to grow dim as I sometimes find myself walking and thinking in paths where the light doesn't shine brightly. Maybe you can relate too! I believe we all experience a dimness of soul in our Christian walk from time to time. I wonder if God showed George Croly Romans 12 in answer to his prayer. These God breathed words in this chapter can certainly take the dimness of our soul away as we step into the light of their Truth. I am so thankful for them and so thankful that God is giving us the opportunity to hide them in our hearts. With that said, let's walk into the light of verses 9-10.

### Looking at the Verses

There are five power packed rays of light in verses 9-10. Take a look at the different versions and see if you can list all five.

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.* (NIV)

*Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.* (Message)

*Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.* (NLT)

*Let your love be sincere (a real thing); hate what is evil [loathe all ungodliness, turn in horror from wickedness], but hold fast to that which is good. Love one another with brotherly affection [as members of one family], giving precedence and showing honor to one another.* (Amplified)

Let's look at these things one by one:

### Love must be sincere

It is so easy for our expressions to one another in the body of Christ to be phony. We can often respond out of Christian expectation and yet God is never pleased with just our actions, He wants our heart to be involved as well. If we treat people as we know we should but inwardly think differently about them, then our soul has become dim. God knows that sincere love, non pretending love, is best. I believe when Paul says, "Love must be sincere," he is saying if love isn't sincere, it really isn't love. It might be manners, it might be show, it might be church correct behavior, but it isn't love. Perhaps that is why he uses the word "must". The original word for sincere means non-hypocritical. God calls us to love, but to love in a way that is real to the core, from the heart and attached to the love and mercy shown to us by God. O Lord, take the dimness of my soul away so I can love!

### Hate evil

How do you personally determine if something is evil? It is really important to know because God says "hate evil." Those are very strong words so there is no room for dim vision here. We better be able to call evil clearly! So how do you do it? God's Word has to be our standard. In our world of relativism, our vision will definitely be dim in this area if we are not checking our environment, experiences and thoughts against the standards of God's Word. God's Word defines evil for us and it doesn't just leave it in the realm of murderous criminals. Any behavior or thought or motive that doesn't meet the standard of God's holy nature is evil. Evil lurks in our presence and we have to learn to hate it. We can't flirt with it; it will always win if we do. God says hate it. When I hate something, I stay away from it and I don't want anything to do with it. O Lord, our souls have gotten so dim in this area, bring in your light so we can see!

### Cling to what is good

I love this wording here. The word cling gives such a strong picture. I picture a toddler clinging to his parent so much so that the parent literally has to peel him off as he is taken in to Sunday School. Is that how we cling to what is good? The idea is that we are to hold tightly to what is good, refusing to give up on it. The following question begs to be asked. How do you personally determine what is good? It is really important to know because God says "cling to what is good". We have to know what is good in order to cling to it. Lots of things can look good on the surface, but we can easily be deceived. I am so glad that I don't have to figure out what is good and what is evil on my own. The all knowing, mighty, all seeing God has already told me what is good. He is very clear about it in His Word. Lord God, clear my vision so I can agree with You and cling tightly to what you love!

### Devote yourself to one another in brotherly love

What does it mean to devote yourself? The original word usage here has a strong connotation of family. There is the idea here that as believers, we are family, and our love should be the kind that brothers share; the kind of love that is devoted to one another no matter what. There is a sense of tender commitment to one another. O Lord, shine brightly in our hearts so that we can view each person in Your body as brothers and sisters in the Lord!

### Honor one another above yourself

When we honor someone we esteem them, we exalt them, we pay tribute to them. This part of verse 10 connects to verse 3. Do you see the similarities? Remember selfish living is the pattern of the world. Perhaps this was a message for the people of Paul's day, but it is certainly one for us as well in our self-centered culture. We can't let that selfish cloud settle around us. Honor should be our purposeful aim. Christ set the example for us. O Lord, help me to view others as you do, to lift them up above myself!

### And So...

What motivated Paul to write these statements? We know the Holy Spirit moved his hand as he wrote, but I imagine there were some things going on in the church which prompted his comments. Do you think they are also needed in our present day? As I have memorized them, I personally sense their timeliness for God's people today.

When I was a young girl I wore glasses. Too busy to be distracted by the need to clean them, my mom would literally take them off my face and say, "How can you see out of these things?" They were so dirty! She would wash them for me and return them and I was always amazed at all I could see. So often we are distracted by life and we don't see as the Spirit would desire us to see. Verses 9-10 are like a good washing for our vision that often gets dim in the world. Let this passage restore your vision!

### Consider:

Is your expression of love for others in Christ's body sincere?

Do you know what God hates? Are you hating it too? How might you be flirting with evil? How do you show you hate evil?

Do you know what God calls as "good"? Are you clinging to it? How are you doing that?

How are your relationships in "God's Family"? Are you devoted? Are you honoring? How do you express devotion and honor?

Are you viewing all of these instructions "in view of God's mercy"?

### Pray

**"O Lord, take the dimness of my soul away. Help me to love as You love. Give me the courage to love what You love and hate what You hate. Shine brightly in my soul!"**