

# Romans 12:9-21

1. Love must be sincere
2. Hate what is evil
3. Cling to what is good
4. Be devoted to one another
5. Honor one another above yourself
6. Never be lacking in zeal; keep spiritual fervor serving the Lord
7. Be joyful in hope
8. Be patient in affliction
9. Be faithful in prayer
10. Share with God's people in need
11. Practice hospitality
12. Bless those who persecute you
13. Bless and do not curse
14. Rejoice with those who rejoice
15. Mourn with those who mourn
16. Live in harmony with one another
17. Do not be proud
18. Be willing to associate with people of low position
19. Do not be conceited
20. Do not repay anyone evil for evil
21. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody
22. Live at peace with everyone
23. Do not take revenge
24. Leave room for God's wrath
25. Do not be overcome by evil; overcome evil with good.

- This is all part of being “transformed” so we “will be able to test and approve what God's will is” as in Romans 12:2.
- 12:9-13 address how to interact with other believers.
- 12:14-21 focuses on our attitude and behavior as demonstrated and perceived by unbelievers.
- This is a list of short commands with very little explanation or elaboration.
- There are missing verbs. The Greek has nine imperatives, yet English translations, such as NRSV, which try to capture Paul's Greek use 31 imperative verbs. So, many of these commands are verbless in the Greek.
- There have been several attempts to figure out how Paul was organizing his list or to present a sequential pattern of topics presented by Paul. None of the suggestions is overwhelming convincing. It seems to be a recitation of general Christian character.

## 12:9 - “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”

|          |           |             |               |          |          |              |          |         |
|----------|-----------|-------------|---------------|----------|----------|--------------|----------|---------|
| 3588 [e] | 26 [e]    | 505 [e]     | 655 [e]       | 3588 [e] | 4190 [e] | 2853 [e]     | 3588 [e] | 18 [e]  |
| hē       | agapē     | anypokritos | apostygountes | to       | ponēron  | kollōmenoi   | tō       | agathō  |
| 9 ἡ      | ἀγάπη     | ἀνυπόκριτος | ἀποστυγοῦντες | τὸ       | πονηρόν  | ; κολλώμενοι | τῷ       | ἀγαθῷ ; |
| [Let]    | love [be] | sincere     | Abhorring     | -        | evil     | cleaving to  | -        | good    |
| Art-NFS  | N-NFS     | Adj-NFS     | V-PPA-NMP     | Art-ANS  | Adj-ANS  | V-PPMP-NMP   | Art-DNS  | Adj-DNS |

- 12:9 clearly begins a new section after 12:3-8, but is part of the expansion of the introductory statements of renewing the mind and being transformed from 12:1-2.

- A point of clarification might be to realize that at this point in the letter Paul is exhorting, not providing descriptive, theological dialogue. Thus, he is speaking to motivate and direct the church, not to teach new material or concepts to the church. They should know these virtues already. Now, the church needs to be urged to do what they already know to be right.
- The literal Greek says “sincere love”.
- “Sincere” is from the Greek *anypokritos* which means “without hypocrisy”
  - Same word is used in 2 Cor. 6:6
  - And, for brotherly love in 1 Peter 1:22
  - For faith in 1 Timothy 1:5 and 2 Timothy 1:5;
  - For wisdom in James 3:17
- “Sincere Love” could be the heading and what follows a description of what sincere love would look like.
- Love that is not “sincere” is “fake” or a “pretense”.
- In Paul’s churches, as in churches today, there was a tendency for insincere or immature Christians to imitate the spiritual fruit of love.
- Today in the modern church this imitation love (or, love that is NOT sincere) has been replaced by the feminization of Christianity in the Western world.
- The imitation Christian love we see (and, are suppose to model) today is sentimental, emotional, soft, defenseless, vulnerable, non-judgmental, accepting, uncommitted. It is nomadic on a journey seeking truth and relationships.
- Love that is not sincere is powerless and a work of the flesh.
- Notice that in 1 Corinthians Paul’s chapter on love (ch. 13) follows his discussion of spiritual gifts as it does here in Romans 12 (12:9 follows 12:3-8 concerning spiritual gifts.)
- Love for others is the primary manifestation of the character of God. (1 John 4:19-21) But, because this is known as a basic Christian truth (or, measuring stick) many use a false show of love as a shortcut to apparent Christian character.
- The believer has already experienced “love” from God, now the believer is to live a life of love towards others as them imitate the Lord. (John 13:34; Colossians 3:12-14; Ephesians 5:1-2).
 

*“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

- Ephesians 4:30-5:1

The rest of 12:9 holds two exhortations from two participles which would seem to indicate that these two are necessary for “sincere love”:

#### “Hate what is evil”

- “Hate” means to “strongly abhor” and “hate exceedingly” from the Greek “apostugountes” (ΑΠΟΣΤΥΓΟΥΤΕΣ)
- The “apo” in “apostugountes” (or, ΑΠΟ in ΑΠΟΣΤΥΓΟΥΤΕΣ) makes the verb emphatic. This is the only place this word appears in the Greek NT. ΑΠΟΣΤΥΓΟΥΤΕΣ breakdown:
  - ΣΤΥΓΟΥΤΕΣ expresses a strong feeling of horror
  - ΑΠΟ- gives the word an intensive force
- Interestingly, hating evil or loving righteousness/purity, is compatible with sincere Christian love.
- In fact, if a believer’s love does not leave room (even demand) a hatred of evil then that love would NOT be sincere love.
- True love involves a deep rooted hatred of evil. (Think Ephesians 4:26, “in your anger do not sin”

#### “Cling to Good”

- Like the word “hate”, the verb “cling” (κολλάω or, *kollao*) is very strong and refers to an intimate union that is expected to be found in marriage.

- The verb “cling” (ΚΟΛΛΑΩ or, *kollao*) can mean “to glue” which again reflects the closest possible connection.
- “Cling” means more than “approve of what is good”. It means your love and your character are good. (“Good” as defined by God’s definition of “good” as in the first days of creation, etc.

Sincere Christian love can be identified as strongly abhorring evil while having a strong, intimate relationship with good.

## 12:10 - “Love one another with brotherly affection. Out do one another in showing honor.”

|          |                |          |             |               |          |          |             |                |
|----------|----------------|----------|-------------|---------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------------|
| 3588 [e] | 5360 [e]       | 1519 [e] | 240 [e]     | 5387 [e]      | 3588 [e] | 5092 [e] | 240 [e]     | 4285 [e]       |
| tē       | philadelphia   | eis      | allēlous    | philostorgoi  | tē       | timē     | allēlous    | proēgoumenoi   |
| 10 τῆ    | φιλαδελφία     | εἰς ,    | ἀλλήλους    | φιλόστοργοι ; | τῆ       | τιμῆ ,   | ἀλλήλους    | προηγούμενοι ; |
| with the | brotherly love | toward   | one another | devoted       | -        | in honor | one another | esteeming      |
| Art-DFS  | N-DFS          | Prep     | RecPro-AMP  | Adj-NMP       | Art-DFS  | N-DFS    | RecPro-AMP  | V-PPM/P-NMP    |

## 12:11 - “Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”

|          |              |          |          |          |            |               |          |          |               |
|----------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|------------|---------------|----------|----------|---------------|
| 3588 [e] | 4710 [e]     | 3361 [e] | 3636 [e] | 3588 [e] | 4151 [e]   | 2204 [e]      | 3588 [e] | 2962 [e] | 1398 [e]      |
| tē       | spoudē       | mē       | oknēroi  | tō       | pneumati   | zeontes       | tō       | Kyriō    | douleuontes   |
| 11 τῆ    | σπουδῆ ,     | μὴ       | ὀκνηροί  | τῷ       | πνεύματι , | ζέοντες ;     | τῷ       | Κυρίῳ    | δουλεύοντες . |
| -        | in diligence | not      | lagging  | -        | in spirit  | being fervent | the      | Lord     | servicing     |
| Art-DFS  | N-DFS        | Adv      | Adj-NMP  | Art-DNS  | N-DNS      | V-PPA-NMP     | Art-DMS  | N-DMS    | V-PPA-NMP     |

## 12:12 - “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”

|          |          |             |          |                |               |          |            |
|----------|----------|-------------|----------|----------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| 3588 [e] | 1680 [e] | 5463 [e]    | 3588 [e] | 2347 [e]       | 5278 [e]      | 3588 [e] | 4335 [e]   |
| tē       | elpidi   | chairontes  | tē       | thlipsei       | hypomenontes  | tē       | proseuchē  |
| 12 τῆ    | ἐλπίδι , | χαίροντες ; | τῆ       | θλίψει ,       | ὑπομένοντες ; | τῆ       | προσευχῆ , |
| -        | In hope  | rejoicing   | -        | in tribulation | being patient | -        | in prayer  |
| Art-DFS  | N-DFS    | V-PPA-NMP   | Art-DFS  | N-DFS          | V-PPA-NMP     | Art-DFS  | N-DFS      |

4342 [e]  
 proskarterountes  
 προσκατεροῦντες .  
 being constant  
 V-PPA-NMP

12:13 - “Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

|                |          |          |         |              |   |          |             |            |
|----------------|----------|----------|---------|--------------|---|----------|-------------|------------|
| 3588 [e]       | 5532 [e] | 3588 [e] | 40 [e]  | 2841 [e]     |   | 3588 [e] | 5381 [e]    | 1377 [e]   |
| tais           | chreiais | tōn      | hagiōn  | koinōnountes |   | tēn      | philoxenian | diōkontes  |
| <b>13</b> ταῖς | χρειαῖς  | τῶν      | ἁγίων   | κοινωνοῦντες | , | τὴν      | φιλοξενίαν  | διώκοντες  |
| to the         | needs    | of the   | saints  | Contributing |   | -        | hospitality | practicing |
| Art-DFP        | N-DFP    | Art-GMP  | Adj-GMP | V-PPA-NMP    |   | Art-AFS  | N-AFS       | V-PPA-NMP  |

12:14 - “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.”

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|---------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| 2127 [e]            | 3588 [e] | 1377 [e]    | 4771 [e] | 2127 [e]  | 2532 [e]  | 3361 [e] | 2672 [e]   |           |
| eulogeite           | tous     | diōkontas   | hymas    | eulogeite | kai       | mē       | katarasthe |           |
| <b>14</b> εὐλογεῖτε | τοὺς     | διώκοντας   | [ὑμᾶς]   | ;         | εὐλογεῖτε | καὶ      | μὴ         | καταρᾶσθε |
| Bless               | those    | persecuting | you      |           | bless     | and      | not        | curse     |
| V-PMA-2P            | Art-AMP  | V-PPA-AMP   | PPro-A2P |           | V-PMA-2P  | Conj     | Adv        | V-PMMP-2P |

12:15 - “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

|                   |          |                  |   |          |          |                |
|-------------------|----------|------------------|---|----------|----------|----------------|
| 5463 [e]          | 3326 [e] | 5463 [e]         |   | 2799 [e] | 3326 [e] | 2799 [e]       |
| chairein          | meta     | chairontōn       |   | klaiein  | meta     | klaiontōn      |
| <b>15</b> χαίρειν | μετὰ     | χαιρόντων        | , | κλαίειν  | μετὰ     | κλαιόντων      |
| To rejoice        | with     | rejoicing [ones] |   | to weep  | with     | weeping [ones] |
| V-PNA             | Prep     | V-PPA-GMP        |   | V-PNA    | Prep     | V-PPA-GMP      |

12:16 - “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.”

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|--------------|------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| 3588 [e]     | 846 [e]    | 1519 [e] | 240 [e]     | 5426 [e]    | 3361 [e] | 3588 [e]   | 5308 [e] | 5426 [e]    | 235 [e] |
| to           | auto       | eis      | allēlous    | phronountes | mē       | ta         | hypsēla  | phronountes | alla    |
| <b>16</b> τὸ | αὐτὸ       | εἰς      | ἀλλήλους    | φρονοῦντες  | , μὴ     | τὰ         | ὑψηλὰ    | φρονοῦντες  | , ἀλλὰ  |
| the          | same thing | toward   | one another | minding     | not      | the things | haughty  | minding     | but     |
| Art-ANS      | PPro-AN3S  | Prep     | RecPro-AMP  | V-PPA-NMP   | Adv      | Art-ANP    | Adj-ANP  | V-PPA-NMP   | Conj    |

|          |           |                 |          |            |           |          |             |
|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| 3588 [e] | 5011 [e]  | 4879 [e]        | 3361 [e] | 1096 [e]   | 5429 [e]  | 3844 [e] | 1438 [e]    |
| tois     | tapeinois | synaparagomenoi | mē       | ginesthe   | phronimoi | par'     | heautois    |
| τοῖς     | ταπεινοῖς | συναπαγόμενοι   | . μὴ     | γίνεσθε    | φρόνιμοι  | παρ'     | ἑαυτοῖς     |
| with the | lowly     | going along     | not      | be         | wise      | in       | yourselves  |
| Art-DMP  | Adj-DMP   | V-PPP-NMP       | Adv      | V-PMM/P-2P | Adj-NMP   | Prep     | RefPro-DM3P |

**12:17 - “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”**

|                  |          |         |          |             |                |                |          |          |
|------------------|----------|---------|----------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|
| 3367 [e]         | 2556 [e] | 473 [e] | 2556 [e] | 591 [e]     | 4306 [e]       | 2570 [e]       | 1799 [e] | 3956 [e] |
| mēdeni           | kakou    | anti    | kakou    | apodidontes | pronooumenoi   | kala           | enōpion  | pantōn   |
| <b>17</b> μηδενὶ | κακὸν    | ἀντὶ    | κακοῦ    | ἀποδιδόντες | , προνοοῦμενοι | καλὰ           | ἐνώπιον  | πάντων   |
| to no one        | evil     | for     | evil     | repaying    | providing      | right [things] | before   | all      |
| Adj-DMS          | Adj-ANS  | Prep    | Adj-GNS  | V-PPA-NMP   | V-PPM-NMP      | Adj-ANP        | Prep     | Adj-GMP  |

444 [e]  
anthrōpōn  
ἀνθρώπων .  
men  
N-GMP

**12:18 - “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”**

|              |          |          |          |          |          |          |           |                 |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1487 [e]     | 1415 [e] | 3588 [e] | 1537 [e] | 4771 [e] | 3326 [e] | 3956 [e] | 444 [e]   | 1514 [e]        |
| ei           | dynaton  | to       | ex       | hymōn    | meta     | pantōn   | anthrōpōn | eirēneuontes    |
| <b>18</b> εἰ | δυνατόν  | τὸ       | ἐξ       | ὑμῶν     | , μετὰ   | πάντων   | ἀνθρώπων  | εἰρηνεύοντες ;  |
| if           | possible | -        | of       | you      | with     | all      | men       | living at peace |
| Conj         | Adj-NNS  | Art-ANS  | Prep     | PPro-G2P | Prep     | Adj-GMP  | N-GMP     | V-PPA-NMP       |

**12:19 - “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ ”**

|              |             |             |            |         |          |          |          |          |                     |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| 3361 [e]     | 1438 [e]    | 1556 [e]    | 27 [e]     | 235 [e] | 1325 [e] | 5117 [e] | 3588 [e] | 3709 [e] | 1125 [e]            |
| mē           | heautous    | ekdikountes | agapētoi   | alla    | dote     | topon    | tē       | orgē     | gegraptai           |
| <b>19</b> μὴ | ἑαυτοὺς     | ἐκδικοῦντες | , ἀγαπητοί | , ἀλλὰ  | δοτε     | τόπον    | τῆ       | ὀργῆ     | ; γέγραπται         |
| Never        | yourselves  | avenging    | beloved    | but     | give     | place    | -        | to wrath | it has been written |
| Adv          | RefPro-AM3P | V-PPA-NMP   | Adj-VMP    | Conj    | V-AMA-2P | N-AMS    | Art-DFS  | N-DFS    | V-RIM/P-3S          |

|              |           |           |          |            |            |          |   |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|------------|----------|---|
| 1063 [e]     | 1473 [e]  | 1557 [e]  | 1473 [e] | 467 [e]    | 3004 [e]   | 2962 [e] |   |
| gar          | Emoi      | ekdikēsis | egō      | antapodōsō | legei      | Kyrios   |   |
| <b>γάρ</b> , | Ἐμοὶ      | ἐκδίκησις | . ἐγὼ    | ἀνταποδώσω | , λέγει    | Κύριος   | . |
| indeed       | Mine [is] | vengeance | I        | will repay | says [the] | Lord     |   |
| Conj         | PPro-D1S  | N-NFS     | PPro-N1S | V-FIA-1S   | V-PIA-3S   | N-NMS    |   |

**12:20 - “To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ ”**

|                 |          |               |          |          |          |          |           |          |                  |            |
|-----------------|----------|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------------|------------|
| 235 [e]         | 1437 [e] | 3983 [e]      | 3588 [e] | 2190 [e] | 4771 [e] | 5595 [e] | 846 [e]   | 1437 [e] | 1372 [e]         | 4222 [e]   |
| alla            | ean      | peina         | ho       | echthros | sou      | psōmize  | auton     | ean      | dipsa            | potize     |
| <b>20</b> ἀλλὰ  | ἐὰν      | πεινᾶ         | ὁ        | ἐχθρός   | σου      | , ψώμιζε | αὐτόν     | ; ἐὰν    | διψᾶ             | , πότιζε   |
| On the contrary | If       | should hunger | the      | enemy    | of you   | feed     | him       | if       | he should thirst | give drink |
| Conj            | Conj     | V-PSA-3S      | Art-NMS  | Adj-NMS  | PPro-G2S | V-PMA-2S | PPro-AM3S | Conj     | V-PSA-3S         | V-PMA-2S   |

|                |          |          |           |            |          |               |          |          |          |           |
|----------------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|---------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 846 [e]        | 3778 [e] | 1063 [e] | 4160 [e]  | 440 [e]    | 4442 [e] | 4987 [e]      | 1909 [e] | 3588 [e] | 2776 [e] | 846 [e]   |
| auton          | touto    | gar      | poiōn     | anthrakas  | pyros    | sōreuseis     | epi      | tēn      | kephalēn | autou     |
| <b>αὐτόν</b> ; | τοῦτο    | γὰρ      | ποιῶν     | , ἄνθρακας | πυρὸς    | σωρεύσεις     | ἐπὶ      | τὴν      | κεφαλὴν  | αὐτοῦ     |
| him            | this     | for      | doing     | coals      | of fire  | you will heap | upon     | the      | head     | of him    |
| PPro-AM3S      | DPro-ANS | Conj     | V-PPA-NMS | N-AMP      | N-GNS    | V-FIA-2S      | Prep     | Art-AFS  | N-AFS    | PPro-GM3S |

**12:21- “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”**

|    |          |             |          |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |          |         |   |
|----|----------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|---|
|    | 3361 [e] | 3528 [e]    | 5259 [e] | 3588 [e] | 2556 [e] | 235 [e] | 3528 [e] | 1722 [e] | 3588 [e] | 18 [e]  | 3588 [e] | 2556 [e] |         |   |
|    | mē       | nikō        | hypo     | tou      | kakou    | alla    | nika     | en       | tō       | agathō  | to       | kakon    |         |   |
| 21 | μὴ       | νικῶ        | ὑπὸ      | τοῦ      | κακοῦ    | ,       | ἀλλὰ     | νίκα     | ἐν       | τῷ      | ἀγαθῷ    | τὸ       | κακόν   | . |
|    | not      | be overcome | by       | -        | evil     |         | but      | overcome | with     | -       | good     | -        | evil    |   |
|    | Adv      | V-PMM/P-2S  | Prep     | Art-GNS  | Adj-GNS  |         | Conj     | V-PMA-2S | Prep     | Art-DNS | Adj-DNS  | Art-ANS  | Adj-ANS |   |