

Romans 12b

9 Just as in 1 Co 12 Paul followed the gifts with the love chapter, here he follows the gifts with an exhortation to love. I think one was read while writing the other - Possibly 1 Corinthians first during his third missionary journey while in Ephesus but Romans was written in 57AD. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, sounds like the second half of this verse. Here Paul begins a series of admonitions, advice to help us stay on track.

If love is a show - everyone will know! Unless it is sincere, willing to pay the price, it has no value and is only self-love trying to pretend concern. Hating evil is aligning your heart with God's heart. Evil destroys life and circumvents the good plans God has for us. Don't just not like it = HATE IT!

Cling to what is good. Hold fast your faith, love, hope. Hold on to sound doctrine. Don't let it slip from your grasp. That is a continual effort required on our part. If you relax you will roll backwards. It demands a continual uphill climb toward Christ-likeness enabled by faith, possible by grace.

10 1Pt 1:22 This is possibly the hardest part of Christianity. Loving those who stab you in the back, and take your years of sacrifice as less than nothing. This is the command of Jesus, to love one another in real devotion. How? By keeping the first command of loving God with all, we are enabled with his love to love the unlovely. Hurting people hurt people. Put others first and God will bless you. Phil 2:3 consider others better than yourself.

11 Yes! Don't let the flame go out on the altar! A priest was to guard it day and night because it was lit by God. Guard the flame. Have a spiritual soul partner that can confront and challenge you. Grow together. Stoke each other's fire. 2Tim 1:6,7 Zeal without knowledge is harmful. Zeal is a useful tool of knowledge. True knowledge should inspire zeal. Of all people on the planet, we should be the most zealous, for we have Truth!

12 Our joy is not the current circumstances but the hope of what God is bringing us to. Patience is not really needed unless there is affliction. If we aren't patient we have to learn it by affliction. It is stretched and exercised by greater affliction. Faithful (devoted) in prayer -Col 4:2 to consistently be obedient to take the time as the Spirit leads us, and pray as He leads. There are so many needs around us and the answer is there in heaven waiting for us to pray it down.

13 God has provided extra in our life so we can help those who have a need so that we both may be blessed. Hospitality is a requirement of elders. Inns were dirty morally and physically and travelling saints needed shelter from the elements and the world.

14 What a contrast to the world! When people are angry and rude with us, we are to be a light to help them out of darkness by not answering in kind, but by being different, blessing instead, asking what is wrong and how we can help. This is not

to be a wimpy yielding but a more powerful display of the fruit of the Spirit. Their loss of control and lack of self-discipline is made obvious by your 'controlled by the Spirit' demeanor.

15 Understanding sympathy that feels with the rest of the body. Sometimes the best help you can be to a grieving person is to cry with them. Just to know that someone cares will be the greatest help. It costs a great deal to do this but it is a display of love. Sometimes rejoicing is just as hard because we selfishly wish we received the same reason for rejoicing. Do you feel your brothers heart? Dare to!

16 Live harmoniously with one another. Phil 2:2, 4:2 We will always have clashing personalities and styles. This is for our good to bring about the fullness of the difference in the body. Thank God for differing personalities that each have a role. Don't get down on them, celebrate them. Pride keeps you from harmony. Harmony is differences that blend to make a more beautiful whole- BLEND. Don't consider class or style differences. Every soul is a part of the body and just as important. conceited = know it all in the Living Version. Know you can learn from any individual as Jesus reveals Himself to each of us.

17 If you want a heavenly reward sow the fruits of the Spirit even to those who attack you, take from you, slander you. It is more powerful, it will win in the end, and you will be eternally rewarded. "Right in the eyes of everybody" is a tough calling, but it is an attempt not to offend so you can win them. In obeying the gospel you will offend but then in actuality they are offended by the word not your personality.

18 Give up your freedoms to be at peace. If the lack of peace is a reason outside you, there may be nothing you can do about it, other than to pray and ask God to make the changes to bring peace.

19 We often want to get even- that is the carnal nature, as if we could deal justice. Leave it to God to handle the way He wills.

20 A quote from Proverbs 25:21,22 I think it means you will cause his conscience to trouble him. He will be convicted. His mind will burn. To feed an enemy meant to make a short term truce. One tradition is that if you eat together you cannot fight that day. The Lord will fight against those who fight the ones who fed them. Another is that breaking bread entered you into a salt covenant - a life time commitment to honor and protect each other.

21 The basis of these admonitions is don't let the world change you, change the world around you! Do not conform - transform! As the Father has sent me - so send I you.