

## ***Align (3)- The Christian Life in Every Day Action***

*Romans 12: 9-21*

Still another area of serving the Lord as we align our lives with His, is LOVING even those who are difficult to love.

### **Love in Action**

*“<sup>9</sup> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. **(That could be a sermon right there)** <sup>10</sup> Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. <sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

*<sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do 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,” says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On 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.” <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Do you know what I have found? It is hard to give advice without seeming to assume superiority; and it is hard to take advice, unless the giver identifies himself with the receiver, and shows that his counsel to them, is also applied to himself.”*

Paul presents God’s people with succinct guidelines for ordinary, everyday life. I would like to look at them one by one. As we do, I want to highlight a few of them.

**(1) Love must be completely sincere.** It starts right out with this thought.

There must be no hypocrisy, no play-acting, no ulterior motive in our love for others. In fact, there is such a thing as **cupboard love**, which gives affection with one eye on what we might gain as a result. The term "**cupboard love**" is a British idiom, used most commonly in the United Kingdom, not so much in this country. It describes the selfish, greedy or insincere affection displayed towards another person in order to get what they want. Then there is real Christian love which is cleansed of self; it is a pure outpouring of the heart to others. When we speak of sincere love, we are looking at what the Word of God calls Christian love. Offering my love to someone without seeking for a return gain for myself, or, ulterior motive being involved. Simply and completely serving the Lord, and giving to others what I have found myself in Christ. We can offer this kind of love in a multitude of ways.

### **Illustration:**

*Bill Broadhurst was a great runner and he entered a 10k race in Omahu, a race that Bill Rodgers would win in less than 30 minutes. Bill Broadhurst had a handicap, he was paralyzed on his entire left side from an aneurism early in life. But he still loved to run and for him to be in the same race as his hero Bill Rodgers, was the greatest thing he could imagine.*

*As the race was run, Bill Broadhurst, as you can imagine, was some distance behind all the rest. By now, the banners had been taken down, the traffic had begun to flow on the roads, there was nothing left that would tell you that a race had been run.*

*Except one man Bill Broadhurst, who was still running the race. 2 hours before this time Bill Rodgers had finished the race and now Bill Broadhurst was nearing the place where the finish line was. A couple of kids on bikes road beside him and said "hey mister are you still running the race, it's been over for hours, someone's already finished first and won, why don't you quit, the race is over!"*

*Broadhurst replied, "**I can't, I have to make it to my hero at the end of the line**". And he kept on running.*

*As he approached the place where he knew the finish line would be, Bill Rodgers and about 30 other people stepped out from an alley, and they placed a banner up, and strung a ribbon across the road as Bill Broadhurst stumbled across the finish line. And there stood his hero, Bill Rodgers, who took off the First Place ribbon from his neck, and placed it around the neck of Broadhurst, and he said, "you're a winner..."*

With this kind of sincere love, the Lord looks at every one of His children, as they run their best, and says, "**You are a winner.**" Run this race for life with sincere love in your hearts.

## **(2) We must hate what is evil and cling to what is good.**

It has been said, that **our one security against sin, lies in our being shocked by it.** It is my opinion that the world has been trying to remove the shock of sin, and cause us to see it as normal and acceptable. It was Carlyle who said, "**We need is to see the infinite beauty of holiness, and the infinite destruction of sin.**"

Paul's words are strong words to emphasize the fact that, "**no virtue is safe which is not held as passionate.**" His children are called to hate evil and love good. Regarding one thing we must be clear--**what many people hate is not evil, but the consequences of evil.** Please listen and try to comprehend this thought: **No man is really a good man, when he is good simply because he fears the consequences of being bad.** We are **not** called by the Lord to simply fear the consequences of dishonor, **but to love the Lord passionately by following God and thus doing good.** That is the way to real goodness.

Our world is living in a place where many are actually holding up dishonor, evil, sin and calling it a badge of honor. Lord, help us, as we strive to "**Align our lives with yours Lord,**" so that we do not allow the world to dictate to us which way we live, thus allowing worldly living as being acceptable when the Word directs us in another path. We are called to **hate what is evil and cling to what is good.** Not just when it is easy and convenient. Because we love God so much, we are compelled to follow Him and do good.

### **Illustration:**

*We're obsessed with our phones today, as a new study has found. The heaviest smartphone users click, tap or swipe on their phone 5,427 times a day, according to researchers. That is of*

course, the top 10 percent of phone users, so one would expect it to be excessive. However, the rest of us still touch that addictive device 2,617 times a day on average. No small number.

The research firm, which specializes in consumer reactions to products, recruited 94 Android device users, and installed special software on their smartphones. The tool tracked each user's "interaction" over five days, all day, the company says in a blog post on its website. **"And by every interaction, we mean every tap, type, swipe and click. We're calling them touches,"** it explains. Averaging out the numbers, the aforementioned figures mean the heaviest users are touching their devices, a couple of million times in one year.

Probably the most interesting thing in all this was, that the people surveyed completely underestimated their phone touching. While they were initially shocked by the numbers, 41 percent said **"it probably won't change the way I use my phone."**

Since we are talking about hating evil and clinging to good, and we know how much we use our phones, may I ask, *How many taps, types, swipes and clicks take place between you and God in a day? If the number of times you were in contact with God, on a daily basis, could be tracked, would we be shocked by the result?* One way or the other? Would it be because of how often, or, how infrequently we reached out to Him? **"Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded"** (James 4:8). How can we cling to God, the good, without staying in-touch with Him regularly. Hate evil, Cling to good, our God.

### **(3) We must be affectionate to one another in brotherly love.**

The word Paul uses for affectionate is **"philostorgos,"** and **"storge"** which is the Greek for family love. We must love each other, because we are members of one family. We are not strangers to each other, within the Christian Church; much less are we to be isolated units; we are brothers and sisters, because we have the one father, one God, whom we all worship. We are His children, and Brothers & Sister in Christ. That is a term seldom used in this world today. I think that has weakened our relationships with each other. It may sound "old fashioned," but I still speak of my earthly brother or sister as, my brother or sister, why not within our church family? Why have we allowed our communication with those we love the most to be weakened due to worldly influence? ***I think with that title, comes a priority in honor.***

More than half the trouble that arises in Churches concerns rights, privileges and prestige. Someone has not been given his or her place; someone has been neglected or un-thanked, someone may feel as though they are not as important, yet, we are to be brothers and sisters in Christ, one FAMILY. The mark of the truly Christian man or woman has always been humility. One of the humblest of men was that great saint and scholar Principal Cairns.

#### **Illustration:**

***Someone once recollected an incident which showed Cairns as he was. He was a member of a platform party at a great gathering. As he appeared there was a tremendous burst of***

**applause. Cairns stood back to let the man next to him pass, and began to applaud himself; he never dreamed that the applause was for him.** It is not easy to give each other priority in honor. There is enough of the natural man in most of us, that we like to get our rights; but the Christian man or woman has no rights--he has only duties.

Some of the other points Paul offers us are:

- ***We are to rejoice in hope.***
- ***We are to meet tribulation with triumphant fortitude.***
- ***We are to share with those in need.***
- ***Then, the Christian is to be given to hospitality.***

Over and over again the New Testament, God's Word, insists on the duty of the open door as part of being His child, (*Hebrews 13:2; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Peter 4:9*). That the child of God should take every opportunity to love someone by actions. Hospitality thus means offering them our service when needed.

Tyndale used a magnificent word when he translated this, saying that the Christian should have a "harborous" disposition. He meant, a welcoming, loving, hospitable home, or location to share with others. ***A home can never be happy when it is selfish.*** Christianity involves a relationship with God, in such a way through Christ, to provide an open hand, open heart, and the open door, which God has given to us, so that we might give unto others, generously. That's part of being our church family, and should be a part of whatever we do, with whatever we have.

Wow, I don't think I have even scratched the surface of what Paul offers us in this passage. Please go read it for yourselves when you have time. Lord speak to your children.

***As we Align ourselves with the Lord, our everyday actions have to include LOVE!***

**Closing Prayer:**