

**Prayer:**

**Slide # 1**

**Romans**

**Theme:** The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

**Outline:**

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39  
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20  
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21  
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical: 12:1-15:33** (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

Romans hammers home that we are justified by FAITH ALONE. We acquire the righteousness of God on the basis of FAITH ALONE.

**Slide # 2**

**Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for **everyone who believes**, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

**17** For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed **from faith to faith**; as it is written, “**The just shall live by faith.**”

God’s working in our lives to bring us to the point of salvation is summarized by Paul in Romans 12:1 as “***the mercies of God***”. This is the compassionate kindnesses of God that has resulted in our salvation. So the great question is this: ***How shall we then live?***

**Slide # 3**

**Rom. 1 – 11 “The mercies of God” → salvation**

***How shall we then live?***

Rom. 12:1-2 “a living sacrifice”

Rom. 12:3-8 body life/gift use - oriented in HUMILITY

Rom. 12:9-21 LOVE

Paul in Romans 12 further clarifies what a transformed life brought about by a renewed mind looks like. It looks like humility. It looks like commitment to body life; it looks like responsible/proper gift use. It looks like a multifaceted life of love as Paul now explains in verses 9-21.

In Romans 12:9-21 Paul gives 21 rapid fire exhortations. This is a rapid “slide show” of what characterizes the life of being a living sacrifice. This is what it looks like in terms of Christian attitudes and actions which are interwoven throughout.

We are to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice but then the reality of this is lived out in the context of the relationships of life. Life is largely about relationships! Paul begins by addressing the relationships of body life as we have noted in 12:3-8, and he now builds on this. There is overlap but in general we could break Paul’s exhortations down like this:

**Slide # 4*****Romans 12:9-21***

- v. 9 – Personal responsibilities
- vv. 10-13 Family of God responsibilities
- vv. 14-16 Responsibilities to others
- vv. 17-21 Responsibilities toward enemies

**Romans 12:9–16 (NKJV)**

**9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.**

In his rapid fire of 21 exhortations on Christian living **Paul begins with love**. The word “**love**” is the Greek word “**agape**” which is the intense word for love that most often denotes God’s kind of love. This kind of love seeks the other person’s highest good. It is based on the will – not emotions. It gives of itself sacrificially.

In addressing Christian living and the relationships of life it is appropriate to start here with agape love. The fruit of the Spirit starts with this love (Gal. 5:22).

LOVE is the fountainhead of all Christian living – the fountainhead of all other Christian graces that are to be lived out in our lives. It is the ruling priority of Christian living.

Love is the identifying mark of authentic faith. Galatians 5:6 says that faith works through love. 1 John 4:8 says, “**He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**” And not only is it the great identifying mark of the true Christian it is a compelling apologetic for the truth of Christianity.

### **Slide # 5**

#### **John 13:34–35 (NKJV)**

**34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

**35** **By this all will know that you are My disciples**, if you have love for one another.”

Note Paul says that our love is to be **without hypocrisy**. Most professing Christians know that we are to love, but Paul emphasizes that it must be real and not just show. The word “hypocrite” comes from the theater as one who wears a mask and plays a part, as an actor would do in a play. Thus, hypocrisy means to be a pretender, to be insincere. In contrast, we are to be REAL in showing love to people.

God wants us to be REAL – not phony. Our Christian love is not to be about putting on a show, but rather is to be genuine (cf. 1 Jn. 3:18). It has been pointed out that love is the sum of virtue but that hypocrisy is the epitome of vice. Hypocritical love is the stuff of Judas that betrays with a kiss. Be loving, but be real in that love!

Commentators point out that all that follows this emphasis on LOVE is really a further development of the LOVE that is to define the life of being a living sacrifice. In Romans 5:5 Paul points out that subjectively the love of God has been poured out in our hearts and then objectively it has been demonstrated on the cross. And based on this the believer has assurance in Romans 8:35-39 that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now in the life of the believer love is to dominate all aspects of the life.

In close succession to LOVE Paul says, “**Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.**” True love hates evil. Love of God, love of His truth hates evil. Thus, proper love and proper hatred go together.

### **Slide # 6**

**Psalm 97:10 (NKJV)**

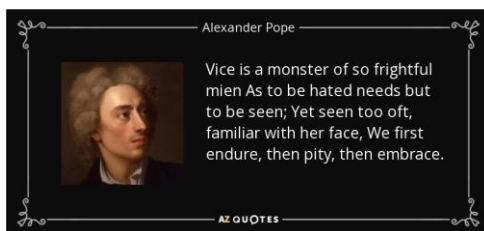
**10 You who love the LORD, hate evil!** He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

A holy love that hates sin is to define us. Biblical love doesn't just skate along with evil. No it hates evil.

The Christian is to both LOVE and HATE. We are to love people, but hate what is evil. To abhor evil means to hate it passionately, to loathe it. We are not to be passive towards evil. We are to have strong convictions. We are not talking about “grey matters” but rather black and white - right and wrong. When the Bible is CLEAR we are to take a CLEAR stand.

And we are to “**cling to what is good**”. Again, hating evil and clinging to what is good go together. The word “cling” can mean “**glued to**”. But we have to intentionally do this! We have to be active in our love/hate responsibilities.

### **Slide # 7**



We should cling to what is good like a drowning man holding onto a log. The whole Christian way is to be committed to what is right and good which at the same time means actively hating that which is evil.

### **Slide # 8**

THERE MUST COME WITH DECISION FOR TRUTH A  
CORRESPONDING PROTEST AGAINST ERROR.

– **Charles Spurgeon**

This rebukes every form of Christianity that seeks the shelter of neutrality and doesn't want to take any strong stand that might upset someone.

**When John MacArthur** was interviewed by Ben Shapiro, Ben asked him: *“Does it bother you that people are offended by what you say?”*  
**MacArthur responded:** *“No, I live to offend people. That’s the reason I’m here: to offend people who are living lies and deception, headed to hell, and don’t know the truth.”*

In Galatians 1:10 Paul said, ***“If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ.”*** If we faithfully cling to what is good and refuse to compromise, the world will surely hate us for it. This is our calling! We are not trying to offend people, we are not trying to be offensive just to be offensive, but rather seeking to stand uncompromisingly for what is good and right according to God’s word and standards.

Want to get in trouble with the world? – just hate what is evil and cling to what is good and you will be hated for it.

### **2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)**

**12** Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Yes, love genuinely, but at the same time passionately hate evil and cling to what is good. We constantly walk this line of loving properly and hating properly. To love right is to hate wrong! You can't have one without the other and yet we want to do so with the right spirit.

### **10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;**

Love constantly has this “one another” emphasis. Agape love involves others. It is other centered – not self-centered. But here the nuance is on family love and brother love in the context of the family of God. We as believers are a spiritual family. We are spiritual brothers and sisters. And as such there is a special family bond which is to be expressed in tender love.

In the Greek there are four different words for love. We often say that reading the Greek is like watching color television in contrast to merely seeing black and white. We have one word for love in English. I love my wife but I also love chocolate chip cookies.

**Slide # 9****LOVE in Greek****Agape** = self-sacrificial love**Philia** = brotherly love**Storge** = family affection**Eros** = romantic love (not in the NT)

In Romans 12:9-10 we have a form of all 3 words for love as found in the NT.

**Slide # 10**

v. 9 – love (**agape**)

v. 10 – kindly affectionate (**storge**)

-brotherly love (**philia**)

With the graciousness of family/brotherly love we are to in honor give preference to one another which is the opposite of a “me first” attitude. There is to be honor and respect – thinking of others before self (cf. Phil. 2:3-5). We are to affirm one another, show appreciation, and value one another. We should constantly communicate to each other, “You matter to me”.

**11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;**

**Lagging** is the idea of being lazy and **diligence** is the idea of earnestness or in haste. The basic idea is to be zealous. The BIG IDEA in this verse has to do with serving the Lord. So to not be lagging in diligence means to not be lazy in serving the Lord. It is the opposite of, “Okay, I suppose if I have to I will do it”. Rather it volunteers to serve willingly! The Bible often speaks against laziness (cf. Prov. 6:6-8; 10:4; 12:24; 18:9; Eccl. 9:10) and especially in reference to the Lord we should not be slack in zealously serving Him (cf. Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:23; Eph. 6:7).

**Slide # 11****Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)**

**23** And whatever you do, do it **heartily**, as to the Lord and not to men,

**“fervent in spirit”**. The word “fervent” (Gk. zeo) literally means to be hot or boiling. We talk about people being on fire for God. That is the idea here. The phrase **“in spirit”** could refer to the Holy Spirit or to our own spirit. But to be on fire in our spirit surely means the Holy Spirit is behind it, and yet we must also be intentional in this as well. We see this combination other places in Paul’s writings...

### **Slide # 12**

#### **Colossians 1:29 (NKJV)**

**29** To this end **I also labor, striving according to His working** which works in me mightily.

#### **2 Timothy 1:6 (NKJV)**

**6** Therefore I remind you **to stir up the gift of God which is in you** through the laying on of my hands.

Fervent in spirit means to serve with passion.

Apollos is described as serving in this way in Acts 18:25.

### **Slide # 13**

#### **Acts 18:25 (NKJV)**

**25** This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being **fervent in spirit**, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.

In the phrase **“serving the Lord”** the word **“serving”** (Gk. “douleuo”) is a form of the word that literally means **“slaving”**. More literally this is **“slaving for the Lord”**. The Lord bought us with His blood. We now literally belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20). In 1 Cor. 7:22 specifically states that our calling is that now we are “Christ’s slave”. Paul introduced the letter of Romans by literally saying, “Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus...” (Rom. 1:1). Our calling is to be that of “slaving away” for the Lord. We are here to serve His purposes.

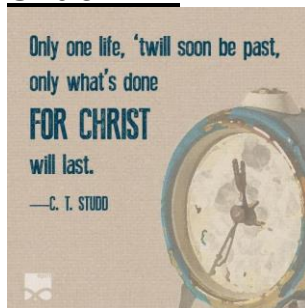
We are not to be lazy in serving but rather diligent and on fire as we slave away for the Lord. We are to be all in serving with passion and heart!

I am the kind of guy who hates to “inconvenience people,” and I hate to ask them to serve in a way that they don’t want to or puts them out.

But Paul is not afraid to be straight forward here telling us point blank to not be slack, to be on fire, and to slave away for the Lord. For Paul there was three priorities in life, 1) the Lord, 2) the Lord, and 3 the Lord! Paul said, “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” – “whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord” (Col. 3 :17, 23).

‘Tis not for man to trifle! Life is brief,  
 And sin is here.  
 Our age is but the falling of a leaf,  
 A dropping tear.  
 We have no time to sport away the hours,  
 All must be earnest in a world like ours.  
 - **Horatius Bonar**

### **Slide # 14**



### **12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;**

Hope in the NT refers to the certain expectation that the believer has regarding the future God has promised to us. Paul often ties HOPE to the coming resurrection (Acts 23:6; 24:15) as does Peter in 1 Pet. 1:3. In Titus 2:13 Paul calls the promise of the Lord’s return our blessed hope. In Romans 5:2 Paul ties hope to coming glory. In Romans 8 he ties it to the coming redemption of the body (8:24). In Col. 1:5 Paul speaks of our hope which is laid up in heaven.

Hope relates to the believer’s certain expectation based on the PROMISES of God. In short it refers to the GLORIOUS FUTURE of the believer including the rapture, the coming resurrection, a coming glorified body, the coming kingdom, and coming glory.

The future looks bright and we should be constantly be rejoicing in it. We have a future worth celebrating! THE BEST IS YET TO BE!



The phrase “***patient in tribulation***” is also translated as “***persevering in affliction***”. “Tribulation” (Gk. thlipsei) refers to distress, trouble, or pressure (cf. Rom. 8:35). Life constantly has its pressure points and we Christians are not exempt.

The Bible doesn’t promise us a smooth road but God does promise us GRACE to deal with hardships. In the midst of various afflictions our calling is to keep on keeping on looking to the Lord for the strength we need (Rom. 5:3). He proves Himself faithful and sufficient and He often uses the darkest times to do it. In the struggles of life there is a lot of hanging in there by the grace of God to the glory of God.

Greg Asimakoupoulos tells of a commuter flight from Portland, Maine, to Boston. The pilot, Henry Dempsey, heard an unusual noise near the rear of the small aircraft. He turned the controls over to his co-pilot and went back to investigate.

As he reached the tail section, the plane hit an air pocket, and Dempsey was tossed against the rear door. He quickly discovered the source of the mysterious noise. The rear door had not been properly latched prior to takeoff, and it flew open. He was instantly sucked out of the jet.

The co-pilot, seeing the red light that indicated an open door, radioed the nearest airport, requesting permission to make an emergency landing. He reported that the pilot had fallen out of the plane, and he requested a helicopter search of that area of the ocean.

After the plane landed, they found Henry Dempsey—holding onto the outdoor ladder of the aircraft. Somehow he had caught the ladder, held on for ten minutes as the plane flew 200 mph at an altitude of 4,000 feet, and then, at landing, kept his head from hitting the runway. It took airport personnel several minutes to pry Dempsey’s fingers from the ladder.

“Things in my life may feel turbulent,” said Asimakoupoulos, “and you may not feel like holding on. But have you considered the alternative?” (Greg Asimakoupoulos, “Holding On,” *Leadership Journal*, Summer 1991, p. 49, as cited in *Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes*)

At times the pressures of life might tempt us to want to give up. But that is not our calling. It’s not a spiritual option. By the grace of God, we are called to hang in there – to persevere.

Patient may give a wrong impression; Paul’s word denotes not a passive putting up with things but an active, steadfast endurance. And something like that is needed, for affliction denotes not some minor pinprick, but deep and serious trouble. – **Leon Morris**

In the midst of tribulation, we need to stay focused, we need to continue to rejoice in hope. For us “**our best life**” is not here or now but looks to the future beyond this life.

And then we need to be “**continuing steadfastly in prayer**”. Not only does our HOPE strengthen us in time of affliction but also prayer gets us through. We constantly need to be praying. We need to pray about everything. And we have an open invitation to cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7).

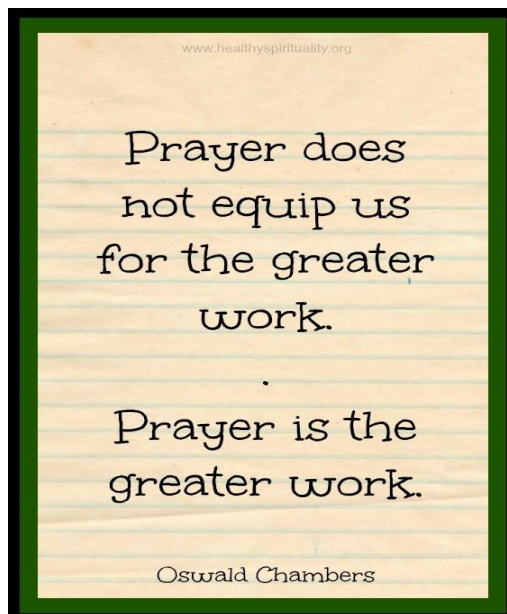
1 Thess. 5:17 says to, “pray without ceasing”. Eph. 6:18 says we should be “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit”.

It has been noted that Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach but He did teach them how to pray. Prayer is where the battle is fought! We win or lose in our walk on the issue of prayer. As Jesus was facing the cross He bathed what was coming in prayer (Matt. 26) and then when they came for Him He went forth with power and conquered sin, death, and the grave. Jesus is our great example in prayer.

Ten will attend Bible teaching, and one hundred Sunday preaching, to two or three who “in prayer steadfastly continue”: but you be of that two or three; for they will prevail, and to them Christ reveals Himself; and they become channels of blessing to countless others.

– **William Newell**

## Slide # 15



### **13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.**

As we have opportunity we are to do good to all, but “especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Gal. 6:10) Needs consistently arise in the context of God’s people and as we are able we should be willing to help. We are to be a caring, sharing, kind of people.

#### **Slide # 16**

##### **1 Timothy 6:18 (NKJV)**

**18** Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, **ready to give, willing to share,**

##### **Hebrews 13:16 (NKJV)**

**16** But do not forget to do good and **to share,** for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Notice however, it speaks in reference to “needs” not “wants”. There are always those who want to be “freeloaders”. Paul addressed them in 2 Thess. 3:10 saying, “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” So, the issue here is legitimate “needs”. In that case we should be willing and ready to do what we can to help out.

**“Given to hospitality”**. The word **“hospitality”** literally means “love for strangers”. In the early days of the church Christians traveling from one place to another often did not have a place to stay and the inns of the day could be dangerous places or places of ill repute. So entertaining fellow Christians passing through became a very important ministry. This ministry was so important that one of the qualifications for an elder is that he be a person given to “hospitality” (1 Tim. 3:2; cf. Lk. 14:12-14).

#### **Slide # 17**

##### **Hebrews 13:2 (NKJV)**

**2** **Do not forget to entertain strangers,** for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

Now we don’t have quite the same situation today, but we might start with just being friendly to visitors whom we don’t know. Many times people will say they visited a church and hardly anyone even said “Hi” to them. We should go out of our way to reach out to strangers, and then go from there. The least we can do is be KIND and FRIENDLY!

The word “**given**” is an intense word literally translated as “**pursuing**”. This same word is also sometimes translated as “persecute”. In persecuting someone they were purposely sought in seeking to do them harm. But the Christian is to purposely seek out people to be a blessing to them (cf. Gen. 18:1-6). So, the idea here is to purposely seek out people for the purpose of showing them hospitality. This is not just going by feelings but based on conviction and being Christlike.

In receiving and entertaining the traveler, those who opened their doors and their hearts were receiving and entertaining Christ (Matt. 10:40; 25:40). – **Expositors**

As with many things hospitality also came to be abused by some people and therefore the early Christians found it necessary to lay down some ground rules as seen in the writings of Didache which was a collection of instructions for Christians living in the post-apostolic days -meaning very early in the Church age right after the time of the apostles.

He will remain one day, and if it be necessary, a second; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. 11:6 And let the apostle when departing take nothing but bread until he arrive at his resting-place; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet. – **The Didache**

#### **14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.**

The normal way of the world is to bless those who bless you and to curse those who curse you. But Christianity turns this on its head.

Paul says as Christians, we are to bless those who persecute us, and then, just for emphasis, he says, “**Bless and do not curse**”.

This is not easy to do. Without God’s help, we can’t do it. This is the stuff of Holy Spirit-empowered supernatural living.

Bless and curse are opposites. Bless is the same word from which we get the word “eulogize”. It basically means “to praise” or “speak well of”. To bless is to wish some well or to speak well of them. To curse is to wish someone ill and to call for their detriment. To bless means to call upon God to bestow His kindness and blessing on them. To curse means to call down judgment upon them.

The word “persecute” literally means “to pursue” – in the sense of pursuing someone for harm. It can take various forms all the way from verbal abuse or being socially ostracized to that of physical abuse and even death.

How radical to call for God to bless those who are persecuting us.

Paul is not saying simply that they should refrain from retaliating against persecutors or that they should forgive them. He is saying that they should actively seek their good as they pray for God’s blessing on them. – **Leon Morris**

Not only should we not retaliate, we should actually bless them! That is not normal! Who wishes well on those abusing them? Who calls on God to bless them in spite of them persecuting you?

But is this not what Jesus did on the cross when He prayed, “**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**” (Lk. 23:34). Is this not what Stephen (the first martyr of the church) did when as he was being stoned said, “**Lord, do not charge them with this sin.**” (Acts 7:60).

This is a mighty high standard to live up to!

One day a city of the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus. James and John then asked Jesus, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” Jesus responded by saying, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” (Lk. 9:53-56).

**D.L. Moody** in one of his sermons pictured Christ after His resurrection giving instructions to Peter: “Go, find the man who thrust his spear into My side and tell him there’s a much quicker way to my heart. Find the man who crowned Me with thorns and tell him I should like to give him a crown of life.” This was a dramatic way of depicting the true spirit of Christianity.

Jesus on the cross opened the gates of paradise to a man who had a few moments before been pouring out curses on Him. In Matthew 27:44 it says, “Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him...” But then the one thief had a change of heart and when he looked to Jesus in repentance Jesus immediately said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Bless those who persecute you is in perfect harmony with what Christ taught in the sermon on the mount.

### **Slide # 18**

#### **Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)**

**44** But I say to you, love your enemies, **bless those who curse you**, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

### **15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.**

This implies that we are intimately involved in one another's lives and know what is happening. It implies caring deeply for one another. We are not to be indifferent to each other but empathize with each other. We are to practice "withness" – just sharing with the person whatever they are going through whether in rejoicing or in weeping. Just being there for someone means so much.

### **Slide # 19**

#### **1 Corinthians 12:26 (NKJV)**

**26** And if **one** member suffers, **all** the members suffer with it; or if **one** member is honored, **all** the members rejoice with it.

Paul's point is we are all in this together! When one part of the body hurts – we all hurt. When one member celebrates we are all happy for them.

### **Slide # 20**

A sorrow shared is  
But half a trouble.  
A joy that's shared is  
A joy made double.

**The story is told** of a little boy with a BIG heart. His next-door neighbor was an older gentleman who was like a grandfather figure to him. When the elderly gentleman's wife died the youngster saw him crying and climbed up into his lap and just sat there. Later his mother asked what he said to the broken hearted neighbor. The boy replied, "Oh nothing, I just helped him cry."

People often wonder what to say, but sometimes we don't need to say anything – we just need to be there and cry with them. Job's friends were doing great until they opened their mouths. Don't worry about what to say – just be there.

It is interesting that the Lord's first miracle was at a wedding – a time of rejoicing (Jn. 2); and at the end of His ministry He raised Lazarus from the dead – a time of great sorrow (Jn. 11). Jesus ministry was in relation to both the gladdest and the saddest of times.

**16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.**

Simply said this saying, "Don't put yourself above others." Have equal regard for each other (cf. Rom. 15:5; Phil. 2:2; 1 Pet. 3:8). In your mind don't have the important people and then the unimportant people. Think about all equally.

**Slide # 21**

**James 2:1 (NKJV)**

**1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.**

***"Do not set your mind on high things"***. Don't have an attitude of elitism. Don't have an attitude of snobbery – looking down on others. Just remember we pretty much all look the same in a hospital gown – and it is pretty humbling.

Paul has already dealt with this attitude in verse 3 where he said, "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think". This is an ongoing struggle – this battle with pride. And it is good to check ourselves because pride is a blinding thing that has blind spots. It creeps in ways that we don't even see. We need to check our attitude: Do I subconsciously think I am a little better, a little more sophisticated, a little bit above.

Pride is a great sin and humility is a great virtue! Three times the Bible says in both the OT and the NT that "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Prov. 3:34; 1 Pet. 5:5; Ja. 4:6).

Who you hang with or are willing to hang with says a lot. Paul says, “Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble” (or the lowly). This is telling!

**His name was Bill.** Bill had wild hair, wore a T-shirt with holes and had no shoes. He was intellectually bright but had some strange ways about him. He became a Christian in college and one Sunday decided to go to church. The church he entered into was a conservative and fairly well to do church. Bill got to church a little late and he couldn't find a seat. As he got closer and closer to the front he realized there were no seats available so he squatted down on the carpet. The people were starting to feel uncomfortable and the tension in the air was thick.

About that time an old deacon from the back slowly started making his way down the aisle towards Bill. The deacon was in his 80s and very well dressed. He walked with a cane. Everyone knew what was coming. And how could he be blamed – a man of his age with his background. He would not be very understanding of some young college kid sitting on the floor.

It took him a long time to reach the boy. The church was utterly silent except for the thumping of the cane and nobody even heard what the pastor was saying. All eyes were focused on the deacon and Bill. It seemed like no one was even breathing. The people were thinking: The pastor can't even preach his sermon until the deacon does what he has to do.

And then they saw the elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty he lowered himself and sat down next to Bill so he wouldn't be alone. Everyone choked up with emotion. Finally, when the pastor regained his composure he said, “What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. But what you have just seen, you will never forget.

Remember Jesus Himself “nowhere to lay His head” (Mt. 8:20). It was the common people who heard him gladly (Mk. 12:37). In 1 Cor. 1 Paul says that God has mainly chosen the foolish, weak, base, despised, nothings (1 Cor. 1:26-29). James says that God has chosen the poor of this world “to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom” (Ja. 2:5).



So, if you or I as a Christian are sitting on our high horse – we need to get off that horse and come down and sit with the common people. We are to take an interest in ordinary people.

**I came from a very poor family** and we were quite common people. When I was almost 16 we had a hundred cattle stolen. We had no money. We had to go on food stamps to eat. It was really humbling. But as I look back it was the worst of times and it was the best of times. God used those times to instill in me some really deep life lessons. My prayer is that I would not forget.

And then to drive the point home Paul says, “Do not be wise in your own opinion” – that is to say in your own estimation. Don’t think you are so smart! That is the downfall of many people. They are too smart for their own good. And this is true of many Christians.

Perhaps you have a really good mind and you are blessed in that way, but still in the BIG scheme of things you are not really that smart. You too only have a 3-pound brain. Don’t let it get the best of you. And don’t confuse intelligence with wisdom. There is a difference!

### **Slide # 22**

#### **Proverbs 3:7 (NKJV)**

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

#### **Proverbs 26:12 (NKJV)**

12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

***Don’t be a know it all!*** A recently married couple were having an argument. The husband reiterated his position forcefully and the wife responded by saying, “When I knew I’d found Mr. Right I had no idea his first name was ALWAYS!” Don’t be that guy!

What a comprehensive picture of Christian love Paul gives us! Love is sincere, discerning, affectionate and respectful. It is both enthusiastic and patient, both generous and hospitable, both benevolent and sympathetic. It is marked by both harmony and humility. – **John Stott**

This is our calling. It is a calling to live out love and in this way we live out the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God which fulfills our calling to be a living sacrifice. It’s all about love. It’s all about others!

Chuck Swindoll tells this story about when he was in Seminary. He and his wife Cynthia were hit by a drunk driver and she being pregnant was in danger of losing their unborn child. Cynthia was bedridden and he had to go back to class to tend to some crucial work.

As he came to campus he was under tremendous pressure and looked for a friendly light under an office door. He knocked on one door and a voice came forth saying, “**What do you want from me? I’m very busy.**” Chuck says it was the blunt response from a professor – long gone. Chuck responded, “**Nothing. I don’t want anything from you.**”

He headed out the door across the frozen courtyard and there he ran into the man Chuck affectionately referred to as “Prof” meaning professor Howard Hendricks.

Chuck writes: He was busy, I’m sure. But he made a beeline for me. He said, “I heard what happened to your family, Chuck.” He put his arm around my drooped shoulders. “Do you need anything? Do you need a car? I can lend you mine. Do you need any schedule relief? I’ll arrange it. You need to concentrate on getting yourself and your family through this crisis. Don’t worry. Don’t worry about anything else.” Then he simply said, “I love you.”

Swindoll says, “Wow! It was as if Jesus was speaking to me – boosting my spirits. I mattered to this man. He genuinely cared. Prof taught us about Jesus, yes. But just as valuable, he showed us Jesus. That day and on a thousand other occasions.

This is our calling.

We are called to put Jesus on display day in and day out! God help us to be a living sacrifice. God help us to love without hypocrisy. God help us to put Jesus on display as a way of life.

That’s what it’s all about!