Romans 12:9-21

Verse 9:

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

--***Let love be without hypocrisy*****.**

--When Paul begins to speak of our individual service towards all men, especially those of the household of God, his golden rule is the same as Christ's—***Love***.

--What is interesting is that it does seem that the early church was so filled with love that those who did not have it genuinely in the Holy Spirit had to pretend to have it to fit in! *Ananias + Saphira*

--Our love is simply to be genuine—not faked. Don't act more spiritual than you really are! Love with the love that you have. *Not punching someone can be an act of true love.*

--When we love genuinely, the ***gifts differing*** will find their place with a varied experience of love. *How I love as a pastor. . . husband. . . father. . . friend. . .*

--Jesus gives the unsaved world the right to judge our salvation by our love, not our doctrine. They don't care about our doctrine, but they cannot deny loving lives.

John 13:34-35:** ***A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

--***Abhor what is*** **evil.**

--Godly love will hate evil and cling to what is good; both should actually be in proportion. *Tozer (Success and the Christian): "The question arises, does God actually *hate* anything? Sure He does—He says so. 'Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows' (Hebrews 1:9).

It is a psychological impossibility to love anything without hating its opposite. If I love holiness, I hate sin. If I love truth, I hate lies. If I love honesty, I hate dishonesty. If I love purity, I hate filth. Hate is only bad when it is aimed against people made in the image of God or when it springs out of some unworthy or low motive like jealousy or envy or anger. We should learn to hate what Jesus hates. I'm sure that if we had the mind of Christ intellectually, so that we judged things the way He judges them, there would be less need for preaching separation from the world than there is today among Christians."*

--***Cling to what is good*****.**

--We should love and give ourselves to the things that are good in God's sight.

Jeremiah 4:22:** ***For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*

Verse 10:

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

--There is a particular love I am supposed to show to the family of God. Every true believer is my brother and sister in Christ.

Galatians 6:10:** ***Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13:** ***And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.*

--The exhortation here is to give honor or preference to one another. Basically, think of what you believe you deserve (A hello, A kind parking lot, A deference of choice, The benefit of the doubt, etc.) and transfer that to the brothers and sisters around you.

Verse 11:

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

--These things all tie together. Hendrickson translates this: *Never come behind in showing enthusiasm. Be aglow with the Spirit, serving the Lord.*

--To be ***diligent & fervent & serving*** is the opposite of being lazy, cold, and selfish.

John 4:36:** ***And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.*

--We have such a short time to prepare for such a long time! Presently we work, and eternally we rest. *Do you love God, His house, His worship, His people, His service? If not, that is what heaven is all about!*

1 Corinthians 16:15:** ***You know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints.*

--And notice, we are to be this way to ***the Lord***. He is the One who receives our diligence, fervent spirit, and service. Not simply imperfect humans.

--If you are not these things: Realize it and ask God for His Holy Spirit. *God, command what You will but give what You command!*

Verse 12:

--***rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;***

--***rejoicing in hope*****. . .** Does my hope make me joyful? Curiosity and speculation are not the same thing as a Biblical rejoicing hope.

--***patient in tribulation*****. . .** Those early Christians knew they were following Christ into persecution. They expected their own portion of affliction and injustice. We should too!

1 Peter 5:8-11:** ***Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that he same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

--***continuing steadfastly in prayer. . .*** What does this look like? It should have personal and public outlets. Do we have any faithful times and places of prayer?

--Loving prayer was the spirit of the early church. They shared their love for one another through prayer **(See Acts 2:42; 46-47; 6:4; 12:5+12; 20:36; 21:5)**.

--It has well been said: *He who loves me best loves me in his prayers.*

Verse 13:

--***distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.***

--There was so very much a need for giving and hospitality in that early church, where following Christ often meant the end of national and family ties. Needs fill the world now and then.

--A heart *pursuing* hospitality. Looking for and desiring to fill up the lacking places in our family. This is a hospitality that chases others instead of waiting to be chased.

Verse 14:

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

--We all have someone who makes us feel like cursing.

--This is as much a command of Christ as is: *You shall not steal* is a command of God.

Luke 6:27-28:** ***But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.*

--We will all face persecution and general mean people in life. Some of them will soon be our brothers and sisters in Christ for eternity. *Their cruelty is our chance to show supernatural love.*

Verse 15:

--***Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.***

--This is a selfless empathy. We should care about the joys and sorrows of others. *Rejoicing with those who rejoice is often harder than showing compassion.*

Verse 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.***

--***Be of the same mind toward one another.***

--In terms of ultimate purpose and goal. Our plans change, but our purpose never does.

--***Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.***

--Was not Christ the ultimate picture of this?! He didn't choose a single disciple who raised His reputation. He answered the simple and heartfelt questions of the common people.
--Are you laboring to achieve the upper echelons of worldly society? If so, you are not on a Christian path.
--***Do not be wise in your own opinion*.**
--How can I tell?
--First, if I always need to share my opinion, then I am most likely wise in my own opinion.
--Second, if I never take the character of a learner.
--Third, if I cannot accept correction.

Verse 17:
--***Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.***
--We are all promised a certain amount of evil in this world. Trying to "get even" is not Christian business.
--Instead, we are called to give ourselves to the good things that God also loves. That will in itself be a testimony.
Philippians 1:27:** ***Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ. . .*
1 Thessalonians 4:11-12:** ***That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.*

Verse 18:
--***If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.***
--Jesus and Paul didn't exactly make peace or bring peace everywhere they went. Particularly with unbelievers. Jesus declared He would be a sword to families!
--This verse has two qualifications:
1) ***If it is possible***. . . because sometimes it is not.
2) ***As much as depends on you***. . . Do you have an issue with someone? Well, have you tried to address it? If not, it still depends on you! Is the ball still in your court, or is it in their court?
--Are you the one stirring up the pot or instigating? Make the first move toward peace.

Verses 19-20:
--***Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If you enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."***
--Paul refers to ***Deuteronomy 32:35,*** and the same truth is repeated in **Hebrews 10:30**, which tells us that this is a truth that requires repeating for the children of God.

--By avenging ourselves, we meddle with rights that belong only to God. Today is the day of our Father's mercy, and the proclamation of reconciliation is our message. We are followers of Jesus Christ. Has He avenged Himself yet? No, not yet. . . ***2 Thess. 1:6-10***
--God's vengeance does not preclude His mercy. In fact, it makes mercy possible.
--Paul would ask the Corinthians in his first epistle: **(6:7)** ***Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?***
--Peter would simply encourage believers to follow Christ's example.
1 Peter 4:19:** ***Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*
--God is going to be faithful to save, faithful to reward, and also faithful to execute vengeance. It is *because* God says ***Vengeance is Mine*** that I do not need to avenge myself.
--It is a true shame that believers feel the need to apologize for God's vengeance. In the end, He will deal with all sins and all wrongs, and I want Him to! I want Him to deal with mine thoroughly!
--The *repaying* is His on the cross or on judgment day. The choice is ours to believe or reject His offer of free mercy. From the beginning, God preached life and death to men—the doctrine has a place in all human hearts and has echoed to all the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve through the centuries. If God failed to punish covenant breakers, He Himself would be a covenant breaker. *His judgment will be perfect, and I must trust that.*
--The reference to hot coals here is either a picture of continued judgment or of a repentant shame. Both have Scriptural warrant in passages such as: **Ps. 11:6; 140:10 & Proverbs 25:21-22**.
--I think that the context fits better with continued judgment.
2 Corinthians 2:14-16:** ***Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

Verse 21:
--***Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.***
--Good is all the things he just spoke about in the chapter. They overcome evil in this world.
--Is there any sentence that so sums up the Spirit of the Son of Man as this?!
--Just think of how much evil he had to overcome again and again and again, day by day by day, hour by hour, and minute by minute. All in love for us. *Satan, Demons, Pharisees, Family, world, the cross, etc.
--Think particularly of this with His disciples. The good in Him constantly overcame the evil in them; their pride, ignorance, anger, racism, impatience, unbelief, misunderstandings, bickering, denials, betrayals, abandonment, fears, and their lack of love. They lost nothing by His rebukes, and He never withdrew His good from them.

--It was God once again being proved in the wilderness for three years instead of forty. And yet He never gave them up! The good in Him overcame all the evil in them, and in the end, what do we see? He is closer to them than ever, and they are more like Him than ever.
--I love this verse. Not because it is true of me, but because it is true of Jesus. Praise God! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and He walks with me!