

## Love and Light Romans 13:8-14

If you're new with us, we're going through Romans... If you're not a Christian and are exploring the faith, welcome. This is a terrific study for you to be part of...

Recap. Paul begins Romans by saying "To those in Rome, who are loved by God and called to be saints." We've been in Romans for months and I'm still reveling in 1:7!

### Loved by God

- Chapters 1-3 show us **why this is remarkable.**
- We are **sinners**. We worship created things rather than Creator God.
- Instead of honoring God and giving thanks to Him, we selfishly follow our sinful passions, and are rightly under the judgment of God. (1:18-3:20)
- But God in his love and justice put forward Christ to die in our place for our sin, and to declare us his righteousness. (3:21ff).
- By faith in Christ, we are justified before God, adopted by God, reconciled to God, and indwelt by the Spirit of God (4-8).
- There is now condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (8:1), and nothing can separate us from the love of God. (8:39)
- 9-11: he talks about the grand sweep of God's saving purposes for Jew and Gentile.

### Called to Be Saints (ch 12ff.

In chapter 12, Paul begins describing this **calling to live as "saints."**

- It involves not being conformed to the world, but being transformed by the renewing of our mind; offering ourselves as a sacrifice to God (12:1-2)
- It means thinking of ourselves properly, and using our gifts for the good of the church (12:3-8)
- It means loving people genuinely (12:9-21)
- It means relating to the government honorably (13:1-7)
- **13:8-14**: Now added to this, is the saint's call to love neighbor (not a new emphasis, but a different emphasis is given), and to live a life of holiness – casting off darkness, and living in the light, in view of the new age to come.

**(Saint) Augustine (354-430) was powerfully converted through this text (esp vv 13-14)**

- He had **not** been known by love and light.
- He had been **enslaved** to sexual sin. (Read *Confessions*)
- He lived for the fame and praise of other people.

**"I went to Carthage [to study for 3 years], where I found myself in the midst of a hissing cauldron of lust.... My real need was for you, my God, who are the food of the soul. I was not aware of this hunger.... I was willing to steal, and steal I did, although I was not compelled by any lack. I was at the top of the school of rhetoric. I was pleased with my superior status and swollen with conceit.... It was my ambition to be a good speaker, for the unhallowed and inane purpose of gratifying human vanity." (*Confessions*)**

But God transformed him turned him into a mighty theologian/church leader...

- After intense time of spiritual struggle.... “take up and read...” Rom 13  
“I had no wish to read more and no need to do so. For in an instant, as I came to the end of the sentence, it was as though the light of confidence flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled.” (Ibid)
- And Augustine said good-bye to this former way of life.  
“How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose!... You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drove them from me, and took their place, you who are sweeter than all pleasure.” (Ibid)
- He became a new creation! Christ became his joy and life.
- The gospel really is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16)!

God can change those who are enslaved to lust, those who live for the praise of people, those addicted to substances, those who are filled w/ anger & jealousy.

- **There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.**

Let's “take up and read” this text & pray that it will radically impact us today.

### **Romans 13:8-14: Ethics and Eschatology**

- This passage combines the **ethics** and **eschatology** (“the Day”).
- Regarding ethics, Paul is speaking about **daily pursuits the saint: love and holiness.**
- Regarding eschatology, Paul reminds us that time is short.
  - We should live our lives with holy intentionality.

### **Our Power: Put on Christ**

**We don't live lives of love and holiness in our own strength:**

**Verse 14.** “Put on Christ.”

- Here's where our **hope** and **power** come from here to live in love and light.
- We put on Christ.
- **This is the essential clothing for the Christian!**
- “I don't know what I'm going to wear today!” Put this on everyday!
- **This looks great on you!**

### **Recall what Paul said in Galatians 3:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

All who are baptized already **have** put on Christ.

- But Romans 13:14 is an **exhortation** to “put on Christ.”
- Did Paul misspeak? Are we clothed in Christ, or do we need to put Him on?
- **Both are true.**
- As Christians, we **are** clothed with Christ.
- And yet, we are commanded to **put Him on.**
  - Put on not only his **character** but live in **personal fellowship** with Him.
  - **Live in the power and hope and joy of your new identity.**

You see, living in **light** and **love** is **not** just about being “**a good person.**”

- It's about living **as a Christ-centered person!**
- Out of our identity in Christ, through communion with Christ, we pursue a life of love and holiness.

### #1: Live in Love (13:8-10)

The most frequented theme in Romans 12, 13, & 14 has to be **love**.

- **12:9-21 – let love be genuine**
- **13:8ff – love neighbor**
- **14:15 – walk in love**

In short, **God's people are to be marked by love.**

- Jesus boiled down the whole law to “**love God**” and “**love neighbor.**”
- Neighbor, not just people who live close to you; but those in need (Luke 10)
- 1 Cor 13 – if you have great gifts and power, but don't love, you've missed it.

**Here, Paul shows the relationship between between love and law.**

- Love is **not** sentimentalism; it has **objective content**, found in God's law.
- **Love is measured and assessed by commandments.**
- Love is measured in our culture by **feelings**.
  - “**You've lost that loving feeling**”
  - “**Is this love that I'm feeling... Is this love that I've been searching for**”
- Love is not empty sentimentalism.

**Love and law are not enemies.**

- They are “in-laws,” united by their relationship to Jesus. (Ferguson)
- **Without Christ, the law is powerless; without law, love is directionless.**
  - The Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts enabling us to love. (Rom 5:5)
  - Spirit-empowered love involves keeping God's commands (8-10)
  - “If you love Me, you will keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15)
  - **The law is like the train tracks, and the Spirit like the engine.**

**8-9:** The only thing we should owe is to love “each other.” (“person” on general)

- **This text doesn't prohibit all borrowing of money.**
- Jesus permitted this (Matt. 5:42).
- It means **we should pay what is owed, fulfilling our agreements.**
- It's **not** a proof text for never taking out a loan. That's an issue of wisdom & integrity.
- **The point:** There's a debt that we will never be settled: **the debt of love for others.**
- **The debt of love is permanent.**

**8b:** “for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

**What does he have in mind?** Next verse...

**Verse 9:** He quotes **four** horizontal commands, and then **Lev 19:18** about neighbor love (Matt 22:36-40).

**Adultery**

- Adultery is often justified on the basis of a person's desires/feelings.
- "He just loved me so much, & I fell for him, so I cheated on my husband."
- Adultery is **not** love because it violates Gods' commandments.
- It's an expression of rebellion, lust, and selfishness, *not love*.

### Murder

- You aren't loving other people if you murder them! I hope that's obvious to you!

### Stealing

- You don't love a person if you steal from them!

In contrast, Love helps others flourish.

Love thinks about the good of others. Love looks 1 Cor 13.

### Coveting

- Paul moves from actions to a "desire"
- Coveting is **not** an expression love for neighbor.
- Coveting is wanting **what God has not chosen to give you**
- It is wanting what someone else has. That's not love.
- If you want another person's wife, life, car, house, reputation, gifts, etc. then that's not love.

### "Any other commandment"

- All of God's commands reveal what love is.
- God has poured Himself into His law.
- It reflects God's character.

### "Love your neighbor as yourself"

- Paul says this is a **summary** of the law.
- Love is **active** and **practical**.
- **The Bible assumes you love yourself** – in the sense that you always are looking out for yourself – no matter how matter how may you feel.
- It's basic human **instinct** to feed yourself and see to basic necessities.
- Love your neighbor like you care for yourself – see to their basic necessities and spiritual necessities.

So love is **more than not** violating commands.

- Love involves **looking for ways to bless your neighbor.**
- If you don't commit adultery, then that's a good start!
- **For the husband, it means not only refusing to cheat on your spouse, but also looking for ways to serve her, to care for her, as yourself.**
- For the church member, it means looking for ways to bless other people.
- **If you aren't stealing from those at IDC that's great! If you aren't murdering, we say than you! But do more than simply avoid sins of commission.**
- Avoid the sins of **omission** – and **look for ways to love.**

- Listen
- Care
- Give
- Encourage
- Rejoice with them; weep with them.
- Do the Romans 12:9-21 kinds of things.

**Verse 10:** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is a fulfilling of the law.

**A fulfilling of the law?**

We aren't under the law, or Mosaic covenant (Romans 6-7, Gal 3-4).

- The commands sited here are not authoritative because they're part of the Mosaic law, but because they are part of what Paul calls in Gal 6:2, "the law of Christ" (Schreiner)
- They transcend time. And they are fulfilled in Christ.
- **The NT confirms these timeless moral norms.**
- When we love, we fulfill the law of Christ; we do this by the enablement of the Spirit.

## #2: Live in Light (13:11-14)

"Besides this" or "do this" or "And this" heightens what has just been said.

Add this to the list of exhortations in 12:1-13:10 – in light of imminence of the end.

### A. Wake Up! (11-12a)

- Phillips: "Wake up to reality."
- Be wide-awake – be ready for action.

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8

- **Night/Darkness** – metaphor for **sin**.
- **Sleep** – A metaphor for **carelessness** and **laxity**. An indifference to God's purposes.
  - Many people are alive but they are **asleep spiritually!**
  - No concern for Scripture, the church, making disciples, the cross, personal holiness, etc.
- Paul says, "Wake up!"
- Today we will encounter a lot of people who are **not** hostile to the Christian message; **they simply don't think about Christ.** They are **happy pagans.**
- The disciple is not asleep, but alert.

#### i. Wake Up Because the End Is Near (11-12a)

**11a:** "What time is it?"

- Paul says, "you know the time" Christian.
- It's time to wake up!
- Realize that the end is near. The Day is at hand.

"For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed."

- He is speaking of the **consummation** of our salvation.

- We **are** saved (Eph 2:8), we are **being** saved (1 Cor 1:18), we **will be** saved (Rom 5:9).
- Final salvation and judgment are coming.
- (cf., Matt 24:42-44; Lk 12:35-36; 1 Thes 5:1-2)

**12:** “the night is ending and the dawn is coming” // “the Day” is at hand.

- **The world around us doesn't believe it.** But it's true.
- Currently, it's nighttime.
- But every day we live, the dawn is getting closer.
- Soon the morning will dawn.

The last name Jesus uses to identify Himself is “The Morning Star”  
(Rev 22:16, “The Bright Morning Star”)

- Peter says the Morning Star has already risen in our hearts (2 Pet 1:19)
- When Jesus comes, He will be the brightest star, and will shatter the night.
- A new age will dawn.
- We long for the Morning Star because this world is dark.
- Philosopher Bertrand Russell offers a sad worldview: “**There is darkness without and when I die there will be darkness within. There is no splendor, nor vastness anywhere; only triviality for a moment and then nothing.**”
- The Christian worldview is radically different.
- We live our lives knowing that the morning is coming -- the Morning Star is coming.

## ii. Wake Up and Get Dressed! (12b)

- Put on your clothes!
- But **don't** replace your **pajamas** with **work clothes**, but with armor! **Battle gear!**
- “The weapons of light.”
- He adds in verse 14, “put on Christ” – more in a bit.

Why the armor of light? **Because the darkness still threatens us.**

- **There's a war on!**
- The desires of the flesh still attract us. (verse 14)
- We are still tempted to do evil.
- So Christian, **know you are in a battle!**
- Throw off the darkness. And pursue light. (**Eph 5:11**)

**Ephesians 6: Armor.** Like a sword, many look at the Bible as irrelevant for modern warfare. But nothing could be further from the truth. We must have our battle gear on, and we must not go into battle without a weapon.

“O Church arise, and put your armor on....”

## B. Cast Off! (12b-13)

Putting off, and putting on is used for the Christian. Many sins fall into this category of “darkness”:

**12b:** What does Paul say to the **Romans** specifically?

- Something very similar.
- Many of these Christians were saved from very sinful lifestyles, and so Paul warns them about **relapsing**, much like he does in 1 Corinthians 6 – this is what you “were,” but are not that anymore.

### **i. Cast off the wild partying (13a)**

- He mentions “**drunkenness**” and “**orgies**” (“**carousing**,” CSB)
- If you read accounts of Greco-Roman **symposia** (after dinner parties) or various religious parties (**Dionysius**), you know what Paul is probably alluding to (Bird).
- He’s censuring the type of party culture that involves wild excess.

### **1 Pet 4:1-5**

4 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. 3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

### **Catch all that?**

- The war is in your passions. You must fight to kill sin. Don’t be passive about it.
- Live for the will of God!
- Some will make fun of you (or of your God!) for not joining their debauchery.
- Take the long view -- nothing is hidden from the eyes of God -- He is the righteous Judge of the living and the dead.
- On that day, you’ll be glad you pursued a life of holiness!

### **Same ideas here in Romans.**

- There’s something better to live for!
- There’s a way to eat, drink, and party in way that glorifies God, and a way that dishonors God, and destroys your witness.

We have a culture celebrates debauchery – Vegas, New Orleans, adult parties, crazy high school/college parties, and so on.

- “**Let’s go get messed up!**” No thanks.
- It’s celebrated in films/songs...
- it’s part of certain professions that include a lot of travel and events
- **Students** – You will face a lot of pressure to be with certain crowds, in certain places, that can lead to actions that dishonor God, damage your witness (and the church’s witness), and even destroy your life.
- Be careful. Walk wisely. Live with a proper reverence before your God.

### **ii. Cast off sexual immorality (13b)**

- Our sexual lives are to be lived under Christ’s Lordship.

- We live in a sex-crazed culture...
  - Studies show that one of the main reasons college students abandon the faith in college is to express sexual freedom.
  - One divinity school not far from here has a class on “**Beyonce's Sexuality**.”
- Our culture also **minimizes the seriousness of it**.
  - Ashley Madison services targeted married men and women to commit adultery. The site’s slogan, “**Life is short. Have an affair.**”
  - They are right, life is short, but that’s the wrong pursuit.
- How are we to live in such a world?
- **The Word of God is to rule our lives, and govern our choices.**
- The culture says, **if it feels good, do it**.
  - **It’s the fallacy of “is” equals “out.”**
  - **“If this is the way I feel/am, this is what I ought to do.”**
  - The problem is that your “**is**” is messed up.
- You can’t live out of what “feels good” – you could justify any action with that logic.

One of the greatest challenges for new Christians, and indeed long-time Christians, is to **glorify God with their bodies**.

- It involves submitting to the **authority of Scripture** – believing that **God is powerful enough to enable** us to overcome sinful patterns.
  - Be the kind of Christian that has a **big God** and a **worn out Bible**.
- It involves **seeing sexuality biblically**. For example, pornography:
  - See it as a mockery of God’s design for sex.
  - See it as violent - an attack on God’s image, and profoundly unloving.
  - See the deadly progressive nature of it.
    - Sin is always progressive; it always wants more (Challis).
    - This should make us tremble.

Now, no one enters heaven because of **perfect** personal purity.

- Jesus gives us His righteous, and then holiness involves living out of the identity.
- We praise God for the blood of Jesus.
- **If are losing in this battle, you need to get help.**
- Schreiner: Pastor left phone on pulpit... someone took it for him, and then a text popped up from a teenager that he had committed sexual sin with. His ministry was over.
- It wasn’t destroyed in that particular moment, but *in* **a series of moments**.
- Over and over he had caved into the desires of the flesh; he had communicated sinfully and shamefully and he had acted physically on his passions.
- He didn’t put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

“When you indulge in sexual sin, it reveals what you truly believe about sexuality. You believe that the pleasure of sin is better than the pleasure of obeying God by enjoying sex the way God created it to be enjoyed. You believe that the pleasure you derive from your sin is greater than the consequences your sin will have on you and those around



you. You believe that your momentary pleasure is greater than the rewards the Lord has for you -- both in this life and the life to come.” (Tim Challis, *Sexual Detox*)

- Christian, remember who you are, and live in the light.
- Realize that in God’s presence is the fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore! (Ps 16:10).
- Realize that the beauty your made for is the beauty of God’s glory. (Ps 27:4)
- Don't settle for cheap distortions.
- Say good-bye to the dark way of life.

### iii. Cast off quarrelling and jealousy (13c)

These too are works of darkness.

We may be **more tolerant of these sins**, than sexual sins and wild partying; but Paul puts them in the **same category**.

- Do you desire control and power?
- Do you resent when others are elevated?
- Do you get bitter when you feel overlooked?
- Do you feel the need to argue all the time?

Then you are giving into the desires of the flesh:

- The only sins are not bodily or sexual.
- Strife and jealousy can ruin you and the community of faith.
- Where does it come from? It comes from desires within:

#### James 4:1-2

What causes **quarrels** and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

**Example: “Time’s Up!” “Time to go!” -- meet/greet, “you’ve been messin w/ my woman -- punches this guy!” “Man, I’ve got to visit your church.”**

Our quarreling/fighting isn’t always that pronounced, and physical, but it’s easy to be argumentative about all kinds of things. To little anger boil, develop resentment, bitterness.

If Satan can’t corrupt your heart with a love of money, substance abuse, or with sexual sin, he may try this tactic: envy and jealousy.

You can be jealous of one’s **life, position, influence, gifts, beauty...**

Social Media perpetuates this. Scott Sauls:

- In 2015, stories about famed Australian “Instagram star” Essena O’Neill, went viral. ...
- **500,000 Instagram followers** and more than **250,000 YouTube subscribers**.

- By the time she turned 18, she was able to support herself financially and was offered modeling opportunities in several major cities.
- Then... she announced to her fans that she had had enough.
- She had grown tired of fame, which had enslaved her in **an addiction to being liked**:

Social media had become my sole identity. I didn't even know who I was without it... I can't tell you how free I feel without social media. Never again will I let a number define me. IT SUFFOCATED ME. Not because I had 500,000 followers, I felt the same as a young girl, **I would just spend hours looking at everyone else's perfect lives and I strived to make mine look just as good... Guess I succeeded. It's totally stupid.**

- **Thousands of "likes" or "followers" doesn't lead to health, joy, and security.**
- You know what's better than being "liked" by thousands of people?
- What's better than having position/power/popularity?
- **Romans 1:7: being "loved by God."**
- **It's better to be loved by God (Rom 1:5), than to be liked/known by people.**
- Don't chase the wind, and don't let competition and jealousy steal your joy in Jesus.

### C. Put On! (14)

"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Previously, "put on the armor of light."

- Put on the **character** of the Lord Jesus. Put on **nearness** to the Lord Jesus.
- Let Christ be the clothes, or the armor that you wear. (**Eph 6:11-12; 1 Thess 5:8**)
- Bird, "Ultimate to put on Christ is also to be empowered by Christ."
- Practically, this means get in God's Word, seek Him in prayer... Draw near to Him.

### 14b: "make no **provision** for the flesh"

Piper: "The word 'provision' means literally 'forethought,' and the whole sentence would go like this: 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **don't let any thought in your head that would lead to a sinful desire**—not just to the gratification of the sinful desire, but even the desire itself.'"

- Don't plan to sin;
- Don't daydream about sin;
- Don't try to take comfort in sin;
- Don't welcome sin; don't entertain the idea.

So... (ht: Piper)

- If you are bored, lonely, tired, frustrated, don't entertain the idea of turning to a wild night of crazy partying, filled with drunkenness and drugs to lift you.
- Frustrated wife, if your husband isn't caring for you, showing affection for you the way he should, don't daydream about romantic, Mr. Perfect.
- Frustrated husband, don't daydream about the beautiful Ms. Perfect – in your head or with pornography.
- Frustrated person that feels overlooked, underestimated, or abandoned, don't allow jealousy and bitterness and hatred to get a foothold in your heart.

**Don't make provision for sin. Don't give forethought. Don't plan on it. Instead, direct your mind to the promises of God. Direct your mind to the beauty of Christ – put on Christ!**

**Putting on Christ is how we avoid making provision for the flesh.**

The Christ who is sufficient and all-satisfying.

**We have a wonderful Savior.**

- **He loved His neighbor perfectly – living and dying for them, fulfilling the law.**
- **He lived in the light, and experienced the darkness at the cross, that we may live in the light.**
- **He has given us new affections and joys. Affections for Himself.**

**And we can say with Augustine that Jesus is truly better than sin. Jesus is better than these fruitless joys.**

**One day soon He will come and eradicate the world of sin once and for all.**

- **And we will no longer wrestle in this body of flesh.**
- **Live in light of *that Day!***
- **For the morning is almost here, and soon all mourning will be over.**