

# Genuine Love

Romans 12:9-21



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)  
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

# Genuine Love Introduction



# Genuine Love Introduction

- Key verses: **Romans 1:16-17** (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

# Genuine Love    Introduction

- In **Romans 1 – 11**, Paul described right belief.
- In **Romans 12 – 15**, he describes right conduct.

# Genuine Love    Introduction

- Key phrase: “the obedience of faith” (1:5, 16:26)
- Faith and obedience are *related* – *not rival* ideas.
- The gospel brings about **faith** which leads to **obedience**.
- This was Christ’s intention for Paul’s apostleship.

# Genuine Love Introduction

## Life Lived by Grace:

- A. Complete Transformation 12:1-2
- B. Many Members 12:3-8
- C. Genuine Love 12:9-21
- D. Church and State 13:1-7
- E. Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10
- F. The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14
- G. Working on Unity 14:1 – 15:13

# Genuine Love    Introduction

- The Bible's idea of love differs from our usual definition.
- [OxfordDictionaries.com](https://www.oxforddictionaries.com) defines it as:
  - 1.1 A strong feeling of affection
  - 1.2 A strong feeling of affection and sexual attraction for someone.
  2. A great interest and pleasure in something.

# Genuine Love    Introduction

- Yet love is something Jesus commands, and it is hard to command something that is mainly a feeling or pleasure.
- **John 13:34-35** (ESV)
- <sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

# Genuine Love    Introduction

- In this passage, Paul will tell us what genuine love looks like.
- Douglas Moo explains.

# Genuine Love

# Introduction



*The opening words are not explicitly linked to anything in the previous context, and there is no verb in the Greek. Paul says, literally, “sincere love.” These words are the heading for what follows, as Paul proceeds ... to explain just what sincere love really is.*

*– Douglas Moo,  
Wheaton Graduate School*

# Genuine Love Introduction

- It will be closer to the kind of love Jesus also describes.
- **John 15:12-14** (ESV)
- <sup>12</sup> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you.

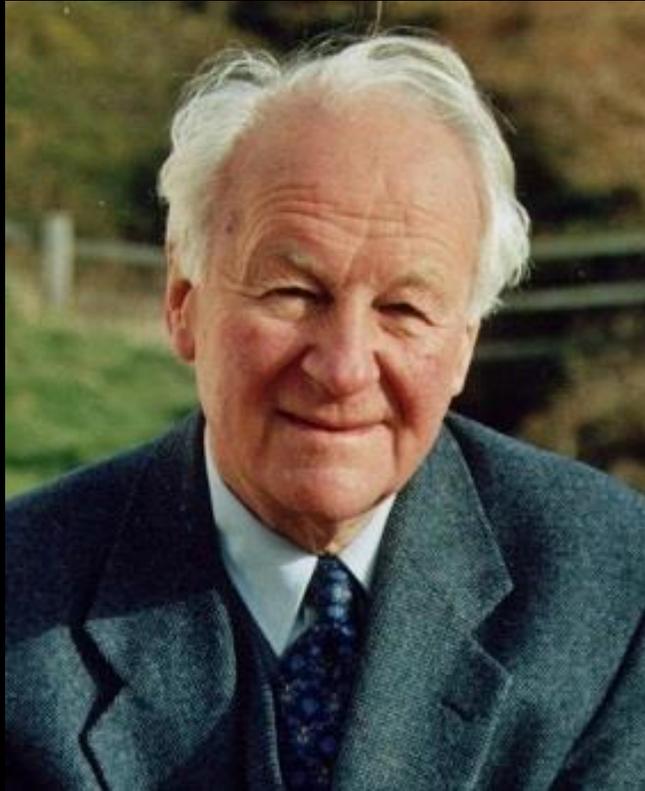
# Genuine Love Introduction

- So we will look at **Genuine Love** verse by verse.

Genuine Love 12:9-10



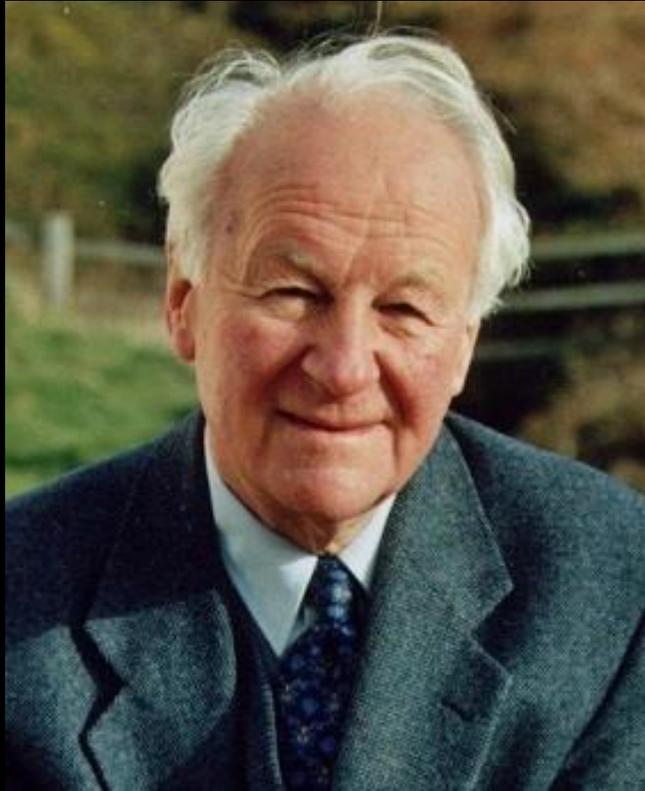
# Genuine Love 12:9-10



*It may seem strange that the exhortation to love is followed immediately by a command to hate [or “abhor”]. But we should not be surprised. For love is not the blind sentiment it is traditionally said to be ...*

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),  
All Souls Church, London*

# Genuine Love 12:9-10



*On the contrary, it is discerning. It is so passionately devoted to the beloved object that it hates every evil which is incompatible with his or her highest welfare.*

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),  
All Souls Church, London*

# Genuine Love 12:9-10

- Our love needs to know the difference between good and evil, clinging to the one while rejecting the other.

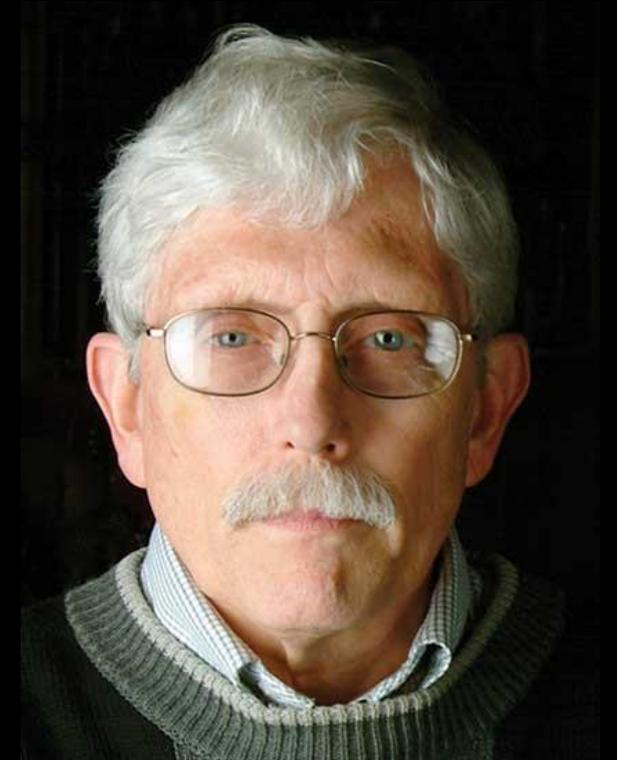
## Genuine Love 12:9-10

- Love in 12:10a is *philadelphia*, the kind of love that you see within families.
- Osborne explains two ways to translate 12:10b.

## Genuine Love 12:9-10

*There are two ways to translate the second sentence: (1) As in the NRSV, “outdo one another in showing honor”; or (2) as in the NIV, “honor one another above yourselves.” ... The one emphasizes strong effort, the other preference for one another.*

*– Grant Osborne,  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



## Genuine Love 12:9-10

- Either way, Paul envisions a congregation with each person habitually showing honor to all the others.

Genuine Love 12:11-13



# Genuine Love

12:11-13



*After converts have experienced the initial glow and ardor of Christian life there is often danger of slipping back into a deadening spiritual inertia. To counter this, the apostle urges diligent endeavor fed by fervency of spirit ... The Lord calls us to serve him with our best.*

*– Everett F. Harrison (1902 – 1999),  
Fuller Theological Seminary*

## Genuine Love 12:11-13

- **12:11** How important it is that our Christianity not become a lazy, lackluster faith.
- The more we put into our relationship with Jesus, the more it will benefit us in the end.

## Genuine Love 12:11-13

- 12:12 Hope, patience and prayer are more closely related than we might realize.
- Paul also made a progression from hope to patience to prayer back in Romans 8.

# Genuine Love 12:11-13

- **Romans 8:24-27** (ESV)

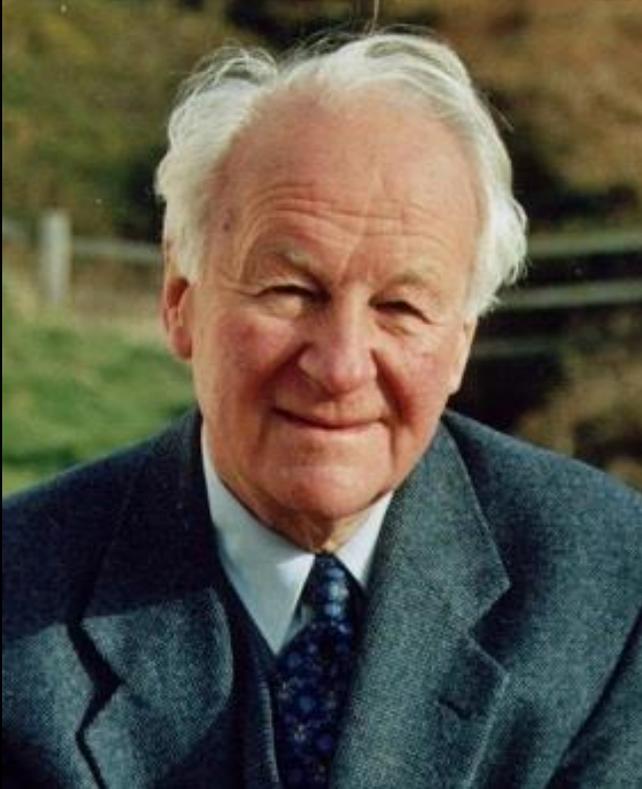
<sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

## Genuine Love 12:11-13

- **12:13** When we **contribute** to the needs of others, especially the saints, they benefit from our material supply.
- **Hospitality, (*philoxenia*)** shares mainly our time and space by bringing others into our home.

# Genuine Love 12:11-13



*If generosity is shown to the needy,  
hospitality is shown to visitors.  
Philadelphia (love of sisters and brothers)  
has to be balanced by philoxenia (love of  
strangers). Both are indispensable  
expressions of love.*

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),  
All Souls Church, London*

Genuine Love 12:14-16



## Genuine Love 12:14-16

- **Persecution** can take various forms from the mildest forms of rejection or exclusion to outright violence.
- In any case, **blessing in return** is probably not what comes naturally to us once we've been on the receiving end.
- But this is truly the teaching of Jesus.

# Genuine Love 12:14-16

- **Matthew 5:44** (ESV)

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

- **Luke 6:27-28** (ESV)

<sup>27</sup> “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

## Genuine Love 12:14-16

- Looking toward other members of the body, we are to enter into one another's joys and sorrows.
- **1 Corinthians 12:26-27** (ESV)

<sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

## Genuine Love 12:14-16

- 12:16 This verse is a further encouragement toward unity.
- The Greco-Roman world was very class-conscious.
- Some were extremely wealthy and powerful, but on the other end, many were slaves.

# Genuine Love 12:14-16

*Paul is speaking against both Roman patrician notions about menial labor being beneath one's dignity and the stratifying tendencies of the culture. He is particularly speaking to Gentiles for whom humility and treating all the same were not familiar and widespread virtues.*

*– Ben Witherington III,  
Asbury Theological Seminary*



## Genuine Love 12:14-16

- Paul now returns to the topic of dealing with those who mistreat us.

Genuine Love 12:17-21



# Genuine Love 12:17-21

*Going beyond the simple avoidance of vengeance, he tells Christians to live in peace, as far as this depends on them ... believers should not be the ones responsible for any lack of peace in their communities or in their relationships with unbelievers.*

*– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian  
University of the Congo*



## Genuine Love 12:17-21

- By reminding us that only God should take vengeance, Paul is careful not to minimize the wrong.
- He is, however, going beyond the wrong itself to God's perspective of it.
- God will deal one day with all wrongs from his all-knowing, all-loving vantage point.

## Genuine Love 12:17-21

- We should also be ready to meet our enemy's needs.
- This is an important way to gain a forgiving attitude.
- But what about these strange “burning coals”?

# Genuine Love 12:17-21



*The ... interpretation adopted by several early church fathers and the majority of recent commentators, is that heaping coals of fire upon the head of one's enemy means to cause the enemy to blush with shame and remorse, and this might lead to his conversion ...*

*– Colin Kruse,  
Melbourne School of Theology*

# Genuine Love 12:17-21



*Acts of kindness are to be carried out, not with a view to causing shame and remorse ... but because it is the godly thing to do ... Paul exhorts his audience to adopt a positive response to persecution, one that does not return evil for evil but overcomes evil with good.*

*– Colin Kruse,  
Melbourne School of Theology*

# Genuine Love 12:17-21

- All of these instructions together give us a crash course in expressing Genuine Love.

Genuine Love

Conclusions



# Genuine Love      Conclusions

- Let's think back to our dictionary definitions.
- [OxfordDictionaries.com](https://www.oxforddictionaries.com) defines **love** as:
  - 1.1 A strong feeling of affection
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# Genuine Love      Conclusions

- Paul seems less concerned with our feelings than with our willingness to put forth effort in expressing love.
- He probably wouldn't rule feelings out, but assumes feelings can grow as effort is expended.

# Genuine Love



# Conclusions

*Love ... has a moral dimension. We tend to think of love as an emotion that we have little control over. We “fall” into it; we “drift” out of it. But in the Bible, love is a matter of the will. We determine to love. And true love will be directed to the good and will shun evil ...*

*– Douglas Moo,  
Wheaton Graduate School*

# Genuine Love



# Conclusions

*We are in control. We are to choose to love what God values, what God loves. We are not to love those things that are wrong ... Biblical love does not lead us to do anything contrary to the will of God.*

*– Douglas Moo,  
Wheaton Graduate School*

# Genuine Love      Conclusions

- Remember love in the Bible is a form of obedience.
- Key phrase: “the obedience of faith” (1:5, 16:26)
- Faith and obedience are *related* – *not rival* ideas.
- The gospel brings about **faith** which leads to **obedience**.

# Genuine Love      Conclusions

- Key verses: **Romans 1:16-17** (ESV)

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