

Love Fulfills the Law

Romans 13:8-10



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

Love Fulfills the Law Introduction



Love Fulfills the Law Introduction

- Paul's goals:
 - To introduce himself to the Roman church in preparation for later mission work.
 - To encourage unity among Jewish and Gentile believers.
 - To thoroughly explain the gospel he preaches as the means to both of the above.

Love Fulfills the Law 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.

Love Fulfills the Law Introduction

- Key concept: **God's grace**
 - Unmerited favor, freely given to penitent sinners.
 - God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

Love Fulfills the Law Introduction

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

Love Fulfills the Law Introduction

- In **Romans 12:9-21**, Paul described genuine love.
- In **Romans 13:1-7**, he described the Christian's relationship with government – with human law.
- In today's passage, **Romans 13:8-10**, he will show us that love fulfills the law of God.

Love Fulfills the Law Introduction

- **Matthew 22:35-40** (ESV)

³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

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- **Leviticus 19:18** (ESV)

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Love Fulfills the Law Introduction

Love in the NT is not mainly or merely a warm, mushy feeling or sentiment but a decision of the will to do what God commands in regard to the neighbor. It involves commitment and action, not just feelings or intentions or attitude.

*– Ben Witherington III,
Asbury Theological Seminary*



Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10



Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love each other.
- Christians need to be faithful in paying debts in full.
- But this deals with more than overusing your credit card.
- Paul's point is that love is always an outstanding obligation.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love each other.
- We may love incorrectly or unwisely.
- We really cannot “love too much.”
- Christ’s example of dying for his enemies is our standard.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- God's love doesn't wink at sin, but provides a remedy.
- **Romans 5:7-9** (ESV)

⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- 13:8 the one who loves another has fulfilled the law
- Where our ability to obey commandments falls short, loving others can succeed.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

Love fulfils all the other commandments ... In other words, if we genuinely love, we will not only obey the explicit commandments of the Mosaic law but will avoid doing anything that may harm others. If all believers practise genuine love, we will lead peaceful but transforming revolutions in our nations.

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



Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- 13:8 the one who loves another has fulfilled the law
- In other words, love will cause us to do what is right, even when no specific commandment can be identified.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

Life is much too complex and variegated to codify what one should do in every circumstance ... Many situations we face cannot be charted out beforehand, so Paul calls upon believers to reflect on what is the loving way to respond.

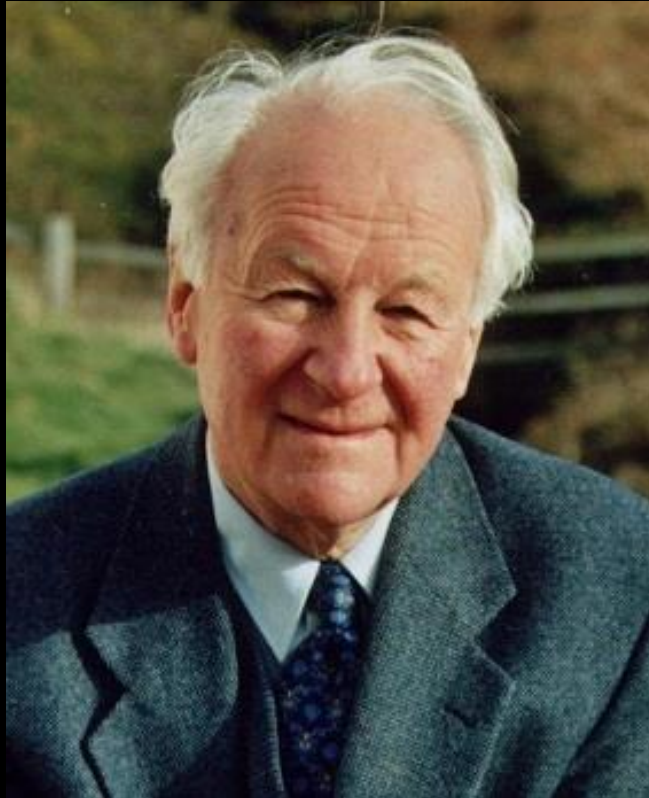
*– Thomas R. Schreiner,
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*



Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- 13:9 you shall not ... you shall not ... you shall not ... you shall not ... “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- That last command is taken from Jesus, who took it from Leviticus.
- It is really the summary of all the commandments that guide us in our dealings with others.

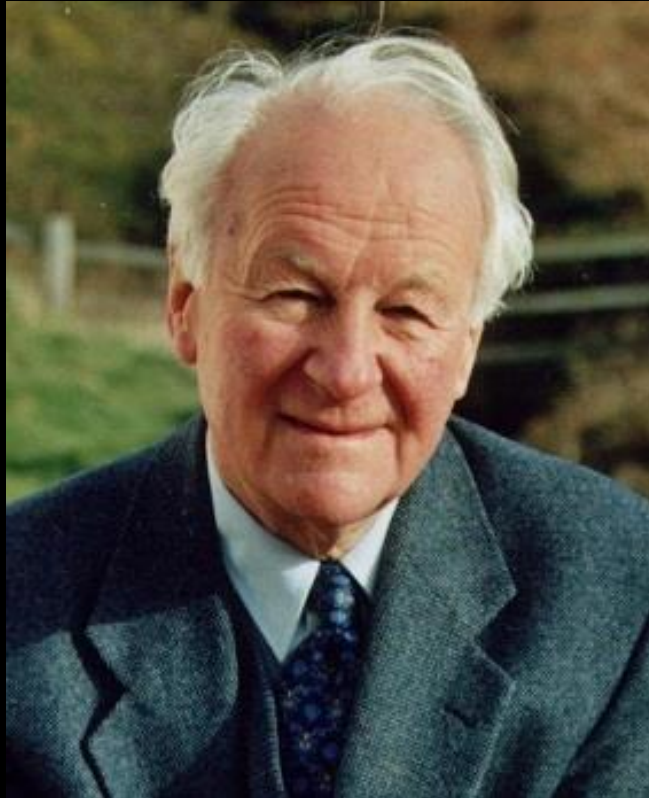
Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10



It is sometimes claimed that the command to love our neighbours as ourselves is implicitly a requirement to love ourselves ... But this is not so ... partly because agapē is selfless love which cannot be turned in on the self; and partly because according to Scripture self-love is the essence of sin ...

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

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10



Instead, we are to affirm all of ourselves which stems from the creation, while denying all of ourselves which stems from the fall. What the second commandment requires is that we love our neighbours as much as we do in fact (sinners as we are) love ourselves.

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

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- 13:9 you shall not ... you shall not ... you shall not ... you shall not ... “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- If we cared for others as we care for ourselves, our love for them would be more obvious.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10



In its context the command of Leviticus 19:18 to love one's neighbor as oneself refers to love of one's fellow Israelite. However, when Jesus answered the expert in the law who asked him, 'Who is my neighbor?' he responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan ... our neighbor is the person we encounter in need (Luke 10:25-37).

*– Colin Kruse,
Melbourne School of Theology*

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- Let's read **Luke 10:25-37** as an illustration of what Christ means to love our neighbor.
- Remember that Samaritans and Jews lived near each other, but were not friendly.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- **13:10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
- Paul is not making reference here to the religious practices found in the books of the law or *Torah*.
- He is not speaking here of offering sacrifices or keeping to specific days.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10



When Paul claims that love is the fulfillment of the law, he has in mind particularly those laws that relate to the neighbor's well-being.

*– Colin Kruse,
Melbourne School of Theology*

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- **13:10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
- His point is that when we love others we want what is best for them.
- If we all did this, there would be little need for laws – biblical or civil – to guide us in our treatment of others.

Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10

- **Galatians 5:22-24** (ESV)
- ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Love Fulfills the Law **Conclusions**



Love Fulfills the Law Conclusions



Our obligation to love one another is a debt that can never be repaid. It always remains outstanding. We can never love enough. God will always be bringing new people into our lives whom we are called to love, and there are those people we have known for a long time whom we are called to love in new ways.

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

Love Fulfills the Law **Conclusions**

- Christ's command for us to love others doesn't so much nullify the earlier commands as supersede them.
- It renders those other forms of law unnecessary.

Love Fulfills the Law **Conclusions**

A Summary of Love and the Law:

- Love takes the place of written laws governing behavior.
- Love helps us to fulfill the law, not disregard it.
- Love must accompany obedience to the commandments.

Love Fulfills the Law **Conclusions**

- Further, obedience is really the essence of love for Jesus.
- **John 14:15** (ESV)

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Love Fulfills the Law **Conclusions**

- Love protects us from oversimplifying the law of Christ.
- The law of Christ is demonstrated by a life of love.
- But this is not the love expressed by mushy feelings.
- Christ's kind of love is expressed in a life of virtue.

Love Fulfills the Law Conclusions

- **Matthew 22:35-40** (ESV)

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Love Fulfills the Law Conclusions

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

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”