

## ***Do The Right Thing Even in The Hard Times!***

*"What Happens Next" Series- Part 04*

**Share/Connect time:** Tell us about a time when you felt completely out of control. Having had this experience, what would you do differently?

**This is how I see it!** During this season of Corvid-19 virus, we have been asked to do certain things that have caused people in our nation to engage in sharply divided debates, opinions, and actions. Wear a mask or not? Stay home or publicly co-mingle? Is it a stimulus package or a bail out program? And the list of divisive issues can and will go on and on.

When asked *"How do you see it?"* our answers will be strongly influenced by our past experiences, our perspective, our core values, and sometimes even by our affiliations. No matter where we come down on the issues, each of us wants to believe we are smart, right, compassionate.

In the best of times, it is sometimes difficult to make the right decisions and follow them up with good and correct actions. In the hard times, when persecution, fear, suffering, uncertainty, and mental stress are magnified beyond our control, knowing and doing the "right thing" can be absent or illusive.

Our Scripture text for today will remind the Christ-follower that we should possess a certain perspective, promote certain core values, and portray a spirit that glorifies God. May these things guide our decisions and help us to do the right thing during the hard times!

**Book:** Romans 12:9-21

Rom 12:9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

Rom 12:10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

Rom 12:11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.

Rom 12:12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.

Rom 12:13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

Rom 12:14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them.

Rom 12:15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

Rom 12:16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

Rom 12:17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

Rom 12:18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Rom 12:19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

Rom 12:20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

Rom 12:21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

**Let's get into the Word:**

The NKJV translation of Romans 12:9 reads: *"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good."* This verse is often used as a proof text for the well-known saying, "Hate the sin, but love the sinner". While our goal is to express *"real, true, authentic LOVE"*, what steps should we take to balance these two actions or responses?

In practice, what ways can we abuse this verse?

In Romans 12:10-21, Paul rapidly gives instructions (almost a bullet list) on how to make right decisions. Each verse reflects a core value for the Christian. Together discuss the verses in the table below using the questions listed:

| Scripture  | List the Core Value(s) | What Value Does an Unbiblical World Assign? | How do I practice this value? |
|------------|------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Rom. 12:10 |                        |   |                               |
| Rom. 12:11 |                        |   |                               |
| Rom. 12:12 |                        |   |                               |
| Rom. 12:13 |                        |   |                               |

In verses 14-21, Paul addresses what our actions should be when we are persecuted. This is important for the Bible says: *“Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2 Tim. 3:12*

Do these Scriptures require us to try to carry on a relationship with a difficult person? List at least 4 “right” responses found in verses 14-21:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Which one of the above 4 responses is your greatest challenge?

Give a recent example of how you practiced verse 14.

Is there a time or situation when the correct response would be to keep our distance? Describe such a situation:

How can we determine when it is right to fight for our rights and when we should just accept being wronged?

**Homework:**

*Is there a situation where you need to apply the principles of our text? How will you go about doing it?*