

## A CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO ALL PEOPLE

(Romans 12:14-16)

...Dr. Boice writes, "today our consumerism sells everything, even the Gospel. Nothing bad is ever faced. Often, Christianity is sold by eliminating anything unpleasant or demanding. The Gospel is peddled as a cure for failure, low self-esteem, and power. How different is the Gospel of which Jesus spoke. He told of the cost of following after Him and warned that those who do so would be hated and rejected just as He was."

...Yet, when the Gospel truly gets a hold of a person, he is different from the world. God desires us to be His light in this dark world. This involves our relationships with others. At times, we will be stretched to the furthestmost.

...Paul gives another practical application of the Gospel in our lives...as we relate to people in general.

### THREE DUTIES FOR US AS WE LIVE AND MOVE AMONG ALL PEOPLE

...This involves not only believers, but more importantly, the unbelievers near us.

#### I. We Are To Bless All People, Even Our Enemies. (v.14)

- A. God, through Paul, commands us to bless those who persecute us.
  - 1. If you know Christ and live for Him you can count on persecution. If you never have any, check to make sure you are really saved. (John 15:18-21, 16:1-3)
  - 2. We suffer and are hated because we are different from them. (2 Corinth 5:17)
    - a. Christians don't belong to this world.
    - b. Christians are identified with Christ. Unbelievers hate God...vented upon us.
- B. We are not only to refrain from wishing them harm, but more, we are to wish them good. "bless"
  - 1. We are never to curse them. We are to pray for them.
  - 2. This is contrary to human nature. You can't do this in and of yourself.
- C. This duty paraphrases the Lord's own words. (Luke 6:27-28) "love your enemies, do good..."  
...this really means that we are to treat our enemies as though they were friends!!  
...We are to seek out and, as far as possible, effect the good of other people, even our enemies.
- D. Jesus is our example. While on the cross, He prayed for His enemies. "Father, forgive them..."  
...Stephen is also a wonderful example of this duty. (Acts 7:60) "Lord, do not hold this sin..."

#### II. We Are To Empathize With All, Whether In Joy Or In Sadness. (v.15)

- A. We are told to rejoice with those who are rejoicing. At first, this seems easy to follow. NO!
  - 1. Rejoicing requires more love than weeping. Chrysostom wrote, "it is natural to sympathize with sorrow, it requires a noble soul to rejoice in other's joy."  
...the flesh does not lead us to rejoice, but tempts us with resentment.
  - 2. It is right for us to rejoice in the blessings, honors, and welfare of others...  
...The one who rejoices at another's trouble displeases the Lord.
- B. It is also distinctively Christian to be sensitive to the disappointments, hardships, and sorrows of others. "Weep with those who weep." Our fallen world is filled with broken hearts and lives..
  - 1. Remember our God is a God of compassion. (Jonah 4:2)
  - 2. Jesus wept in compassion at the tomb of Lazarus. (John 11:35)
  - 3. Furthermore, MacArthur tells that we should weep for those who should weep.

#### III. We Are To Be A Humble, Easy To Get-Along-With People. (v.16)

- ...Again, we see this in Jesus, who had the common people thronging around Him.
- A. We should be willing to associate with people of low position. That is what we are. (1 Cor 1:26f)  
...We need to stop thinking of people being "beneath us." Instead, come to regard them as people made for everlasting fellowship with God.
  - B. We must not be partial. There is no aristocracy in the church. No upper crust..
    - 1. James 2:1-4, 9 gives the clearest teaching on impartiality.
    - 2. This does not mean we should avoid those in high positions or of wealth.
  - C. Pride is the hindrance. Don't have too high of an estimation of yourself.  
..."a conceited, self-promoting Christian is a serious contradiction."

### LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES: