



GOD'S VISION FOR A NEW HUMANITY | A CHANGED RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER (32)

May 3, 2026

Romans 12:9-13

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Discussion Question

- Who or what was your first love?

WORSHIP 10 MIN

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Psalm 36

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,

Your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;

Your judgments are like the great deep;

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house,

And you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life;

In your light do we see light.

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 12:9-13

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

BIBLE STUDY 40 MIN

Summary

We are continuing our sermon series entitled *God's Vision for a New Humanity* throughout which we are studying the latter part of the book of Romans. While much of Romans expounds upon the theology of the gospel message, chapters 12-15 focus on the practical implications of the gospel on the life and relationships of the believer. This week's passage focuses on our changed relationship to one another. With the transition at verse 9, Paul moves from the discussion of gifts and a changed relationship to ourselves (Romans 12:3-8) to another implication of the renewed mind (Romans 12:1-2). Here love emerges as the governing principle of Christian community, summarized well by one commentator who said that in this passage "all our duty towards one another is summed up in one word, and that a sweet word: love."

Up to this point in Romans, references to love have been to the love of God. For example, God's love demonstrated on the cross (Romans 5:8), poured into our hearts by the Spirit (Romans 5:5), and unfailing in its hold upon us (Romans 8:35, 39). This is characteristic of the book: Paul establishes what God has done before laying out the pattern for the Christian life. The practical flows from the theological. So when he now turns to the love Christians show one another, he is not introducing a new or independent demand; rather, he is describing the necessary outflow of what God has already accomplished. The love of Christians for others is grounded in (and only made possible by) the love of God expressed in the gift of his Son (John 13:34; 1 John 4:9-11). Such love is the mark of the renewed mind. It is not an optional virtue to be cultivated but the natural outflow of a life transformed by the gospel of God's love (cf. Galatians 5:13-14).

Paul unfolds the love we are meant to share in Christian community through a rapid-fire volley of short, sharp injunctions. These are so compressed that in the Greek, most omit finite verbs entirely, lending them an almost breathless urgency. Some commentators have dismissed this section as simply a random collection of miscellaneous instructions, but as English pastor John Stott observed, "each staccato imperative adds a fresh ingredient to the apostle's recipe for love" — multiple ingredients forming a comprehensive and searching portrait of Christian character. The portrait is both comprehensive and coherent. These are not miscellaneous virtues randomly assembled, but they form a unified vision of a community ordered by love at every level: in its inner disposition, its family life, its worship, its suffering, its generosity, and its posture toward the lowest and least. The demanding nature of these exhortations is inseparable from the grace that makes them possible. The renewed mind, transformed by the gospel, now sees others through the eyes of him who first loved us. In this way, the Church becomes what N.T. Wright calls "a small working model of the new creation," a community where love governs all relationships and bears visible witness to the transforming power of the gospel (John 13:35; Westminster Confession of Faith 26.1).

1. Looking at the Bible

- Share with the group some key phrases or ideas that stood out to you from the passage.

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Looking at these verses, how has Jesus already done for us the things that are listed? How might remembering that Jesus associated with us, the lowly, while we were still his "persecutors" change these verses from a burden we must carry into a beauty we get to reflect?
- How has receiving this love from Christ and/or from his people had an impact on your life?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- Verse 10 challenges us to outdo one another in showing honor. When you see someone else being praised, what is your immediate internal reaction?

4. Looking at our World

- How does contemporary secular culture tend to define love, and in what ways does this passage challenge or correct that definition?
- What steps can you take to make these expressions of love more apparent in your community group, in the church, and to people around you?

PRAYER
15 MIN

Pray for each other: Share any prayer requests you have.

Pray for yourselves and for the other members of your group to be empowered to love others radically.