

Romans 13:11-14

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PRINCIPLE #1 – LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF BECAUSE TIME IS RUNNING OUT. (V. 11-12a) OR OBEY GOD’S COMMANDS BECAUSE TIME IS RUNNING OUT.

Romans 13:11-12a, *“And do this, understanding the present time, the hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.”*

EXPLANATION – When Paul says, “And do this”, he is referring at least to what is found in the immediately preceding verses. Therefore he is saying, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” However it is possible that in saying, “And do this” Paul is referring to the broader context, extending it all the way back to Romans 12:1. And if that is the case, Paul is saying. *“Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Diligently and cheerfully use the spiritual gift God has given you to build up the Body of Christ. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, but leave room for God’s wrath. Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. Submit yourself to the governing authorities. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe someone taxes, then pay the taxes; if you owe someone money, then pay them money; if you owe someone respect, then give them respect; if you owe someone honor then give them honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, ...Love your neighbor as yourself.”* (Romans 12:1-13:9)

HOW SHOULD WE DO THIS?

Romans 13:11-12a, *“And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.”*

In other words, we should not be apathetic, haphazard or lazy in obeying these commands. Rather we should be alertly, diligently and earnestly obeying these commands because the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the completion of our salvation is closer now than it was at the moment we first confessed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some people might read verse 12, where it says, “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here,” and say, “Wait a minute. Paul wrote this almost 2000 years ago, and he said the Second Coming of Christ was close then, and Christ hasn’t returned yet. I don’t think we have anything to worry about Christ isn’t coming back and if He does come back it’s not going to be during our lifetime.

Was Paul wrong when he said that Christ’s return was almost here?

No. I wouldn’t say that Paul was wrong. However, it is difficult to understand. Maybe we need to remember what Peter said in 2 Peter 3:3-10, “... *you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this coming He promised?” But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.*”

Regardless of whether or not the Lord Jesus Christ returns during our lifetime, the truth is that the day is “the night is nearly over; the day is almost here” for many of us. I know that there is a good chance I have lived over 2/3 of my life on earth. I also know that there is a good chance that many of you have lived more than 3/4 of your life on earth. Even the young people have no guarantee of a long life. None of us know how much time we have left before our life on earth ends.

We all live on the edge of eternity. The night may be nearly over for any one of us whether we are old or young. So if we are ever going to “offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” we can’t wait much longer. If we are ever going to “not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds”, we can’t wait much longer.

We must wake up, be alert, diligent and earnest in obeying the Lord’s commands. We must wake up, be alert, diligent and earnest in loving our neighbor as we love ourselves.

ILLUSTRATION —

APPLICATION — Are we apathetic, haphazard and lazy when it comes to obeying these commands and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves? Or are we alert diligent, and earnest in obeying these commands and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves? The Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:14, “... *since you are looking forward to this (the second coming of Christ), make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him.*”

The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:28, *“And now, dear children, continue in Him, so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming.”*

PRINCIPLE #2 – CLEAN UP FROM YOUR DEEDS OF DARKNESS. (V. 12b-13)

Romans 13:12b-13, *“So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.”*

EXPLANATION – The second coming of Christ is always viewed as a reason for a person to live a holy life. So Paul tells us that all Christians including himself are to put aside the deeds of darkness which are encouraged by the prince of darkness and behave decently. The things we are to put off can be broken down into three categories:

1) “ORGIES AND DRUNKENNESS”

The word translated “orgies” describes boisterous, partying and carousing. Of course we all know what drunkenness means. In other words, Paul is saying, “Give up the party life. Give up carousing. Give up living for your own selfish desires. You can’t live like that and obey God’s commands.”

2) “IMMORALITY AND DEBAUCHERY”

The word “immorality” describes a person who does not value sexual fidelity, but seeks sexual gratification when and where they can. This word “immorality” would include, premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, and pornography.

The word “debauchery” not only describes immorality. It describes a person who no longer tries to conceal their evil deeds. They don’t care who sees them engage in evil; nor do they care what people think about them. In other words, Paul is saying, give up living for sex. You can’t love people and live for sex. You will destroy them, others and yourself in the process.

3) “DISSENSION AND JEALOUSY”

The word translated “Dissension” means “quarrels, disputes, strife”. The word translated “jealousy” describes the spirit, which cannot be content with what it has and looks with jealousy and envy on every blessing given to someone else.

In other words, Paul is saying, “Don’t live for causing strife, dissension and jealousy.” Some people can’t seem to enjoy themselves unless they get people fighting either with them or with each other. You can’t love people if you quarrel and fight with them. You can’t love people if you are jealous, and envious of them. You can’t obey God’s commands and love people if you are competing with them for position, power and prestige.

When we become believers in Jesus Christ we are to put aside the deeds of darkness orgies and drunkenness, sexual immorality, debauchery, dissension and jealousy.”

The Apostle Paul wrote the Colossian Christians and said in Colossians 3:5-10, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your sin nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.”

ILLUSTRATION – John Kitna - Quarterback of the (Bengals – 2001-2005, Lions – 2006-2008, Cowboys - 2000 – 2011) - Sports Spectrum - Oct, 1999

During his first two years of college (Central Washington University), He drank until he’d black out, or he drank until he was stumbling drunk. He began shoplifting, stealing food, clothes, and bikes. Eventually he was arrested for petty theft. He hit his lowest point in October 1993 when his girlfriend Jennifer caught him with another girl. Kitna says, “I was 19 or 20 and my brother, who is 5 years younger than me, looked up to me. He was doing the things I was doing. Not only was I destroying my life, but I was destroying his life.”

Seeing the trouble he was bringing upon himself, his girlfriend and his brother, Kitna called Eric Boles, a former college teammate who was a wide receiver with the New York Jets at the time for help. Eric explained the plan of salvation to Kitna and told him he could pray the sinner’s prayer with him over the phone. Kitna was uncomfortable praying the sinner’s prayer at that time and refused to pray.

Several weeks later while watching an NFL game on TV by himself, John Kitna got down on his knees and talked to God. This is what John Kitna said, “I had this unbelievable burden. But as soon as I prayed, all that guilt and burden was lifted off me. Everything changed in my life.” Kitna quit stealing, cussing, drinking, and womanizing. The girlfriend who caught him with another girl became his wife a year later. There was also a chain reaction to Kitna’s decision to receive Christ. His brother became a Christian. His father accepted Christ and his mother rededicated her life to Christ.

Kitna the partier suddenly became Kitna the preacher. A weekly Bible study he began in his apartment grew from a few people to 70 within two years. Many of the friends he used to get drunk with were the ones coming to his Bible study.

One of those friends was a teammate of Kitna’s by the name of Larry Bellinger. Larry said, “John told me what had happened to his life. It was so obvious. He wasn’t going to parties anymore. He wasn’t getting drunk anymore. He told me I needed to get my life right. I got convicted.” Kitna said, “Jesus Christ has made my life good. His grace and His forgiveness have changed me.”

APPLICATION – Have you placed your faith and trust in Christ Jesus as your personal savior? Has he changed you? Have you put off and continue to put off partying, carousing, premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, pornography, quarrels, disputes, strife, jealousy, greed, anger, rage, malice, slander filthy language and lying?

PRINCIPLE #3 – DRESS UP IN THE ARMOR OF JESUS CHRIST (V. 12, 14)

Romans 13:12, “... *put on the armor of light.*”

Rom. 13:14, “*Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*”

EXPLANATION – Paul is saying, “Having laid aside the garment of sin, now clothe yourselves more and more with the robe of Christ’s righteousness,

ILLUSTRATION – When I got up this morning I put on my clothes. And I am sure you are glad I did. I put on my clothes with the intention that they would be part of me all day. My clothes will go where I go and do what I do. They will cover me and make me presentable to others. That is the purpose of clothes.

In the same way, the Apostle Paul is saying to us, “Put on Jesus Christ when we get up in the morning. Make sure that He is a part of our relationships and activities all day. Make sure that He goes where we go and acts through us in everything we do. Then we will have the power to carefully, diligently and earnestly obey the Lord’s command and love our neighbors as we love ourselves. The secret to carefully, diligently and earnestly obeying the Lord’s commands and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves is simply putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:12-14, “... *as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*”

Galatians 5:16-23, “... *I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ...The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.*”

In the last phrase of Romans 13:14, Paul points out that putting off the deeds of darkness and clothing ourselves with Christ must be a clean cut thing. We must not have any reservations, or thoughts of going back to our old way of life.

Romans 13:14, “*Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*”

ILLUSTRATION – Ray Stedman said, “I heard of a man who was delivered in his Christian experience from smoking. He had the habit of smoking that bothered him, and he was delivered from it. He took all his paraphernalia -- his pipes, his tobacco, and his cans, and

everything -- and dug a hole in the back yard and buried them there. Then he put a stone over the spot so he would know where to dig in case he couldn't hold out! You see, that is making provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."

APPLICATION – Do you make sure that Jesus Christ is a part of all your daily relationships and activities? Do you realize that the secret to carefully, diligently and earnestly obeying the Lord's commands and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves is simply putting on the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you made a clean break with the deeds of darkness? Or do you still think and plan how you can gratify your old sin nature?

- **PRINCIPLE #1 – LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF BECAUSE TIME IS RUNNING OUT. (V. 11-12a) OR OBEY GOD'S COMMANDS BECAUSE TIME IS RUNNING OUT.**
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SPECIFIC APPLICATION – There is no doubt Satan will continue to tempt us to get involved in the deeds of darkness because we are still sinners. But as God's children we must feed on God's word and think about what is true, what is honorable, what is right, what is pure, what is lovely and what is admirable, because sin begins in the mind.

As God's children, we must use our minds to remind ourselves of Christ's eternal presence with us rather than using our minds to meditate on how we can become involved in partying, carousing, illicit sex, dissensions, strife, jealousy, greed, anger, rage, malice, slander filthy language and lying. If we feed our flesh, we will fail; but if we feed our new nature the nourishing things of the Spirit we will succeed. J. B. Phillips' translation of this last verse: Romans 13:14, *"Let us be Christ's men from head to foot, and give no chance to the flesh to*