

Love Fulfills the Law
Romans 13:8-14:23
(Lesson #23)



13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Vs 8 - Paul's advice is simple, if someone has a legitimate claim on a believer the believer should promptly and properly fulfill that obligation. **Do not withhold from anyone what is rightfully due them.** Settle your debts swiftly.

Also, do not owe anyone, anything... **With one exception. The debt to love is never fully discharged.**

9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. **10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." (Ro 12:9-10 ESV)

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' **44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," (Mt 5:43-44 ESV)

You and I are called to love our enemies. You and I have been called to follow Christ. We have been called to love like the one who loved us while we were enemies:

"but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Ro 5:8 ESV)

You and I are called to be Christians!

Vs 8b - The word translated fulfill is the Greek word is πληρόω (pleroo). It is to **fill**, to make **full**, to **cause to abound**, to render **full**, to **consummate**, to **carry to the end**, or to **render perfect**.

So we **fulfill**, we **complete**, we carry to **the ultimate goal**, the righteous demands of the law when we **love one another**.

Now Paul has **not addressed** loving God. So this fulfilling is only in relationship to laws about how we behave with one another.

But do not miss the point, **you are most like God when you love your enemies**, you are the **best reflection of the Savior** when **you love like He loved us**, even when we were enemies.

"For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."" (Ga 5:14 ESV)

"The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1Ti 1:5 ESV)

"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well." (Jas 2:8 ESV)

When believers love other people, in particular their enemies, they "fulfill" the **righteous requirements of the law**.

What I believe Paul saying: All the laws given about our relationships with one another can be summed up and indeed are fulfilled in loving one another.

What Paul is not saying: Go out and love your brother and that will save you. “The wages of sin is death.”

Vs 9 - Paul quotes only those **second tablet commands** that have to do with how we treat one another.

The simple act of loving others fulfills all the complex demands of the law. Now likely Paul is referring to the **Mosaic law**, for he quotes from the **Mosaic law**.

Jesus sums up the matter later as recorded by Matthew, when he is speaking to a lawyer, who the Pharisees had sent to catch Jesus in his words:

“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.”” (Mt 22:37-40 ESV)

Paul’s summary of the second part of the decalogue being summed up and fulfilled in loving others is likely a reflection of Jesus’ teaching on this very point.

Vs 10 - **So in summation**, we might say that loving others accomplishes the **intent** of the **Mosaic law** as it relates to **the treatment of others**.

Let’s be honest, if you love others, you are not going to **cheat with their spouse, steal their stuff, or lie to them**.

Loving others means we seek their good, not their harm. Now, it does not mean if I love others, that has freed me from the laws I have already broken. Equally, you and I must recognize that we **do not love others perfectly**. We do not love others to merit salvation.

11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

All of a sudden, there is an abrupt shift, a metaphor is introduced, and the intention of the metaphor is clear.

Vs 11 – Indeed, this you know, the hour is come for you to wake up! **Salvation has drawn much closer than when you first believed.**

Vs 12 - **The night is far gone**, many hours have passed, **the day is at hand**, the day is close, in fact the day is dawning, the sun is rising. So then, cast off the works of darkness, the imagery is the way one would cast off the blankets.

Quick, out of bed, and once out of bed, like you would, put on your tunic to go outside, so **put on the armor of light!**

Paul **shifts the metaphor**, and he says to put on the **armor of light**. The Greek word translated armor is ὅπλον (hoplon). It literally means arms that are used in warfare.

What **“armor”** is Paul talking about? Of course, he is talking about the **armor of God!**

This idea of armor was not birthed in the mind of Paul, his **illusion** and even possible **reference** goes all the way back to the Old Testament: **The illusion is likely from Isaiah 59:17-18.**

Let's set the context then come back and make the point: *"1 ¶ Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; 2 but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness."* (Isa 59:1-3 ESV)

The set time in the context of this prophecy is **before the redeemer comes (verse 20)**. So before the redeemer comes **God's people will refuse to obey him**, they will **act evil towards one another**, they will **not pursue what is right, no one will act for the good**, on the **behalf of his brother**.

Then we read where Paul's allusion comes from: *"16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. 17 He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. 18 According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment."* (Isa 59:16-18 ESV)

What Paul is saying is twofold:

- 1) This is what Christ did for you; He took up his armor on your behalf.
- 2) Therefore you take up His armor (the armor of light) or as you are probably thinking the (armor of God) and act in ways consistent with how Christ acted, in your behalf!

Paul provides and expanded discussion of the armor of God in Ephesians 6:13 *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, (Eph 6:11-18).*

When **Pastor taught the series from Eph 5 and 6** he did a fantastic job covering each of these pieces, so I will simply echo his summations here:

1. The Belt of Truth = Personal Authenticity
2. The Breastplate of Righteousness = Life Integration
3. The Shoes of Peace = Healthy Relationships
4. The Shield of Faith = Good Decisions in Moment of Crisis (MOC)
5. The Helmet of Salvation = Gospel Confidence
6. The Sword of the Spirit = The Holy Spirit Directed Word
7. Prayer = Divine Trust

Vs 13 - The church in Rome in 62AD and you and I today, **live in a critical time in Slavic history.**

Although it is the last part of the last watch of the night, you and I need to live properly as in the daytime. Not in this list of vices the world is absorbed in:

- 1) **Orgies** – the word here translated orgies, is probably not meant to be that specific, but rather is broader meaning **riotous, nocturnal** activities, that would go from house to house.
- 2) **Drunkenness** – Yep, you know what that means.
- 3) **Sexual Immorality** – lewdness and all forms of sexual immorality
- 4) **Sensuality** – Unbridled lust, shamelessness, or excess.
- 5) **Quarreling** – Contention or strife

6) **Jealousy** – envy or contention

Now this list is not exhaustive, but representative of how the world walks, and now Paul is going to remind us of how we should walk.

Vs 14 - You and I live in the Romans 7 reality. We are born again, but we have not been completely delivered from the old nature, not yet. Therefore each and every day, like we would put on a jacket to head out on a cool morning, we must “**put on**” the **Lord Jesus!**

Put on His excellence, put on his moral virtue, put on His holiness, put on His righteousness, put on his loveliness, put on his lowliness.

And make no **provision for the flesh, allow no quarter, do not give the flesh any space.**

OK, so now in closing we need to get dead level honest with ourselves here. **What are the works of the flesh that you need to make no provision to?** Paul provides an **expanded discussion** of the works of the flesh to the church in Galatia. It is not exhaustive, but it helps expand the things that are old nature desires to pull us to:

“19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Ga 5:19-21 ESV)

Paul is reminding us that we should make no provision for the flesh...

Now last week, I mentioned that we should disobey civil authorities when they call us to disobey God. After class one of the class members asked me to bring specific examples from the Bible. I have brought 10.

- 1) **Hebrew Midwives and their decision not to obey Pharaoh and kill male children (Ex 1:15-21).**
- 2) Moses Parents and their decision not to obey pharaoh and cast their son into the Nile (Ex 1:22-2:1-6).
- 3) Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah made the decision to not break their Jewish dietary laws (Da 1:1-9 ESV).
- 4) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego disobeyed the command to worship the golden image (Dan 3:8-18).
- 5) Daniel’s decision to disobey the command to only worship the king for 30 days (Da 6:3-13 ESV)
- 6) **Saul’s command that Jonathon was to die for disobeying his order about eating (1Sa 14:23-45 ESV)**
- 7) Mordecai’s disobedience to the King’s command to
- 8) fall down and worship Haman (Es 3:1-6 ESV)
- 9) **Peter and John when they were commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:13-22).**
- 10) **The apostles had been commanded to stop teaching Jesus and they kept teaching in his name (Ac 5:17-40 ESV).**
- 11) The wise men disobeyed Herod and did not go back and tell him where Jesus was (Mat 2:1-15).

14:1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. 2 One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. 3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. 4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

- 1) **One person, the Gentile believers, (strong person) believes they may eat any and everything.**

2) The other person, the Jews who have become Christians, (weak person) still have the trappings of their Judaism and thus they only eat vegetables.

Vs 1 - So Paul opens with a discussion about people who are “weak in faith.” At this point we are not exactly sure who these people are, although I have already told you and you will see it develop.

So in reference to those who are weak in the faith:

- 1) We are to welcome them.
- 2) We are not to quarrel about opinions. So this weakness in the faith, at least in some cases can come with a strong opinion and we are not to quarrel about these issues.

Vs 2 – So the initial dividing along weak and strong first has to do with food.

- A) One group believes: ***we may eat anything*** (this is the strong person).
- B) For about the other group Paul says: ***while the weak person eats only vegetables***

Theologians believe these are Jews who have converted to Christianity who still have concerns about Jewish rituals involving food. Because they cannot verify that the meats sold in the market meet all kosher requirements, were properly drained of their blood, and have not been offered to idols. They simply shifted to eating vegetables.

“But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king’s food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.” (Da 1:8 ESV)

No doubt, some Jewish Christians, living in Rome would have seen themselves in the **exact same circumstance** that Daniel and his friends, and thus would have taken the exact same step.

The difference they were missing, Christ had freed us from the Mosaic Law (Rom 7:5-6; Rom 6:14; Gal 3:28-29; Heb 7:11-14).

Vs 3 – Paul gives two simple and clear commands, that require very little additional information:

The strong should not “**despise**” look down on or have a low opinion of the weaker brother or sister and the weak should not “**pass judgment**” on the stronger brother or sister.

FOR>>> God has welcomed them both!

Now when Paul says pass judgment, he means to declare and determine the motives of their heart, he means to declare and determine sinful or holy. YOU are not to PASS JUDGEMENT on others!

But, you and I make judgments all day long. As moral agents of God, human beings, we make judgments all the time. But we should not pass judgment on people. That is God’s realm, that is God’s business.

Vs 4 – Weak or strong, who are you to pass judgment upon another man’s servant. **Again, who do you think you are looking at a believers, based on something on the outside and passing judgment?**

This is wrong for a number of reasons, let me give you a few:

- 1) The most obvious, although we are to judge all things (1Cor 2:15), we do not pass judgment on other people, sinful or holy. So the first reason, and most obvious reason, **we are commanded not to.**

- 2) **We cannot see the heart.** We only see the outside.

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” (1Sa 16:7 ESV) Only God sees the heart.

3) You and I are not the pass judgment, **we are not God! It is the Lord who is the judge and who shall judge His people!** (Heb 10:30)

So you and I are not to pass judgment on a brother or sister. **QUESTION:** What should we do if we see a brother or sister overtaken in a sin?

“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.” (Ga 6:1 ESV)

So this requires us to look at what is happening, make a judgment that it is wrong, not pass judgment on our brother, but making a judgment about the situation, and responding. Then go and seek to restore that person.

Can I give you one more:

“But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.” (1Co 11:31 ESV)

One more? (Last one I promise):

“14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 ¶ I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.” (1Co 10:14-15 ESV)

We are to make judgments of right and wrong, but not pronounce eternal judgment on a person who does something we do not agree with or we think is wrong. We do not know the heart and we are not God.

The word translated slave is **οικέτης (oiketes)**. It is the word that means a slave who serves in the house, a domesticated slave.

The servant stands or falls before his actual master, not before you and I! AND, the Lord will cause him to stand...

5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Vs 5-6 - Here Paul shifts his discussion from what a person eats, to the calendar and the esteeming of some days above other days.

Of course, this is about the Jews, who had festival days that they held in high honor, and more importantly, the keeping of the Sabbath. Honoring Saturday, as an ultimate day of rest.

Here Paul says something that would have been shocking for the Jewish Christians.

Be convinced in your own mind, no longer a command, the Mosaic law has been fulfilled in Christ. The one who honors certain days should do so in honor of the Lord. The one who is concerned about what he eats, should do so in honor of the Lord. The one who abstains, should do so in honor of the Lord!

Vs 7-8 - It is not about these things we do, that no longer matter, **but instead about living our lives for Christ and for His glory.** Live or die, we are the Lord's and we should do what we do for His glory!

Vs 9 - He lived and died for us, He lives again for us. He is Lord of all! Live for Him!

Vs 10 - Here Paul reminds us, rather than passing judgment on our brothers, we should recognize that God is the ultimate judge, and we will all stand before His judgment seat! He is the ultimate judge.

All will stand before the judgment seat of God!

Vs 11 - To solidify his point, Paul quotes (Is 45:23) with slight modifications:

"By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.'" (Isa 45:23 ESV)

God is the judge, not you and I!

Vs 12 - This is a future tense reality that each of us will **"give an account"** of ourselves to God.

People understand this in a multiplicity of ways. The important point for us is that God is the judge, we answer to him. We judge right and wrong, but we do not **"pass judgment"** about people!

13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. 15 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. 16 So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Vs 13 - This is the **third time** that Paul has warned us about **passing judgment on one another.**

Here he says, we should rather decide to NEVER put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a fellow believer!

Vs 14 - Now this is the death nail, along with other verses, to the keeping of days and the eating of certain foods. Paul is pursued that within itself, nothing of itself is unclean, as it once was under the Mosaic Covenant.

Vs 15-16 - If, I use my freedom to eat anything I want in such a manner as to offend my brother or sister in Christ. **I am not walking in Love!** Remember:

- *Ro 12:9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*
- *Ro 12:10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*
- *Ro 13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.*
- *Ro 13:9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*
- *Ro 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

If love is the summation of God's law. Then to act unlovingly is a violation of the sum and substance of God's law!

We do not want our diet to injure a brother who does not yet understand the freedom we have in Christ!

Equally, verse 16, do not let what is right, appear to be evil!

Vs 17-18 - The kingdom of God is not about food, it is not about drink. It is about righteousness bestowed upon us by Christ, it is about being at peace with God through the sacrifice of Jesus, it is about joy, true joy that only comes from knowing you are in a right standing with God through the sacrifice of His Son for your sins!

Put all of this into practice in serving Christ, and you will be acceptable (pleasing) to God and accepted by men.

Vs 19 - Here is the sum! Pursue not what food you eat, or what you drink, or how you honor Saturday. Instead, pursue all those things that make for peace and mutual uplifting or up-building. Let's work on those things that are mutually edifying.

20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. 21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. 22 The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. 23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin."

Vs 20 - Here again, Paul is clear, **in the New Covenant everything is clean**, but you do not want to damage a brother, or cause a sister to stumble because of what you eat.

Vs 21 - If eating meat or drinking wine might cause your brother to stumble, do not do it! **Do all things in love.**

Vs 22 - We might translate his idea is hold to the faith that you have and keep it between yourself and God.

Or even closer, the **personal convictions that you have**, keep those as a faith matter between you and God.

Where there is freedom, live there. Follow your non-biblical convictions on your own. Hold them between you and God. Do not force them on fellow brothers.

Vs 23 - If we **sin against our conscience** we are not acting in faith and thus it is sin.

If you feel like you should not have a TV in your home, do not have a TV. But understand God may not be saying that to someone else.

If you feel like you should not eat pork, do not eat pork, but understand God may not be saying that to your brother or sister.