

Nov 12, 2023



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

We follow in Jesus' footsteps when we use our freedom to choose building others up instead of serving ourselves

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Jesus, thank You for setting me free. Give me wisdom and grace to exercise my freedom in ways that truly honor You and bless others

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being

(1 Cor 10:24 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", July 11, 2022)

Series: God's Law Is Love

**UNIT 3: Christ Frees,
Law Enslaves**

NEXT WEEK

**Freedom from the World
(Col 2:16-23)**

Freedom in Love Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor 13:8-13

Lesson Background and Introduction

Today's lesson moves us to a section that is more practical (what we are to do) in content as Paul shifts focus. Chapter 12 begins this section by challenging readers to offer themselves as "a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). What follows describes what that kind of life should look like in a Christian's daily conduct. In the seven verses in Romans 13 that precede our first segment of text for this lesson, Paul examined a topic that should be of special interest to Christians of any century: our attitude toward civic authorities. The key concept here is one of obligation, which Paul uses to make a transition from how we are to relate to those authorities to how we are to relate to one another. 1 Corinthians 13, the second of two segments of today's lesson, features Paul's timeless and matchless explanation of Christian love. The larger context of this chapter is Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in chapters 12-14. Possession and use of spiritual gifts had become a source of great contention within the Corinthian church. Paul was concerned that undue focus on these gifts could distract the Corinthian believers from more crucial concerns. Should that happen, the result would be a fracturing of the unity in Christ that is to characterize followers of Jesus.

The actions and attitudes of Christian love improve our spiritual view in critical areas. Without it, we are somewhat like the man in the village of Bethsaida to whom Jesus gave sight in a two-stage miracle (Mark 8:22-26). After "stage one," Jesus asked him if he could see anything. The man replied, "I see men as trees, walking." After "stage two," the man could see clearly. Jesus was not content to leave the man's ability to see in stage one. Neither is Jesus content that our own spiritual vision remain partially obscured regarding whom we should or should not extend his love through our own attitudes and actions. The process can be seen as two mutually reinforcing, upward-spiraling reciprocals. First, as the clarity of our spiritual vision improves, we will begin to see more and more opportunities to express the love of Christ to others; and as we express that love, the clarity of our spiritual vision will be improved. Second, this improved vision will cause us to see that to minister to others in love is to serve God (Matthew 25:34-40); "But whoever loves God is known by God" (1 Corinthians 8:3; compare and contrast Galatians 4:9; 1 John 4:19-21). Because of Christ's love, we do not view people as the world does. We see them as those for whom Jesus gave his life and who need "the message of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). The same love moves us to respond to those in need (1 John 3:16-18), the kind of "neighbor love" modeled by the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33). Those who have been baptized into Christ "have clothed [ourselves] with Christ." Given that fact, it is (or should be) only natural also to "put on love" as Paul told the Colossian Christians to do (Colossians 3:14).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Love and the Law (Rom 13:8-10)

Love the only debt we owe (8)

- Debt of loving God and neighbor (Matt 22:36-40)
- Debt of living in the light of love (1 John 2:9-10)
- Debt of doing everything in love (1 Cor 16:13-14)
- Debt of walking in love (2 John 1:5-6)

Love fulfilled the Law (9-10)

- Love fulfilled the Law by summing it up (Gal 5:14)
- Love fulfilled the Law by binding all things in unity (Col 3:14)
- Love fulfilled the Law through the golden rule (Matt 7:12)
- Love fulfilled the Law by giving to the poor (Matt 19:21)
- Love fulfilled the Law by loving one another (1 John 4:21)
- Love fulfilled the Law through obedience to God (2 John 6)

Permanence of love (1 Cor 13:8-13)

Love never fails (8)

- Love never fails because it provides us hope (Rom 5:5)
- Love never fails because nothing can separate us from it (Rom 8:35)
- Love never fails because Jesus prayed about it (Luke 22:32)
- Love never fails because it remains eternally (1 Cor 13:13)
- Love never fails because it counts to God (Gal 5:6)

Love is complete and perfect (9-12)

- Love is complete in that it can cover a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8)
- Love is complete because it never does harm (Rom 13:10)
- Love is complete it is rooted and grounded in God (Eph 3:17, 19)
- Love is complete it helps our maturity in God (Eph 4:15-15)

Greatness of love (13)

- Love is great because the Holy Spirit provides it (2 Tim 1:7)
- Love is great because it proves we have been born of God (1 John 4:7-9)
- Love is great because it builds up (1 Cor 8:1)
- Love is great because through it we know God (1 Cor 8:3)
- Love is great because we can do everything in love (1 Cor 16:14)
- Love is great because it is commanded (2 John 5)