

That We Might Bear Fruit For God

Lesson 13

The Christian mind renewed to exercise of Christ-like love that overcomes evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21).

By F. M. Perry

“(9) Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. (10) Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; (11) not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; (12) rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, (13) contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. (14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. (15) Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. (16) Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. (17) Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (19) Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. (20) ‘But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.’ (21) Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:9-21 NASV).

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The Christian mind renewed to exercise of Christ-like love that overcomes evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21).

Questions for study.

1. In the statement, "Let love be without hypocrisy (dissimulation)," what is the basic meaning of the word "love?" How do we get this kind of love? What sectors of the inner man are involved in this kind of love? The will? The emotional sector? The intellect? Considering the origin of this kind of love, how might our exercise of it become tainted with the evil of hypocrisy? (Romans 12:9).
2. In the statement, "Be devoted (kindly affectioned) to one another in brotherly love," what is the basic meaning of the word translated "brotherly love?" What is the basic meaning of the word translated "devoted" ("kindly affectioned")? How do we get this kind of love? What sectors of the inner man are involved in carrying out this instruction? The will? The emotional sector? The intellect? (Romans 12:10).
3. What do you think is the Holy Spirit's reason for instructing us to "give preference to one another in honor?" (Romans 12:10).
4. How and for what reasons did Jesus exercise both "AGAPE" type love and "PHILEO" type brotherly love in His life? Give examples of Jesus' expression of these kinds of love as revealed in the New Testament
5. How can a Christian implement in his life the "abhorrence of evil" and the "cleavance to good" as instructed in Romans 12:9? (Consider the problem as set up by Paul in Romans 7:19. Then consider the remedy revealed in Romans 8:1-4 and the step by step process of renewing the mind given in Romans 6:6-15.)

6. What is the meaning of the phrase, "fervent in spirit," found in Romans 12:11? How does God intend the Christian's personal spirit to be involved in his life of fruit-bearing for God? How does the "renewing of the mind" (Romans 12:2) affect the function of the Christian's personal spirit? (Romans 1:9; 8:14, 16; 1 Corinthians 6:17-20; Hebrews 4:12).

7. Compare Paul's instruction concerning "hope," "tribulation," and "prayer" in Romans 12: 12 to Paul's discourse on "faith, hope, and love" which he gave in Romans 5:1-5. Trace our avenue of access to God in prayer in terms of our personal spirit and "the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

8. How does "contributing to the needs of the saints" and "practicing hospitality" help us to renew our minds, to be transformed, and to bear fruit for God? (Romans 12:13; Matthew 15:34-36; Romans 15:25-26).

9. What will happen in our Christian life if we do not "bless those who persecute" us? What will happen if we fail to heed any of the instructions given in Romans, chapter 12, which are intended to renew our minds? What effect will failure to heed these instructions have on our fruit-bearing for God? (Romans 12:14; Matthew 5:44; Romans 9:32-33; Philippians 2:5).

10. What is the meaning of the instruction, "Be of the same mind toward one another?" Has Christ ever directed us to do anything that would place us at odds with other Christians also being led by the same Holy Spirit? (Romans 12:16).

11. What inner decisions and reactions must take place within the soul to bring one to the point of "paying back evil for evil?" What is God's warning to one who might consider "paying back evil for evil?" (Romans 12: 17; 2: 1-9).

12. What is the meaning of the instruction, "Respect what is right (provide things honest) in the sight of all men? Do not men often call things right which actually are not right in the sight of God? Does Paul

give equal weight to things of men and things of God? (Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21).

13. By use of the phrase "if possible" in Romans 12:18, did the Holy Spirit give us license to change our attitude from "peace seeking" to "war mongering?" What is the relationship of the "peace of God" mentioned in Romans 5:1 to the "peace with all men" mentioned in Romans 12:18? What is our divine pattern for having peace with all men?

14. What is the process supplied by God and appropriated in the Christian's inner being by which evil is overcome with good? What sectors of the Christian's inner being are involved in overcoming evil with good? (Romans 12:21; Romans 8:1-4).

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Lesson 13. The Christian mind renewed to exercise of Christ-like love that overcomes evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21).

Questions for study.

1. In the statement, "Let love be without hypocrisy (dissimulation)," what is the basic meaning of the word "love?" How do we get this kind of love? What sectors of the inner man are involved in this kind of love? The will? The emotional sector? The intellect? Considering the origin of this kind of love, how might our exercise of it become tainted with the evil of hypocrisy? (Romans 12:9).

The word "love" in Romans 12:9 comes from the Greek word AGAPE. There are several words in the New Testament Greek language which are translated with the English word "love." However, the different Greek words indicate different meanings, that is, different kinds of love. The Greek word AGAPE refers to a type of love which is unemotional, and which calls for the expression of unbiased goodwill toward the one being loved. Jesus called for the expression of this kind of love by His disciples toward all mankind, men, women, or children, whether enemy or friend. This kind of love is not natural to mankind but is characteristic of God. Christians can express this kind of love in their lives only after they have learned it from God.

Thus, the first sector of the inner man to be involved with this kind of "AGAPE" love is the intellect of the soul of man. Since the admonition to love with "AGAPE" love comes to us only from the word of God, the Christian's spirit is involved, for the Christian's spirit is the place where God's Holy Spirit dwells within him. Receiving an understanding in the Christian's intellect and an affirmation by the Holy Spirit indwelling the Christian, the Christian's spirit takes the concept of "AGAPE" love into the conscience and intuition. These actions of the spirit's conscience and intuition are not consciously realized by the Christian, but are revealed by the Bible to take place within the inner Christian. Intellectual understanding and acceptance of the command from the

word of God to "let love be without hypocrisy," the conscience then is equipped to monitor the Christian's actions and to warn the Christian, if necessary, with its "still small voice." However, it is the will or volition of the soul which has now been enabled and must take over in the exercise of "AGAPE" love. The Christian human being has no natural tendency to exercise such love. "AGAPE" love must be exercised by the will of a Christian's soul.

The emotional sector of the Christian's soul is not called upon to be involved in "AGAPE" love. However, since Christians do have a natural tendency to be stirred emotionally by many things, the emotions may become involved in the will to exercise "AGAPE" love. For instance, Jesus said that Christians should "love their enemies." It is quite likely that the emotions of the Christian will naturally become active at the thought of making overtures of love to an enemy. Jesus also said, "Husbands, love your wives." It is quite hopeful, of course, that the "AGAPE" love Jesus commanded of husbands will be coupled with other types of emotionally driven love.

The only legitimate reason for a Christian to adopt and express "AGAPE" love is that he might serve as God's vessel in God's expression of "AGAPE" love to all mankind. The gospel of Christ is an expression of God's "AGAPE" love to mankind. Only through God's love can the saving power of the gospel become effective. Christians are fellow workers with God in expressing love and saving mankind from their sins. However, men under the influence of Satan have the capacity to pretend expression of "AGAPE" love for illegitimate reasons which, of course, makes such expression hypocritical.

2. In the statement, "Be devoted (kindly affectioned) to one another in brotherly love," what is the basic meaning of the word translated "brotherly love?" What is the basic meaning of the word translated "devoted" ("kindly affectioned")? How do we get this kind of love? What sectors of the inner man are involved in carrying out this instruction? The will? The emotional sector? The intellect? (Romans 12:10).

The words "brotherly love" are translated from the Greek word "PHILADELPHIA" which carries the idea of "affection for one's close friends." The word "devoted" is translated from the Greek word "PBILOSTORGOS" which carries the idea of being "kindly affectioned" or "devoted" as to a family member. The instruction to "be devoted to one another in brotherly love" is then an instruction involving one's emotions. This writer believes that brotherly love will most likely be a natural outcome of a Christian's exercise of God's "AGAPE" love towards someone. One cannot long will himself to the accomplishment of the highest best interest of someone (as in the exercise of "AGAPE" love) without eventually developing emotional ties of brotherly love. (Please read the conversation between Jesus and Peter in John 21:15-23. In this passage the verb forms pertaining both to "AGAPE" love and "PHILADELPHIA" love are used in a very informative way.)

In the expression of "PHILADELPHIA" love the soul of man (primarily the emotional sector) is involved. There is no indication that the spirit of man is involved in the development of such love. It does seem logical that the Holy Spirit and one's own personal spirit would take note of such love for it is recommended (perhaps even commanded) here that it be characteristic of Christian relationships.

3. What do you think is the Holy Spirit's reason for instructing us to "give preference to one another in honor?" (Romans 12:10).

Please go back to Romans 12:4-5. "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Then in verse 10 of the same chapter, in the context of instructions from Paul concerning the relationship of a Christian to the body of Christ (the church) composed of many Christians, he said, "Give preference to one another in honor." This instruction to each Christian individual is one which Paul affirms is necessary for the proper functioning of an assembly striving to function as the body of Christ.

We are also reminded that Paul said in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing

from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests but also in the interest of others."

When we let Christ's Spirit work through us then "AGAPE" love, brotherly love, and the ensuing preference for one another will be well expressed in our lives. But when we let Christ's characteristics get replaced with those of our old man of sin, then we will cease to be devoted to one another.

4. How and for what reasons did Jesus exercise both "AGAPE" type love and "PHILEO" type brotherly love in His life? Give examples of Jesus' expression of these kinds of love as revealed in the New Testament.

Concerning "AGAPE" love, John said, "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (1 John 5:16). Since He was a being who had the characteristics of God, Jesus was unique among men in being committed to the exercise of "AGAPE" love. It was a part of His nature as God.

Concerning "PHILEO" love, John quoted Jesus as saying, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing." (John 5:20). John also quoted Jesus as saying to His disciples, "The Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me." (John 16:27). Thus we see that brotherly love described by the Greek word "PHILEO" is also a Godly type of love. Since He was a human being, Jesus had a close kinship with mankind and thus had the ability to express brotherly love to other human beings. It was a part of His nature as a man created by God.

Some examples of Jesus' expression of love are as follows:

John 15:9. "Just as the Father has loved (AGAPAO) Me, I have also loved (AGAPAO) you; abide in My love (AGAPE)."

John 11:5. "Now Jesus loved (AGAPAO) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

John 13:1. "... having loved (AGAPAO) His own who were in the world, He loved (AGAPAO) them to the end."

John 13:23. "... one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved (AGAPAO) ."

John 13:34. "... even as I have loved (AGAPAO) you, that you love (AGAPAO) one another."

John 20:2. "... to the other disciple whom Jesus loved (PHILEO)."

John 11:36. "And so the Jews were saying, 'Behold how He loved (PHILEO) him.'"

Rev. 3:19. "Those whom I love (PHILEO), I reprove and discipline;"

Notice the reference to both types of love in the following conversation between Jesus and Peter:

John 21:15-17. "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, Son of John, do you love (AGAPAO) Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love (PHILEO) You.' He said to him, 'Tend My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love (AGAPAO) Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love (PHILEO) You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.' He said to him a third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love (PHILEO) Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love (PHILEO) Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (PHILEO) You.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'"

5. How can a Christian implement in his life the "abhorrence of evil" and the "cleavance to good" as instructed in Romans 12:9? (Consider the problem as set up by Paul in Romans 7:19. Then consider the remedy revealed in Romans 8:1-4 and the step by step process of

renewing the mind given in Romans 6:6-15.)

Paul called our attention to a common problem among Christians in Romans 7:18-19. He said, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me." This is the problem that Christians encounter when they try to "abhor evil" and "cling to good" so that they may bear fruit for God.

Paul then said, in effect, in Romans 8:1-4, that no matter how impossible it may seem to us, God has made it possible for us to "abhor evil" and "cling to good" and "bear fruit for God" because: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of, the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

Then Paul followed the statement of the remedy of our problem with the rest of chapter 8 in which he spoke of our walk in newness of life being led by the Holy Spirit who indwells us. Paul already had given us a practical step by step process of actually getting into our "walk in the Spirit" where it is possible to do such things as "abhor evil" and "cling to good." This process was given in Romans 6:1-15. See Lesson 2 in this series.

6. What is the meaning of the phrase, "fervent in spirit," found in Romans 12:11? How does God intend the Christian's personal spirit to be involved in his life of fruit-bearing for God? How does the "renewing of the mind" (Romans 12:2) affect the function of the Christian's personal spirit? (Romans 1:9; 8:14, 16; 1 Corinthians 6:17-20; Hebrews 4:12).

The word "fervent" is often used with the word heat (as in "fervent

heat") meaning the heat that makes water boil, or that melts the elements and makes them bubble. Thus to be "fervent in spirit" may be to have one's spirit intensely engaged, perhaps "to the boiling point." In Acts 18:25 Apollos was said to be "fervent in spirit" in his speaking and teaching things concerning Jesus.

Paul's use of this phrase "fervent in spirit" is another indication that our personal spirits must be involved in our living for Christ. This is to be expected since the New Testament reveals that the Holy Spirit of Christ dwells in our inner man within or along side of our own personal spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:17-20; Romans 8:14, 16). If we are "fervent in spirit," then our personal spirits will be intensely engaged in whatever it is that the spirits of Christians do in their united activity with God's Holy Spirit.

The realm and activities of spirits, even our own human spirits, are pretty much a mystery to us. In view of Paul's admonition in Romans 12:2 to be "transformed by the renewing of your minds," our "minds" will also be intensely involved in whatever we do. New Testament evidence does not allow us to equate the "mind" with the "spirit." Although the "mind" seems to be most closely related to the "soul," it also seems to be the part of us which forms a bridge from the "soul" to the "spirit." Also, with a "mind" fervent for Christ, the "soul" may more easily be able to release the "spirit" to be "fervent" in its somewhat mysterious activity with Christ's Holy Spirit within us. (Hebrews 4:12).

7. Compare Paul's instruction concerning "hope," "tribulation," and "prayer" in Romans 12: 12 to Paul's discourse on "faith, hope, and love" which he gave in Romans 5:1-5. Trace our avenue of access to God in prayer in terms of our personal spirit and "the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Paul said in Romans 12:12 that hope, tribulation, and prayer have important parts to play in our lives for Christ. We should rejoice in hope, persevere in tribulation, and be devoted to prayer. This affirms that hope is a gift from God which can only make us rejoice. Also it affirms that tribulation will come as a fact in our Christian lives and that our

response to it must be to persevere. And it affirms that God has opened an avenue of communication from us to Him and that we must be devoted to it in order to maintain and enhance our relationship with Him.

In Romans 5:1-5 Paul makes a great discourse on the results which God's three gifts, faith, hope and love, effect in our lives if we properly appropriate them. In this discourse we see faith, hope and love as gifts which God gives to us. We see tribulation as a fact of every Christian's life on earth. And we are reminded of the personal responses that the interaction of these things require of us. First of all there is the fact of Jesus Christ and the Cross. God's gift to us of faith in Jesus Christ brings us into God's grace, justifies us from the guilt of our sins, brings us into peace with God, and brings to us the gift of hope of the glory of God. Then the fact of tribulation in our lives can be harnessed to strengthen and make even more real the hope which we have. Tribulation does this through our response of perseverance to it. When we persevere in the face of tribulation our Godly character is proven to ourselves and to God. And this just gives us more confidence in the hope which we already have. Finally we are enabled to make the response of exultation! And we are enabled to radiate "the love of God which has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Paul said in Romans 1:9, "For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you." This is a statement of Paul's devotion to prayer and it gives us some insight into how the communication link with God works. This avenue of communication evidently went from the mind, intellect, and will of Paul's soul to his personal spirit and thence to the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. Then, through His oneness with the Holy Spirit, God the Father could bear witness to the content of Paul's prayers.

8. How does "contributing to the needs of the saints" and "practicing hospitality" help us to renew our minds, to be transformed, and to bear fruit for God? (Romans 12:13; Matthew 15:34-36; Romans 15:25-26).

In Romans 15:25-26, Paul commended contributions to the saints. He said, "Now I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints, for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem." And our Lord Himself promised Christians, in Matthew 15:34-36, that as a result of contributing to needs and practicing hospitality, they would be blessed of the Father and would inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you invited Me in; naked and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me."

We have been admonished by Paul to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." How does "contributing to the needs of the saints" and "practicing hospitality" help us to be renewed in mind and transformed? Our goal is to have the mind which was in Christ Jesus because it is the mind of Christ to which our minds are to be renewed. (Philippians 2:5). So the New Testament makes it clear what the mind of Christ was concerning contributions to the saints and hospitality. Learning by practice, that is, practice which is led by the Holy Spirit within us, is Christ's way of renewing our minds and transforming us.

How does this help us to bear fruit for God? Well, what is bearing fruit for God? It is the gaining of converts to Christ! Even in the practice of mind renewing by contributions and hospitality we are doing our part in letting Christ work through us to the bearing of fruit.

9. What will happen in our Christian life if we do not "bless those who persecute" us? What will happen if we fail to heed any of the instructions given in Romans, chapter 12, which are intended to renew our minds? What effect will failure to heed these instructions have on our fruit-bearing for God? (Romans 12:14; Matthew 5:44; Romans 9:32-33; Philippians 2:5).

Paul and other New Testament writers have revealed that in our walk we will meet persecution. It is Christ who tells us, through His Spirit and through Paul, "Bless those who persecute you." Any command or

admonition which Christ gives us will turn into a stumbling block to us if we do not heed it. So it can become a stumbling block in our lives if we curse those who persecute us. But if we let the Spirit lead us to bless those who persecute us, we will not stumble but we will be strengthened. All of these inspired admonitions of Paul echo the teachings of Jesus Himself. In Matthew 5:44 Jesus said, "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."

In cursing those who persecute us, or in failing to be faithful in the carrying out of any of these admonitions in Romans 12, our actions are tantamount to abandoning our gift of faith in Christ Jesus. Without faith we are right back under law, said Paul. Using Israel as an example, Paul said in Romans 9:32-33 that Israel did not achieve righteousness. "Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written (by the Prophet Isaiah), 'Behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed. '"

We cannot bear fruit for God if we are not being transformed by the renewing of our minds. And we are not renewing our minds if we are not living by faith in the leadership of the Holy Spirit of Christ who indwells us. If we do not respond in faith to the Holy Spirit's leading by heeding the instructions of Paul's Roman letter, then we will not be used to bear fruit for God.

10. What is the meaning of the instruction, "Be of the same mind toward one another?" Has Christ ever directed us to do anything that would place us at odds with other Christians also being led by the same Holy Spirit? (Romans 12:16).

The Holy Spirit leads us to walk in the same way that Christ walked. Paul said in Romans 15:5 that God will "grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus." There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit wants us to "be of the same mind." To be of the "same mind toward one another" apparently means to love each other as yourself and to be no respecter of persons because these attributes are Christ-like. It also seems to include the thought that we all

together must be seeking to carry out Christ's plan and purpose for us. Christ will not direct us to do anything that will place us at odds with the same Holy Spirit's leading of all His other servants.

11. What inner decisions and reactions must take place within the soul to bring one to the point of "paying back evil for evil?" What is God's warning to one who might consider "paying back evil for evil?" (Romans 12: 17; 2: 1-9) .'

Paying back evil for evil requires the soul's mind to pass judgment and the soul's will to order the taking of revenge. In Romans 2:1, 3, Paul said, "You are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment. ... Do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?" Paul went on in Romans 2:5 to remind us that if we live in accordance with the worldly code which calls for the "paying back of evil for evil," God will render to us according to our deeds. That means that we can expect nothing but the wrath of God because our deeds re evil. So in our Christian "walk," the Holy Spirit reminds us to never pay back evil for evil.

12. What is the meaning of the instruction, "Respect what is right (provide things honest) in the sight of all men? Do not men often call things right which actually are not right in the sight of God? Does Paul give equal weight to things of men and things of God? (Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21).

Christians are instructed by the Holy Spirit through Paul to "respect what is right in the sight of all men." A similar instruction was given by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:21: "We have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." However, we know that men often arbitrarily call things right which actually are not right in God's sight. And men sometimes take issue with our proclamation of things we believe to be right in the sight of God. Surely Paul is not telling us that the precepts of men are always to be respected. In Matthew 15:9 Jesus reiterated a truth first uttered by the Prophet Isaiah: "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the

precepts of men." We must conclude that things pronounced as "right" by men must first be tested against the divine standards of God. Paul does not give equal weight to things of men and things of God when they oppose each other.

But there are things considered right in the sight of men which do not contradict or oppose things which are right in the sight of God, things which are almost universally considered right by men. In the 12th chapter of Romans, Paul is discussing the conduct of Christians as they go about "bearing fruit" among people of the world. His instruction, to "respect what is right in the sight of all men," may relate to the Christian's respect for the various cultures among the people he encounters. For instance, in 1st Corinthians 9:22 Paul said, "I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." In doing this, Paul showed respect for what was considered right in the cultures of the various people he encountered.

There may be some reference here also to truths which Paul stated in chapters 1 and 2 of the Roman letter. Something of God is evident within all men. Men do instinctively the things of God's law and are recognized to have the works of God's law written in their hearts so that their consciences bear witness to whether they are doing right or wrong. Therefore, since God is the author of all absolutely "right" things, and some of these "right" things can be known within every man, we should respect (or take thought for) what men pronounce as right. But we are not given permission to place the things of men on a par with the things of God.

13. By use of the phrase "if possible" in Romans 12:18, did the Holy Spirit give us license to change our attitude from "peace seeking" to "war mongering?" What is the relationship of the "peace of God" mentioned in Romans 5:1 to the "peace with all men" mentioned in Romans 12:18? What is our divine pattern for having peace with all men?

By saying "if possible," did Paul mean that there may be exceptions when we can change our attitude from one of "peace seeking" to one of

"war mongering?" No. We must remember that the Spirit through Paul said never to pay back evil for evil. We must not change that attitude. The phrase, "if possible," goes with the phrase "as far as it depends on you." It may be impossible through our influence alone to keep peace. But it is not to be our attitude or action which breaks the peace.

While we are truly "walking in the Spirit," it will not be possible for us to break the peace. It is certain that the new perfect creation of God living in us, being led by God's Holy Spirit, will not break the peace. But the phrase, "if possible," points out the possibility that we may be still living in the flesh. We may not have accepted that our old man died with Christ. We may not yet be led by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit within us that prevents us from breaking the peace. Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may do all sorts of evil things.

If we cease to "walk in the Spirit," it then becomes easily possible for us to be the cause of shattered peace. Peace is a precious gift of God. In Romans 5:1 Paul said, "Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace is exhibited by Christians who are God's new creation being led by God's Holy Spirit. "Walking by the Spirit," we will exhibit the peaceable kingdom to the world. Let the Holy Spirit keep us in that peace.

14. What is the process supplied by God and appropriated in the Christian's inner being by which evil is overcome with good? What sectors of the Christian's inner being are involved in overcoming evil with good? (Romans 12:21; Romans 8:1-4).

It is the Holy Spirit of Christ, who has been given to the Christian to dwell in him who overcomes evil with good. The Holy Spirit leads Christians to "walk" in such manner as to feed enemies and give them drink and to always "overcome evil with good." In this world the goodness of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit through Christians is the only real remedy for evil.

In order for the Christian to be effective in "overcoming evil with good," he must have presented and yielded his heart to God so that God's Holy

Spirit can be at work in him. What specifically must the Christian do in yielding his heart to God? Remember that the "heart" is a Biblical term for the spiritual inner part of a person, consisting of the "soul" and the "spirit." The Bible reveals that the "soul" functions in the body of flesh through the mind, the will, and the emotions. The "soul" of the person is the essence of the person which manages the whole life of the person inclusive of the fleshly life and the spiritual life. The "spirit" of a person functions in the body of flesh through communion with other spirits, through conscience, and through intuition. The "spirit" of the person is intended to become the holy dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit cannot indwell the person until he presents and yields his "soul" to God. The sectors of the Christian's inner being which are involved in overcoming evil with good are the soul and the spirit of the Christian.

The process that takes place in the Christian's inner being as he becomes able to overcome evil with good are as follows:

The Christian (already a baptized believer) must give up his soul and surrender his mind, will, and emotions to God. (Matthew 16: 25-26) .

Through the work of the word of God (the Holy Spirit's word) as a Christian studies, the Christian's spirit is set free from the overbearing power of the Christian's soul. (Hebrews 12:4).

This allows the Christian to accept in his own spirit the Holy Spirit of God as a gift. (Acts 2:38).

The Christian now realizes that he has a new Spirit within him giving life to his "new man" which he received at baptism. He presents that "new man" to God to "walk" as he is led by the Holy Spirit within him. (Romans 6:2-14).

The conscience and intuition of the Christian's spirit (which is now one with his personal spirit) instruct the soul of the Christian in the management of his life. (Romans 8:1-17) .