

# Weekly Message Study Guide

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Date \_\_\_\_\_ Speaker \_\_\_\_\_

## DEMONSTRATE CHARITY | 12:21 | Week 4 | November 8

### Romans 12:9, 14-20; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

*These study guides are designed for individual or group study but highly encouraged to be experienced in community with a small group or other friends on the journey with Jesus.*

**CONTEXT** | Paul wrote Romans 12 to remind the Church of its identity and mission. Paul has been saying what makes the followers of Jesus different - what allows them to be the kind of transforming salt and light that every society needs. Today as we experience the “empire storyline” of elections and lawsuits let’s turn our attention again to the “Kingdom storyline” instructing us how to live in these conflicted times.

Do not be conformed • Value everyone  
Pursue the common good • Demonstrate charity

- Of the reminders above which one do you especially need right now? Why?

**Romans 12:9 A Jesus-like Love** | Paul uses the word *agapé* to describe our actions toward others. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 for a further definition.

- How have you considered love as an action? Give an example.
- Go around the group and brainstorm actions you can imagine "for the sake of others."
- Paul draws contrasts in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. How do those apply today in our political times?

**Not Hypocritical** | The sincerity of Jesus-like Love must be above question. We can’t play-act *agapé*.

- Where have you caught yourself trying to do the Christian thing but not really feeling it? Be honest.
- How can we overcome our fleshly tendencies? What has worked for you? Share it with the group.
- Paul uses this opening verse for a series of actions. Why do you think he starts with sincere love?

**Think About Impact** | In community, your attitude and actions have an impact on others. We are not to be “conformed” but we are to practice our differences in peace. Read verse 16 - live in harmony; verse 17 - do what is honorable; and verse 18 - live at peace.

- Is Paul’s instruction realistic? Why or why not?
- What priority do you find this value of peace to be in our church, in your home, in your work, in your neighborhood?

**Living It Out** | If the Christian witness is going to make an impact on this world, then we need to Demonstrate Charity at a level that people are not accustomed to seeing - at a level that looks like Jesus’ love.

- How would you summarize and put in your own words how to express Jesus like love for each of the sections below?
- Which one comes most naturally to you? Which takes more effort? Why?

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- A.** 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse... 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil.
- B.** 17 Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
- C.** 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.
- D.** 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.

**PRACTICE OF THE WEEK** | Reflect on the four points of charity from above by the following actions **A.)** Speak words of good-will toward those on the other side. **B.)** Think about how you come across to others. **C.)** Don’t be consumed by anger. **D.)** Let your practical kindness toward people who disagree with you make people think.

- Write down a list of your recent “triggers” where you were upset or in conflict. How do these instructions from Paul apply for each event?
- How could you have handled it differently? What do you think the result would have been if you had responded in the way God leads us through Paul?
- How do these ideas influence your conversations in this political season?

Pray that you would be open to God’s transforming love to be part of the Kingdom storyline in your sphere of influence. Pray now for one another in this way.