

Name _____ Date _____

The Sonship Life Study Guide

Romans Education, Part Two Student Edition: Book 2

Welcome to The Sonship Life study guide. This book is designed to coincide with the power point presentation and video lessons.

The video lessons are found on Vimeo.

Students which need help during the week can contact MBI for help at the following email: mbibiblestudies@gmail.com



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NOTETAKER
Romans Education, Part Two
Session 11

**Fig. 1: THE SECOND FORM OF DOCTRINE
FOR GODLY WISDOM**

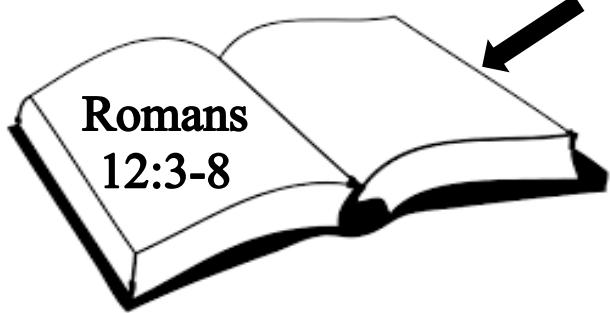


Fig. 2

Romans 12:9 *Let love be
without dissimulation.*

*Abhor that which is evil;
cleave to that which is
good.*

*10 Be kindly affectioned
one to another with
brotherly love;
in honour preferring one
another;*

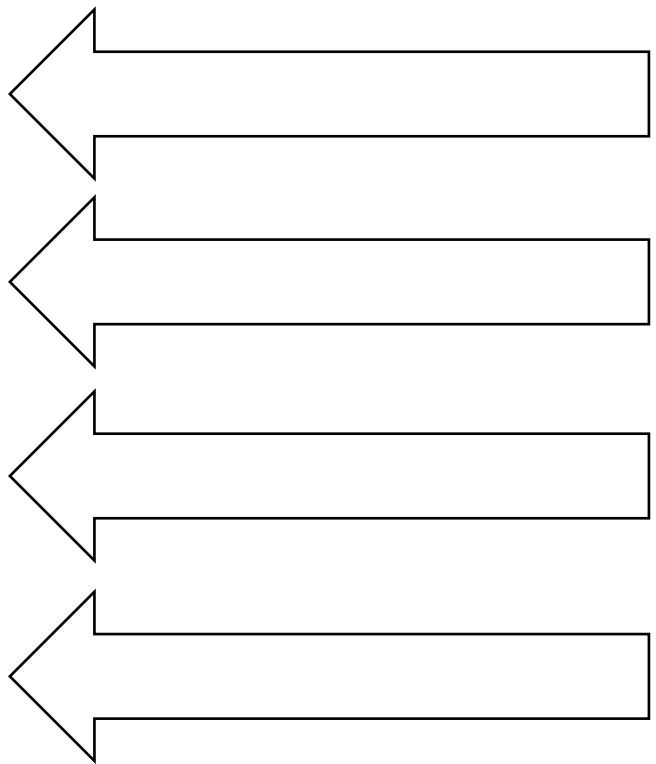


Fig. 3

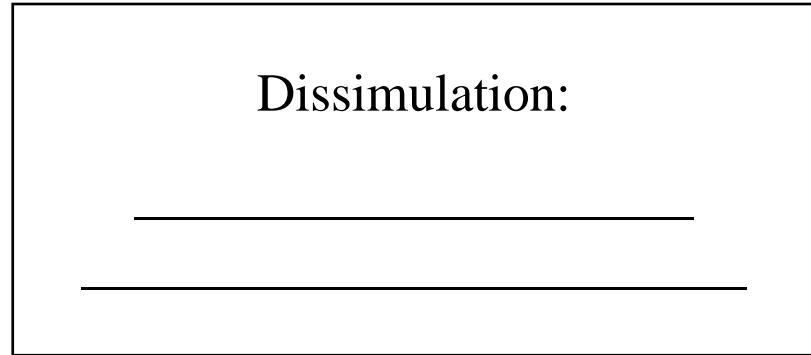
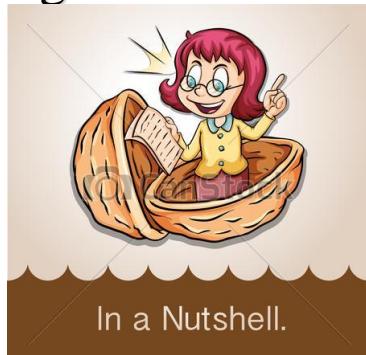


Fig. 4

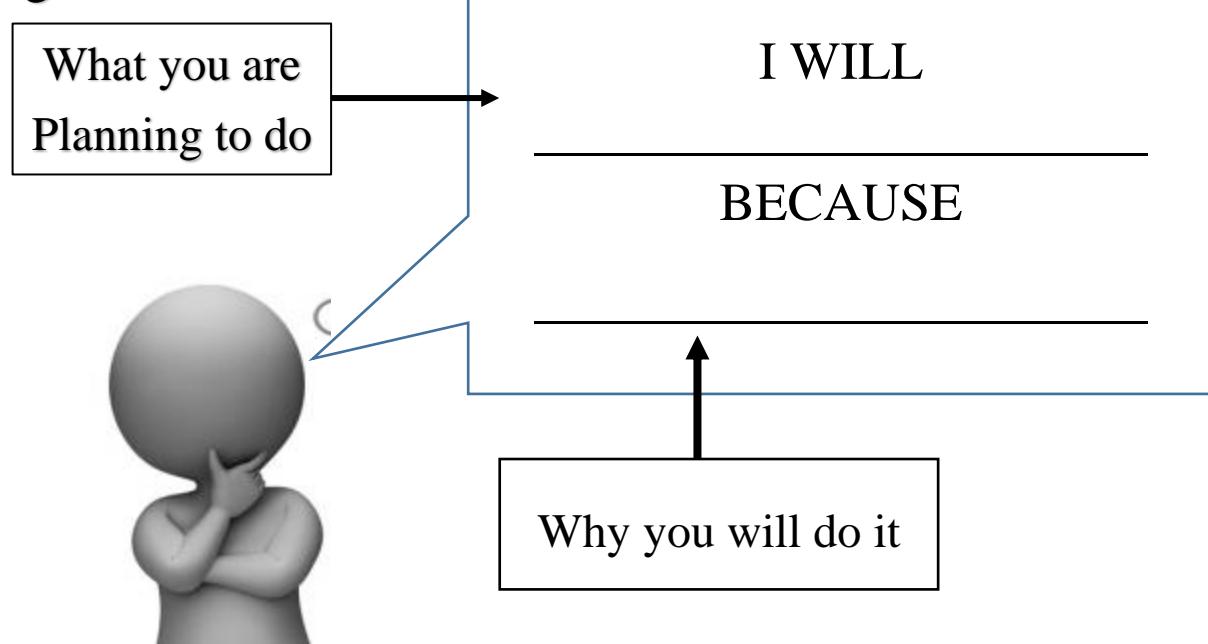


Fig. 5: Checkpoint Overview

Checkpoint #1: _____

Purpose: To determine our readiness to _____

Checkpoint #2: _____

Purpose: To determine our readiness to _____

Fig. 6: Checking Our Motives

- Do you see the discharge of your office as an indicator of your _____ for all your Father has done for you?
(_____)
- Do you see your office as accomplishing your Father's _____ and you have a desire to _____ with Him?
(_____)
- Do you see your office as beneficial to _____?
(_____)

Fig. 5



Dissimulation Motives:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Romans Education, Part 2

Session 11 Notes: The Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation

Brief Review for Context (since we paused to do the School of Evangelism)

Romans 12:3-8 was the first form of doctrine presented to us in our education proper.

The doctrine of Romans 12:3-8 is designed to begin installing the first sonship decision-making skill of godly wisdom in us. It does this by generating the first core feature of our Father's love in us; selflessness.

If we are to "reign with Him" in the heavenly places (2 Tim. 2:12), these attributes of godly love will be the foundation for godly rulership. I say this so you understand how important they should be to us both now and in the future.

While anyone can instruct us to be selfless, God's version of selflessness can only be acquired from Him. And since the way He generates selflessness in us is by means of His word working in us, then godly selflessness can only be acquired from Romans 12:3-8.

The word of God is not merely motivational; it is not just admonishing us to be selfless. It is meant to be the means by which we become selfless. In other words, the doctrine not only provides the desire to be selfless (there is the motivation) but at the same time, it provides the power to produce godly selflessness in us.

We are not just deciding to be selfless, but we are deciding to align our conduct and behavior with the godly thinking given to us in God's word.

Selflessness is only godly when it is applied the same way and for the same reasons as our heavenly Father. By that I mean to say that the ability to practice godly selflessness will not automatically result in us always doing so. It depends upon us and our daily (if not moment by moment) response to the doctrine.

By the instruction of Romans 12:3-8, we learn 1) to value and esteem the members of our local assembly, and 2) to do so for the same reasons God does.

The immediate context for learning this is the local assembly of which we are a part. The easiest place to learn and apply the doctrine is within a body of like-minded believers. As a matter of course, we will extend that same love to the body of Christ as a whole. Or, to say it another way, we will learn to treat the saints outside our assembly in accordance with how we (learn to) value and esteem them as members of the body of Christ.

What We will Accomplish in this Lesson

- *Introduce the 2nd form of doctrine in our education proper*
- *Identify the edificational pattern in the verses*
- *Allow the next checkpoint in our education to assess our progress*

The Next Form of Doctrine

That now brings us to the next form of doctrine and the furtherance of our instruction in godly wisdom. The next form of doctrine is found in Romans 12:9-10.

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*¹⁰ *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

In keeping with the pattern for the doctrine, let's break down these two verses into their component parts.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation.

The obvious question is: *What* love is Paul referring to in vs. 9? Our love for what, is to be without dissimulation? Is Paul just talking about love in general? No, he is talking about the love that was generated in us by vv. 3-8; let our selfless love be without dissimulation. He is talking about our love for our fellow saints who are a part of the same local body of which we are a part. It is our love for each other that Paul is exhorting us to discharge “without dissimulation.”

Since vs. 9 starts out by referring back to the love generated in us by vv. 3-8, therefore the first sentence of vs. 9 is a pre-doctrinal exhortation. We will come

back to this shortly, but first let's see the rest of the verses to discover the pattern of the doctrine.

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

The second sentence in vs. 9 is the godly thinking aspect of the doctrine.

In our thinking we are to abhor something and we are supposed to cleave mentally to something else. More about that when we get into the verse.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

As you can see, vs. 10 is separated into two parts by a semicolon. The first part is the godly living component.

The final phrase in vs. 10 is the godly labor component.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

As you would expect, this form of doctrine will introduce us to the second core feature of godly love. As we have no instruction to the contrary, the immediate context for Romans 12:9-10 continues to be the local assembly and eventually, we will apply it to the body of Christ as a whole.

Now we will go back and look at the exhortation which began vs. 9.

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

This exhortation refers us back to the core feature of selflessness which generated our Father's attitude in us toward our fellow saints.

It is worth understanding that selflessness is not actually something we do as much as it is an attitude which influences what we do. Therefore, Paul exhorts us to let our selflessness; our actions which reflect our love for the other members of the assembly, be without dissimulation.

So what is dissimulation?

OED: Dissimulation

- 1) The action of dissimulating or dissembling; concealment of what really is, under a feigned semblance or something different; feigning, hypocrisy.

OED: Dissemble

- 1) To alter or disguise the semblance of (one's character, a feeling, design, or action) so as to conceal, or deceive as to its real nature; to give a false or feigned semblance to: to cloak or disguise by a feigned appearance.

When Paul exhorts us to love without dissimulation, he is saying that our actions toward our fellow members should reflect that we value them as our Father does and not for other reasons. This is Paul's way of making sure our love is genuine, that it really does stem from the doctrine.

No matter how we treat our fellow members, if our actions toward them are not the result of the doctrine working in us, then our "love" is with dissimulation.

As we ask this question in light of everything we do, it will become obvious just how much of what we do is not tied to the doctrine. At times, you will be doing something or deciding something and you may not readily understand how to tie that to the doctrine. As you progress we will see how even those seemingly unrelated issues are indeed meant to be sonship decisions.

The first phrase of vs. 9 is a pre-doctrinal exhortation ("pre" to the doctrine of vs. 9) which serves as the second checkpoint we have encountered so far in Romans 12.

Do you recall the first checkpoint? Where is it found? The first checkpoint was found in Romans 12:1.

And what was the Romans 12:1 checkpoint assessing? It was assessing our readiness to begin the sonship education.

The second checkpoint is found where? It is found in Romans 12:9a.

What is Romans 12:9a assessing? It is assessing our readiness to move to the next doctrine. It is assessing our edification up to this point; specifically the edification of the first form of doctrine.

And how is it doing that? It assesses our readiness to move on to the next doctrine by having us make sure that our godly selfless love for our fellow members is genuine and not contrived (without dissimulation).

And how will you know if it is genuine or not? That is a critical question. To answer it, we are going to take what would normally be in the Edification Evaluation section and import it directly into our lesson.

Edification Evaluation

(I am importing the Edification Evaluation into the session notes because it is critical for us to understand how to properly evaluate the edification process in us.)

As we come to Romans 12:9-10, the first thing we encounter is a checkpoint that makes sure that things are working properly. So how can we know if our love is without dissimulation? How can we know that the doctrine of Romans 12:3-8 is working in us, at least to some degree?

We can know that by asking ourselves some questions. Just to state it generally, we could ask:

- Why am I doing anything in relation to my fellow members?

This can be accomplished through the doing of your office and also by assisting someone else in their office. So, let's take the issue of your own office first.

Firstly, let's talk about why you are engaged in your office:

- Do you see the discharge of your office as an indicator of your gratitude for all your Father has done for you?
- Do you see the discharge of your office as an indicator of your gratitude for all your Father has done for you? (Love God)
- Do you see your office as accomplishing your Father's operations and you have a desire to labor with Him?

- Do you see your office as accomplishing your Father's operations and you have a desire to labor with Him? (Love His business)
- Do you see your office as beneficial to others? (Love His body)
 - In what ways does your office benefit them?
 - Does it help their spiritual well being?
 - Does it help their edification?
 - Does it help their godly labor?

If this last issue (Love His body) is true for you, then this is an indicator that your love really is without dissimulation! This is a measure of edification.

Next, let's talk about the second issue of helping someone else in their office:

- Have I done anything to help someone else in their office and just as importantly, why did you help them?
 - Was it because this was an opportunity to demonstrate how much you value and esteem them and their office?
 - Was it because you love God for all that He has done for you and you realize that by serving fellow members you are serving Him?
 - Was it because you see your fellow members engaged in an office that is accomplishing your Father's operations?

This exhortation ensures we are not “faking it” as we value and esteem our fellow members. Why is that important? It is important because we are about to build upon that first feature of selflessness. If that first feature is only us being selfless in the energy of our flesh, then we have no proper foundation upon which to build the rest of the features of godly wisdom.

If we do not genuinely value and esteem the other members who have been charged to labor with God (the measure of faith) just as we have, then this next feature of godly love will fail too. To allow our love to be with dissimulation, is to lay the groundwork for our own failure as sons, and to sow the seeds of failure for the assembly of which we are a part.

To love without dissimulation is to genuinely love (value and esteem) the other members of our assembly for who our Father sees them to be.

There is a difference between *being* “selfless” and *acting* selflessly from time to time. Notice the “ness” suffix points to a state of being (according to the OED; definition 2). The doctrine makes us selfless, but the flesh can only act selflessly. If the doctrine has not transformed us, then our love will be “*with dissimulation*;” the very opposite of what Paul exhorts of us.

If our love is *with* dissimulation, then it is not the genuine article; it is not godly love. If that is the case, then we may be selfless from time to time and even then, it will be product of our flesh and not the effectual working of the word in us.

We have to train ourselves to ask the question, “Who or what is behind my actions; what are my motives?” As we pull back the curtain to see who is behind what we are doing, if it is “us,” then our love is with dissimulation. That is, it is not the genuine godly kind of love produced by the doctrine and actually performed by Christ in us.

Wrong motives are not necessarily evil. Our actions toward our fellow members must not be simply out of obligation or duty. Neither should we be prompted to feign godly love for one another in hopes of some type of promotion or exaltation. Neither should we be prompted to feign godly love for one another in hopes of some type of promotion or exaltation.

Godly love is not the product of fear of consequences or guilt. And neither is it the result of natural human goodness which can be produced by any lost man.

Though human goodness may be “noble,” it can never be godly, which is the minimum standard for how we are to live as sons and daughters. If we find ourselves “loving” the saints for any of these reasons, then the checkpoint of vs. 9 has revealed our dissimulation and we should fix it.

And how do we “fix it?” We simply change our motivation by making a conscious decision to do what we are doing for the godly reasons given in the doctrine.

This is a sonship decision. It is not about emotion or some kind of warm, fuzzy feeling. It is about obeying the doctrine. This is not the first time we have encountered this, as we saw this very thing back in our sanctification study in Romans 6.

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed** from the heart **that form of doctrine** which was delivered you.

Romans 12:9 is showing us whether or not we are obeying the doctrine of Romans 12:3-8. If you are not, all it takes to change that is a godly, sonship decision to align your motive, thoughts and actions with the doctrine.

Summary of Session 11

How important are the core features that comprise our godly wisdom? They are so important that they are the very foundation for being able to “reign with Christ” in the heavenly places. Without godly selflessness, we will be incapable of making the godly judgments we will need in order to occupy a place of rulership on the behalf of the Lord.

What is dissimulation? In this context it means to “fake” our love for our fellow saints; it means to be selfless with them out of our flesh. Dissimulation means that we have wrong motives for doing what we are doing.

Any of the core features of godly wisdom can only come from the doctrine. In order for that doctrine to do its effectual work in us, we must understand it and then respond properly to it.

The first core feature is godly selflessness and it is generated in us by Romans 12:3-8.

Romans 12:9a is meant to test our godly love for our fellow members and thereby assess whether we are ready to move on to the next form of doctrine.

No matter how we treat our fellow members, if our actions toward them are not the result of the doctrine working in us, then our “love” is with dissimulation.

We have to train ourselves to ask the question, “Who or what is behind my actions; what are my motives?”

If our motives are just out of obligation or duty, they are not godly.

If our motives are motivated by the opportunity for promotion, they are not godly.

If our motives are to avoid consequences or to assuage guilt, they are not godly.

If our motives are just out of natural human goodness, they are not godly.

Self-Test for Session 11

Why are the core features of godly wisdom important?

What is love with dissimulation?

How do we get the doctrine to work in us?

What is the first core feature of godly wisdom and where does the Bible generate that in us?

What is Romans 12:9a (Let love be without dissimulation") meant to do?

How can we practice living out of the doctrine?

As we assess our daily actions, what are some godly motives for doing what we do?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Prayer for Session 11

Prayer for a lesson like this one involves constantly talking to your Father about putting the doctrine into practice and making decisions out of the doctrine.

This is a conversation you are having with God about learning to constantly recall the doctrine and make as many decisions out of that doctrine as you can.

What is this kind of prayer meant to do? Prayer activates the doctrine. In other words, the more you are talking to God about this issue, the more it will be on your mind. The more it is in your thinking, the more times you will remember to do it. The more you do it, the more you are living out of the doctrine.

Another part of your conversation would be talking to God about decisions you make during the day which were not out of the doctrine because you did not think about it, but because you did not know how to apply the doctrine to your decision. Spend some time talking to God about these decisions and as you do, think about how the doctrine might come into play. You will not always see how to apply the doctrine to every single decision at this point, but the further you go into your education, the more kinds of decisions can come out of the doctrine. So don't panic over it, just keep it in your mind.

At the end, the important thing is to be talking to Him about all of these things so that they are in your mind more often as time goes by.

Self-Test Answers for Session 11

Why are the core features of godly wisdom important?

They are the very foundation for being able to “reign with Christ” in the heavenly places.

What is love with dissimulation?

It means our love for our fellow saints is not genuine, it is not a result of the doctrine working in us.

How do we get the doctrine to work in us?

We must understand it and then respond properly to it.

What is the first core feature of godly wisdom and where does the Bible generate that in us?

The first core feature is godly selflessness and it is generated in us by Romans 12:3-8.

What is Romans 12:9a (Let love be without dissimulation”) meant to do?

It tests our godly love for our fellow members and thereby assesses whether we are ready to move on to the next form of doctrine.

How can we practice living out of the doctrine?

We have to train ourselves to constantly ask the question, “Who or what is behind my actions; what are my motives?”

As we assess our daily actions, what are some godly motives for doing what we do?

- *Love my Father*
- *Love His business*
- *Love my fellow saints because my Father V&E them, because they are part of His body and we need each other to accomplish His operations, because I care about their edification*

Romans Education, Part 2

Session 12 NOTETAKER



Fig. 1

Love without Dissimulation Motives:

- _____ (which produces)
- _____ (which produces)
- _____ (which produces)
 - _____ (which produces)
 - _____ (engage in the education)
 - _____ (office)
- _____

Fig.2: Features of Godly Wisdom

Romans Education, Part 2

Session 12 Notes: The Godly Motives of Romans 12:9

Romans 12:9 ***Let love be without dissimulation.*** Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

As we respond properly to the doctrine, the character of Jesus Christ is formed in us, transforming us to possess godly selflessness as a part of our character. When we pull back the curtain to see who is behind our actions, we do not want to see ourselves, but we want to see Jesus!

If the doctrine is in our minds, if we are motivated by God's word, then Christ is being formed in us and our actions find their source in Him and not ourselves. This is love which is "without dissimulation."

But that does not come out of nowhere. All of this is progression of events and revealing of doctrinal information which culminates in godliness if it is understood and properly responded to.

The motives for this kind of love go all the way back to the mercies of God. That fundamental mercy is that "while we yet sinners Christ died for our sins."

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Then, we find out that the death of Jesus Christ was sufficient to satisfy God's righteous judgment against us and all that a person need do to avail themselves of that propitiatory satisfaction is to put their faith in His finished work. Salvation is offered to mankind as a free gift of grace without any works to earn it, or keep it, on the part of men. In response to our faith, God justified us unto eternal life and gives a justified status in His Son. Next, we learn that our justified status in Christ has given us a new identity in Him and our old identity in Adam has been done away with so that we truly are a new creature in Christ. We then learn that God has forgiven us of every sin we have ever committed or ever will commit so that nothing we ever do or fail to do has any effect on our salvation.

Additionally, He has imputed the righteousness of Jesus Christ to us so that our standing before him is that of being perfectly righteous, assuring that we can never be in our “lost” condition ever again. We then learn that because of our justified status in Christ we now have peace with God and are no longer the enemies of God that we were prior to when we trusted Christ as our all-sufficient Savior. Because of the “faith of Christ” our justified status in Christ is permanent and does not rest on anything we have done or will ever do.

We become a vessel for the Spirit of God to dwell in and we are given complete and total access to God without restrictions of any kind. We have a kindship with God in which we are “sons of God” in connection with our justified status in Christ; that is to say, we are made to be part of the family of God.

And all of these things only pertain to our justification and they constitute only a small part of the “mercies of God.” That is, they are only part of those wonderful things that were provided for by the work of Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, and then they were given to every one of us as a free gift of grace when we trusted God’s Son as our Savior. Unless God were to tell us about them we would not even be aware of these “mercies” which every saint is the recipient of. So, God has the apostle Paul write the book of Romans which informs us of all these wonderful, justification mercies, which we possessed from the moment we trusted Christ as our Savior. This information we call “the doctrine.”

The question is: Which doctrine? If our love is going to be the genuine article, not only does godly selflessness need to have been generated in us, but also the doctrine pertaining to the mercies of God.

And the reason for Paul writing about the “mercies” is so that knowledge will have a certain impact in our hearts and minds.

As we will see, the information about these mercies is critical to the production of a godly love in us which is without dissimulation.

Hopefully, that list of justification “mercies” were impactful to you as you contemplated the many items in the list and just how important they are for you to have. Next, I want to remind you of all the mercies that were additionally given to us as part of our sanctification and then the mercies which are given to us in

connection with us being in Christ. Even though I am not enumerating them here, the list is long, impressive and hopefully, impactful.

So, when you take all of those mercies which Paul reveals prior to Romans 12, he is counting on your knowledge of them to produce a heart of extreme gratitude in you toward your heavenly Father.

It is that heart of gratitude that generates our love for God. The more we review those mercies and the more we understand about them (how critically important they are), the more we will see our love for God increase (deepen) and abound (become multi-faceted; for many reasons).

When we do anything out of a genuine love for God, then that is godly motive. That is what we are after. We want our love for our Father to be the motivating factor behind all we do.

Once the mercies have produced a godly love for our Father in us, to the extent that our love for Him is actively increasing and abounding, that love will produce an ever-increasing desire to be godly.

Let me talk a minute about what I mean when I say that abounding love for God will produce an “ever-increasing” desire to be godly.

In what way will our desire to be godly increase?

It will increase in the sense that:

- You will desire to be “like your Father” in more and more ways
It is impossible in the beginning to identify all of the ways you can become “godly.” But as this process continues, you will desire to turn more and more areas of your life over, to be like your Father.
- More and more of His “table of likes and dislikes” will become yours
You will begin to see the attractiveness and importance of some things diminish as your love for God increases. And you likely will see an increased desire for other things which before, you had little interest in.
- Our desire for the education will increase proportionally

As our love for God increases, we will also desire to labor with Him, both here and also in the heavenly places. Therefore, our office becomes an expression of our love for God!

Do not lose track of what we are doing here; we are looking at how a godly love which is without dissimulation gets generated in us and remains that way. It is by the Mercies ultimately producing a love for God which results in a myriad of heart-desires which all revolve around godliness.

So the love of God is a huge motivator for us to love in a godly fashion. Now, up to this point, I have only talked about the mercies producing an increasing and abounding love for God.

But that love for Him, His tables of likes and dislikes working in us, and other things as well, all work to produce a love in us for our fellow saints. And even though that stems from our love for God, the love for one another is a legitimately godly motive for our actions as well.

Application: That first phrase of Romans 12:9 is a checkpoint to ensure that our love for one another is the genuine article; that which is produced by the doctrine as it installs the character of Jesus Christ in us.

And that is what is behind the illustration in your Notetaker. When your love is without dissimulation, then what is really behind the things you do is Christ in you! In this way, the first phrase of vs. 9 is a checkpoint to assess the genuineness of our selfless love before we are given the next core feature of godly love.

The Second Form of Doctrine in Godly Wisdom

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.* 10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

The second core feature of godly love which our Father wants generated in us is lovingkindness.

We have already seen the breakdown of this form of doctrine into the pattern for our edification. In accordance with that breakdown, we now look at the godly thinking aspect of the doctrine.

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

Mainly, we have four words which are meant to be understood in the context of vs. 9: abhor, evil, cleave and good.

We have two opposites presented to us for our “thinking;” that which is evil and that which is good. In order for this next feature of godly love to be in us, then we must begin to think about evil and good the way Paul intends it as he writes vs. 9.

As we learn to hate evil and embrace good to the extent that our Father does, that thinking will combine with our selflessness to produce godly lovingkindness.

We all have an idea of the definitions of evil and good.

OED: Evil

The antithesis of “good” in all its principal senses.

- 1) Morally depraved, bad, wicked, vicious

This is the way we normally think of evil, especially in connection with Satan. But there is another way of thinking of evil; one which has to do with the doctrine of Romans 12:9 and the treatment of our fellow members.

OED: Evil

- 2) Doing or tending to do harm; hurtful...
- 3) ...desire for another's harm
- 4) Causing discomfort, pain, or trouble...

In these definitions, because we love our fellow members, we begin to view as “evil” those things which are hurtful or harmful in some way. As we look at the things which happen to the other members of our body, we either see them as hurtful (evil) or beneficial (good.)

OED: Good

12) Conducive to well-being...beneficial, profitable...

As we notice circumstances or events which are detrimental to our fellow members (especially, but not exclusively, in connection with their function in the body) we are supposed to think about those circumstances or events in a particular way; we “abhor” those things.

So what does it mean to “abhor” something?

OED: Abhor

- 1) To shrink back from with shuddering, to view with horror or dread.
- 2) To regard with extreme repugnance or disgust; to hate utterly, loathe, abominate.

So what are supposed to shrink back from? What are we supposed to regard with extreme disgust? What are we supposed to hate?

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. **Abhor that which is evil...***

Abhor seems like a pretty strong word, doesn’t it? But in order for us to “renew our minds,” we must begin to look at the things happening to our fellow-members the same way our Father does. The events which happen to them need to impact us the way it impacts God. Those “evil” things are supposed to make a very strong impact on us and thereby elicit a response from us to their aid.

How important is this? It is very important seeing that godly lovingkindness is generated in us to the same degree that we abhor evil and cleave to good. Verse 9 is teaching us to look at the things happening to the ones we love and consider (think about on purpose!) what kind of impact is being had upon them.

If it is detrimental to them, we will regard it with utter loathing and disgust. If it is good (beneficial) for them, we should delight in it. We should desire to contribute to the welfare of our fellow saints. This godly love is a proper motive for being helpful to them; supporting those things which are profitable to them.

Session 12 Summary

As we respond properly to the doctrine, the character of Jesus Christ is formed in us, transforming us to possess godly selflessness as a part of our character.

If the doctrine is in our minds, if we are motivated by God's word, then Christ is being formed in us and our actions find their source in Him and not ourselves. This is love which is "without dissimulation."

The information about the mercies of God is critical to the production of a godly love in us which is without dissimulation.

Once the mercies have produced a godly love for our Father in us, to the extent that our love for Him is actively increasing and abounding, that love will produce an ever-increasing desire to be godly.

As our love for God increases, we will also desire to labor with Him, both here and also in the heavenly places. Therefore, our office becomes an expression of our love for God!

But that love for Him, His tables of likes and dislikes working in us, and other things as well, all work to produce a love in us for our fellow saints.

The second core feature of godly love which our Father wants generated in us is lovingkindness.

Session 12 Self-Test

Why is it so important to respond properly to the doctrine; what are we ultimately attempting to accomplish?

How can our actions actually be the actions of Jesus Christ in us? Or, to apply it to the doctrine of Romans 12:9-10, what is the process whereby our love is without dissimulation?

What is the starting point for producing a love which is without dissimulation; what is the first doctrine which that will be built upon?

God does not force us to be godly; we have to want to be godly. How is a desire to be godly generated in us; upon what is that desire built?

God certainly wants us to love Him. And while many express that love in many ways (through song or praise, etc.), our Father had designed a particular vehicle by which we express our love for Him; what is that God-given expression of our love for God?

Our love for God will produce a love for His business, but ultimately, our love for God is the basis for loving something else, what is it?

What is the second core feature of godly wisdom?

The godly thinking of Romans 12:9 teaches us to look at our fellow saints and consider what?

Session 12 Self-Test Answers

Why is it so important to respond properly to the doctrine; what are we ultimately attempting to accomplish?

As we respond properly to the doctrine, the character of Jesus Christ is formed in us, transforming us to possess godly selflessness as a part of our character.

How can our actions actually be the actions of Jesus Christ in us? Or, to apply it to the doctrine of Romans 12:9-10, what is the process whereby our love is without dissimulation?

Our actions are Christ's actions when the doctrine is in our minds and we are motivated by God's word. This is how Christ is being formed in us and our actions find their source in Him and not ourselves. This is how we love "without dissimulation."

What is the starting point for producing a love which is without dissimulation; what is the first doctrine which that will be built upon?

The information about the mercies of God is the critical first doctrines to the production of a godly love in us which is without dissimulation. Without a sufficient love for God, we will not possess His love for the saints.

God does not force us to be godly; we have to want to be godly. How is a desire to be godly generated in us; upon what is that desire built?

Once the mercies have produced a godly love for our Father in us, to the extent that our love for Him is actively increasing and abounding, that love will produce an ever-increasing desire to be godly.

God certainly wants us to love Him. And while many express that love in many ways (through song or praise, etc.), our Father had designed a particular vehicle by which we express our love for Him; what is that God-given expression of our love for God?

As our love for God increases, we will also desire to labor with Him, both here and also in the heavenly places. Therefore, our office becomes an expression of our love for God! God has designed that laboring with Him in our office be the expression of our love for Him.

Our love for God will produce a love for His business, but ultimately, our love for God is the basis for loving something else, what is it?

Our love for Him ultimately works to produce a love in us for our fellow saints. In other words, our love for the saints is rooted in our love for God.

What is the second core feature of godly wisdom?

The second core feature of godly love which our Father wants generated in us is lovingkindness.

The godly thinking of Romans 12:9 teaches us to look at our fellow saints and consider what?

Verse 9 is teaching us to look at the things happening to the ones we love and consider (think about on purpose!) what kind of impact is being had upon them.

If it is detrimental to them, we will regard it with utter loathing and disgust. If it is good (beneficial) for them, we should delight in it. We should desire to contribute to the welfare of our fellow saints. This godly love is a proper motive for being helpful to them; supporting those things which are profitable to them.

Romans Education, Part 2

Session 13 Notetaker

The 2nd Core Feature of Godly Wisdom (Godly Love)

Fig. 1



Romans Education, Part 2 Notes

Session 13: Abhorring Evil

Previously: Verse 9 is teaching us to look at the things happening to the ones we love and consider (think about on purpose!) what kind of impact is being had upon them.

If it is detrimental to them, we will regard it with utter loathing and disgust. If it is good (beneficial) for them, we should delight in it. We should desire to contribute to the welfare of our fellow saints. This godly love is a proper motive for being helpful to them; supporting those things which are profitable to them.

There is an example of this sitting back in the Psalms. The context is the final installment of Israel's program. In this psalm, there is a contrast between the evil of the wicked and the goodness of God toward the believing remnant.

Psalm 36:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD. The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes. 2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. ³ The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: **he hath left off** to be wise, *and to do good.* ⁴ He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; **he abhorreth not evil.**

Notice that the wicked no longer "do good." That is, they are disposed to hurt and hinder the remnant. They do not abhor evil, but they cleave to it.

On the other hand, look at what the psalm says about God's actions toward the remnant.

Psalm 36:7 How excellent *is thy lovingkindness*, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

Psalm 36:10 O **continue thy lovingkindness** unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

There is a similar issue over in Psalm 107.

Psalm 107:8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD **for his goodness**, and **for his wonderful works** to the children of men!

Psalm 107:43 Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand **the lovingkindness of the LORD**.

OED: lovingkindness

Originally two words, hence, lovingkindness is “loving-kindly. Affectionate tenderness and consideration; kindness arising from a deep personal love, as the active love of God for His creatures.

Noah Webster’s 1828 English Dictionary: KINDNESS “Good will; benevolence; that temper or disposition which delights in contributing to the happiness of others, which is exercised cheerfully in gratifying their wishes, supplying their wants or alleviating their distresses. Kindness ever accompanies love!

Putting everything together, we can see that **godly lovingkindness is a strong disposition to do those things which are helpful, beneficial and provide for the wellbeing of those we love** (in this case, our fellow members).

At the same time, there is an abhorrence of evil; an intense hatred for that which is hurtful to them. It is our godly disdain for the evil (what we have working here is our learning to hate that which God hates and love that which God loves) which is in some way injurious to those we love that moves us to exhibit “kindness” toward them.

When this really takes hold in our inner man, we will actively look for ways to be helpful and profitable to one another. This kind of love is at the root of caring as much for the edification of our fellow members as we care about our own.

Two things we need to see are 1) something about lovingkindness itself, and 2) how lovingkindness is exemplified to us by the Lord Himself.

When we look at the word “lovingkindness” in the Bible, we find that it is used 26 times in 26 verses. There is something amazing about the way this word is used. Take a look at some of the references and see if you can identify it. We do not need to see all 26 references to discover the common thread, so read the following verses and see if you can find it.

Psalm 17:7 Shew **thy marvellous lovingkindness**, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee* from those that rise up *against them*.

Psalm 26:3 For **thy lovingkindness** *is* before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

Psalm 36:10 O continue **thy lovingkindness** unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

Psalm 40:11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let **thy lovingkindness** and thy truth continually preserve me.

Psalm 42:8 *Yet* the LORD will command **his lovingkindness** in the daytime, and in the night his song *shall be* with me, *and* my prayer unto the God of my life.

Psalm 92:2 To shew forth **thy lovingkindness** in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

Psalm 107:43 Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the **lovingkindness of the LORD**.

The common thread to lovingkindness is that this word is used to describe a feature love which is only possessed by God. Or, to say it another way, God is the only one who is ever said to possess lovingkindness; it is never used in connection with men until we get to Romans 12:9-10. And even though the exact word “lovingkindness” is not used in Romans 12, the very attributes described in that word are exactly what Paul says we need produced in us as this second feature of godly love is generated in us. Think about that. There is a feature of God’s love that prior to Romans 12 was never said to be possessed by men; but only by God. And now, this feature can be produced in us as we love our fellow members.

Do not lose sight of this being our godly thinking. In view of that, let me show you an example of how this kind of thinking is in the LORD Himself. To see it, turn with me to Isaiah 63.

When Israel was afflicted, the Lord was afflicted. He was moved to bestow “great goodness” upon them (God was “cleaving to that which is good”). Here is an example of God abhorring the evil (the afflictions) and cleaving to that which is good.

Isaiah 63:7 I will mention **the lovingkindnesses of the LORD**, *and the praises of the LORD*, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the **great goodness** toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. 8 For he said, Surely they *are* my people, children *that* will not lie: so he was their Saviour. ⁹ **In all their affliction he was afflicted**, and the angel of his presence **saved them**: in his love and in his pity **he redeemed them**; and **he bare them**, and **carried them** all the days of old.

Yes, we are looking at scriptures that pertain to Israel’s program but you have to remember that prior to Romans 12, the only One who displayed lovingkindness was God Himself! But now, we can possess that feature of godly love which “cleaves to that which is good and abhors that which is evil” toward our fellow saints.

We left off in our last session looking at the example of God’s lovingkindness in Isaiah 63.

Isaiah 63:7 I will mention **the lovingkindnesses of the LORD**, *and the praises of the LORD*, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the **great goodness** toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. 8 For he said, Surely they *are* my people, children *that* will not lie: so he was their Saviour. ⁹ **In all their affliction he was afflicted**, and the angel of his presence **saved them**: in his love and in his pity **he redeemed them**; and **he bare them**, and **carried them** all the days of old.

Godly lovingkindness is not just some kind of sentimental emotional feeling, but it results in godly action. In the Lord’s case of Isaiah 63, He saved them, He

redeemed them, He bare them, and He carried them. God's love was without dissimulation! And that is why Romans 12 is talking about the feature of God's love (lovingkindness) being generated in us as the next step to our getting godly wisdom.

This brings us to the next section of the doctrine, the godly living section contained in vs. 10.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love...*

It is this “kind affection to one another with brotherly love” which we have condensed down to the single word, “lovingkindness.”

OED: Affectioned

- 1) Disposed, inclined (in any way)

The #1 definition of “affectioned” is actually exemplified by Romans 12:10 in the OED.

affectioned, 1. Disposed, inclined (in any way). arch.

c 1555 Harpsfield Divorce Hen. VIII (1878) 29 Reasons which may seem sufficient to any indifferent affectioned man. 1561 T. N[orton] tr. Calvin's Instit. ii. 109 So affectioned and minded by the direction of the spirit that they desire to obey God. a 1581 E. Campion Hist. Irel. xi. ix. 110 They sate upon him diversely affectioned. **1611 Bible Rom. xii. 10 Bee kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly loue.**

And then look at the second definition:

OED: Affectioned

- 2) Swayed by the affections; biased, partial.

OED: Affections

1a) The action of affecting, acting upon or influencing; or (when viewed passively) the fact of being affected 2) an affecting or moving of the mind in any way; a mental state brought about by any influence...

The point here is that being “swayed by the affections” is not talking about being kind to someone we are emotionally fond of, but rather, we are being swayed by the “affections” which are those things which influence our state of mind toward someone. Something (in this case, the doctrine) has had an “affect” on our thinking whereby we now have an inclination to be kind to our fellow members in response to their experiencing good and evil.

And while this may have extension to every part of their life by which they may encounter good and evil, we should pay particular attention to that which pertains to their function within the body and their edification.

With that definition in mind, Paul is saying we should be inclined (influenced by the doctrine) to exhibit kindness toward our fellow members.

Romans 12:10 ***Be kindly affectioned one to another*** with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

That kindness is to be set forth “with brotherly love.”

As we are all “sons,” we are also “brothers” in our sonship relationship with one another. In this context (brotherly love), we should love each other as ones who are interested in the sonship lives of each other; as those who mutually care about our fellow-members’ welfare as sons.

The bond that we share as sons draws us together for the purpose of sharing our sonship lives. We should desire to spend time together, fellowshipping around our education and sonship living so that we are helpful and profitable to each other. We support and advance the sonship life of our fellow members. We have a desire to contribute to the sonship life and sonship welfare of the rest of the body.

So, we may guess that our awareness of the evil which harms our fellow saints gives rise to our opportunities to “show mercy” and “extend help” and “encourage,” etc. But what about in the ages to come? What is the practical opportunity there? How much “harm and hurt” will come to members of the body out in the creature?

Well, the question is close to the reality, but it puts the focus on the wrong entity. Truth is, it is the creature itself which needs our future “kindness.” As we learned

back in Romans 8, the creature is under the bondage of corruption (a state of being) and occupied by the Adversary and his angels.

While Satan and his angels will be driven out at the appropriate time, the creature remains under that bondage until it is delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And that is where we, by our kindness extended toward the creature in response to its detrimental state of being under the bondage of corruption, are able to deliver it.

As members of the body of Christ who are conformed to the image of God's Son, with His life and character operating in us, we will become the very functional life of the creature. Think about that. Just as Jesus Christ has become our life...

Colossians 3:4 When **Christ, who is our life**, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The bondage of corruption has robbed the life of God from the creature. The only way for that life to return is for sons and daughters who will possess the very life of God, to fill the creature and become the functional life of the creature so that the life of Christ can fill that entire portion of the creation; to fill the heavenlies.

Just as Christ lives His life in us as we "walk after the Spirit" (after who the Spirit has made us to be in Christ);

Romans 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, **who walk** not after the flesh, but **after the Spirit**.

...just as Christ lives His life in us as we obey that form of doctrine which as delivered unto us...

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

This is in relation to our sanctification, not justification! This is not talking about how we used to be lost and now we are saved, it is talking about our service.

(Look where you are: Romans 6.) We used to be servants of sin, but that changed first as we were given a new identity in Christ as part of the sanctified status we received when we were put "in Christ." But practically, as we "obey from the

heart that form of doctrine" which God delivered to us through the apostle Paul, we are able to have the very life of God manifested in us. (Great is the mystery of godliness! See 1 Timothy 3:16.) Paul's sonship doctrine transforms us and produces the life of Christ in us. This is the "glory which shall be revealed in us."

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory:**

As Christ takes up residence in us, we in turn take up residence in the creature so that by virtue of being in us, the life of Christ is also made manifest in the creature. That is the issue of Ephesians 1:22-23. The point I am focusing on by talking about this is that Christ will not superimpose Himself within the creation as though He does not need us, but rather He fills the creation by filling us with His life and then filling the creation with us.

Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

We (the church, which is His body) are the fullness of Him (Christ).

There is more to say about this, especially as it pertains to the work we will be doing in the heavenly places. We have placed these notes in the RoK #1: The Issue of Fulness.

But let's return to that issue of godly lovingkindness as it pertains to us here and now, as part of our godly living. Once we begin to think about one another the godly way (cleaving and abhorring) we will also start looking for an outlet (the godly living!) to make our godly thinking manifest. And the first place that needs to happen is within the local assembly.

Session 13 Summary

The core feature that is being taught to us in vv. 9-10 is lovingkindness.

Godly lovingkindness is a strong disposition to do those things which are helpful, beneficial and provide for the wellbeing of those we love.

Godly lovingkindness is not just some kind of sentimental emotional feeling, but it results in godly action.

Session 13 Prayer

Prayer for this session is a conversation with our Father about how we will cultivate this strong disposition to be helpful, beneficial and provide for the well-being of those in our assembly.

Again, because prayer activates the doctrine, the more we talk to God about this area of our life, the more it will be in our thinking.

RoK #1: The Issue of Fulness

Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

What does that mean, that we are the fullness of Him that filleth all in all?

First of all, if we are His fullness, it does not mean that we make Him who He is; that is quite the opposite of the truth. As His fullness, we “fill Him up” so that He “fills all in all.” (More about that last bit shortly.)

If the church which is His body “fills Him up” then what else is there? Well, Israel of course. But Israel concerns the earth, which is only part of the creation (and a small part at that.) Along with the nation of Israel, the body of Christ becomes His fullness in the sense that He will “fill all in all.”

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word “fullness” is comprised of two parts, “full” and “ness.” The suffix “ness” gives a state of being in connection with the previous word. Hence...

OED: full

1a) Having within its limits all it will hold; having so space empty; replete.

Therefore, fullness is the state of that condition being in effect by being filled up.

There is an analogy here.

Just as Paul’s writings to the church, the body of Christ filled-full the written word of God and closed the canon of scripture...

Colossians 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, **to fulfil the word of God;**

...the church, the body of Christ fills-full the life of Christ throughout all of the creation.

And He is the one who “filleth all in all,” not us.

Why was it given to Paul to “complete” the word of God? Firstly, it has to do with the necessity of scriptures being in place at the time Israel’s program is resumed. Secondly, because the message given to Paul (along with the people who will enact it; the body of Christ) will complete the universe.

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

The critical part is that the ones who have been chosen to be “holy and without blame before Him in love” are those who are “in him.” How do you get “in him?” This is referring to those who are “in Christ” and the only way you get that is by trusting Him as your all-sufficient Savior.

So, those who are in Christ have been chosen to be holy and without blame. But there is more.

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Also, those who are “in him” have been predestinated unto the adoption; we will be his sons and daughters in connection with our sanctification, which has to do with the Father’s business, not just because we are part of the family of God by way of justification.

Ephesians 1:⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. ⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; ⁸ Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; ⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

What is it that He has made known to us? What is the “mystery of His will?” What did God purpose in Himself? The next verse tells us, following the colon of vs. 9.

Ephesians 1:¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and

which are on earth; *even* in him: ¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: ¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

God will use us who are “in him” (members of the body of Christ) to reconcile the universe to Himself. God chose those members of the body of Christ to this endeavor before any of them were ever born.

So, God’s times are incomplete without the dispensation of the fullness of times wherein He will utilize us to the reconciliation of the heavenly places, but Christ Himself is incomplete without His body. We get the privilege of completing the One who is completing the All in all.

The Father will not complete the whole creation until the Son has c

Christ will not begin completing the creation without us (His body), hence the creature is waiting for (earnestly expecting!) the manifestation of the sons of God.

The Son will not submit Himself to the Father until the whole creation has been brought into submission to Him. And that is part of our job in the heavenly places. Once the entire creation is brought under the headship of Christ, then Christ presents that to His Father and then submits Himself to the Father who then becomes the All in all. So, we are the complement to Christ and Christ is the complement to the Father. We really are part of the plan and God has made it so that it will not happen unless and until we do our part.

He could have done it all by Himself with a wave of His hand, but He chose not to do it that way. Instead, it delights God to call out a special group of people and direct them through a specific period of time for a specific purpose; to bring the whole creation to a conclusion; a fulfillment. This is our job and Israel’s.

The meek only inherit the earth; we get all the rest. When you look at the heavens, you realize that the Earth is a speck among the entire creation. And for Israel, more specifically they are focusing on a piece of real estate in the Middle East.

For us, seated with Christ in the heavenlies, our realm will be that of every spinning galaxy ever made.

Romans Education, Part 2

Session 14 Notetaker

Fig. 1

The Goals of Manifesting Godly Lovingkindness

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



The strengthening of the local assembly's capacity to labor with God by the promotion of the sonship lives of those in the assembly.

Fig. 2

What it Means to Honor a Fellow-Member

HONOR

- 1. High Respect
- 2. Token of High Regard
- 3. Actions conferring Honor

Fig. 3 What it Means to Prefer a Fellow-Member**PREFER**

1. _____
2. _____

Fig. 4 By-Products of Godly Lovingkindness Put into Practice**Fig. 5 By-Products of Godly Lovingkindness Put into Practice**

- The _____ of the body will rise
- More people will be _____
- More people will be _____
- _____ for the doctrine will _____
- The assembly is insulated against _____

Fig. 5 My Response to “Evil” Happening to Me

I DO NOT:

- _____ about my circumstance
- _____ that I am not suffering
- ask “_____” as though I should be immune from these things
- _____ or His goodness because something bad is happening to me
- _____ as God trying to tell me something or get my attention in some way or punish me as this implies God is the author of my suffering; He is not.

I DO:

- _____ for what it is (SoPT/SoC) and deal with it accordingly
- _____ talking to God about what I am going to do
- _____ to put the life of Christ on display
- _____ of the doctrine which comforts

Fig. 6 The Means by which We “in Honor Prefer One Another”



Romans Education, Part 2

Lesson 14 Notes: Kindly Affectioned

Previously: Once we begin to think about one another the godly way (cleaving and abhorring) we will also start looking for an outlet (the godly living!) to make our godly thinking manifest. The first and most natural outlet is within the local assembly.

And why is that the first and most natural outlet? Because we are “related” to one another through Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;*
in honour preferring one another;

The “brotherly love” and the “kindly affectioned” dovetail perfectly in that the root of the word “kind” (or kindness or kindly) is “kin.” Kin is the root of kindred which has to do with someone in your family. Well, when you talk about “brotherly love” you are also talking about someone in your family; brotherly.

As members of the same body, we have a kinship with each other and as such, we should see each other as family; a family that is knit together in Christ.

When it comes to the godly living aspect of this, it will be up to us to determine how we will manifest godly lovingkindness toward the other members of the body. We should be on the lookout for ways to build each other up, to promote the sonship life of every other member. Each of us will make a sonship decision regarding how we will put this godly lovingkindness into action. Sometimes it will be toward an individual, a group of individuals and other times it will be toward the assembly as a whole.

Notice also that verse 10 does not tell us exactly how we are to be “kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love.” This means you will be spending some time with your heavenly Father to determine exactly how you are going to live out of this feature of kindness. Or, to say it another way, it will be up to us to turn our godly thinking of cleaving and abhorring to the good and evil into actions. And why? Is God simply assigning us something to do so we can be “good?”

The purpose to this godly living is to establish a strong bond between the saints in the local church. At the first we may care about the good and evil that happens to our fellow members simply because we are told to do so, but with the living of it, that godly lovingkindness takes root in us and forms a strong attachment to our fellow members so that we truly care about what happens to them.

And why will we care? We will care because as part of the same body, they also have been dealt the measure of faith. We will care because we need them in order to be a body. We will care because we have truly come to love them for who they are and what they are a part of.

If we are thinking about this like our Father does, then we realize that God did not restrict His business to His Son only, but instead determined to have many sons who would be “joint-heirs” with Him in the Father’s business. We were told about this all the way back to Romans 8.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that **he might be the firstborn among many brethren.**

As the firstborn, Christ has the preeminent position. Hence, He is the “head of the body.” And the term body is appropriate to the joint function of every member, but we could also say that as our elder brother, Christ is the head of every son. And just as His purpose is the advancement of our sonship life, so should our godly living have in mind the advancement and growth of the sonship life of our fellow members.

So far we have covered the godly thinking and the godly living. Now it is time to look at the godly labor portion of the verses.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

OED: Honour

- 1) High respect, esteem, or reverence, accorded to exalted worth or rank; deferential admiration or approbation.

5a) Something conferred or done as a token of respect or distinction; a mark or manifestation of high regard...

6a) ...an action or attribute that confers honour; a source or cause to honour...

Putting it all together, our godly labor is an action that manifests our high respect for another member of our assembly.

And exactly how will we do that which manifests our great respect for another member? We will do so by “preferring them.” So what does that mean?

OED: Prefer

1a) To put forward or advance, in status, rank, or fortune; to promotion (to a position of or office of dignity)

6a) To set or hold before others in favour or esteem...

So, in a nutshell, “in honor preferring one another” means that we set forward a fellow member in such a way that causes him to be honored in in our own eyes and honored in the eyes of the rest of the assembly.

As we survey our own assembly, and we find those for whom we have great respect or those who have in some way distinguished themselves within the body, then we hold them up before all so that they might be admired by every other member.

It is the discharge of this godly lovingkindness that generates the very first steps which eventually result in the local body being “fitly joined together” as the body “edifies itself in love” just as Ephesians 4 and Colossians 2 describe.

So what is the operation that God wants us to labor with Him to accomplish by this godly lovingkindness? As the spiritual needs of the assembly are being met by the edification offices which are taking place, and the assembly is being provided for and maintained by the practical offices, as the members of the assembly begin to labor with God out of this lovingkindness, the assembly is now capable of strengthening itself!

Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, **maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

As the assembly strengthens itself, it now has the capacity to grow and increase in the accomplishment of God's operations.

And just so we understand, the “preferring” which is done “in honor” is supposed to benefit the entire assembly, not just one person.

1 Corinthians 12:25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether **one member suffer, all the members suffer** with it; or **one member be honoured, all the members rejoice** with it.

This is going to be accomplished, for the most part, by something that gets said; it is verbal! And if it is said appropriately and for godly reasons, several things result:

- The body grows in its capacity to accomplish God's operations
- The morale of the body will rise
- More people will be saved
- More people will be edified
- The enthusiasm of the assembly will increase
- The assembly will be insulated against outside attacks which might otherwise have impacted some member to quit

Before we move on let me say something important: It is not enough to simply know this doctrine, but we must implement it into our conduct if we are truly going to be transformed by the doctrine.

I know we have all kinds of people listening live and later on the recorded sessions. But listen, even if you are an introvert, even if speaking out loud as you watch on Zoom makes you nervous, there are still ways to obey this doctrine. When it comes to the godly living of this doctrine, you can write it in a card to someone who is experiencing the “good or evil” in their life. There are even ways

for you to intercede on their behalf. Just think about it. You notice that Paul does not tell us exactly how to do this, and that is on purpose. We are meant to think about this, talk with our Father about it, and then live out of the doctrine.

(At this point I want to emphasize that you read the Edification Evaluation section included for this lesson. We will talk about the implementation of the doctrine in more detail there, so please do not overlook it.)

So what about if you are not physically at the assembly; how can you labor with your Father to bestow honor upon another member? Well, think about it. You can write it in a card and ask it to be read before all. It does not even have to be for someone who is physically here, it may be for another Zoom member.

There is something else to understand here; the method by which this is done. Do not think of this as some kind of “pat on the back” session. The honoring of a fellow-member needs to be for something which has benefitted someone in the assembly or the assembly as a whole. Most of the time, the benefit needs to be related to edification.

In the same way, rejoicing with them over the “good” in their life should also be related to their edification in some way. Our intervention to help them with an “evil” can surely be material or physical in nature, but ultimately, we would want to see it tied to their edification being benefitted as well. That way this doctrine does not devolve into just another social service, but keeps the more important inner man issues in view.

Now let's pull all the doctrine together.

How are we supposed to put our godly lovingkindness into action? In the sense of our godly thinking, we have a strong reaction toward the “good” and “evil” which happens to our fellow members in our minds. That means we stop and really think about what is happening to them. And because of what we already know about them (part of the body, interdependent, etc.) we care about what happens with them.

Therefore, in our everyday actions toward them, our godly thinking is made manifest. We rejoice when good things happen and when bad things happen we

care about those things in the sense that we look for ways to intervene to their comfort and help. This is our godly living and it can apply to anything that is happening with them. For example, if I suffer from some sort of “sufferings of this present time,” it is my job to depend on the all-sufficient grace to patiently endure it.

That means:

- I do not whine and complain about my circumstance. But it also does not mean that I pretend that I am not suffering.
- I do not ask “why me?” as though I should be immune from these things. I do not question God or His goodness because something bad is happening to me. I do not interpret my circumstances as God trying to tell me something or get my attention in some way as this implies God is author of my suffering; He is not. And while it is true that He allowed the suffering, it is still not His way of talking to me and it is certainly not His way of punishing me for something I have done that was displeasing to Him.

As I endure the sufferings of this present time, I depend on God’s grace to patiently endure it. But the assembly is supposed to look at it differently; they are supposed to abhor the evil and do something about it.

And when we are not suffering in some particular way, we are supposed to be honoring one another because of the faithful performance of an office which benefits the entire assembly. And when I see another member honored, I should be rejoicing with them in that.

So now we know that one of the ways in which the entire assembly is strengthened, and its capacity to grow is increased, is a direct result of each of us laboring with our Father out of Romans 12:9-10 by our verbally expressing our respect and appreciation (value and esteem) for what another member is doing to meet the needs of the assembly.

This is exactly what Paul does in Romans 16:1.

Romans 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for

she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. ³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: ⁴ Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. ⁶ Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

In all, Paul mentions thirty people directly by name and an additional multitude are referred to corporately. Paul is honoring a lot of people in front of the saints at Rome.

Remember that the saints at Rome did not meet in a single building at the same time. They met in various houses throughout the city and, no doubt, at various times. This epistle which Paul wrote to them all would have to make its way from house to house in order for all to hear it.

Almost all of the names in Paul's honor-roll are Greek. If the saints at Rome are going to "greet, receive, salute and assist" these people, then they must have, at some time, moved to Rome (probably for the reason of commerce for many of them). But they were not from Rome. But what they all had in common is that they were known by Paul for their work, faith and love.

True, when Paul writes Romans 16, he had not yet been to Rome. So how did he know so many people who lived there? He knew them because for the 30 years previous, he had traveled everywhere else and had met these people who eventually wound up in Rome.

In this list are men, women, old, young, prisoners and freemen, people related to Paul (5 of them!), people of note (Andronicus and Junia are "of note among the apostles") and those lost in obscurity of which we know nothing but their name.

Before we move on, let me dwell on just a small part of this list in vs. 13.

Romans 16:13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

There is something briefly stated here that still stands out to me as I read it. Paul says for the Romans to salute Rufus, who has sometimes been identified as the son

of Simon the Cyrenian. But that may or may not be right as that name was very common. But the part I am after is the mention of Rufus' mother. Paul does not mean to say that he and Rufus are brothers by blood, but rather that Rufus' mother was such to him that he counted her as his own mother. It makes me wonder, did Paul's own mother cast him off after his conversion? Was she no longer living? Whatever the case, this godly Christian lady too in Paul and treated him like her own Rugus; like her own son. She made him welcome in her home and he looked at her as his own mother.

Paul loved these people and they loved him. It is interesting that while Paul was a man who made enemies every day, he was at the same time a man most hated and a man most loved. While forty Jews would vow to kill him, Priscilla and Aquila would "lay down their own necks" to save him from a blow.

These are people who worked alongside Paul. Some of them came to Christ as a direct result of Paul's ministry and all of them were saved by "Paul's gospel." Some had sat with him at a fire and listened to him talk about the creature and the heavenly places and they thrilled to hear of those things which lay ahead for them. Others had entertained him in their home. They had heard Paul pray in accordance with this mystery that was given to him to reveal. Some of them witnessed Felix quaking at Paul's words while others watch as Agrippa turned pale and confessed, "almost thou persuades me to be a Christian."

There is a bond between them and it is the bond of godly love and charity. They learned what we are learning; that if we labor with God out of the godly love generated in us by His word, that love will do more for us than genius, wealth, position or prestige.

We might wonder, why should such a catalog of obscure names find a permanent place in the canon of God's inspired word? Because God wanted to preserve a proof that Paul practiced what he preached. He labored with his Father in accordance with Romans 12:10.

No doubt it must have been gratifying and stimulating to those who were in the list, but not to the point of pride and self. But it did, no doubt, elevate them in the

eyes of their brethren at Rome and elsewhere the epistle would make its way. And I am sure it enlarged their sphere of influence.

And I think this is not only appropriate but it also serves as a foretaste of when the body of Christ is assembled together and we receive our glorified bodies and a commendation from our Lord as He declares our position and installs in His creature! From that time, everyone will truly know who we are and what the Lord thinks about us.

This is selfless lovingkindness in operation within the local assembly.

When you see offices being occupied and labored out of godly, selfless lovingkindness, rather just giving it a brief “nod,” or no notice at all, here is an opportunity to labor with your Father by saying to them, “I so appreciate the good work that you are doing for this assembly; thank you for filling an office in this assembly. I really do value and esteem you for what you do for this body and our Father’s operations. You are doing something important and I wanted you know just how much that means to me.”

This is also an opportunity to say these things in front of others so they too can value and esteem this person and their office.

When a person hears these kinds of things being said about them, selflessness keeps them from pride, but instead, a greater zeal for the work is generated in them; a loyalty and dedication to the office will get further established, and...there will be an excitement when they see the doctrine working in their fellow members!

From this comes a “building up” and “joining together” and a “compacting” and an “edifying” which Paul talks about in Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Men in this world also bestow honors upon each other, but not for the same reasons. We are doing this because our Father has taught us to abhor evil and

cleave to that which is good and we therefore honor our fellow members because of how it benefits them and the rest of the body to accomplishment of our Father's operations. This is godliness in action; charity in action; godly labor in action.

We are not trying to puff anyone up, we are not trying to manipulate anyone and we are not trying to patronize anyone. We are building a godly camaraderie around our mutual, godly cause which our assembly is engaged in accomplishing. Or, to say it another way, our honoring of one another is further rooting us and establishing us in this sonship education/edification process. As we participate in the godly labor of vs. 10, we are helping insulate ourselves from those attacks which work to make us drop out or quit.

Let step aside here to make a point about a way in which the members of an assembly are "taught of God" to love one another, as Paul wrote of the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

Let me show you a couple of ways how this happens in a local assembly.

Firstly, the previous doctrine produces a godly love for our fellow members which produces a desire to express how we value and esteem them. (*I have a couple of examples to give you concerning this.*)

What is happening here is that the previous doctrine, being responded to and contemplated on, begins to generate the next step in our edification. In this case, the previous doctrine began to generate thoughts of how to express our value and esteem for (in Larry's case) the entire assemblies in Monahans and Glen Rose, and (in Willa's case) for that group of people who make it possible for our remote members to participate. In these cases, that desire turned into godly labor as both of these couple articulated their acknowledgment of what others are doing. Without knowing the specific doctrine concerning it, they were "in honor, preferring one another."

So, when the doctrine is working in us, it can cause us to labor with our Father even before we know from the scripture it is a godly labor. We have seen and are

seeing this happen in our own assembly. This is the first way in which “we ourselves are taught of God to love one another.”

This is godly edifying taking place the way it was designed to take place. This is actions which are a result of the doctrine. These are the moments when we are being conformed to the image of God’s Son; when Christ is being formed in us.

We learn this doctrine also by seeing the other members live out of doctrine which we are not yet aware of. For example, here we are today in Romans 12:10. We learn to “in honor prefer one another” and we learn how to do that. Once that doctrine is in us and we begin to do it consistently, we will continue to practice it long after we have left the book of Romans.

Suppose that sometime next year (2022) we are in Corinthians and new people come into the assembly. If we are doing this correctly, they will begin to notice, without us having to tell them about it, that we are “in honor preferring one another.” They will see it take place over and over again. They will see all the members of the assembly engage in that godly labor at one time or another. The natural by-product of seeing that is emulation (we provoke new members to emulation!) by our godly labor in their sight. And before they ever come to that part of the doctrine, they begin to participate in it to the degree they can.

And it will not just be about the doctrine of Romans 12:10. They will see the members living out of all the doctrine which they learned up to that point, and by that example, they will “be taught” to do the same. They will “see” the various doctrines being lived long before they may actually “read” the doctrine themselves as they seek to catch up. They will see the doctrine working in the assembly. They will see it put on display and made manifest and they will see the godly charity with which it is applied.

No wonder Paul says that the saints in the churches are “his epistles” which are read of all men.

2 Corinthians 3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

2 Corinthians 3:3 *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*

They are putting Paul's epistles on display by their godly living and godly labor.

Romans Education, Part 2

Session 14 Summary

To Honor our Fellow-Members means we conduct ourselves toward them in a way that shows high respect. Our actions toward them demonstrate the high regard we have them as follow-members. And we confer honor upon them to the benefit of the entire assembly.

As we in honor prefer one another, we not only promote the sonship life of others, but we make it so the assembly can actually strengthen itself. That strengthening increases the capacity of the assembly to labor with God in His operations.

The way we in honor prefer one another is by saying it; verbally expressing our respect and appreciation.

Session 14 Edification Evaluation

Look, as you go through the lessons live with us on Sunday (or at another time on Vimeo) that is great. You have a chance to ask questions and make sure your understanding the doctrine. And that is what the live and recorded sessions are for.

But...the problem with that is when we fail to invest our time in getting doctrine from our head to our heart; from our brain to our life. Information, in and of itself, is not the goal; it is a means to an end. The “end” is that you become conformed to the image of God’s Son; that you become godly.

The Edification Evaluation offers you some step-by-step guidelines to implementing the doctrine into your life on a constant basis. When you do that, you are not just gaining more knowledge, but you are becoming Christ-like.

It doesn’t take hours and hours each day. If you can spend 10 minutes a day looking over the doctrine, talking to your Father about it, and thinking about how to implement it into your life, and then spend another 5 minutes organizing the actual doing of the doctrine in your mind, all you have left to do is to do it when the time occurs.

Once you have done it, you need to do it again and again.

For example, as you look out among the other members of the assembly, you will see individuals who are faithful in the performance of some office. Many times what they do may not be in the spotlight but behind the scenes, so you will have to think about the things that are being done.

Stop now and think about the faithful performance of some member of the assembly and think about how you might “in honor prefer them.” Do not put off the practice of the doctrine of Romans 12:9-10.

Either now or when you finish reading over this section on Edification Evaluation, spend 10 minutes with your Bible and your heavenly Father and determine how you will put the doctrine into practice.

Remember that the godly living aspect is the “responding to the good and evil in their life.” Your “godly living” can put the doctrine into practice with them

personally. Rejoicing with them over the “good,” or assisting them with the effects of an “evil” does not always require a public display and it is not always limited to words spoken, but it can be. Sometimes it may require for you to “do something.” Let your words and/or actions be part of what your are talking to your Father about.

In order to know about the good and evil, you will have to “get to know” the other members of the assembly and take an active interest in them. They are “kin” in the spiritual sense and you will be spending eternity with them.

Now, when it comes to the godly labor aspect of the doctrine “in honor preferring one another” things are a little different. The godly labor aspect of vs. 10 is verbal and it is meant to be public. It may be public in a small group within the assembly or it may be before the whole assembly. Again, take the time (I recommend 10 minutes as a minimum) to talk with your Father about a way to implement your godly labor of “in honor preferring” another member.

Don’t skip either one. This is supposed to be part of our “arsenal” of sonship behaviors from now on.

It is fine to send a private note of thanks and encouragement; that has its place. But what vs. 10 is talking about is a more public demonstration of honor which not only elevates the individual but also works to the benefit of the entire assembly. And just how is the assembly benefitted by a single member being elevated?

First of all, the “honor” will not always be upon an individual. Sometimes it may be a group of people who are involve together in some office, or it may even be the assembly as a whole.

Stop now and think about what is happening with the members of your assembly.

Secondly the assembly benefits as they gain appreciation for the faithful discharge of an office. Perhaps they were not aware of something that was being done and could not appreciate it until they know of it; and now they do.

Thirdly, those who are privy to the honoring of others are motivated to look for other saints to honor, which increases the camaraderie in the body. Those saints who are being honored are encouraged to continue and to do even better.

As each saint is honored, the correct attitude is to point to the doctrine as their motivation for the performance of their office. This not only gives God the glory but points the whole assembly to the doctrine as the motivation for we all do. This serves to increase the enthusiasm of the entire assembly for the doctrine.

As this form of doctrine becomes an increasing reality among the members of the assembly, the saints become knit together in such a way that the assembly as a whole becomes insulated against attacks from outside the assembly. Let these things be in your mind as you think about whether or not it is important for you to participate in the doctrine.

As you think of ways to respond to the “good and evil” in the lives of your fellow saints, do so with an emphasis on their edificational well-being. As you think of ways to “in honor prefer one another” let it be genuine and not contrived.

In other words, do not “make stuff up” in order to implement the doctrine. Find something genuine and have the right motive as you “obey the doctrine.”

Session 14 Self-Test

1. In the pattern of the doctrine, vs. 9 addresses what?
 - a.
2. Our godly living is exercised by doing what?
 - a.
3. In the pattern of the doctrine, vs. 10 addresses what?
 - a.
4. Our godly labor is exercised by doing what?
 - a.
5. Our godly labor actually accomplishes 3 things; what are they?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
6. What does it mean to “in honor prefer one another?”
 - a.

Session 14 Prayer

Look back at the section Edification Evaluation. Within that section we talk about the prayer aspect.

Session 14 Self-Test Answers

1. In the pattern of the doctrine, vs. 9 addresses what?
 - a. Our godly living
2. Our godly living is exercised by doing what?
 - a. Attending to the “good and evil” in the lives of our fellow members
3. In the pattern of the doctrine, vs. 10 addresses what?
 - a. Our godly labor
4. Our godly labor is exercised by doing what?
 - a. “...in honor preferring one another”
5. Our godly labor actually accomplishes 3 things; what are they?
 - a. Promotes the Sonship life of others
 - b. Allows the assembly to strengthen itself
 - c. Increases the assembly’s capacity to labor with God
6. What does it mean to “in honor prefer one another?”
 - a. It means we set forward a fellow member in such a way that causes him to be honored in the eyes of the whole assembly