

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Romans: Charter Of Salvation Grace
Part VI: The Practical Application Of God's Spiritual Provisions To Living
C. Applying God's Spiritual Provisions To Social Relationships
(Romans 12:9-21)

I. Introduction

- A. A great thrust exists in evangelical circles today for the believer to engage the secular society around him and to change it for righteousness by way of social and political activism, cf. Mark Dinsmore, "'Apostolic' Apostasies Attract," The Berean Call, March 2008, p. 8.
- B. Though we believe the believer is to live separate from the world and not use social and political activism to usher in Christ's kingdom on earth by way of external reforms, we do not hold that this means living with a "fortress mentality" where we have no social contact with others. Rather, we are to be in contact with all men, having a correct social relationship with them as taught in Romans 12:9-21 as follows:

II. Applying God's Spiritual Provisions To Social Relationships, Romans 12:9-21.

- A. The believer's love must not be hypocritical toward fellow believers, but genuine, Romans 12:9a.
- B. The believer must abhor what is evil but to hold fast to what is wholesome for mankind, Rom. 12:9b.
- C. The believer's love for fellow Christians must be characterized by brotherly affection, the kind that excels in honoring fellow believers as much as is possible, Romans 12:10.
- D. The believer is to exemplify a sustained fervency before others in his service to the Lord, Rom. 12:11.
- E. Instead of living with a negative attitude toward life, the believer must rejoice in the hope that he has in the Lord, to be patient in trials and to pray continually as a way of life, Romans 12:12.
- F. Toward fellow believers, the Christian is to contribute materially to the needs of the saints and try to show hospitality, Romans 12:13 ESV.
- G. Toward carnal believers or the lost who mistreat them, the believer must bless and not curse, Rom. 12:14.
- H. Toward other people who experience great emotional highs and lows, believers must show sensitivity, empathizing with their respective joys and sorrows, Romans 12:15.
- I. Believers should seek to live as much as they can in harmony with other people, Romans 12:16a.
- J. Believers should try to associate with humble, lowly people versus associating with the proud, 12:16b.
- K. When wronged, the believer must not repay evil for evil, but respond in the matter in a way that is respected by everyone, be it the foe or onlookers, Romans 12:17.
- L. In difficult relationships, the believer should try his best to live peaceably with all involved, Rom. 12:18.
- M. Vengeance should not be practiced by the believer, but he should leave room for God's wrath to handle the wrong he has suffered (Romans 12:19a), a truth further explained in Romans 12:19b-21 as follows:
 - 1. The believer should recall that God has promised in His Word (cf. Deuteronomy 32:35) to express His wrath in taking righteous vengeance in his behalf for wrongs he has suffered, Romans 12:19b. Thus, he should trust and obey God's promise in the matter and not take vengeance for himself!
 - 2. For this reason, the believer can afford to treat those who have wronged him with goodness in actions like feeding his hungry foe and with giving him drink when he is thirsty, Romans 12:20a.
 - 3. [The practice of heaping burning coals on the head of one's enemy does not mean to heap up God's wrath on him by treating him kindly, for that would be evil passive-aggressive sin! Rather, heaping hot coals into the foe's fire pan on his head was a blessing, for hot coals could quickly restore the fire in the foe's hearth, a great help to such a person with this kind of need, cf. Romans 12:20b.]
 - 4. Thus, the believer must overcome the evil done against him by absorbing it in his good response to it, Rom. 12:21. (2 Kings 6:8-14, 18-23; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed. cross ref. to Romans 12:20)

Lesson: *Toward others in a social context, be they believers or the unsaved, the believer must express genuine love, consideration, fervency in spirit, optimism and goodness as he TRUSTS the LORD to RULE and even OVERRULE in ALL such social interactions.*

Application: *God is sovereign over all our social relationships, so may we recall that He holds us accountable for every word we speak and act we take with others; HE will reward the good and punish the evil, be it in us or in the other party, so may we take care how we function in our social contacts!*