

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

Part VI: God's Righteousness Applied To Practical Living, Romans 12:1-15:13

E. God's Righteousness Applied To The Believer's General Spiritual Walk

(Romans 13:8-14)

I. Introduction

- A. Having been positionally made perfectly righteous in Christ through belief in the Gospel, the believer must live a righteous life, what is holy and acceptable to the Lord, cf. Romans 12:1-2.
- B. Understanding what such a life means in very practical terms that can be quickly summarized helps a believer know what he should have as a central focus in life, and Romans 13:8-14 describes that focus (as follows):

II. God's Righteousness Applied To the Believer's General Spiritual Walk, Romans 13:8-14.

- A. Having just discussed the believer's need to pay his financial obligations to the government (Romans 13:7), Paul added that the believer should owe no man anything, but to pay his financial debts to others, Rom. 13:8a.
- B. However, there is a debt a believer has that can never be completely paid -- his indebtedness to love all men, so Paul charged his readers to address this debt as a way of life, Romans 13:8b.
- C. He explained that this focus of loving all men is the central focus of the Mosaic Law itself, Romans 13:9-10:
 - 1. Paul listed five of the Ten Commandments and noted that each of them actually require that one express love toward his neighbor, Romans 13:9a-d, f (as follows):
 - a. The command not to commit adultery fulfills the law of love toward the innocent spouse, Rom. 13:9a with Ex. 20:14. The two parties involved in adultery selfishly meet their own lusts at the cost of the right that the innocent spouse has to his/her spouse's body, so love for the innocent inhibits the act of adultery!
 - b. The command not to murder another person fulfills the law of love toward the potential victim as well as toward his dependents and/or family members who love and value him, Romans 13:9b with Exodus 20:13.
 - c. The command not to steal from another party fulfills the law of love toward that rightful owner of the possession involved, Romans 13:9c with Exodus 20:15.
 - d. The command not to bear false witness fulfills the law of love toward the one whose reputation must be preserved from the unjust, harmful effects of slander on his relationships, Romans 13:9d; Exodus 20:16.
 - e. The command not to covet fulfills the law of love toward one who has a valuable possession, preserving him from needless insecurity caused when another lusts after his possession, Romans 13:9e; Exodus 20:17.
 - f. Thus, Paul added that each of these commands focus on one's need to love one's neighbor as himself, the summary command given in Leviticus 19:18; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 491.
 - 2. The Apostle then summarized what love does in general to one's neighbor, claiming it does no wrong to one's neighbor, and thus that it fulfills the intent of the entire Mosaic Law, Romans 13:10.
- D. Accordingly, Paul called his readers to awake out of a state of insensitivity to the selfishness of sin and to begin living righteous lives that truly focus on selflessly loving others, for the time of our physical salvation in the coming of the Lord is nearer now than when we first believed, meaning we are closer to giving an account to God at the end of this life to have lived selflessly in love for others versus selfishly for ourselves, v. 11.
- E. This type of life, one that separates from the works of darkness typified by selfish deceit and lust gratification rather to focus on selfless love toward other people, is achieved by relying on the Lord to live in godliness versus living by means of the sin nature, Romans 13:12. Paul referred to it as "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" Who epitomized selfless love in giving His life on the cross for our salvation, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Lesson: Paul directed that we believers make our central focus in life not to live for ourselves, but selflessly for other people by relying by faith on God's power versus living by means of our sin natures. Such a life in practical terms will avoid adultery out of love for the innocent spouse's rights, not murdering another out of love for that party and his dependents and loved ones, not stealing out of love for the owner, not bearing false witness out of love for the victim's reputation before others and not coveting out of love for the one possessing the prized possession that he not suffer frustration or insecurity by realizing that someone lusts after what he possesses.

Application: (1) May we believers make our central focus living by the Holy Spirit's power so as to avoid selfishly fulfilling our own lusts at the cost of the welfare of others by selflessly loving other people so as not to harm them, but only do them good. (2) If we are tempted to sin against another, may we COMBAT that temptation by viewing ourselves in that party's place and desire to protect his rights and happiness instead of harming him. (3) May we be MOTIVATED to live this way in view of our eternal accountability to God to live this way.