

Romans 13:11-14 - Part 2

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[0 : 00] While you're getting yourself settled, please go ahead and take out your copy of God's Word and turn to the book of Romans, chapter 13. Father, we truly do need you.

We need you in everything that we do, in every hour and moment of our short days. We need you, Father, to sing praises to your name. We certainly need you for the understanding of your Word. So I pray, Father, this morning that you will bless the words that I speak, that they will be right and true, that they will properly send us in a direction that honors and glorifies you in everything. And I pray for all of us, Lord, you will apply it by your Spirit to our hearts, that no one who's here this day will leave the same, that we will leave this place with a greater and deeper appreciation for the personal work of Christ, that we will want to make him known everywhere that we go. We pray all of this in his precious name. Amen. So we've been preaching through the book of Romans, and we have arrived at verses 11 through 14.

[1 : 32] We dealt last week primarily with the first two verses there, verses 11 and 12. But join me in reading, and I'm actually going to back up a bit and begin reading in verse 8.

Oh, no one anything except to love each other. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and any other commandment are summed up in this word.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know the time, that the long hour has come for you to wake from sleep, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

The night is far gone, the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

So recall, as we've been working through Romans, that we get to the end of chapter 11 and Paul sums up his doxological statements, right? He's finished laying out the truth of the gospel for us, that we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone forever.

[2 : 59] And he praises God for that in the doxology there found at the end. And then he turns at the beginning of chapter 12 to appeal to us, to say to us, in light of these great truths, these mercies of God, as he calls it there in verse 1 of chapter 12, we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices.

That is, all of us. We're meant to give all of who we are now in response to the fact that God has redeemed our souls. He goes on to talk about what this is now going to look like, how it's going to play out in our living.

And in verse 9 of chapter 12, he says, Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil. Hold fast to what is good. And I propose to you that the very essence of godliness, if I ask for a word to explain what godliness is, a proper response would be love.

Not the love that we speak about in the world, not the romantic comedy type of love, but the superseding, the unconditional, the Christ-like type of love. And he went on to expound about that, what this love looks like in various ways to different peoples and people groups.

And then in verse 8 of chapter 13, he expands that to speak of this continuing debt of love. Something that we're going to be constantly working towards, constantly paying back.

[4 : 21] Our lives are to be characterized by this very love. Because love is the fulfilling of the law.

In the beginning in verse 11, he says, Besides this, in addition to the fact that love is the fulfilling of the law, you know the time. You have a knowledge of the time.

And we talked about what that time is in verse 11 and 12. There's a metaphor of the daytime and the night. He uses this metaphor to explain to us a truth.

And that truth is that the salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed. Not that we are working in these days to gain salvation, but that we are eagerly awaiting the full and final realization of that salvation, the glorification, if you will.

When all things will be complete and all things will be made new. When the kingdom of God that's been begun in Christ will be finally and fully finished.

[5 : 23] So we see that we live between the times. We're kind of at a juncture there. And not that we're in this gap between the times, but in the overlap between the two. Between the reign of sin and death and the coming full and final reign of Christ.

I also propose to you that our knowledge of time also includes the knowledge of who we are. We are the ones who live with the revelation of Jesus Christ in this sinful world.

We have the weight of our flesh pulling us one direction. We have the Spirit of God guiding us in the other. And this Paul is proposing to us is how it is that we are to cast off and put on.

So what is it then that we are to cast off? We're going to be looking at the last half of verse 12 and 13 and 14. He gives us some specific things, which I believe are just a sampling of things.

I don't believe this is an exhaustive list of what we're to cast off, but we can categorize these things here. He talks about in 13, orages and drunkenness, sexual immorality and sensuality, quarreling and jealousy.

[6 : 40] And if you'll allow, I'll categorize them in this way. One, we're to cast off being outside of our minds. The word here translated in the ESV is orages, means carousal.

It was the Greek term used initially to speak of the celebration of a war, or a victory over war, or in a game, in a competition of sport. It was the celebration that followed it, but it had developed into much, much, much more than that.

It developed into a licentious celebration, a losing your mind over the celebration that you're having. And interesting here, it's connected to this idea of substance abuse, which often accompanied that type of celebration.

as well as, as the word translated here, orages. People stepped out of their rational thinking in the celebration of things, and he's coupled those together as he's done in Galatians 5.21, and Peter does it as well in chapter 4, verse 3, of 1 Peter.

So that's the picture that we're being given here of an example, a sampling of something that we are to cast off, being outside of our minds, not being in control of our very faculties.

[7 : 59] Secondly, improper sexual desire. He says to cast off sexual immorality and sensuality. Now sexual immorality here is not the Greek term pornea, which is where we get the term pornography from, but rather koite, which is the improper use of the marriage bed.

The improper use of the marriage bed. Sex outside of marriage or sex within marriage done improperly. Right? But gentlemen, you're not off the hook because the Greek term doesn't mean that, because the term sensuality would include, would be all inclusive of those types of acts. Shameless excess and absence of restraint. That's what it means. We're to cast this off as well.

Thirdly, we're to cast off the desire for preeminence or control.

We see this in quarreling and jealousy. The idea here behind quarreling is an antagonistic competitiveness that seeks the highest recognition possible, the Greek phrase here.

And jealousy, *zealos*, it's where we get the word *zeal* from. Right? Used in the positive in a number of places in the scriptures, but it's used negatively when the self is the object of one's zeal.

[9 : 19] So, the seeking of gain for yourself, we're meant to cast that off as well. Now, some translations use this term cast off and they say instead, lay aside, which is a good way to think of it.

To toss it away. It's the idea of disrobing without the intention of putting the garments or garment back on. To put it off. To lay it aside.

I kind of like cast off in the ESV because it has this picture of tossing it away from your very being. If you've ever done much manual labor, you've probably found yourself in a situation where you've so disgusted your clothing that the serious consideration is just to throw it away.

I don't know that I ever even through cycles of washing want to re-wear this clothing. I've done that. I've just said, put it in a bag and get rid of it. It's that idea. I'm going to take it off without the intention of ever putting it back on.

It's a discardment of it. It's a rejection of it. Have any of you ever, I'm asking this rhetorically, have any of you ever received pajamas at Christmas?

[10:33] You get the Christmas PJs, right? You get up in the morning and you've got on your pajamas, you're comfortable, you're lounging around, you get the new pajamas and you're likely at that moment to take a break in the opening of Christmas presents to go put on the new comfortable clothes, right?

You're going to run off, you never go put on the nice clothes that you get for Christmas to sit around the house and open things, but if it's a new pair of sweatpants, right? When I was a kid, I got the sweatpants with the new elastic band because you had to have a good tight elastic band around your ankle in those days, right?

You want to go put on the new comfy pants and bring them back. My mother buys for all the grandkids for Christmas every year a new pair of pajamas and we do this on Christmas Eve and my favorite child to, that changes, we change all the kids, we take a picture of them, it's really fun. The older ones, Jed and Britton, they run off to their rooms and go change. My favorite though is LJ, who is three, who wherever he is, whatever he's wearing is coming off right there and he's putting on the new pajamas, he's so excited about them and this picture's in my mind of casting off because he does not care what happens to the old pajamas, right?

He's getting them off as fast as he can, he throws them to the side and there they would stay if somebody else didn't come along and pick them up on his behalf. That's this picture of casting it off, of putting it away from us.

[11:49] So, what then are we to put on? Right? At the end of verse 12 he says, let us cast off the works of darkness, which he's expounded upon here now, and we're to put on the armor of light.

The implication here is that we're dressing for a battle. If we're to walk as those who walk properly in the daytime, Paul's suggesting to us that that's not going to be a stroll.

That's not going to be an easy little jaunt through the park, but it's going to be a battle. He uses this term armor. We must necessarily put on the armor of light.

In a parallel text to this one found here in Romans, 1 Thessalonians 5, 5-9, Paul writes, you are all children of light.

Children of the day, we are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

[12:52] But since we belong to the day, let us be sober. Here's the point I'm driving to. Having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. So it's safe here to say, when Paul's talking about this armor of light, that he's talking about the armor of faith, and love, and hope.

We're to put these things on, and more specifically, in verse 14, we're to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Back in Romans. We're to put on the armor of light, which is, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. There's another place in the New Testament that Paul speaks of putting on Christ, and that's found in Galatians 3.27, where he says, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Notice the change in time frame here. Those of us who are believers, who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. So the understanding, then, again, is that we're between two worlds.

[14:04] We have put on Christ as Christ's redeemed ones, and yet we're also to continually put him on. We're to put him on because we've already put him on, if you'll allow.

So that begs a question, then. How? How? What does that even mean to put on the Lord Jesus Christ? It's not a garment that we can wear, you see?

How do we put on the Lord Jesus Christ? 2 Corinthians 4.6 gives us a clue to this. God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We have beheld Christ. Christ. We have seen him in all his magnificent glory. Anybody can read of him in the scriptures.

We have the revelation of him. This is why I will always and forever argue that the call of God in our lives is an effectual call. That when he shows us Christ, we will necessarily respond, yes, and please.

[15:20] Right? We have beheld the most glorious thing we can possibly behold in all of eternity, forever, in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

So why is it then? Why do we so easily, so readily, turn back to sin? Why do we put off the garment and pick it back up and put it back on?

And I think the answer to that, at least in part, is that we are finite in our senses. We can touch things and feel things and taste things and smell and see, if I haven't said that already.

Right? We experience the world in these ways. And sin is easy to gratify those types of senses. Right?

It's easy to see the value, the short-term value, albeit, in some of these things because it's so readily available for us. So, if then we choose sin over the glorious ways of Jesus Christ, what I propose to you is that we're not tasting, we're not seeing, we're not feeling Jesus Christ.

[16:39] You set the pleasures that are available to us from the things of the world and the things of Christ on a scale and the scale in an amazing, immeasurable way tips to Christ.

The things of earth will go strangely dim in the light of what? Christ's glorious grace. So, so let's talk about this a little bit more, this idea, and to further explain it, I want to use another biblical metaphor. So, Paul's been talking about not being of the night, but rather being children of the day, walking as those who walk in the day. Another common biblical metaphor, which is found often, particularly in the Psalms, is of men with divided hearts.

For example, Psalm 119, verses 2 and 3, reads, blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

And here we see that language of walking, just like we've seen in Romans chapter 13. Right?

Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

[17:53] Walk in the Greek means to behave, the act of behavior. In the Hebrew, it's a manner of life. Same thing, right? Synonymous here in this way.

Psalm 119.10 reads, With my whole heart I seek you. Let me not wander from your commandments. Psalm 86.11, Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.

Unite my heart to fear your name. Do you see the connectivity between us having undivided hearts, hearts that are together and focused and the obedience that comes with that.

Right? Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ that we may walk as those who walk in the day. John Calvin said of Psalm 86.11, those of you who think he's a scary guy, listen to these beautiful words.

Right? In the word unite, there is a very beautiful metaphor conveying the idea that the heart of man is full of tumult, drawn asunder and as it were scattered about in fragments until God has gathered it to himself and holds it together in a state of steadfast and persevering obedience.

[19:11] To cap off the Psalm, Psalm 119.32 and I love this one, it says, I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart, which can also be rendered when you set my heart free.

Right? Here is Psalm 119, more than likely, David wrote it, right? I will run in the way of your commandments when you set my heart free. Children of light, our hearts have been set free.

We're no longer slaves to sin. We've been, the bondage of that has been broken for us. We don't have to go on sinning. We don't have to be those who dwell in dark places. We've been granted to be those who walk in the light and that is the point that Paul is driving us to.

This knowledge of the time, recognize who you are. Right? Not only that you should live this way, it's the fulfilling of the law. Right?

But that you can. It's possible that you might live sinless lives. It's been granted to us.

[20:22] You recall the story of when the Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus, wanted him to condemn her. You know the story. He reaches down and writes in the sand. We don't know what he wrote in the sand.

I would presume it was the sins of the men, the accusers. Don't really know. But then he stands up and he says, you who is without sin, throw the first stone. And of course they all drop their rocks and walk away.

Right? What does he say to her after that? Go and sin no more. It does not mean that we will. I'm not standing here to tell you that I live a sinless life.

I do not. But it has been granted to me the ability to do so. And we should live as those who've been set free from the bondage of sin.

So back in our text, Romans chapter 13, here's kind of a further clue trying to bring us back around and pull this idea together for you. Verse 14 says, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no

provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

[21 : 26] The one is subservient to the other. So notice that the putting on the Lord Jesus is the way in which we make no provision for the flesh. And here's how.

The word provision translated here means literally forethought. Forethought. So put on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is how this could read.

And don't let any thought in your head that will lead to a sinful desire. Not just to the gratification of the sinful desire, but even the desire itself.

Paul's not saying here, put away those things that are a temptation to you to act on sin. He's saying here, cast off things that will even tempt you to desire sin.

He's getting again at the very root of who we are, which is what? It's the heart. If we're putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be people of undivided hearts.

[22 : 27] And we will then necessarily, as an outflow of that, we'll walk in his ways. Romans 12.2. Let me back you up. I always want to show you context.

It's so important. Paul didn't write these as little jotted notes and then somebody put them together in a collection later on. He wrote this as a train of thought for us.

Romans 12.2, he says, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Be transformed, changed, shaped.

It's continual action that's taking place here. that we might have hearts that are undivided. So I ask the question, and some of you may feel like I haven't answered it yet, and that's okay, because I haven't completely.

How are we to put on the Lord Jesus Christ? So in part, I've said that we experience him. We behold him.

[23 : 29] We see him in our lives and in the lives of others. So how do we do that practically? Right? If you want to jot the notes, what am I going to do this week to experience Christ in a newer and a deeper way that I might cast off the works of darkness?

That I might not live in that way, but I might live in the way of the light? How am I going to do that practically? Break it down. It's not all that complicated. There's no mystic answer I'm going to give you.

Some special key to unlock this. Practice the graces that have been given to you. For example, read your scripture.

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ. We talked about this morning in Aletheia Way, didn't we? Even those Old Testament stories. The grand heroes of the Old Testament.

There are truths to be mined on the surface of all of those stories and there's the truth that we always want to get to and that is the person and work of Jesus Christ. Take, for example, the story of David and Goliath.

[24 : 30] Right? A beautiful story of an obedient boy who, in the face of great danger, faced a giant to deliver the Israelites. Right? What's the truth in that?

Can we learn things about being obedient to God? Sure. Can we learn things about God being able to accomplish things with small means? Absolutely. Right? But what is the truth? That David is a type of Christ.

That coming to defeat sin and death on our behalf, notice that the Israelites stood by and watched as he went and slayed the giant that was Goliath.

Right? That's the truth. It's everywhere in the scriptures. From the very beginning to the very end, it all speaks of Christ.

Spend time in this book. Church, we don't know the scriptures the way we should. I put myself in that category. Right? It's a lot of words found in here, these 66 books of the Bible.

[25 : 33] But if we would diligently study this, we would know it so well. It's a book. So many of you can quote from so many other books. What about this one?

The most precious book ever written. It was written by our Lord. And beyond that, we have the Spirit of God to help us understand it, to discern it, to apply it to our living, to bring it to remembrance as we need it.

It is alive and it is active. And if you have not experienced that, get busy experiencing it. Every day you open the scriptures, you will not have your affections turn towards Christ.

Do it anyway. Keep after it. It is a discipline at times. A great, great joy at others. Make it a habit if you can.

Time permits. Make it a habit to do as George Mueller did, where when he started reading his scriptures in the morning, he read them until his affections were set on Christ.

[26 : 37] Set on Christ. That's how he began his day. That he might behold Christ at the very beginning of the day. That all that other stuff would then become filthy, rags, to be cast off.

Right? Are you feeling defeated in sin and you don't read your scriptures? It's a place to start. Secondly, pray.

Church, we've been given a great grace in prayer. We have been granted by Christ to approach God at any time of the day with any concern.

We can cast all of our anxieties and cares on him because he cares for us. The Most High, the Creator of the universe, by his might and power, he spoke it into existence.

He now holds it in its sway with that very same word, wants to have a conversation with you. Not just to hear what you have to say, but to respond to you.

[27 : 41] It's such a blessing to pray. If you appreciate the Father, part of Father God, he wants you to sit on his lap. Right?

And chat about how your day's going, what's concerning you. And he wants to speak into your ear about how he is going to work through you and for you to accomplish good in your life.

Why do we not pray? Thirdly, invest in the church. Notice that I didn't say attend the church. church. It's an easy thing. I'm thankful that every single one of you are here this morning, that you took the effort to get up, get ready, to show up. That's the easy part.

Right? And it's not all there is to church life. invest in it. Get to know people. Share your life with them. Right? Serve.

[28 : 39] Be involved in these ways. Because if our goal is we're going to try to behold Christ so that we can discard, we can cast away the works of darkness. You want to see Christ in the world?

Look at him in his people. He is transforming us day by day, little by little. And if you will take the time to get to know somebody beyond the surface of things and get into the spiritual of things, you will see that he is working in people's lives.

He's causing them to do things that they wouldn't normally do. Right? He's making them new creations. It's a work that only can be accomplished by God. You will be amazed as you spend time with people in that way of how enthralled you will become with Christ.

So invest. Invest in the church. Not necessarily this one, although we'd love to have you. Get involved with a group of believers and consistently march it out with them.

And then fourthly, be radically obedient. Go where God calls you to go, whether that is this afternoon to a neighbor or to the ends of the earth someday, wherever God leads, go there.

[29 : 55] Because if you go where he's working and inviting you, you will experience him in that place. You will see him in the same way you see him working in the lives of people in the church.

You will see him working in grand ways in the lost world. Be obedient. Track him where he goes. Our God has a grand mission.

He is calling his church out of this world. When he is done, all things here will come to an end and he'll establish a new heaven and a new earth. It's getting done, everybody. It's not done yet, but it's getting done.

He doesn't need us. Hear me carefully. He does not need you, but he loves you. He wants you to experience life to the fullest.

And you know where we're most likely to do that? With him. Go be where God is. Working in this world. And you will have newer, grander, higher visions of Jesus Christ.

[30 : 56] And when you do that, casting the garment off and never putting it back on becomes easier and easier and easier. The scale always tips heavily in his favor.

If you're finding yourself fighting this battle with sin, the woe is me type of Christian, just can't get a handle on it, you're probably fighting it wrong.

Fight it by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. Read about him in his scriptures. Pray to him. Meet with the church that you might see Christ in his people and go and be obedient with him in the world so that you'll see him alive and active there.

I can promise you, you will not be disappointed. Let's not act as though this battle has no consequence. Get busy killing sin or it's going to kill you.

If you're a Christian, the final full penalty for sin has been paid for you in Christ. But our sin still has temporal punishment. We still experience the downside of sin.

[32 : 06] We have momentary pleasure and then the downside of all the things that come along with it. So don't act like it's not affecting you. That you can bop around, experiencing God's grace as he forgives you for the things that you're doing.

It has dire and serious consequence in the here and now. Why would you trade lesser things, greater things, for lesser things?

Excuse me. Why would you trade joy and satisfaction, peace that's found in Christ, for trifling little, momentary pleasures? sinners. You do it because you're a sinner by nature and you don't behold Christ the way you ought.

So beloved, we know the time we live in. If we didn't, we know now. We live between these two worlds, but we have been set free from the bondage of sin.

So then let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. let us walk properly in the daytime because we have Jesus Christ.

[33 : 14] Let's pray together.