

Romans 13:11-14

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[0 : 00] letter from doctrine to practice, from theology to ethics, from foundation to application. Paul states in Romans 12 verses 1 and 2, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that's everything that he has said in those previous 11 chapters, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship, whole self offering to God.

Verse 2 says, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. The work we find before us today is that work of being transformed by the renewal of our minds, testing to discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The last time that we were studying Romans together, we considered Paul's exhortation to Christian love. That was two weeks ago. Paul tells us in Romans chapter 13 and verse 8 that the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

And in verse 10, love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And the end of chapter 13 develops this idea further.

[1 : 26] Before we read the text, I'd like to remind you, beloved, that this is God's word to us written for his glory and our good. And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and to obey its commands.

Romans chapter 13, beginning in verse 11. Besides this, you know the time that the 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.

In these four verses, as Paul continues to drive this idea of love as fulfilling of the law, he employs an analogy of rising in the morning.

[2 : 32] The outline for our study will follow the text arc through that analogy in the following three points. Number one, wake up. Number two, cast off.

And number three, put on. So firstly, wake up, verse 11 and the first part of verse 12. He begins verse 11 with this phrase, besides this.

And we should deal with that phrase first. It could be more simply rendered, do this as the New American Standard does, or most simply, and this.

That's what the Greek literally translates to, and this. Paul is stating in addition to the fact that love fulfills the law, you should love because...

Why? You should love because... You know the time. Paul here is not referring to chronological time, otherwise he would have used the Greek word *chronos*.

[3 : 40] Instead, he uses the word *kairos*, which means season or age. You see, this letter is addressed to Christians, those who have believed, you'll see there at the end of verse 11.

So this is the age when Christians are to wake from sleep. What does Paul mean by that? He is encouraging the Roman believers and us this morning to stir from spiritual lethargy.

It is not the time to be spiritually lazy, but to be roused and fervent in our love for one another. Why?

Is it because we have need to earn God's favor? Is the finite clock of our lives hastening us to the infinite and we must pocket as many credits as possible to cash out when we stand in judgment?

No. Surely, the finite clock of our lives is hastening us to the infinite. But if you are in Christ, then your salvation is a settled matter.

[4 : 52] But Paul reasons that because our salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed, that we should stir from our spiritual laziness.

Does he not? He does. But not because he intends to motivate us with fear. He's not saying your days are fleeting and you're approaching this moment quickly, so you better get busy.

Paul intends to motivate us to fervent love because of the great love that we have been shown in Christ. Here Paul uses the noun salvation.

In its verb form, it means to save. R.C. Sproul explains this verb well in his commentary on this verse. He says, The Greek word appears in the biblical text in every possible tense, indicating a sense in which we are being saved, and in a sense we have been saved.

The simple aorist tense is rendered, you are saved. The present tense is rendered, you are being saved. And the future tense reads, you shall be saved.

[6 : 07] The future perfect is rendered, you shall have been saved. These are all the rendering of the same Greek verb. Salvation is unfolded biblically in all those increments.

Therefore, in the ultimate sense, we do not experience salvation the moment we were born again. That is just one aspect of salvation. The fullness of our salvation will not take place until our glorification when we enter into heaven.

End quote. Having been saved, having been saved, we are being saved, we will be saved, and we will have been saved. And I'll let you try to wrap your mind around what that means exactly.

Right? We are in the process. Justification, sanctification, glorification. All of the wonderful promises of God's love for us in Christ should shake us from our stupor and motivate Christian love.

Wake up, Paul says. He means to encourage us. Right? The gospel is true for you. Right? You're in the process.

[7 : 20] Having been, you are being, will be finally saved. And that day is coming. We live in this age where we are Christian. And this should motivate Christian love.

Again, Romans 12, 1 and 2. I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God. What are we to do? Present ourselves, our whole selves, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is our spiritual worship.

We're not to be conformed to this world, the ways of this world, but rather to be transformed, the ways of God, by the renewal of our mind. And he goes then into chapter 12 and 13 and on to the end of the book to help us understand what that transformed life will look like.

Paul goes on in verse 12, the night is far gone, the day is at hand. His analogy continues by juxtaposing the night and the day, darkness and light.

This imagery is employed all throughout the Bible and perhaps resonated a little more with the original readers of this letter as the night was a place of danger.

[8 : 39] The world was not quite as lit as it now is. It was a place of hiding and a place of expressed wickedness in the cover of dark.

Let me show you just one Old Testament example and one New Testament example of this analogy being employed. Isaiah 5 and verse 20 says, Woe to those who call evil good and good evil reverse things.

Who put darkness for light and light for darkness. Who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. And then John chapter 3, verse 16 and following, For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned. But whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

Pause. Jesus didn't come to bring the condemnation. The condemnation already existed. And this is the judgment, verse 19 says, The light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

[10 : 00] For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed. So you know the time.

The night is far gone. The day is at hand because the light of Christ has shown in our hearts. So wake up. If you are in Christ, this is not the age of spiritual slumber.

This is the age of Christian love. So we are to wake up. But we are also, secondly, to cast off. You see this in the middle part of verse 12 and in verse 13.

He says there, So then let us cast off, or if you prefer, put off, the works of darkness. So the middle of verse 12 continues this analogy.

Having awoken, we are to take off the works that are suited to slumber. If you prefer, I don't mean to make pajamas seem evil, but if you prefer in the analogy, to take off those things that are suited for sleeping.

[11 : 11] Paul then states at the beginning of verse 13, let us walk properly as in the daytime, and then gives us negative examples in the rest of the verse.

So if we are to walk properly, we are to not do the following things. He begins, Nod in, orgies, and drunkenness.

And this phrase is likely a reference to the Roman worship of the pagan god Bacchus at a festival called Bacchanalia. All of the details of this nighttime festival that you need to know are found there in the phrase.

Not a lot more really to know about what took, what happened in this particular festival. Now, it may well be that the Roman Christians needed not to hear that particular rebuke.

I hope that all of you this morning have not participated in such a festival. They may have thought, oh, of course not, right? Of course we shouldn't participate in such things.

[12 : 23] But, Paul continues. He's building out his argument. He's saying, of course we wouldn't do that kind of nighttime activity. But he goes on to say, in a broadening sense, not in sexual immorality and sensuality.

And these two sins are closely related. The first referring to the perversion of the marriage bed. The second, to flagrant debauchery of all kinds.

Note here, Paul is using this kind of extreme example and getting wider and wider. Which certainly are actions that should in no way characterize Christian love.

These are all, so far, these two first prohibitions are perversions of Christian love. What it ought to look like to love.

These are the opposite of that. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, this is verse 3 through 5, for this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality.

[13 : 39] Each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor. Not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.

Christians should be distinct in this way amongst many other ways, which is the broadening that Paul does next.

But here, here, we might quickly be able to dismiss the first prohibition. Sure, sure. no orgies and drunkenness.

I hope, I pray, that we can also not find ourselves rebuked in the second. Not in sexual immorality and sensuality.

Now, if this is true of us, right, Paul broadens it a bit more. And note, we are still tracking Paul's argument for Christian love.

[14 : 38] Don't think he's departed altogether from the topic, right? He says next, not in quarreling and jealousy. I think we should just find this progression staggering.

I have been using the term broadening, right, by which I just mean including more of his listeners in these prohibitions, failures. But perhaps I should be saying tightening like concentric rings on a bullseye, Paul's bringing the issue to our hearts.

Look at the way in which love is perverted in the world. We should have nothing to do with that, right? Not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

Quarreling or strife refers to contention, arguing, disagreement over trivial things.

It connotes competitiveness that seeks its own way and preference. It is self-seeking and it is not humble. It forgets that God in Christ forgave you and does not extend forgiveness.

[16 : 02] is your life characterized by this kind of contention, this self-preference? Similarly, jealousy wants all that someone else has for you.

It is selfish and refuses to rejoice with those who rejoice. It does not serve others. It is always seeking a beneficial angle.

in every circumstance, in every relationship. These sins are what cause division, partisanship in the church, and they are not fitting for those who walk properly as in the daytime.

You see what Paul has done to us? I think he's brought all of us to a place where we must go, ooh, I may be guilty at this point.

I likely have some space for repentance, extending forgiveness, having conversations, working to heal relationship. I'm one who has been delivered by Christ.

[17:17] I should be one who is awake and putting off the works of darkness. We are to cast off the works that are suited to slumber.

These things ought not define us. Paul teaches similarly elsewhere. Join me if you will for a moment in Ephesians chapter 5.

I'll begin reading in verse 8. This should sound so very familiar. It says, there at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible.

[18:36] For anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says, awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

We're to be distinguished as those who have been saved by Christ. We are little Christ's, and the primary thing that's going to characterize us is the putting off of those things that no longer belong to who we are in him.

we are also, thirdly, to put on. So we've woken up, we've cast off, and we are to put on, and we see this at the end of verse 12 and verse 14.

Not only are we to cast off the works of darkness, but we are to put on something else. Having risen, we are to take off those works suitable to slumber, but then what are we to do?

[19:47] J. Adams, the modern father of the biblical counseling movement, spoke often of dehabituating by rehabituation, which is just a phrase I love.

He once wrote, just as indwelling sin is a matter of habituated behaviors, so the renewal of sanctification is a matter of rehabituating behaviors.

The body habituated to sin wants to continue in it. The spirit must reprogram the brain and through it the members of the body to live righteously.

You can refer back there to Romans chapter 12 verse 1 and 2. If there were some moral reason that I needed to put my left shoe on before my right shoe, many of you have heard this analogy from me, I would have some work to do because I invariably put my right shoe on before my left shoe.

This is amoral. I know it doesn't matter, but this is what I do, and I don't know why I do it, but I put on my right sock and then my right shoe and then my left sock and then my left shoe. every morning this is what I do.

[21:00] Some people have called me crazy for doing so. If I were, for some moral reason, supposed to put on my left shoe first, I would have to take some deliberate action to accomplish that task.

I couldn't just hope I would do it. I do it mindlessly. It's just the way I put on my shoes. I don't think about it at all. I'm going to have to do something deliberate.

I don't know what. My right shoe is upside down when I get to them in the morning. I go, why is my right shoe upside down? Oh, right. I'm supposed to put on my left shoe first. Something to jog my memory that I'm meant to do this activity in a different way.

We dehabituate by rehabituating until it becomes normal that my left shoe goes on before my right shoe. None of this has anything to do with shoes.

So, what are we to put on? Paul does not give us specific activities in today's text. He just talked about Christian love, which has a broad scope as we think about it.

[22:06] But in today's text, there's no specific activity that we're meant to put on instead of those others. You could think about the opposite of those prohibitions, but he doesn't address them specifically.

But he does say we're to put on the armor of light. Last part of verse 12. We're to put on the armor of light.

And here Paul, he starts foundationally. We have to think, what is the truth that I'm supposed to understand that's going to produce the fruit that God intends?

So, we're going to put on the armor of light. The battle of this age is a spiritual battle, and those in Christ by the power of the spirit, have every resource at our disposal to walk in the light.

This is a work of grace, but it has been granted to us in Christ. Paul expands on this idea in Ephesians chapter 6. If you happen to be in Ephesians still, you might want to join me.

[23 : 07] Verse 11. There Paul says, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and bud, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith, which with you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

And John Bunyan in the Pilgrim's Progress, when Christian is fighting Apollyon, includes this weapon and calls it all prayer. Truth, righteousness, the readiness of the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the word of God, and all prayer.

These are all defensive and offensive tools granted to those who are in Christ. Which is why I think that Paul says in verse 14, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

[24 : 42] I think he means for our minds to draw a connection between those two things. Put on the armor of light, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Not as two separate things, but as the same activity. Everything necessary to realize our mere salvation is ours in Christ.

He accomplished it already by his life, death, and resurrection. It is finished. Paul shares this sentiment in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 6 where he says, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ.

Confident the work he began will come to its conclusion. We've been given everything we need in Christ for this to be true. We have only to realize who we are.

Children of light. If you are in Christ, if you place believing faith in him, then you're a child of light. and to realize this is to access the power to walk as a child of the light.

Can we do this through the renewal of our minds by fixing our gaze on the completed work of Jesus Christ? Paul writes in Philippians chapter 3 beginning in verse 8, he says, I count everything is lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

[26 : 08] Thank you, my love. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his suffering, becoming like him in his death, that by any means I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Now, here, there, future salvation, the glorification that is Paul's and ours in Christ. Then he says, not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Jesus Christ has made me his own.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider all that he's accomplished on your behalf and access all the power he gives you by the Spirit to turn away from the works of darkness and to the works of light. If we have believed in Christ, then we have been united to him. He is in us and we are in him. We need daily reminders of this grand reality.

[27 : 40] We need deep Bible meditation and memorization. We need faithful brothers and sisters to speak the truth to us. We need to sing this truth and we need to pray this truth.

By grace alone, through faith alone, I am Christ and he is mine. And I think this is what it means to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then Paul concludes, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. Now this is possibly the most practical part of our text.

Paul here speaks to deliberate action, careful thinking, and cautious planning. What sin entangles you?

How readily do you provide the opportunity for works of darkness? How carefully do you work at putting yourself out of the situations where you may be tempted to sin?

[28 : 52] John Piper once wrote this little dialogue which I just found so very helpful the first time I read it. That I hunted and hunted and hunted and found it again this week. And so I just want to read it to you as we think about this idea of making no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

He writes, quote, picture your flesh, that old ego with the mentality of merit and craving for power and reputation and self reliance.

Picture it as a dragon living in some cave of your soul. then you hear the gospel and in it Jesus Christ comes to you and says, I will make you mine and take possession of the cave and slay the dragon.

Will you yield to my possession? It will mean a whole new way of thinking and feeling and acting. You say, but that dragon is me.

I will die. He says, and you will rise to newness of life for I will take its plan. I will make my mind and my will and my heart your own.

[30 : 07] You say, what must I do? He answers, trust me and do as I say. As long as you trust me, we cannot lose. Overcome by the beauty and power of Christ, you bow and swear eternal loyalty and trust.

And as you rise, he puts a great sword in your hand and says, follow me. He leads you to the mouth of the cave and says, go in, slay the dragon.

But you look at him bewildered. I cannot not without you. He smiles. Well said. You learn quickly. Never forget my commands for you to do something are never commands to do it alone.

Then you enter the cave together. A horrible battle follows and you feel Christ's hand on yours. At last, the dragon lies limp.

You ask, is it dead? His answer is this. I have come to give you new life. This you received when you yielded it to my possession and swore faith and loyalty to me.

[31 : 15] And now with my sword in my hand, you have felled the dragon of the flesh. It is a mortal wound. It will die. That is certain. But it has not yet bled to death.

And it may yet revive with violent convulsions and do much harm. So you must treat it as dead and seal the cave as a tomb. The Lord of darkness may cause earthquakes in your soul to shake the stones loose, but you build them up again and have this confidence with my sword and my hand on yours.

This dragon's doom is sure. He is finished and your new life is secure. And then Piper continues, Christ has taken possession of our soul.

Our old self has been dealt reckoning of the flesh as dead, piling stones in its tomb and a constant relying on the present spirit of Christ to produce love and joy and peace within.

So, make no provision for the flesh. Wake up, cast off, and put on.

[32 : 32] Let's pray together. as