

## THE PROS AND CONS OF MINISTRY

## STUDY FIVE

## What Will You Pass On to Others?

*Romans 12:9–16*

*I want you to remember that all that lasts is what you pass on. It will not be your financial portfolio. It will not be your possessions. What you will pass on, most importantly, will be a life well-lived and a legacy of a series of life-changing relationships that you cultivate in the years ahead.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**I** WILL die someday. Every single person must come to accept the grim reality that the hand of death is impartial. Once someone has accepted this fact, he or she will naturally ask an important question: *What will I leave behind when I go?*

Many think of this question purely in material terms since you can't take anything to the grave. Many choose to save their wealth in their final years so they can use it to bless their children and grandchildren. Some families pass on revered heirlooms, like a valuable piece of jewelry or a centuries-old work of art. Others take a more modest approach and leave behind items of personal significance, like a treasured photo album or a beloved article of clothing.

The sad reality is that even these cherished treasures will eventually pass away—just like the one who gave them away in the first place. The inherited money will eventually dry up, and the physical objects will either decay or be lost, tossed, or sold.

Yet there is something you can pass on that will leave an eternal impact. This *Searching the Scriptures* study will consider what it looks like to pass on the immeasurably valuable gift of true, biblical love.



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### PREPARE YOUR HEART

The apostle John said, “We love each other because he loved us first” (*1 John 4:19*). Before you begin your study of Scripture today, offer this prayer of thanksgiving to God for His love.

*Father, thank You for Your love. I know that I have done nothing to deserve it. As I study Your Word today, remind me of just how much You love me, so I might extend that same love to others . . . even to those who I think don't deserve it. In Jesus' name, amen.*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul wrote his letter to the Romans in two major movements. The first section, which comprises the book's first eleven chapters, focuses on theology or *orthodoxy*. This section covers all-important themes such as God's righteousness, humanity's corruption, Christ's faithfulness, justification by faith, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

Because right practice—or *orthopraxy*—always emerges from orthodoxy, the second movement builds off the first by introducing a flurry of practical commands. Much of these five chapters deal with Christian unity, and essential to unity is love. The great apostle's letter spotlights this vital virtue in *Romans 12:9–16*.



### Observation: Unhypocritical Love

Just as a tree cannot grow without strong and healthy roots, neither can a believer engage in effective Bible study without careful and thorough observation.<sup>1</sup> Take several minutes to read *Romans 12:9–16* slowly and closely. Then do it again. This may feel like plodding, but know that you are growing roots now that will allow you to bear the fruit of solid application later.

With what declaration did Paul begin this discussion in *12:9a*?



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This passage is shaped like a pyramid. Love stands firmly at the top in *Romans 12:9a*, but *12:9b* provides clarification to what love looks like, and *12:10–16* goes into specific examples of loving actions. According to *12:9b*, what does it mean to love?

Summarize Paul's essential command(s) in each of the following verses to further demonstrate true, Christlike love:

1. *12:10a*:
2. *12:10b*:
3. *12:11*:
4. *12:12*:
5. *12:13*:
6. *12:15*:
7. *12:16*:

*Candidly, I don't know of a better list to shape one's life than that list of commands.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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### Interpretation: The Character of Love

The Greek text of *Romans 12:9* says that love is to be genuine: *anypokritos*. The opposite of this term is *hypocrites*, in which the English word “hypocrite” finds its origin. In ancient Greek literature, this term describes an actor in a play, especially one who wears a mask. In *12:9–16*, Paul demonstrated what unhypocritical love was, but what does hypocritical or “pretend” love look like?

Look back at the list of commands you compiled in the Observation section. What kinds of character traits underlie the loving behavior Paul desired?

*Love is not making the other person comfortable. It's not telling him or her what he or she wants to hear. It's not treating another like he or she treated you. It isn't looking the other way when another does wrong. Sometimes, love must be tough and even stern. Other times, it is soft, affirming, reassuring. And it is always full of forgiveness and compassion.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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### Correlation: The Greatest Commandment

The hostile religious leaders hated Jesus, and they constantly looked for opportunities to attack him. One day, they tried to trap Him with a trick question: “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” (*Matthew 22:36*). Regardless of the commandment Jesus chose, His opponents had nine others with which they could ask, “Well, what about *this* one?”

In response, what did Jesus wisely say in *22:37–38* was the first and greatest commandment? According to *22:39*, what is the second most important commandment?

First:

Second:

Jesus concludes this address saying, “The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments” (*22:40*). What did Jesus mean by this statement? How does this truth correlate with Paul’s teaching in *Romans 12:9–16*?

Some would say that to love is to be human. Yet our selfish flesh fights against selfless love any chance it gets. Indeed, it’s better to say that to love is to be *Christian*, as true love is rooted in God, exemplified in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. So how can you cultivate Christian love in your life today? Explore the ways as you apply the passage.



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### Application: Passing Love On

Based on his own study of *Romans 12:9–16*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll developed a list of seven virtues essential to demonstrating unhypocritical love that you can pass on to others and leave behind long after you're gone.

1. Devoted affection
2. Honor
3. Enthusiasm and passion
4. Patience
5. Generosity
6. Sympathy
7. Humility

Why is it difficult to embrace these character traits and to demonstrate true love to others?

Which of these seven characteristics come naturally to you in your relationships? Which one could use a little work? In what ways can you practically rely on God to allow Him to cultivate this aspect of love in you?



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*Romans 12:9–16*

So what will you pass on? God has given you only one life, and He's taught what it means to make that life count eternally. Do not let regret paralyze you. As long as you have breath, you have time. Christ is with you, and His Spirit is in you. Let love flow into a legacy of transformative memories.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for being a God of love and for demonstrating that love to me through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Give me the strength to model this kind of true, unhypocritical love to those around me—especially those whom I find hardest to love. I want pass on a legacy of a life lived for You. Help me do so. I pray these things in Jesus' loving name, amen.*

#### ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

