

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**
Chapter 11- Luke 11:1-13
214- Lord, Teach Us to Pray- Part 7

August 11, 2013

Luke 11:1-13

1 It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.

3 'Give us each day our daily bread.

4 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

5 Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

7 and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you *anything*.'

8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

11 Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?

12 Or *if* he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

To the Glory of God

Now last week- we began to explore just what Jesus was talking about when He instructed us to pray what Dr. Luke recorded at the end of **Luke 11:4**:

... And lead us not into temptation

... and of course we know about the sister Passage where the Apostle Levi added the phrase in the middle of **Matthew 6:13**:

... but deliver us from evil...

So if we understand this correctly- our Lord Jesus tells us here to pray to God the Father or ask God, or beseech God, or plead with God that He Himself will not lead us into temptation but that He will mercifully and graciously and kindly and lovingly deliver us, or rescue us, or save us from evil, and the workings of the evil one- who is the devil and those who align themselves with him.

And we pray this with the caveat that we understand that God the Holy Spirit is busy at work in our lives to add to our lives that which we need and to take away from our lives that which we need so that we are transformed from one realm of glory to another into the Image of the Lord Jesus Christ by way of progressive Sanctification.

Because we know and we confess and we believe and we teach here in this Church that the main number one priority of the Work of God the Holy Spirit and the issue to which He spends the overwhelming majority of His time doing in the life of the believer is not causing you to act like a nut or to hop around or to fall on the floor or say things that God did not say but rather to bring about that person's Sanctification or more precisely- his "Holification" or his being made holy.

The main Work of God the Holy Spirit *before* Justification is the Sovereign Regeneration or the giving of life of the lost person- which we call, being born again" where God the Holy Spirit Sovereignly- all by

Himself- without our permission and without consulting with us and without our cooperation and based upon nothing that we do or do not do- but God the Holy Spirit- all by Himself, I say- Sovereignly gives the lost person spiritual life whereby he now has eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe and the God the Holy Spirit Sovereignly places within that person deep and serious and profound conviction of sin and He Sovereignly makes that lost person fully aware of his lost condition and then Sovereignly causes that person to deeply grieve over his sin and his continual offense toward God and then He Sovereignly empowers that lost person to genuinely desire to be delivered from his sin and God the Holy Spirit Sovereignly drags that person to Jesus and at the Feet of Jesus- that lost person who now has been granted the ability to truly love God will confess his sin, turn away from or repent of his sin and with the gift of Faith that has been given to him- he will fully trust in the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father will graciously and mercifully forgive him of all his sin and will justify him fully. And that is what we have learned on Sunday Evenings is the primary Work of the Holy Spirit prior to Salvation.

But after that person is saved- the primary Work of God the Holy Spirit is to sanctify us and part of doing that is that God will Sovereignly and *passively allow* and He will Sovereignly and *actively cause* very specific things and very precise situations and very detailed circumstances to enter into your life that are designed on purpose by God for you and are tailor made by God just for you that are designed to do one thing-

That by being “exercised” or “worked” by these things- we will be changed into
the very Image and Likeness of our Lord

... and what is interesting is that many times- we call some of these things that God Sovereignly and passively *allows* to come into our lives to change us, “evil”. And we do that primarily because we don’t like them and because they force us to change and because they make us uncomfortable and hurt us and offend our flesh.

But as we strive to do what the Puritans taught and use the “logic of Scripture” or in other words as we strive to see things from God’s Perspective and to step back and look at things the way that Scripture describes them- which is God’s Point of View- rather than the way our

own minds think about them or the way that the lost pagan world describes them- we see that- that which God allows to come into our lives- is not only necessary for our Sanctification and our growth in God and the development of our love for God and that which causes our obedience to be more sure and easier and that which draws us closer to Jesus so that we may live in such a way that reflects that our Treasure really is in Heaven- but those things that we do not like and that make us uncomfortable and that force change upon us are really our best friends and are in fact gifts from a Kind and loving God who Loves us so much- He is not about to allow us to remain the way we are- but is determined to change us into His Image which will result in us loving God and obey God and enjoying God forever.

Now we know from last week that God doesn't ever actively sin and that His Perfect Nature and Character will not *allow* God to be tempted with sin like we are and therefore God never tempts us to do evil, or forces evil upon us, or makes us to sin, but that we sin when we are carried away by satan's temptations by the lust that already exists inside our fallen flesh.

So from James' Epistle- we learned last week that ultimately all temptation really is- is an opportunity presented by satan for us to act out on an internal lust that we already have residing in us by virtue of the fact that we are fallen from Adam's transgression in the Garden. So from that we realize that satan doesn't force or make us sin either- we always sin because we want to, we agree with satan about that subject at that time, we temporarily align ourselves with satan and his will in some fleshly carnal lust to love money or to crave fame or to trust in a promise that the world makes or to covet more earthly possessions or to dishonor our parents or to make and worship an image, or to love an idol, or to doubt God, or to spread a false witness, or to take something that doesn't belong to us, or to forsake the assembling of ourselves on the Lord's Day, or to engage in sexual sin, or to covet what somebody else has.

So in the finality of this prayer- when we pray and ask God to "not tempt us but deliver us from evil"- we are actually asking God to deliver us from the present evil world that is dominated by a fallen system that promotes and enjoys rebellion against God, and we are asking God to deliver us from satan and all the opportunities that he gives to us to act out on our internal sinful lusts, and we are asking God to deliver us

from the internal lust itself that we have residing inside of us by clothing us with a new body in Heaven where we not only will not ever sin again- but will not be able to sin again.

And that is the ultimate finality of this prayer. But when we pray this prayer- we are also asking God to deliver us right now- down here in this life, very specifically to deliver us from the thousand different details of our lives and our existence- things in our neighborhoods and in our nation and in our children and in our families and with our money and in our own minds and hearts and in our leaders that works in concert with satan and his desires; and that fights *against* God and His Will, and that dishonors Jesus Christ, and brings Him no Glory.

And we realize that part of answering that prayer is in changing us- because we know that all evil manifested on the earth since the Fall- originates from inside the human heart. And so the way that we are "delivered from evil" is for us to be change and for the evil inclinations that we already have inside of us- in our flesh- will be diminished and suppressed and held down and crucified and mortified and killed and starved and made to be weak so that- even though we will not be sinless- we will sin less.

Now you cannot believe what I just said and also not believe that the very foundation of the disciplines of Sociology and Psychiatry and Psychology that have become so popular over the last 150 years or so- are all wrong- and thus they are not ultimately helpful to us- because they base what they do on the false premise that all people are *basically* and *internally* "good" and therefore what is wrong with people is all *external*- in their environment and in their lack of money and education and opportunity.

These disciplines all teach the same thing- that if we can just change the *external environment* of the individual- the "internal goodness" of that person will rise to the surface and emerge. And of course from this faulty and unbiblical logic comes forth a whole system of real bad and ultimately destructive teachings which include the concepts of self- help, self- fulfillment, self- gratification, and self- esteem- which of course are all predicated on the natural enemy of God and the biggest hindrance to Salvation and that is the natural and normal self-righteousness of lost humanity.

And so because God is Good and Kind and Love- His Word tells us how things really are- so we can see and believe and be changed. And so the Bible paints the exact opposite picture that the world paints and the Holy Scriptures describe the human race as being radically ruined by The Fall and totally depraved and entirely fallen and as being "evil" and "wicked" as the *normal* and *natural* function of their fallen nature with no capacity whatsoever to do or to be "Good" or to Righteous in God's Eyes based on anything that we do for ourselves.

And therefore- all evil, all sin, all rebellion against God and His Will, all acts or thoughts or beliefs which are contrary to God and His Agenda and which fight against Divine Truth, and which act in concert with satan and *his* will- flow out into the world from *inside* of Mankind *normally* and *naturally* due to this rebellious and fallen nature. And this is why Jesus said this in **John 3:19-21**

19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

21 But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

So it isn't that we simply "do" or engage ourselves in evil. No, it is far worse than that. Jesus says here that lost and unsaved people *love* darkness- we *love* evil, we *love* to rebel against God. In our lost and unsaved condition- it actually brings joy and pleasure to our lives to sin against God. And the loving of darkness in lost people is not something strange or rare- it is normal and natural. So in that lost and unsaved condition- there is no mechanism, no way, no path, no instrument, no earthly or human power by which we are delivered from evil- other than the Sovereign and gracious Move of God.

Therefore we cannot "educate" our way out of evil, we cannot "medicate" our way out of evil, we cannot "think" our way out of evil, and we cannot "develop" our way out of evil. Therefore- we are not delivered from evil by way of financial prosperity or through surgery or by more Governmental influence or through less poverty or by providing more opportunity, or better roads, or a better use of technology, or by achieving more comfortable and safer lives.

No, being delivered from evil is manifested in two ways:

1. Finally and Ultimately
2. Specifically and Immediately

We are *finally* and *ultimately* delivered from evil by way of God Sovereignly returning to this earth and ending all evil by destroying all unrepentant sinners and by rescuing us out of this world and translating us into Heaven away from all of satan's influences and apart from the fallen system of the world and by being given a new body that has never known sin and will never know it.

And we are delivered *specifically* and *immediately* from evil by way of God graciously changing us through the ongoing and progressive sanctifying Power of God the Holy Spirit where those sanctified people whose lives have been individually transformed by the Power of the Holy Spirit and ordered and disciplined by the Objective Propositional inspired Scriptures impact their families which then impact their churches which then impact the community.

You see, God's Order in delivering us from evil *ultimately* and *finally* requires the Sovereign returning of King Jesus to the earth with a rod of iron where everything will change and the Glory of God will cover the earth as the water covers the sea.

But God's Order in delivering us from evil specifically and immediately is carried out primarily by God sanctifying saved men who then marry saved women who then bear children. And the Man's primary role in delivering us from evil is to love God and to hate sin and to work in cooperation with the prayer of being delivered from evil by reading and studying and knowing the Word of God so that he may lead the family and protect them and to provide for them and to teach and to govern and to set the agenda and to order the family in such a way that this family is being delivered from evil on an ongoing basis by loving and serving and fearing God in that they live counterintuitive to the world and that they strive to operate in humble and joyful submission to the Authority of Scripture- all to the Glory of God.

And the primary role of the woman is to love God and to hate sin by being the complement to her husband in supporting her husband in this great endeavor by bringing her God- given talents and abilities to work and to implement this agenda of being delivered from evil and to

not fight or rebel against her husband by establishing a competing agenda.

And the primary role of the children is to love and honor and respect the parents and to obey them in learning the wise and joyful and peaceful Way of serving God- which is in contrast to the hateful and destructive and violent way of the world.

And these holy families- made up of sanctified individuals- faithfully gather together to form a local church which earnestly contends for the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints as they seek to be delivered from evil by struggling against those things that rebel against God and that bring dishonor to Him as they learn together and worship together and love each other and pray for each other and hold each other accountable and care for each other and together they strive to be found busy in the Work of the Lord, faithful to God's Word, and fruitful in the Kingdom.

And these sanctified Churches- made up of sanctified families- which are made up of sanctified individuals- continue to be delivered from evil by impacting their local community through the Power and stability of their corporate testimony and their application of Biblical Truth so that even the lost people in those communities know and are subject to the Will of God in a far greater way in the way that commerce and politics and justice and family life is carried out and these local communities in turn impact the wider geographical areas which in turn impact the nation which in turn changes the world.

So to try to change our American culture by simply voting for the lesser of two evils or to try to change the culture by changing the occupant of the White House or the make- up of the Supreme Court or the Congress without doing the hard work of being delivered from evil *individually* which causes the families to be delivered from evil which causes the Churches to be delivered from evil which causes the communities to be delivered from evil which causes the nation to be delivered from evil which causes the world to be delivered from evil is not only a waste of time but it is a fantasy.

You cannot see the nation delivered from evil unless the local communities are delivered from evil *first*. And you cannot see the local communities delivered from evil unless the local Churches are delivered *first*. And you cannot see the local Churches delivered from evil unless the families are delivered *first*. And you cannot see the families

delivered from evil unless the individuals in those families are being delivered *first*. And you cannot see individuals delivered from evil unless Biblical Holiness and Righteousness is seen and believed and understood and applied *first*.

We must understand, dear friends that evil rules unless it is confronted and rejected and defeated by Righteousness. And that confrontation has to happen consciously and that rejection has to occur purposefully and that defeat of evil has to happen continually and it has to happen in the Power of the Holy Spirit, and it has to happen in accord with sacred Scripture, and it has to happen by Grace and through Faith, and it has to happen to the exaltation of Jesus Christ and to the Glory of God- or it will not happen at all.

As I have been faithful to tell you many times- you will not stumble into Holiness. Nobody trips and falls into Biblical Purity; nobody is delivered from evil by accident. There are no shortcuts in being delivered from evil. There is no simpler path. Being delivered from evil is a tough, ongoing, and progressive reality that is in direct proportion to Biblical Righteousness or Holiness being believed on and trusted in and received and applied in our lives.

And so we are to pray to this end and we are to pray continually about this and we are to pray relentlessly about this and as God provides- we are to put on that which God says and that which God gives and that which God does in our lives so that Righteousness is elevated and we are delivered from evil. To pray that we will not be tempted and to pray that we will be delivered from evil and then to continue to think and believe and live the very same way we did before we prayed- is not only a guarantee for failure- it borders on blaspheme. And this is one of the main reasons why I say that we are not to simply memorize and repeat the words of this prayer- because that never changes anybody. But we are to pray "after this manner" or "in accord with these subjects" or in concert with the tenor of these words and as we pray- sincerely and earnestly and desperately- God will move upon us to give us very practical ways- very specific things we can start or stop that God will use to see to it that we are delivered from evil.

Now please turn with me to **Romans 12** for one of those very practical ways to see us not tempted and to see us delivered from evil- one single Passage beginning in **Romans 12:9**:

- 9** *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.*
- 10** *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*
- 11** *not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;*
- 12** *rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,*
- 13** *contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.*
- 14** *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*
- 15** *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*
- 16** *Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.*
- 17** *Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.*
- 18** *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*
- 19** *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.*
- 20** **"BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."**
- 21** **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Now right off "Jump Street" let me say that I believe that this Passage here in **Romans 12** is the "way" or the "means" by which God will answer our prayer that Jesus told us to pray in **Luke 11** where we are not tempted and that we are delivered from evil. In other words- I believe that the reason that this Passage is in the Bible is to show us the way in which our prayer can be answered by God and what that answer looks like.

You see, I do not believe that God just zaps somebody and presto- they are no longer tempted with sin and they are immediately and completely delivered from evil. I don't believe that and I don't believe the Bible teaches that. I also do not believe that you can come and get hands laid on you to be delivered from high blood pressure and being overweight and then go home and eat nineteen Klondike bars. I *do* believe that we can pray for you and love you and encourage you and support you so you can cry out to God for the strength and the courage to trust God for the power and the discipline needed to control what you

put in your mouth. And even though that may not cure your high blood pressure- it is guaranteed to make your meals less tasty.

Conversely- I believe that the means by which God has chosen to deliver us from evil looks like this Passage. And so as we pray to be delivered from evil- we should also pray in accord with this passage here in **Romans 12** and “put on” or “apply” or “submit to” or “obey” this Passage and in so doing- the amount of temptation in and around us will go way down and the amount of evil in us and around us will be greatly diminished as well.

You know- it is truly a wonderful thing that, if you believe and teach the straightforward Truths of the Bible- you will spare yourself and your children a hundred sorrows in each new generation. So if you want to be useful for your generation- if, for example- you young people desire to impact your generation- you don't need to be an expert on the latest philosophical fad, or the latest progressive morality, or the latest psychological trend.

A few people need to simply take the time to study these things that came from the Apostle Paul as he was moved upon by God the Holy Spirit to pen down these infallible Truths and simply respond in faith to what they say.

These Truths are both timeless and very, very relevant. And so what plain ordinary Christians need to do is to go deep with the Bible and believe and absorb and teach what this Passage means and what it implies in its straightforward statements.

And if you will just do that—if you will dare to think deeply into the height and depth of the Bible, and allow God's precious Word to shape your mind and heart- if you will just dare to say, *“This is Divine and Eternal and Objective Absolute Truth- and by God's Grace and to God's Glory I will joyfully and humbly submit to this Truth in my life!”*- you will be spared many heartaches and many trendy detours that sound so up-to-date, but in the end- they bring nothing but destruction and damnation to your life.

And I think you will see how this Truth will work in delivering us from evil if we meditate for today on just one verse- **Romans 12:9**- which says:

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good

Now suppose you get up in the morning and you read several chapters of the Bible before you enter the day. And suppose that one of them is **Romans 12**. So you read through this chapter and you see these 13 exhortations. What will you remember about those 13 exhortations in two hours? And what effect did they have? After three minutes reading this chapter- how are you changed in your loves, and your hates, and brotherly affections, and in honoring others, and zeal, and fervency, and service, and hope, and joy, and patience, and prayer, and generosity, and hospitality? Did mentioning these 13 exhortations in your mind for a total of about 15 seconds transform your heart and mind so that all 13 of them are fired up and growing? Surely that's why this was written.

But it doesn't usually work that way. Reading over texts like this once, and quickly, has very little lasting effect to produce all these beautiful things in our lives. So what are we to do? What would make these things happen?

Paul gives us guidance for just how in **Romans 15:15&16** where he says

15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my* offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

(Now keep in mind he is writing mainly to Gentiles- that is, non-Jews in Rome and he is explaining how his ministry of writing this letter helps him accomplish his goal of transforming Gentile sinners into a worship gift to God),

So Paul's goal here by writing this Epistle to the Romans is so that the Gentiles would be an "acceptable offering" (v. 16)—just like he said in **Romans 12:2** that we prove what is good and "acceptable": the will of God.

And his means of preparing the Gentiles—us—for God as being acceptable living sacrifices of worship (**Romans 12:1**) is to write to us and remind us boldly of things we may already know (15:15).

But the writing alone does not produce in us the Holiness and the Newness and the Love and the deliverance of evil that Paul is aiming at- so he says at the end of verse 16,

... sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

So now we know Paul's goal for us when we read **Romans 12**. He writes to us boldly to remind of some things that we already know with the goal that we are transformed in our hearts and minds and begin to embrace the acceptable Will of God, and in so doing- we will be sanctified or in other words- we will be delivered from evil. And Paul says that this all happens by the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Now it is important to understand that neither of these can be excluded from Paul's strategy:

- ✓ The Word
- ✓ The Spirit

We are not sanctified by the Word but without the Spirit, and we are not delivered from evil by the Spirit but without the Word. The 13 exhortations of **Romans 12:9-13** are written so that the Holy Spirit may take them and make them the means of His transforming, sanctifying work and the end of that is that we will not be overcome with evil- but we will overcome evil with good.

And so the implication this has for how we read **Romans 12** is threefold:

- ✓ **We will pray as we read.** We will ask God to pour out His Holy Spirit to make the Word effective in our lives. We will admit our need for Him and be conscious that mere reading will not deliver us from evil or produce godly lives. We will depend on His Work in us to make the Word produce what it commands. We will say with Augustine: *"Command what You will and grant what You command."* We will pray.
- ✓ **We will consciously look to Jesus Christ as the One Who died for us and rose again so that we could be forgiven for all our failures to live this way, and have any hope that God would look with**

Favor on us to help us. We also look to Him as the One Who lived perfectly like this as our Perfect Example. And we look to Him as the One we hope to glorify by living this way.

- ✓ **We meditate on these exhortations and do not breeze over them.** Because we desperately desire to be delivered from evil- we linger over them. We ask what they mean, and we think about that in relation to the other Scriptures. We ask what difference these exhortations would make in our lives, and we think about practical situations where they affect us. We slow down and walk through this magnificent grove of trees and stop to pick the fruit and eat it and savor the beauty and the sweetness of this grove. In other words, we meditate on these Words. We don't rush over them.

All of this is implied in **Romans 15:15&16**. So that is what we want to do. So our focus is on the first exhortation in **Romans 12:9**,

Let love be without hypocrisy...

Now **Romans 12:4-8** are about the use of our spiritual gifts and now Paul turns from the focus on gifts to the focus on the more general way of love in the church. And this is exactly what he did over in **1Corinthians 12&13**. **1Corinthians 12** is all about spiritual gifts. But then Paul says at the end of chapter 12:

But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

... and then he begins Chapter 13 by talking about love and saying:

1Corinthians 13:1

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

So in both places- Paul moves from spiritual gifts to the more general and more excellent way of love.

But we have to keep in mind that here Paul is still unfolding what it means to have a transformed mind from Romans 12:2 and what it looks like when we are not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought but are thinking highly of Christ with the measure of faith that we have as verse 3 says.

So think of this. Of all the things he could have said that love should be- what he does say is:

Let love be without hypocrisy.”

So why is that even on Paul’s mind? Because this is the dead opposite of verse 3. Verse 3 says not to think of ourselves too highly, but to think with faith, that is, to think with our minds and hearts looking away from ourselves to Christ for our peace and satisfaction. So verse 3 is about a wonderful self-forgetfulness in the service of Christ. And the exact opposite of that is hypocrisy. Why? Because the hypocrite is totally concerned about himself.

Now if you understand how wicked the human heart is and that evil originates in the heart- then these exhortations are necessary if we are ever to hope to be delivered from that evil. So Paul has not left his theme. By the Mercies of God in Christ he is working for transformed minds that are not conformed to this age but are renewed, and that means first and foremost that we cannot make much of ourselves but we must make much of Christ.

So there is a lifestyle, a mindset, and a way of life that displays the infinite Value of exalting Jesus Christ over self-exaltation. And that mindset, lifestyle, and way of life is what Paul is wanting for us. And the Promise of **Romans 12:21** is that this lifestyle will cause us to be delivered from evil. But to accomplish this- we cannot allow our love to be hypocritical. Our love must be real.

Now hypocrisy manifests itself in two ways:

- A. Hypocrisy tries to make the outside look better than the inside.*
- B. Hypocrisy hides its own flaws by drawing attention to other people’s flaws so that ours don’t look so bad.*

The classic statement of the first form of hypocrisy is **Matthew 15:7-9** where Jesus said,

7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:

8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN. '''

*The 2nd way that hypocritical love manifests itself is when we hide our own flaws by drawing attention to other people's flaws so that ours don't look so bad. And this is common in the Church and in Marriage. But in **Luke 6:42** Jesus said,*

Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

So Paul is saying: real love doesn't act this way. Let love be without hypocrisy. It isn't love if it is hypocrisy. He said in **1Corinthians 13:6** that love **“rejoices with the truth.”** But hypocrisy is all about falsehood, concealment, deceit, cloaking, misleading, and hiding. So hypocrisy is the opposite of loving the Truth. And therefore Hypocrisy is the opposite of love. So, Paul says, Let love be without hypocrisy. Let it be genuine.

So now we have seen the two ways that hypocrisy shows itself. But where does this evil come from? Why do people do this? Well there are at least two goals of hypocrisy that I see from the New Testament.

- *The goal of getting and keeping the praise and approval of other people.*
- *The goal of covering sins that may have nothing to do with how we are posturing and posing.*

The first manifestation of Hypocrisy is being driven by the craving for other people to make much of us. But there is another evil that hypocrisy sometimes aims at. Most commonly we think of hypocrisy aiming at the praise of others. So with that kind- there is a kind of posturing and posing. But there is *a more subtle goal and that is to*

cover up sins that may have nothing to do with how we are posturing and posing.

For example, in **Luke 13** Jesus heals a woman who had been bent over for 18 years on the Sabbath. So the ruler of the synagogue was angry and said,

There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.

But the Lord Jesus answered him,

You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? (vv. 14-15).

So even though this man had a zeal for the Sabbath- Jesus called that zeal- "hypocrisy". Why? It wasn't so much that he was seeking the praise of men. He was a hypocrite because his outward religious zeal was hiding something very dark in himself. What was this man concealing? **"Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey . . . and lead it away to water it?"** Bottom line: money! (See **Luke 16:14.**) So he really didn't give a rip about this woman at all! All this man cared about was the ox and the donkey! And so that kind of zeal for the Lord's Day is sheer hypocrisy.

Oh, people of the Covenant of Peace Church- beware of making our religion a cloak for worldliness! There are liberals who do this— talking endlessly about the poor and about peace and about the environment—and then sleeping around on the weekend. But there are fundamentalists and evangelicals who do this—talking endlessly about the cesspool of modern culture and the godlessness of secular humanism— while hiding away in their safe suburban (or urban) homes, with their surround sound entertainment centers, driving their \$75,000 cars, and guaranteed retirement while not lifting a finger for the poor, or caring for the catastrophic needs of the world.

So it cuts both ways. Both are hypocritical. And that isn't being *delivered* from evil- that is being *overcome* with evil. But true Biblical love is not that way. Love doesn't put up artificial fronts. Love does not dwell on the flaws of others. Love does not crave the praise of men. And love does not act religious to hide sin.

Love forgets itself and looks to Christ and overflows with joy in him to meet the needs of others. So the first step in seeing our prayer about not being tempted and being delivered from evil answered is that our love be real and not hypocritical.

Now look quickly at the rest of **Romans 12:9**:

... Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Now I see at least five things in these nine words that we need to understand so that our prayer to God about being delivered from evil will be answered.

1. There is Such a Thing as Objective Good and Evil Outside Myself

Now first of all- when Paul says, **“Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good,”** he is rejecting the notion that *“Evil”* is defined by what I abhor, or what I don’t like, and he is also rejecting the notion that *“Good”* is defined by what I hold fast to.

In other words- there is such a thing as *“Good”* and *“Evil”* that are objective realities outside of us. And so *“Good”* and *“Evil”* don’t depend on us or our children to become good or evil. They are *“Good”* or *“Evil”* objectively regardless of whether we agree or disagree. *“Good”* is not what we want to be good. And *“Evil”* is not what we say is evil. Liking something personally does not make it to be *“Good”* and hating something does not make it to be *“Evil”*. There is fixed reality out there about these things that is always objective and never subjective. God is the only One Who determines what is *“Good”* and what is *“Evil”*.

And so because that is true- *“Good”* and *“Evil”* never change. We change- but what God calls *“Good”* and *“Evil”* never changes. And so we have to understand that our hearts have the capacity to cling to things simply because we desire them and our hearts can also reject things intensely- but simply because we just don’t desire them. But that isn’t the criteria by which we determine what is *“Good”* or *“Evil”*.

So here in inspired Scripture Paul says, *“Here is ‘Good’, and here is ‘Evil’. Now bring your emotions and your will and your thoughts and your actions into conformity to what God has already objectively spoken and established.”* And then he says, *“When you face Objective Evil- hate it. And when you face Objective Good- embrace it”*.

But what makes "Good" to be "Good"? And what makes "Evil" to be "Evil"? In other words, how does it come about that there is such a thing as "Objective Good and Evil"? Well, this verse doesn't say. But we don't have to look far for the answer. 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."**

So the reason there is such a thing as "Objective Good" is because there is such a thing as "The Will of God." Or most simply, and most profoundly, the reason there is such a thing as "Objective Good" outside ourselves is that there is a God outside ourselves. And most concretely and specifically, God has made Himself known *objectively* and *historically* in the Jesus Christ of Scripture.

In other words- if there were no God—if there were no Christ—then "Good" would be always *subjective* and would *never* be objective. "Good" would always be in the eye of the beholder- especially the beholder who had the bigger stick. So in that world- might would always make right and we would never be able to be delivered from evil.

But God *does* exist. And therefore might does *not* make right. And so that which is "Good" and "True" and "Right" and "Beautiful" and "Holy" all have an *objective foundation* in God Himself and in His Own Self-Revelation- Jesus Christ and not in the mind and heart and mouth and force of Man. Which means that the simplest peasant in Russia or the persecuted Jew in Germany or the slave in Georgia or the Christian prisoner in Rome can stand up to the most powerful Stalin or Hitler or plantation owner or Caesar and say: *"No sir, that is Evil and all your power does not make it Good. God is above you. And therefore "Good" and "Evil" have objective reality apart from you."*

Oh, what a gift we give our children when we teach them the simple, straightforward teachings of the Bible. Their implications are vast beyond our knowledge. In this one phrase there is a world of precious Truth!

2. Merely Choosing Against Evil and for Good Is Not Enough; We Must Hate Evil and Cling to Good

Notice Paul's verbs: *"Abhor (apostungountes) what is evil; hold fast (kollömenoi) to what is good."* Notice that he did not say *"Choose*

against evil and choose good.” His words are very strong here. “Abhor” is a good translation. “Loathe; Be disgusted with; Hate with Passion” (*Liddell and Scott Lexicon*) would also be correct. “Hold fast to what is good” means: to joyfully and continually embrace it. Love it. This is the very same word used for sexual union in **1Corinthians 6:16**.

In other words, God is not mainly interested in a human willpower religion or a willpower morality. So simply choosing is not enough. Choosing doesn't signal a deep moral and spiritual transformation. Remember the meaning of hypocrisy—changing the outside with willpower choices while leaving the inside alone.

So Paul says, *“Don't just avoid evil- hate evil with a passion. Don't just choose good- embrace the good joyfully and continually. You must actually love the good.”* So the real issue of Christian living is a battle mainly to get our internal emotions and our loves and our desires changed- not just our outward behavior.

3. The Bible Commands That Our Emotions Be Changed Even Though We Don't Have Immediate Control Over Them

You can't make yourself immediately hate what you honestly love. But when Paul says, **“Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good,”** he is *commanding* our emotions to be one way and not another way. Don't ever fall for the argument that God does not require that our emotions be one way and not another, as if God only has requirements for our body or our will.

God commands not only that we choose the good but that we *love* the Good- and so we must not only consciously and outwardly choose against evil- but we must honestly hate and abhor evil from our hearts.

But what if your heart is in such a condition that you really love the evil and hate the good? How will you ever obey this Command? The answer is that we must be born again. That which is merely born of the flesh loves the things of the flesh. That which is born of the Spirit loves the things of the Spirit (**John 3:3-7, Romans 8:7-8, 1Corinthians 2:14-16**).

Or to use different biblical terms: the new covenant, purchased for us by the blood of Christ (**Luke 22:20, 1Corinthians 11:25**), must be fulfilled in our lives, if our emotions are going to conform to God's view of good and evil. **Ezekiel 36:26, “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.”** God must give us a new heart if we are going

to hate and love as we ought. The way we get for ourselves a new heart (**Ezekiel 18:31**) is by despairing of self-change and crying out for mercy from God in the name of Christ that he would take out the heart of stone. And when Christ has given us a new heart that begins to see the world the way he sees it and feel the way he feels it, we must go on fighting for daily transformation: "Beholding the glory of the Lord, [Jesus] we are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (**2Corinthians 3:18**).

So being delivered from evil is not mere choosing. It is choosing with honest intensity: *Abhor* what is evil. *Embrace* what is good.

4. Objective Biblical Good Is Always Good for Us, and Objective Biblical Evil Is Always Bad for Us

I see this mainly in the relationship between the two halves of this verse. First, verse 9 says, "**Let love be genuine.**" And then, without starting a new sentence (in the original Greek), it goes on to say, "**abhorring what is evil; holding fast to what is good.**" And the link between the command to love and the command to abhor evil and embrace good is very close. It looks as if Paul is saying something essential about love.

Everyone agrees that love means, at least, doing things for people that are good for them, not bad for them. So when Paul says, "**Let love be genuine, abhorring the evil and embracing the good,**" I take him to mean that it will be a loving thing to do if we abhor the evil and embrace the good. Which means that what God calls "Evil" must always be bad for people, and what God calls "Good" must always be good for people.

It's not the other way around. *We* don't decide what is good for people and what is bad for people and then define love that way. God decides what is "Good" and what is "Bad" and we follow that and then we call that "Love"- because what God says is "Good" is always good for people, and what God says is "Evil" is always bad for people.

For example- you can see this very clearly in **1John 5:2**. John writes,

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

So how does anyone know if they are really loving people? Only because they really love God and strive to keep His Commandments. We must know that God's Commandments are *always* the tangible expression of "Objective Good". And God's Prohibitions are *always* the tangible expression of "Objective Evil". And therefore "Objective Evil" is *always* bad for people, and "Objective Good" is always good for people.

But let's be explicitly Christian. The *ultimate* "Objective Good" is the God-Man, Christ Himself. He is our "Good". And so you can see most clearly that the *ultimate* "Objective Good" is *always* good for us because nothing is better for us than Christ. He is infinitely Good and infinitely good for us. In Him the good and the good-for-us become perfectly one. And so all other "Good Things" are good for us only *indirectly*. They are "Good" for us only because they lead us to Jesus. He alone is the "Good" which is directly and supremely good for us.

5. Genuine Love Must Hate

If there were a universe in which there was no evil that hurt people or dishonored Christ- there would be only love and no hate. There would be nothing to hate. But in a world like ours it is necessary not only that we love and hate- but that our love *include* hate. Paul says, "**Let love be genuine, abhorring what is evil.**" One commentator calls this abhorring "*an intense inward rejection.*" Make no mistake about this word- abhorring is a total rejection and it is inward and it is intense. And my point is that in this world- true love has to possess hatred for evil. Since evil hurts people and dishonors God- you can't claim to love people while coddling or condoning or celebrating what God has called, "Evil".

Don't make the mistake of saying: the evil I cherish only hurts me, and so it is not unloving to others. That's absolutely false (see **1John 5:2** above). You were made to display the infinite Worth of Jesus Christ to others. And that is what is ultimately "Good" for them. And that's what it means to love them. But if you do things to yourself that damages your delight in Christ and your display of Christ- then you sin against others and not just yourself. You rob them of what God made you to give them.

So I say again, love for others must hate evil. Because evil hurts others directly, and evil hurts others indirectly by hurting you. Evil

obscures the Beauty of Christ. And Christ is our greatest "Good" and our greatest joy. If you do not hate what God called "Evil" then you really do not love God or people.

Conclusion

Romans 12 gives us a very practical blueprint where we can put legs under our prayer that we earnestly and desperately cry to God about- "*Do not lead me into temptation but deliver me from evil*". And **Romans 12** shows us how to do that and it is summed up in verse 9:

Abhor that which is evil- cling to that which is good

And if by God's Grace and to God's Glory we can manifest this kind of love- then verse 21 will come to pass:

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Amen. Let's pray