

What Love Looks Like

(Insights from Romans 12:9)

Pastor Bob Johnson, Grace Point Church, March 4th, 2018

"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good."
Romans 12:9 (ESV)

Unpacking Four Key Words:

1) How does God define _____?

- **2 Cautions: S_____ & R_____**
(Proverbs 6:16-19, Romans 1:28-31)
- **2 to take a closer look at:**
 - looking ... (Luke 18:9-14)
 - sowing ... (Titus 3:10)

2) What does it mean to _____?

- **2 Examples to Consider:**
(Genesis 13-14, 19; Judges 13-16)

3) How does God define _____?

(Micah 6:8)

4) What does it mean to _____?

(Philippians 4:8)

What influences what I hold fast to?

- My (Proverbs 4:23)
- My (Proverbs 2:4-5, Matthew 6:21)
- My (Proverbs 13:20)

This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to "Week 8" of our small group session!

We are glad that you have taken this journey with us digging into God's Word with others. We pray this is a time of growth, encouragement, and fun as you deepen friendships and make new friends along the way! We only have three more weeks to meet as a small group this 'small group season'. After Easter, we start a brand new season of small groups at GPC.

Looking Back:

Each week we'll look back and have an opportunity to share with our group how the week went and also share a few things to help us get to know each other better. What is something encouraging that happened since our last meeting?

In Romans 12:9, we are encouraged to show genuine love toward others. The word 'genuine' means 'without hypocrisy'. Hypocrisy in the church is one of the most common reasons people give to avoid attending a church. What do those who say that mean? If you had an opportunity to respond to someone who made that excuse, what would you say to address their concern and hopefully encourage them to plug in to a local church like Grace Point?

Also in Romans 12:9, we are encouraged to hate what is evil. Speaking of hate, what food or foods did you 'hate' or strongly dislike growing up? Have your taste buds changed since then?

In Romans 12:9, we are also encouraged to hold fast or cling to what is good. Part of what is good in Scripture are the promises of God. What is a promise in the Bible that you are clinging to that helps you with your circumstances, relating to others, when you are aware of your own sin or the sins others, maintaining hope etc.?

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention or raised a question for you, encouraged you or challenged you?

Looking Up: (DIGGING DEEPER)

1. Three of Daniel's friends were faced with the decision to 'hate what is evil' and 'cling to what is good'. In their case, hating evil meant saying no to the direct command of a Babylonian King to worship an idol. The clinging to what is good was their obedience to God even though that meant being thrown into a blazing furnace.

From their experience in Daniel 3:8-28, what do you learn about making the decision to hate evil and cling to what is good no matter what the cost?

2. Last Sunday we looked at Proverbs 6 where it describes seven things God hates. That list isn't exhaustive as other places in the book of Proverbs contain more things God detests. Read the following Proverbs and list the other things God also hates.

Proverbs 3:32
Proverbs 12:22
Proverbs 15:26
Proverbs 16:5

Also look at Romans 1:28-32 for more examples.

Based on these verses and the message from last Sunday, what general observations can you make about what God hates?

If you had to explain to a friend in one or two sentences what God hates, what would you say?

3. In a culture that seems to consistently promote evil and scoff at good, it can be hard to paddle upstream by hating evil and clinging to what is good.

What motivations do you find in Galatians 6:7-10 to clinging to what is good?

4. In the last part of Bob's message, he gave three things that influence what we cling to in life. They are: what we continually think about, what we invest our resources (time, talents, treasures) toward, and who we build close friendships with.

Take another look at the passages that were given for each of these three:

- our thinking (Proverbs 4:23)
- our investing (Proverbs 2:4-5, Matthew 6:21)
- our relating (Proverbs 13:20).

How have you seen the influence of one or more of the above in what you have been able to cling to or what you have been able to let go of?

Looking Forward:

This last section is based on passages like the one below.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

James 1:22-25 (NLT)

Let's all take a few minutes to silently pray and reflect back on last week's message and what we discussed in our group. As we reflect, let's all pray and ask God for a specific application that He might prompt us to live out this week.

Some examples to prayerfully consider:

- ask God what you need to 'recoil from'
- ask God how you can reshape your thinking, investing and/or relating in order to grow stronger spiritually
- look over the verses on this outline and pick one or two to memorize and meditate on for the next few days

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other.

