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Making a List; Checking It Twice  
*Romans 12:14-21*

INTRO: Here is a list (vss 14-21), a list that we need to make a part of our lives; it is a list that we need to double check. The list given here deals with attitude, the attitude that believers should have toward unbelievers, toward those outside the church, even toward those who are enemies to the faith.

Commentator John Brown says: "Having thus stated how the Roman Christians ought to behave to their fellow-sufferers, the Apostle proceeds to show how they should conduct themselves to the authors of their sufferings" (407).

1. VS 14, GENEROUS BLESSINGS

- A. We are to pray for those who persecute us; we are to bless them, to suffer patiently under their persecution.
  - 1. Plato said: "The good man will choose rather to suffer evil than to do evil: and it is always evil to hate" (Barclay 167).
  - 2. Our attitude should be that of our Master:
    - a. Luke 6:27-28 tells us to love our enemies, to do good to those that hate us, to pray for them that spitefully use us.
    - b. When the child of God is treated wrong, insulted, misused, he has only to look to our Lord for an example of what to do. Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him. Luke 23:34 says: "Then said Jesus, father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."
  - 3. Deacon Stephen, before slipping from this life to glory, prayed for forgiveness for those who stoned him (Acts 7:60). Could it be that Saul, who later became Paul the Apostle, was deeply moved by Stephen's words? How many have been touched by the kindness of a true Christian? Before you were saved, did some one lovingly take your hateful ways?
- B. "Bless and curse not."
  - 1. If you truly bless, you will not be able to curse, not even in your thoughts. Some bless then curse the offender to others. This is not real blessing.
  - 2. Blessing and cursing are not compatible. They are opposite. We cannot wish a person health and harm, good and ill at the same time and be sincere. "Love calls down blessings upon the persecutor, not curses" (Vaughn 143).

## II. VS. 15, UNDERSTANDING SYMPATHETICALLY

- A. "Love never stands aloof from other people's joys or pains. Love identifies with them, sings with them, and suffers with them" (stoff).
- B. We are to rejoice with rejoicing ones and weep with the weeping one.
  - 1. We will, as long as we live on this sin cursed earth, have those who are weeping; and we are to, as our Lord did at the grave of Lazarus, enter into their sorrow. "Jesus wept."
  - 2. J. Frank Norris said: "We need more rejoicing and less grouch. Go-home rejoicing, live rejoicing, come to church rejoicing. There is no joy in hell, but heaven is filled with joy. Therefore we should rejoice, 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory'" (196).
  - 3. We are to be sympathetic: "weep with them that weep."
  - 4. "The opposite of rejoicing is being filled with envy (Titus 3:3); and over against weeping is gloating" (Hendriksen 418).

## III. VS. 16, HUMILITY EXERCISED

- A. We are to live in harmony: "Be of the same mind one toward another."
  - 1. No big men; no little men; no rich men; no poor men. As Norris says: "just folks" (196).
  - 2. The church is to be a place where no man is respected because he has money nor rejected because he doesn't. When I was in the Air Force, we had a Captain, a fighter pilot, who went to the same church as I did. At the base, he was my superior. At church, he was my humble brother.
- B. We are not to think we are something; we are not to lift ourselves up. It is best to let others say we are smart than to flatter ourselves. Proverbs 27:2 says: "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." We are not to be snobbish; we are to associate with the most humble of folks.

## IV. VSS 17-18, NOTABLE PRINCIPLES

- A. Vs 17, We are to be Christian in principle. We are not to act or react like the world.
  - 1. I Thess. 5:15; I Cor. 4:12-13.
  - 2. 1 Peter 3:9 says; "Not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing...."
  - 3. "Provide things honest in the sight of all men."
    - a. Pay your bills.
    - b. Don't lie or cheat.
    - c. "...Christian conduct must not only be good; it must also look good" (Barclay 169).
- B. Vs. 18, Paul and Jesus had trouble and were the cause of trouble to others. But we are to, "If it be possible ... live peaceably with all men."
  - 1. This does not mean compromise.

2. Christians are to be peace lovers, peace lovers, and peace makers. Some believe it is their job to keep things stirred up! That's not what is taught here.

V. VS. 19, DO NOT TAKE REVENGE

- A, Note the words, "Dearly beloved." This is a tender appeal in light of a tough problem.
- B. Vengeance does not belong to you, and it does not belong to me. It belongs to God; it is His proper work.
  1. Sometimes we get in the way. "Give place unto wrath" means let God have room to do His work.
  2. God will take care of His business in His time.

VI. VSS. 20-21, KINDNESS THAT OVERCOMES

- A. Vs 20, Love can turn an enemy into a friend.
  1. Love overcomes wrong, evil, with good.
  2. When kindness is returned for evil, the offender feels a burning shame for what he has done.
  3. Godet said: "Heap benefits on thine enemy; for thereby thou shalt light up in his heart the fire of gratitude instead of hatred" (439).
- B. Vs 21, This verse is not just a negative; it has a positive much like the principles of Eph. 4:28.
  1. William R. Newell said: "Merely to stop doing wrong things will finally make a monk out of you; doing good, will put you in Paul's company" (478).
  2. Here is how it is:
    - a. We will be overcome, or we will overcome.
    - b. We will be defeated, or we will be victorious.

CONCLUSION: Here is a list of principles to be checked often.