

# An Awesome Obligation

Romans 13:8-10

## Introduction

Paul is continuing his description of the “transformed” Christian life—loving one’s neighbor as oneself.

## The Aim

Help Christians understand how Self-Love fulfilled in God-Love becomes the measure of Neighbor-Love.

## Outline

- A. Self-Love
  - a. Self-Love isn’t INHERENTLY sinful
    - i. Consider normal human existence: food, shelter, safety, companionship, etc. Loving our neighbor means helping others obtain these things.
  - b. Self-Love is affected by sin
    - i. We are deeply selfish, so even Christians struggle to love generously.
- B. Neighbor-Love
  - a. One’s neighbor can be anyone—“the other” (13:8)
  - b. BEING a neighbor is simply showing mercy and compassion (Luke 10:25-37)
- C. God-Love
  - a. God-Love is the basis of Paul’s commands in chapters 12-16. Consider all that he has said about the gospel up to this point.
  - b. God-Love is described in 1 John 4.
    - i. We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19)
    - ii. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:11)
  - c. God-Love is linked with Neighbor-Love and worth “much more” than all offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:29-34).
- D. Summary

“Self-Love fulfilled in God-Love is the measure of Neighbor-Love”

--John Piper, *What Jesus Demands from the World*

Extended quote by John Piper, *What Jesus Demands from the World*

“So what then is Jesus commanding in the second commandment (that we love our neighbor as ourselves)? He is commanding that our self-love, which has now discovered its fulfillment in God-love, be the measure and the content of our neighbor-love. Or to put it another way, he is commanding that our inborn self-seeking, which has now been transposed into God-seeking, overflow and extend itself to our neighbor. So, for example,

- If you are longing to see more of God’s bounty and liberality through the supply of food and rent and clothing, then seek to show others the greatness of this divine bounty by the generosity you have found in him...
- If you want to enjoy more of God’s compassion through the consolations he gives you in sorrow, then seek to show others more of God’s compassion through the consolations you extend to them in sorrow.

- If you long to savor more of God's wisdom through the counsel he gives in stressful relationships, then seek to extend more of God's wisdom to others in their stressful relationships.
- If you delight in seeing God's goodness in relaxed times of leisure, then extend that goodness to others by helping them have relaxed, healthy times of leisure.
- If you want to see more of God's saving grace powerfully manifested in your life, then stretch out that grace into the lives of others who need that saving grace.

If you want to enjoy more of the riches of God's personal friendship through thick and thin, then extend that friendship to the lonely through thick and thin."

## Application

1. To whom can you show mercy and compassion today?
2. What love from God will you pass on to "the other"?
3. How has God loved you? Go and do likewise!