**The Book of Romans**

Part Five: God’s righteousness is revealed in His Loving Demands Upon His People. (Romans 12-15:13)

***Faith’s To Do List Or, God’s People At Work Romans 12:9-21***

We saw last week that following Jesus means dedicating ourselves in worship to Him in order to use our gifts and resources to lay down our lives for His family. This makes our “religion” intensely practical. That is, faith in the Gospel is not an ending place, but a beginning place for every aspect of our lives. Paul gives us about thirty commands, practical ways we can honor God by looking after one another. But notice how many are rooted in attitude. Practicing these things demonstrates faith working through love. Galatians 5:6

***In relationships, let your love be real . . .*** vv. 9-13

Hate evil while being closely attached to what is good. v. 9

Love with genuine affection and intense respect. v. 10

Serve others energetically and thus serve the Lord. v. 11

Be hope-fully joyful, persistent in patience and prayer. v. 12

Mind others’ physical needs and seek ways to serve them. v. 13

***In conflict (real or potential), let God be judge. . .*** vv. 14-21

Pray for those who attack you and don’t answer in kind. v. 14

Love others freely in both their joys and their sorrows. v. 15

Seek unity, and walk with the disadvantaged by genuine hands-on help, and not by patronizing condescension. v. 16

Always do right! People are watching, so treat others with respect and don’t demand your “pound of flesh” as a prize. v. 17

Above all, never pursue vengeance, but kindness and goodness, knowing that if and when necessary, God’s judgment is far more fitting and just than your own. vv. 18-21

**How do we escape the “nice but distant” trap?**

***1. Become a Big Picture Person. Get outside yourself.*** God gave us armor because we’re in a battle. Eph. 6:10, 11

***2. Imitate God in hating sin but loving sinners.*** Our personal sin should be feared, not indulged, and at the same

 time help us understand others. Gal. 6:1-5

***3. Befriend people who aren’t like you.*** Learn to reach out with humility, not pride. Look around for the

 friendless and befriend them. Luke 14:12-14

***4. Strive to see things from others’ point of view.***

You don’t have to understand completely to love well. 1 Pet. 4:8

***5. Trust God fully to set all things right, for He will.***

 Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly. Deut. 32:35, 36