

FEBRUARY 2026 PRAYER SERVICE

Prayer Service for Chapter 6 of “Love is Much More Than Love” Study Topic

The Chapter focuses on Romans 12:9-21

By Fr. Eli Lopez, USA-SR Spiritual Counselor

TIME FOR SCRIPTURE:

Romans 12:9-21 presents St. Paul’s practical exhortations for authentic Christian love within the body of Christ, urging believers to reject evil, embrace goodness with zeal, show mutual honor and empathy, live peaceably, and overcome evil through non-retaliatory good.

Key Themes and Commands

Paul structures his teaching as a series of imperatives, forming a blueprint for transformed living:

- **Genuine Love and Zeal (vv. 9-13):**

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers” Love must be sincere, active, and fervent, expressed in joy, endurance, prayer, generosity, and welcome.

- **Empathy and Humility Toward All (vv. 14-16):**

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.” Christians empathize across joy and sorrow, bless enemies, and pursue harmony through humility.

- **Peace, Non-Retaliation, and Victory Over Evil (vv. 17-21):**

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God...if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink’...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Reject vengeance - entrust justice to God - and respond to enmity with kindness, achieving triumph through good.

This passage flows from **Romans 12:1-8**’s call to be **“living sacrifices,”** applying spiritual gifts ethically in community and society.

Complementary Scripture passages to **Romans 12:9-21** illuminate St. Paul’s exhortations on genuine love, zeal for service, empathy, humility, non-retaliation, and overcoming evil with good, drawing from Old and New Testament parallels emphasized in patristic and magisterial sources.

Genuine Love, Mutual Honor, and Zeal (echoing vv. 9-13)

These verses reinforce sincere affection, holding fast to good, outdoing in honor, rejoicing in hope, patience in suffering, prayer, generosity, and hospitality:..

- **Leviticus 19:18:** “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” parallels “love one another with mutual affection” as the essence of Paul’s command.
- **Psalm (various, e.g., hope in the Lord over princes):** “It is better to hope in the Lord, than to hope even in princes” supports “rejoice in hope.”
- **Exodus 34:6:** God as “merciful and gracious,” calling for patient love amid tribulation.

Blessing Persecutors and Empathy (echoing vv. 14-16)

Paul’s call to bless enemies, rejoice/weep together, live in harmony, and associate with the lowly finds roots here:

- **Matthew 5:44:** “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” directly expands “bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.”
- **Matthew 5:39:** “If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” exemplifies inner readiness for non-retaliatory love.
- **Exodus 23:4:** “If you meet your enemy’s ox or ass going astray, rescue it” prefigures beneficence toward foes.
- **Isaiah 5:21:** Pronounces woe on the haughty, aligning with “do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.”
- **1 Thessalonians 5:15:** “See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all.”

Non-Retaliation, Peace, and Overcoming Evil with Good (echoing vv. 17-21)

Central to Paul’s ethic: no private vengeance, entrust to God’s wrath, feed enemies, heap “coals of fire” (charity), and triumph through good:

“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (**Deuteronomy 32:35**; cf. Psalm 93:1; Nahum 1:2).

- **Leviticus 19:17-18:** “You shall not...remember your brother’s evil against you” forbids repaying evil.
- **1 John 5:4:** “This is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith” describes good conquering evil.
- **Jeremiah 15:19:** “They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them.” Victory draws others to good.
- **Matthew 18:21-22:** “Not seven times, but...seventy-seven times” reverses vengeance cycles with forgiveness.
- **Matthew 7:12:** The golden rule, “**love your neighbor as yourself**” (**Leviticus 19:18**), is at the heart of the **Torah**.

These passages form a scriptural continuum: the Old Testament limits violence (e.g. by rejecting endless vengeance in Genesis 4:23-24), and this is fulfilled in Christ’s reversal toward mercy. St. Thomas Aquinas and Tertullian affirm their harmony with Paul, from Mosaic law to Gospel commands.

Romans 12:9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God...if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink'...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION:

SHARED PRAYER ON SCRIPTURAL TEXT:

The intent is reflection in the form of a prayer, not discussion.

PRAYER INTENTIONS:

- Pass card or cross, so people can pass gracefully and the team knows when the prayer is complete.
- The team should respond at the end of each person's turn, for example, "Lord, hear our prayer".

LITURGICAL PRAYER:

Psalms that complement Romans 12:9-21 draw out parallel themes of genuine love, zeal amid trial, blessing amid persecution, humility, non-retaliation, entrusting vengeance to God, and overcoming evil through good, as referenced in patristic and scriptural commentaries on Paul's exhortations.

Zeal, Hope, Patience in Suffering, and Prayer (echoing vv. 9-13)

Psalms reinforce rejoicing in hope, endurance in tribulation, and fervent service:

- **Psalm 118:8-9 (Creator's Psalmist):** "It is better to hope in the Lord than to hope even in princes" parallels "rejoice in hope," prioritizing trust in God over human powers.
- **Psalm 20:1:** "The Lord hears you in the day of tribulation" supports "be patient in suffering...persevere in prayer," invoking divine aid in hardship.

Blessing Persecutors, Harmony, and Humility (echoing vv. 14-16)

These emphasize pure goodwill, empathy, and rejecting haughtiness:

- **Psalm 28:3 (noted as Ps 27:3):** "They speak words of peace to their neighbor, but have evil in their hearts" contrasts hypocritical cursing with Paul's call to "bless...and curse not," urging sincere benevolence even toward potential foes.
- **Psalm 34:13-16 (quoted in 1 Peter 3:10-12):** "Keep your tongues from evil and your lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer" echoes blessing persecutors, harmony, and humility, linking to non-deceitful love and peace-seeking.

Non-Retaliation, Peace, and Overcoming Evil with Good (echoing vv. 17-21)

Psalms affirm leaving vengeance to God and triumph through righteousness:

Psalm 94:1 (noted as Ps 93:1): "God the Lord of vengeance" underpins "never avenge yourselves... 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord,'" entrusting justice to divine wrath rather than personal reprisal.

These Psalms, woven into early Christian exegesis, show continuity between Paul's ethic and the Psalter's wisdom, forming a unified call to transformative charity. The provided sources reference these specifically in relation to **Romans 12** but do not include full Psalm texts or additional ones; they highlight harmony with Mosaic and prophetic traditions without broader enumeration.

Psalm 34:12-20

Response: *Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you fear of the Lord.*

*Who is the man who delights in life, who loves to see the good days?
Keep your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking lies.*

Response: *Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you fear of the Lord.*

*Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.
The eyes of the Lord are directed toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.*

Response: *Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you fear of the Lord.*

*The Lord's face is against evildoers to wipe out their memory from the earth.
The righteous cry out, the Lord hears and he rescues them from all their afflictions.*

Response: *Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you fear of the Lord.*

*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, saves those whose spirit is crushed.
Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him from them all.*

Response: *Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you fear of the Lord.*

CONCLUSION OF PRAYER TIME:

A prayer for married couples inspired by **Romans 12:9-21**. This prayer draws directly from **St. Paul's** blueprint for **authentic Christian love**—sincere affection, mutual honor, zealous service, patient endurance, blessing amid trials, harmony, non-retaliation, and overcoming evil with good—applying it to the sacred vocation of marriage.

ALL:

Heavenly Father, in the mercies of your Son Jesus Christ, we, your married children, present our union as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to you. Grant us genuine love that hates what is evil and holds fast to what is good: may we love one another with mutual affection, outdoing each other in honor, ardent in spirit as we serve you together in our home.

Lord Jesus, teach us to rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering—through illness, disagreements, or hardships—and persevere in prayer as one flesh. Help us contribute to each other's needs, extend hospitality as a couple, bless and never curse, even in moments of hurt, rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Holy Spirit, bind us in harmony, free us from haughtiness, that we associate humbly with one another and the lowly. Let us repay no evil for evil, but seek what is noble: live peaceably in our marriage, never avenge ourselves, but leave all wrath to you, O God, for "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay.*"

When trials tempt us to bitterness, inspire us: if our spouse hungers or thirsts—for affection, understanding, forgiveness—let us feed and give drink, heaping coals of charity upon each other's hearts to melt away resentment. Do not let us be overcome by evil, but help us overcome evil with good, transforming our love into a witness of your Gospel.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family, strengthen our covenant, that our marriage may reflect Christ's love for his Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

DEEP POOLING:

This is a time to share on more serious matters or when the input of the group is requested. This will not necessarily happen at all meetings.

SHARING ON THE ENDEAVORS:

We join teams in order to enlist the help of others in growing closer to God. The "endeavors" are practices which we voluntarily assume. They have been found to be a means of drawing us closer as a couple and in furthering our spiritual growth. By sharing on the endeavors at the team meeting we seek help and encouragement from our teammates in our journey.