

MATURITY

MATURITY--is the ability to control anger and settle differences without violence or destruction.

MATURITY--is patience, the willingness to pass up immediate pleasures in favor of the long term gain.

MATURITY--is perserverance, the ability to sweat out a project or situation in spite of opposition or discouraging setbacks.

MATURITY--is unselfishness responding to the needs of others, often at the expense of one's own desire and wishes.

MATURITY--is the capacity to face unpleasantness and frustration, discomfort and defeat without complaint or collapse.

MATURITY--is humility. It is being big enough to say I was wrong. And when right, the mature person need not say, "I told you so."

MATURITY--is the ability to make a decision and stand by it. The immature spend their lives exploring endless possibilities, then do nothing.

MATURITY--means dependability, keeping one's word, coming through in the crisis. The immature are masters of the alibi, confused and disorganized. Their lives are a maze of broken promises, former friends, unfinished business and good intentions which never materialize.

MATURITY--is the art of living in peace with that which we cannot change.

In light of the above, how do you evaluate yourself?

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

"Brother Love"

Romans 12:9-13

INTRODUCTION

1. No one will ever be able to question how God provides for the functioning of the local assembly or the universal assembly. The gifts have been given (vv. 3-8).

2. The six phrases with "in" denote sphere, the first three the spheres of the tasks themselves; the second three the spheres of the motivation filling the heart. There are five substantivized participles (he . . . he, etc.) which are present tenses expressing one's character in accord with what he keeps doing.

3. The seven works Paul lists cover main activities in the church: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, showing mercy. Like 1 Cor. 12 to 1 Cor. 13, so here vv. 3-8 relate to v. 9. Love is crucial in the exercise of gifts. Look:-

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE v. 9

The definite article is used with the strong word for love, hence the love i.e. the whole of it. Dissimulation means not hypocritical. A hypocrite was a show actor who wore a mask. True love is not stage actor-love. Has no mask (1 Jn. 3:18). You cannot simulate true love.

2. SENSITIVITY OF LOVE v. 9

The participle has an imperatival force. The verb itself expresses a strong feeling of horror. Being a compound verb, the idea of separation is intensive. Evil has a definite article, thus, the wicked thing, i.e. everything wicked. The noun refers to active wickedness, not just something morally inferior.

3. PURITY OF LOVE v. 9

The verb cleave means to be glued and is often used of being joined firmly and permanently. Again the definite article notes the whole of good (cf. love, evil).

Following the description of love (v. 9) there are nine admonitions in the dative and one admonition in the accusative (vv. 10-13). Study them:-

4. PRACTICE OF LOVE v. 10a

With regard to brother-love--family affectioned towards each other. This is a proof of the non birth (1 John 3:14). That's why it is the brother-love because it is always present among Christians. We

are all one family. Show the family tie!

5. HUMILITY OF LOVE v. 10b

In brother-love, all are alike, stand on the same level. But in a family, there are also differences. The participle means to lead the way in regard to the honor which is due. If only this spirit of the preference for others and determination to sink our own position and reputation were in evidence. Wow--what a difference it would make in individual and corporate life!

6. FAITHFULNESS OF LOVE v. 11a

Business is really busy-ness, diligence, thus, as regards diligence--not slow. In zeal, not flagging. "Be not lazy as to what you ought to do" (Luther). Procrastination is the thief of time. Don't avoid distasteful work. This is all an outward attitude.

7. EARNESTNESS OF LOVE v. 11b

The verb means to boil. It refers to an inward attitude (cf. above) not just some carnal effort, but our spirit moved by His Spirit (cf. Acts 18:25). This will move a man to diligence. When enough steam is generated in the boiler, the engine speeds over the rails! See Rev. 2:4; 3:15; Mt. 24:12.

8. SERVICE OF LOVE v. 11c

In regard to the Lord--slaving i.e. work as slaves (cf. 1:1), it means taking orders from the Lord and never once acting as a Master. Thus, the regulating principle of our service is devotion to Christ.

9. BOUYANCY OF LOVE v. 12a

In regard to hope--rejoicing (cf. 5:2 glory on the basis of hope). A cheerful disposition is related to hope. The present pressures are to be met by hope--rejoicing.

10. ENDURANCE OF LOVE v. 12b

This is the other side of 12a. Hope is to guarantee patience or endurance (cf. Heb. 12:2). Persecution is characteristic of Christian's life (5:3; 8:35; 2 Cor. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:6; 3:3, 7; 2 Thess. 1:4, 6).

11. DEVOTION OF LOVE v. 12c

In the matter of prayer--staunch! i.e. continuing steadfast (cf. Acts 1:14; 6:4; 2:42, 46). The idea of firm adherence and constant waiting is latent (cf. Mk 3:19; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2).

Summary of v. 12: Insofar as we have come to hope, let us be joyful; insofar as we have cause of

pain, let us endure it; insofar as the door of prayer is open to us, let us continue to use it.

12. FELLOWSHIP OF LOVE v. 13a.

Saints refers to our position, standing in Christ, not exceptional holiness. It means belonging to God, devoted to Him (16:1, 2; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:2). As to saints--fellowshipping. This means contribution, collection of money, contributing to amelioration of needs (cf. Acts 4:34, 35; 11:37-30; Rom. 15:25-27; 2 Cor. 8:1-4; 9:1-4).

HEART OF LOVE v. 13b

Hospitality means love of strangers. This means: keep an open house. Sad that modern hotels have replaced this treatment of blood brothers.

CONCLUSION

Remember: Christians are people with a common life common grace, common needs, common duties, and common hopes.