

If you have limited time to prepare, this 3-step outline is a helpful tool for leading a small group discussion:

1. Read the text from Sunday's message.
2. What did you find most helpful/confusing/new/ that you did not understand from the message?
3. What were your big takeaways? How will you put these into practice in your life?

## Getting Started

- What is the darkest place you have ever been? How did it make you feel?
- React to this statement ... Even a small light shines brightest at the darkest times.

## Discussion

Paul called love the fulfillment of the Law, which recalls the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-31). The Law is not only an expression of God's character, it points to His original created order, His vision for how the universe should work. For Paul, love embodies the highest ideals of the new kingdom that Jesus will establish and enforce upon His return to Earth. In the meantime, believers are to become living examples of this new kingdom. (Chuck Swindoll)

- Read Romans 13:8-14. We sometimes think of law as being harsh and unyielding, while we see love and soft and flexible. Yet Paul speaks of both law and love in the same paragraph (13:8-10). What connections do you see between love and the commandments?
- How might the laws listed in this passage show us practical ways to express love?
- The Greek word translated as "neighbor" is the word "*heteros*", or "one of a different kind". This could be different beliefs, different personality, different politics, different mannerisms, different tastes, race, values and history. In other words, with love, *difference should make no difference*. With this knowledge of the word for "neighbor" how does this change your perspective on the command to "love your neighbor"?
- What is the "do this" of verse 11?

The word for "time" used in 13:11 is "kairos" not "chronos". Chronos is chronological time, time of the day. Kairos means the quality of a certain time period. In effect Paul writes, "Do this knowing the kind of time in which we live." He is communicating a sense of urgency. This is a "time" when our "salvation" is closer than ever before. This is a reference to the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

- Read 2 Peter 3:11-18 and summarize in your own words how Christians should be living in these "last" days?

There is an old saying, “Clothes make the man”. In the East, even today, clothes are very much a part of one’s identity, signifying where he or she fits in society. To “put on” something is to believe a certain way and then behave accordingly. “Putting on Christ” isn’t about hiding what’s inside but to display our true identity in Christ. What we “put on” reminds us of who we are, which allows us to behave properly with greater ease. (Chuck Swindoll)

- What are some of the things that you have “put off” in your life and what have you “put on”? Consider Ephesians 4:17-5:2 and Colossians 3:5-17.

Paul gave several admonitions in the light of the Lord’s soon return. (These are from Warren Wiersbe’s *Be Right commentary on Romans*)

1. Wake up! (Consider 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 and Matthew 25:1-13)

2. Clean up! (Consider 1 John 2:28-3:3)

The Christian wears the armor of light, not the deeds of darkness. He has no reason to get involved in the sinful pleasures of the world.

3. Grow up! (Romans 13:14)

To put on the Lord Jesus Christ means to become more like Him, to receive by faith all that He is for our daily living. We grow on the basis of the food we eat. This is why God warns us not to make provisions for the flesh. If we feed the flesh, we will fail, but if we feed the inner being the nourishing things of the Spirit, we will succeed.

- What kind of person do you want to be when you meet Jesus?
- What specific action would you like to pursue in response to Romans 13:8-14?

## Prayer