

XII

Practical Christianity

ROMANS 12:9–13

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

READ | ROMANS 12:9–13

THINK ABOUT

Romans 12:9–21 is one of the most concise collections of ethical commands in all of Paul’s letters. In verses 9–13, Paul outlines practical characteristics of the believer. The apostle begins this section with the statement, “Let love be genuine.” Love is foundational to all Christian relationships. But, how is authentic love to be lived out? Paul uses a series of imperatives to reveal what genuine love looks like in the lives of all believers.

Paul notes that authentic love results in “abhorring what is evil” and “holding fast to what is good.” The believer is literally to hate what is evil and to cling to what is good. Love leads us not to be lazy, but to serve the Lord fervently (v. 11). Love causes us to cry out to God in prayer as we hope in Him through trials (v. 12). Love compels us to give sacrificially to the needs of others (v. 13). Love drives us to be hospitable (v. 13).

Ultimately for the believer, love comes from the reality that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (5:5).

APPLY

Have you listened to a love song recently? Our culture views love as an emotional feeling. Scripture says the opposite. Love is something you do! It’s an action. The characteristics of every believer come from a place of love.

All of these actions flow from genuine love for God and others. How do we properly love? We model Christ’s sacrificial love for us. Scripture declares that “we love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

ASK

What are some qualities and actions you associate with love?

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Read 1 John 4:19. What drives a believer to live out the imperatives Paul outlines in Romans 12:9–13?

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What are some intentional steps you can take this week to pursue loving God and others?

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PRAY

Father, thank You for the great love You have poured into my life through Jesus Christ. Thank You for sending the Lord Jesus to model genuine love.

Help me to live out my faith authentically by loving You and serving those You place in my life. Help me to hate what You hate and love what You love.

1 JOHN 4:19–21

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

GALATIANS 5:13–14

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

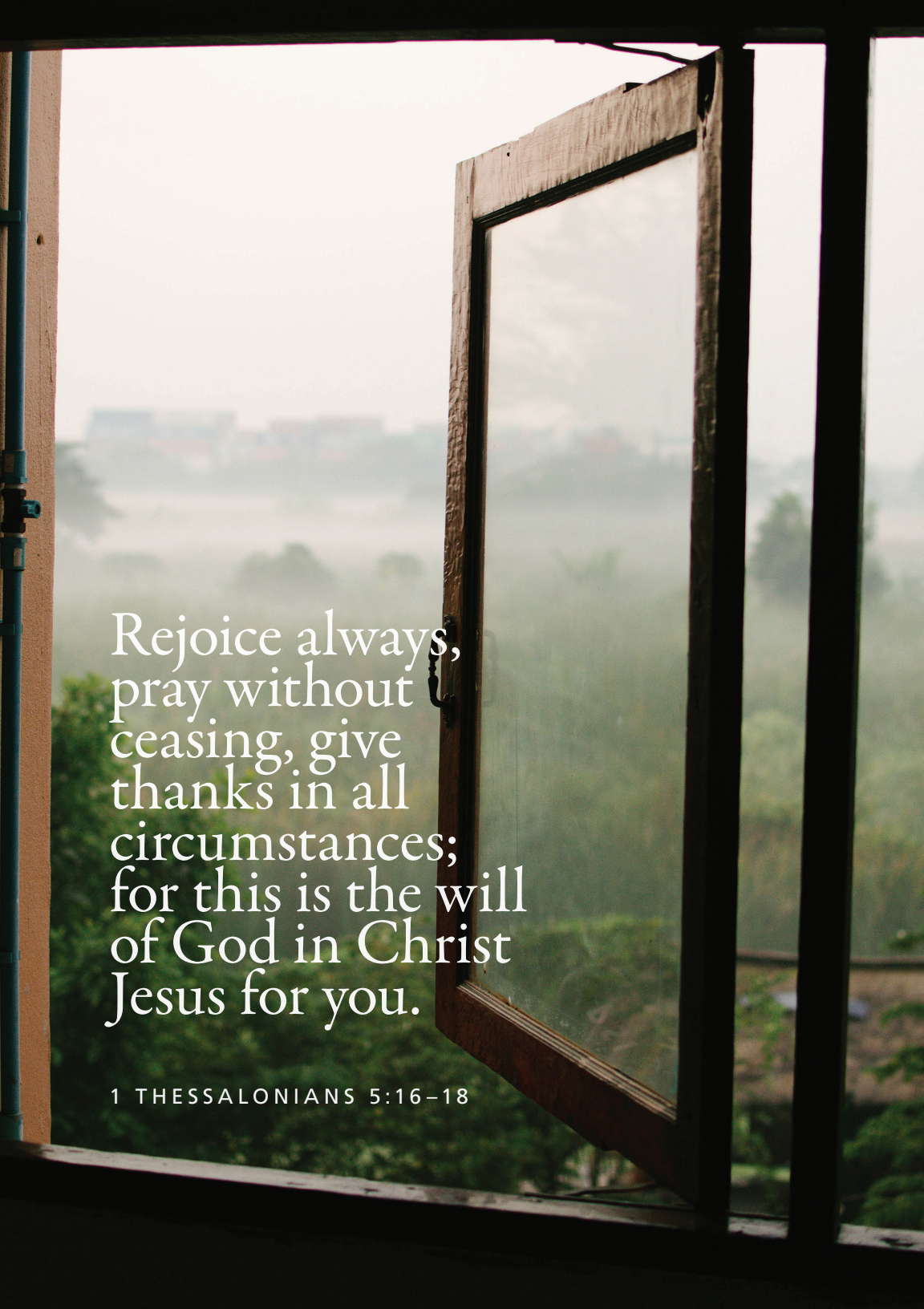
PSALM 97:10–12

O you who love the Lord, hate evil!
 He preserves the lives of his saints;
 he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
 Light is sown for the righteous,
 and joy for the upright in heart.
 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,
 and give thanks to his holy name!



SING

“These Things Are True of You” — *Tommy Walker*

A photograph of a window with a wooden frame, slightly ajar, looking out onto a misty, green landscape. The window is the central focus, with the view of trees and a distant town visible through the glass. The lighting is soft and diffused, suggesting an overcast day or early morning. The text is overlaid on the left side of the window frame.

Rejoice always,
pray without
ceasing, give
thanks in all
circumstances;
for this is the will
of God in Christ
Jesus for you.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18