

Sermon Series: The One Another Commands

Sermon Title - Live in Harmony With One Another

Sermon Text: Romans 12:11-21

Focus Verse: Romans 12:16

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

Sermon Summary: This study looks at the one another command to live in harmony with one another. The surrounding verses in Paul's virtue list are used to show various behaviors which are required to live in harmony with one another. Paul's list of values give us at least 11 practical ways to practice the virtue of living in harmony with one another! Some of these things may come easy for you and others you may need to work on.

Full Sermon Notes: "I will look up for there is none above you, I will bow down to tell you that I need you! Jesus Lord of all, Jesus Lord of all." Folks, we all need Jesus in every aspect of our lives! Amen! We need Jesus to be the Lord of our lives in order that we can fulfill the one another commands He has asked us to follow! And remember, not in order to earn our salvation, but in order that we might live as Christ! Let's pray and ask God to continue teaching and showing us how to be more like Jesus in the way we live our lives. Prayer!

I mentioned our church purpose, mission and vision in last week's message. Remember our mission?

NSC Mission - Transforming Worship, People and the World!

Here's a question for us: Are we ready to change our world or have we lost the dream, the vision, the call, the mission, the purpose of transforming the world with the good news of Jesus Christ? Can the church even change the world? Is it realistic to think we can change our world? What keeps the church from transforming the world? Is it that we've lost credibility? Is it that we don't have the resources? Is it that we don't have enough people willing to get involved? Maybe a little bit of all of the above? Or could it be that the church is no longer Christian? I know this sounds shocking for me to say, but the word Christian means to be Christ followers. Is the church as a whole, in America following Christ, or the world. As we have seen for the last two weeks, the word Christian means to be Christ-like. Has the church in America become more like the world and less like Christ?

Now by "like the world," I don't mean style of music, or fashion style or the way you style your hair, if you're fortunate to have some to style. By "like the world," I mean the way we act. The way we speak to others, the way we deal with others, our standards, our integrity, our honesty, our genuine care and concern for each other. Our priorities. Our motivations. And of course those things, if they are like Christ, will influence our music choices, not as much style as lyric content, and our clothing choices to a great extent, not style so much, but in the area of modesty. But think about this...

It's not Christian style, but Christian values that matter most!

The way we do life!
Are we Christ-like?
Are we Christ-followers?

Are we just seeking the same things as the world, but in the name of Jesus? Success, achievement, climbing the ladder, impressing others, but not really caring about others. Maybe it's time we started living for something bigger than ourselves. Greater than ourselves. A God sized dream, a God sized vision? Are we willing to lay down our personal dreams and goals for a kingdom dream? A kingdom vision? A kingdom move of God? Are we willing to live by the one another commands? Our previous two commands were...

Love one another!
Be devoted to and honor one another!

Today's command is...

Live in harmony with one another!

Our one another command is found right in the middle of our text for today, and it is surrounded by some verses that we can use for implementation. While I don't think Paul's original intention was for verse 16 to be the focal point of what he was saying in this passage and for all the other verses to point to that one verse, I do believe his list of values give us at least 12 practical ways to practice the virtue of living in harmony with one another! Some of these things may come easy for you and others you may need to work on. Let's look at verse 16 and then I'll show you what I'm talking about.

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

If we are to live in harmony with one another then it stands to reason that we need to know what harmony means, right?

Harmony: 1. the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions having a pleasing effect.
2. the quality of forming a pleasing and consistent whole.
3. agreement or concord.

We're going to have a whole message on agreeing with one another in a couple of weeks. But for today, let's realize, harmony is not just singing together, but working together to achieve a goal, a common purpose, mission, and vision! When musicians sing or play in harmony, it is to achieve something that is beautiful and pleasing to the ear.

I've asked Andrew and Kylie to come up and sing us a harmony.

Beautiful!!! Right? Vocal harmonies are so cool and pleasing to the ears. Thanks so much guys. But think about this: When we are living in harmony with one another, it is pleasing to God! Hey kids, I'm so glad you're worshiping with us this morning. I've got a question for you: If you have a brother or sister, do you think it's more pleasing to your parents to hear you guys fussing and fighting or laughing and playing together? Laughing and playing together is like living in harmony with one another and fussing and fighting is like singing out of tune, not in harmony. When that happens, it's not pleasing to the ear. And here's something that's amazing: Even people who can't carry a tune in a bucket or play an instrument can tell when the harmony's are off! Why? Just because a person can't sing, doesn't mean they don't love music! So harmony is important not just for the singer, but for the listener and harmony in the family of God is not just important for us it's important to our Heavenly Father for He is our most important audience! Amen? Amen! And harmony is also important for the lost! You see, when God's children live in harmony it speaks volumes to the world and draws others to the cause of Christ! Why? Because the world is watching and listening to our lives as followers of Christ! And when we are in harmony it is pleasing to them as well and when we're not, it's painful to their eyes and ears! This harmony thing is so important because If we aren't living in harmony with one another, we will absolutely not achieve God's purpose for His Church. If we aren't living in harmony with one another, the world we are trying to reach will laugh and turn and walk away. They'll say something like this: "I've got enough dysfunction and disharmony in my life already, at home, at work. I don't want more of the same!" You know what I say to that? This is unacceptable. We need to be living in such a way that people see our love and harmony and desire what we've got. Others need to see the friendship and fellowship within the family of God so clearly that they want in! "Hey, can I join you guys? I need what you've got!" Before the world's gonna want it we've got to have it! The more we have it the more the world's gonna want it. So just how do we go about living in harmony with one another? I looked at the verses surrounding verse 16 and realized that the surrounding virtues Paul mentions in his virtue list are actually very practical ways in which to live in harmony with one another. To begin with...

Living in Harmony with One Another Requires... Zeal and Spiritual Fervor!

Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Zeal is great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective.

Fervor is an intense and passionate feeling.

Paul was saying that we should never be lacking in our zeal and spiritual fervor, serving the Lord! Would you agree that a part of serving the Lord includes serving others? There'll be a whole sermon on that coming up! But I believe we should spend copious amounts of energy and enthusiasm when it comes to living in harmony with one another in God's Family the church, and one of the ways we do this is by doing good to others. Paul actually said this in his letter to the Galatian church...

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

I've got to say something here. At Northshore Church we are blessed to have a number of folks who have great zeal and spiritual fervor to do good for others. I was talking to one of our men one day and told him about some work I did to help out a church member and I got fussed at, in a nice way, because I didn't call him and some of the other guys to help out! That's because our people have zeal and fervor to serve the Lord and His people. Isn't it ironic that Paul put zeal and fervor immediately following his admonition to be devoted to and honor one another, the one another command we studied last week? Listen, if our zeal and fervor are self-serving, we will never have the privilege of living in harmony with one another. If our zeal and fervor are first and foremost focused on God and others, the joy you'll discover will be exponentially greater than anything you could ever achieve by focusing your zeal and fervor on yourself! Remember, zeal is great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective. Didn't Jesus tell us what one of our greatest causes and objectives should be when He gave us our first One Another Command? Remember...

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

If we are going to live in harmony with one another, we must have great zeal and spiritual fervor, serving our Lord and our fellow man with passion!

What else is required to live in harmony with one another?

Living in Harmony with One Another Requires... Joyful hope, patience, and lots of prayer!

Romans 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

One verse three truths and when you look at this verse in its context, you realize it's talking about hope, patience, and prayer as they pertain to relationships. This verse is sandwiched between Paul's "one another" commands to be devoted to and honor one another, and the command to live in harmony with one another. Our relationships should be characterized by joyful hope! A belief in the very best in others. Hoping for the very best in others and a willingness to help others be their very best. Joyful hope certainly characterized Jesus' relationship with His disciples. He believed they would do great things. Jesus said...

John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

But Jesus was not only joyful in hope, He was patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer! A great example is found when Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray, just before His crucifixion...

Mark 14:32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

Mark 14:33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

Peter, James and John were His inner circle, His closest friends on earth.

Mark 14:34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

Mark 14:35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

Mark 14:36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Mark 14:37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?"

Mark 14:38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Jesus is facing His toughest time in life and yet He is concerned about what will happen to Peter. He certainly is troubled they could not even pray with him for one hour, but He was patient in affliction.

Mark 14:39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.

Mark 14:40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

Mark 14:41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Jesus didn't berate them or tear them down. He was so patient with them. No long lecture. Just a question and a statement, "are you still sleeping, enough!" Do you know what had happened on the other side of the Kidron Valley, just before they came to the Garden of Olives?

Jesus, knowing what the disciples were going to face in the coming days, prayed for them...

John 17:10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.

John 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.

If we are going to live in harmony with one another, we must be like Christ and hope for the best in each other, be patient with each other and pray for each other. There will be a whole sermon on praying for one another coming up! But for today we must also understand...

**Living in Harmony with One Another Requires...
That we share and practice hospitality!**

Romans 12:13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practise hospitality.

Share with one another. Is this not one of the most fundamental truths we try to teach our children? You should share with your baby brother. You need to learn to share with your little sister. Hey kids, is it ever really difficult for you to share with your brother or sister, or with a friend? Sometimes we have more than we need, but we're still stingy and want to keep it all for ourselves. And did you know that sometimes the things we won't share go to waste, or it might even be a toy that we don't use anyway, but we would rather it sit in the toy box than share. That's not a good way to live. And let me tell you something...It really is rewarding when you share something and get to enjoy watching the person you shared it with truly enjoying the gift you gave them. As God's children, we must learn to share. And that hospitality thing. Wasn't Paul just trying to tell us to be nice? Jesus had something to say about this to His disciples...

Luke 22:24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

Luke 22:25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.

Luke 22:26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

Luke 22:27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

If we are going to be like Christ, then we are going to have to follow His example.

Sharing, being nice, serving. About that serving thing, there will be a whole message on that one coming up as well! But for today we must realize...

**Living in Harmony with One Another Requires...
That we bless and do not curse those who persecute us!**

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse

This is probably one of the hardest things to do or to not do. When someone curses us or speaks evil of us, we want to speak back. We want to lash out. We want to defend ourselves. We want to fight. But listen to the wisdom of God's Word concerning this...

James 3:6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

James 3:7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,

James 3:8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

If we could only be like Christ with this one.

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Jesus laid down His rights and did not defend Himself because He wanted to take our punishment for us. Maybe we should do less fighting for our rights and more laying down our rights in order to live in harmony with one another. But we must also understand that...

Living in Harmony with One Another Requires...

That we rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn!

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

If we are going to live in harmony with one another, we must learn to celebrate when others celebrate. Why don't we? Are we jealous of their good fortune? "I don't ever get the breaks." "They have all the luck." "Life just ain't fair." Why can't we just celebrate with one another?

James 3:16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Paul also tells us to mourn with those who mourn. When we see someone hurting, we need to come alongside them and help them carry their load. Sometimes the greatest thing you can do when someone is hurting, is not to give them a boatload of your advice and great wisdom, but just be there for them and let them know your heart breaks for them.

It's what Jesus would do!

John 11:32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

John 11:33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

John 11:34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

John 11:36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

In order to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep we must realize that...

**Living in Harmony with One Another Requires...
That we get rid of the pride!**

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

The writer of Proverbs gave us a clear picture of what God thinks about pride...

Proverbs 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech.

Pride and conceit are mortal enemies of harmony. Remember, last week, we talked about Spiritual pride. The writer of Proverbs wrote...

Proverbs 13:10 Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Does this have anything to do with being Christian? Listen to the following verses, then answer the question...

Philippians 2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,

Philippians 2:2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Philippians 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

And when we have the attitude of Christ it will help us understand this concept...

**Living in Harmony with One Another Requires...
That we do not repay evil for evil but do what is right!**

Romans 12:17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

This is another way of putting the "Golden Rule!"

Matthew 7:12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Did you notice, it says do unto others what you would want them to do unto you, not what they do unto you. The world has rewritten the golden rule.

"Do unto others before they do unto you"

Not good! If we are going to live in harmony with one another, someone's going to have to take the initiative, the first step. Someone's going to have to be like Jesus and lay down their rights for the good of the kingdom.

1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

Only when we start living by the golden rule can we fulfill the next requirement for living in harmony with one another...

**Living in Harmony with One Another Requires...
That we live at peace with everyone!**

Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Now I realize it says "as far as it depends on you". This means we all must ask the question: "Have I done all I can do to make peace?"

Ask it honestly and deeply. Have I really done everything I can do? Have I been willing to go the extra mile? Have I been willing to lay down my pride? Jesus said this...

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

If you've truly done all you can do, then put it in God's hands and pray God will soften the other person's heart.

**Living in Harmony with One Another Requires...
That we give up on revenge!**

Romans 12:19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Romans 12:20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Verse 20 is a direct quote from Proverbs. So what's this heap burning coals upon their head thing? Sounds kind of violent. We talked about this already in one of our Relationship sermons this year and there's a lot of different opinions on the burning coals. But it could be as simple as this: when we don't try to enact justice but choose instead to be kind to those who aren't kind to us, we allow the Holy Spirit of God to use our actions to bring the burning conviction of God on

them, with the hopes they will see the error of their ways and change! The natural inclination when you've been wronged is to take revenge and do unto them what they've done to you or worse! That's the natural human way, but a servant of God is to surrender their desire for revenge to God. In fact God says He will avenge and repay. Why let God handle revenge? He's the only one who truly knows another person's heart. He's the only one who knows the why! He's the only one who is truly just! He is not subject to the whims of human emotion! Again, the natural instinct when you've been wronged is to distance yourself from the person who wronged you and never talk to them again! That's natural. The supernatural, God thing, is to sincerely pray for the person who has wronged you and if you find out they are hungry and thirsty, to feed them and give them something to drink and let God handle the individual. I'm not talking about putting yourself in an abusive situation, or a dangerous situation. I'm not telling you you've got to be okay with the wrong that was done to you! Forgiveness is not saying it's okay what you did to me, but it is saying I'm not going to hate you or wish bad things on you because you did me wrong. I believe heaping coals of fire on their heads means your kindness will put a burning conviction upon their heart and mind. They may resist that conviction, but it is there nonetheless. It is always better to let God handle the vengeance thing. He's the only one who can bring judgement with justice. We simply don't have the ability or knowledge to do so. When we seek revenge it always ends up destroying our very soul and keeps us from experiencing the harmony God intended for His people! There will be a whole sermon on the one another command of do not judge one another next week!

Conclusion: Both Paul and Peter were inspired by God to put this live in harmony with one another concept in our Bibles. Peter puts it this way...

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

1 Peter 3:9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:10 For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.

1 Peter 3:11 He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

And Paul gives us this closing admonition found in the final verse of our text...

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

If we are going to live in harmony with one another then we must heed these words and the only way to overcome evil with good is to let Jesus be Lord of our lives each and every day so we can be like Christ! Let's pray!

One Another Commands 3
Small group study helps.

Why do you think it is so hard for human beings to live in harmony with one another? Should it be different with God's children? Why?

We should hope for the best in others, be patient when they don't measure up, and pray for them. Easy to say, not so easy to do. What are some ways you've found that actually work to do these things?

Phil 4:5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Phil 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In order to live in harmony with one another we must rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. Explain.

1 Pet 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

How does the "Golden Rule" factor into living in harmony with one another?

Romans 12:17 (NIV) Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

Matthew 7:12 (NIV) So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.