

Main Idea: In Paul’s letter to the Romans we learn two important truths about caring for one another.

- I. We find the power to care for one another in Romans 1-11.
  - A. Until we’ve experienced Romans 1-11, we cannot care for others as God intends.
  - B. If we have experienced Romans 1-11, then we can and must care for others.
- II. We find the particulars for how to care for one another in Romans 12-16.
  - A. We must see ourselves as living sacrifices (12:1-2).
  - B. We must see ourselves as members connected to one body (12:3-8).
  - C. We must work at honoring God in our relationships with one another (12:9-21).
    1. Be devoted to one another (12:10a).
    2. Honor one another (12:10b).
    3. Live in harmony with one another (12:16).
  - D. We must work at honoring God in our response to governing authorities (ch 13).
  - E. We must work at honoring God in dealing with Christian liberties (chs 14-15).
    1. Stop passing judgment on one another (14:13).
    2. Pursue what edifies one another (14:19).
    3. Accept one another (15:7).
    4. Admonish one another (15:14).
  - F. We must show we value our relationships with our brothers and sisters (ch 16).
    1. Greet one another (16:16).

Make It Personal: Questions to ponder and discuss in this evening’s care groups...

1. What obstacles must we overcome to show we care?
2. In practical terms, how can we express our devotion to the elderly and infirmed in our church? What special needs do they have, especially those who are shut-in? How can we organize our care group to better meet those needs?

One of the most encouraging truths I can affirm for you today is that in Christ God has given us everything we need to live a life that pleases Him. He does not promise us a problem free life, but He has given us all the resources we’ll need to live for His pleasure no matter what comes.

I want to highlight two of these invaluable resources. One is *the Book*, the Bible, and specifically the promises of God contained in the Book. We pondered those promises in our previous series, *Promises to Live by in the Crucible of Suffering*.

The other resource is *the Body*. We who know Christ are plugged into the Body of Christ, so by God’s design we’re not alone as we go through life. We have His people, as we’re learning in our current series, *A People to Live With in the Crucible of Suffering*.

The Book and the Body. God’s promises and God’s people. In order to experience God’s help in times of trial, we have what we need and we need what we have. We must take advantage of both *the Book* and *the Body*.

Two weeks ago we learned from Philippians 2:1-5 that we as a church are *called to be a caring community*. Caring isn’t just a slogan. It’s a resemblance we’re called to maintain. Our Savior cared for us to the point that He humbled Himself and went to the cross to meet our needs. We then are called to have His mind, to humble ourselves, to put the interests of others ahead of our own, and to meet their needs.

Last time we looked at what caring looked like in the first church in Acts 2:42-47, and we marveled at how the Risen Christ puts His glory on display in and through His Body as it functions in obedience to Him. In other words, if we want to see glory of Christ, we’ll will not see it any more clearly in this world than by looking at His Body at work.

We saw how the first church functioned last time. According to Acts 2:42, the first believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching (they were a learning community), to

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\*\* Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

the fellowship (they were a connected community), to breaking bread (they were a worshipping community), and to prayer (they were a praying community). When a church engages in those four priority tasks, it puts the glory of its Head on display. And that's what it means to be a caring community.

But that's still too general. What does *caring* look like in specific terms? When a church is caring as Christ intends, what happens? How does it operate? What do its people do in their relationships with each other?

That's the question we want to begin to answer today. And to do so, we're going to look at the epistles and see what counsel the Holy Spirit gave to local churches concerning how express their care for one another.

Today we'll look at the letter to the Romans. Next time we'll look at Galatians. Then Ephesians. And finally James and 1 Peter. Why these particular epistles? Because in these God-inspired letters we find an assortment of some forty "one another" commands that give us a clear expression of what caring looks like in action.

I want us to start by going to the Cadillac of Paul's letters, Romans. What do you think of when you think of Romans? Deep and glorious theology? For sure. You'll find no clearer development of the hope-giving doctrine of justification anywhere in the Bible. But Romans isn't a seminary textbook. It's a letter to a local church, so it's not surprising that the strong theology of Romans leads to strong application.

Specifically, in Paul's letter to the Romans we learn two vital truths about caring for one another. Let me give them to you at the outset and then develop them. One, we find the *power* to care for one another in Romans 1-11. Two, we find the *particulars* for how to care for one another in Romans 12-16.

### I. We find the power to care for one another in Romans 1-11.

What's Romans 1-11 all about? In Romans 1-11 the apostle Paul presents a careful and thorough presentation of what God has done to meet mankind's greatest need. He begins in chapter one by identifying man's problem. He is a sinner and therefore under the wrath of God. That's true whether he is a Hebrew, a humanist, or a flat out heathen, as Paul explains in chapters 2-3. We've all fallen short of the glory of God, and we all lack the righteousness that's necessary to enter His glorious presence.

But what we lack and could never attain on our own merit, God offers in the person of His beloved Son, Jesus the Christ. Jesus lived a perfect life, and did so as a substitute. And He died as a substitute, and rose again as a substitute, so that now, when a sinner puts his or her trust in the work of that perfect substitute, God imputes the sinner's sin to Christ, and Christ's righteousness of His Son to the sinner. He *justifies* that sinner, not on the basis of the works of the sinner, but on the basis of the work of His own Son. By faith alone, apart from works, God declares the believing sinner to be just as right with Him as His own Beloved Son is.

Yet that's not all. What God does for the sinner positionally, which is the theme of Romans 1-5, He then enables the redeemed sinner to live out experientially, which is the theme of Romans 6-8. Justification, that's righteousness imputed, leads to sanctification, that's righteousness imparted. And that leads to righteousness vindicated, which is the theme of Romans 9-11, where Paul deals with the problem of Israel's rejection.<sup>1</sup>

That leads us to two conclusions about caring.

**A. Until we've experienced Romans 1-11, we cannot care for others as God intends.** That is, until we've experienced the liberating power of the gospel, until we've been justified by faith on the basis of Christ's work, we cannot care for others in a way that

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<sup>1</sup> I'm indebted to *The NIV Study Bible*, p. 1707, for this outline of Romans.

pleases God. We can't do *anything* in a way that pleases God. Remember, apart from Christ we are under the wrath of God.

You say, "Wait a minute. I know some very caring people who don't profess Christ. Why do you say they can't care?" I said they can't care *as God intends*. By God's common grace, even unregenerate people can do acts of kindness. They can give a plate of food to someone hungry, or even give their lives on a battlefield. So they can care, but not as God intended, for God intends every act of care to be done for His glory and in dependence upon the merit of His generous Son. As Romans 11:36 says, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."

Does your unsaved neighbor give God the glory when he picks up your trash? For that matter, do you when you pick up his? Everything, including every act of caring, is to be done in dependence upon Christ and for the glory of Christ, or it's not being done as God intends.

You see, this is the power of the gospel. When we come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, He sets us free, not only from sin's penalty, but also from sin's power to rob God of the glory He deserves. Or to state it positively, Christ sets us free so we can truly care for others in ways that bring honor and attention to the One who made it possible, Christ Himself.

So until we've experienced Romans 1-11, we cannot care for others as God intends. That's not another of a thousand reasons, my non-Christian friend, why you need to be saved, and why I urge you now to call on Christ and receive His offer of righteousness, by faith alone, apart from your works.

Yet that brings us to a second conclusion.

**B. If we have experienced Romans 1-11, then we can and must care for others.**

We *can*. We are not under God's wrath any longer. We've been set free. We've received God the Holy Spirit who enables us to change, to be givers instead of takers, to be God-glorifiers instead of self-glorifiers. We *can* care for others now.

And it's not a grind. Loving Christ and showing we care for others is how we maximize our own joy too.

The world has it all turned around, and so do until we experience Romans 1-11. Last week Michael Jordan turned 50. I read an interesting article that quotes ESPN senior writer Wright Thompson who spent some time with Number 23.<sup>2</sup> Jordan told Wright, "I would give up everything now to go back and play the game of basketball." When asked how he replaces it, Jordan simply states, "You don't. You learn to live with it."

What's it like to be a celebrity? Wright observes, "Jordan is at the center of several overlapping universes, at the top of the billion-dollar Jordan Brand at Nike, of the Bobcats, of his own company, with dozens of employees and contractors on the payroll. In case anyone in the inner circle forgets who's in charge, they only have to recall the code names given to them by the private security team assigned to overseas trips. Estee is Venom. George is Butler. Yvette is Harmony. Jordan is called Yahweh—a Hebrew word for God."

Interesting choice of a code name. Yahweh means, "I am that I am. I will be what I will be."

"My ego is so big now that I expect certain things," Jordan admits. But, as Thompson observes, this is a natural consequence of life at the very top. "Jordan is used to being the most important person in every room he enters and, going a step further, in the lives of everyone he meets. . . . People cater to his every whim."

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<sup>2</sup> by Matt Smethurst; <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2013/02/21/when-greatness-meets-emptiness-michael-jordan-at-50/>

Then the writer says, “Imagine that life for a moment. Put yourself in his shoes (Air Jordans, of course). You can't recall the last time you weren't the most important person in the room. No matter where on Planet Earth you go, you're king. Thirty years and counting. What would that recognition do to someone? To you?”

Interestingly, the article is entitled, “Do You Still Want to Be Like Mike?”

Living a me-first life does not satisfy, for it only leads to the desire for more me-first living. That's not just true for Michael, but for every person created in the image of God. There is no satisfaction *until* we experience the gracious, liberating work of God as explained in Romans 1-11. When that happens, we begin to truly live. When that happens, we discover that we can let go of our me-first approach and truly care for others.

And not just *can*, but we *must*. It's not optional. It necessarily follows. How do I know? Because Romans doesn't end after chapter eleven. The record of what God has done for us in Romans 1-11, leads to what God requires of us in Romans 12-16. Doctrine leads to duty. Position leads to practice. Resources lead to responsibility.

That brings us to our second point. We find the power to care for one another in Romans 1-11.

## II. We find the particulars for how to care for one another in Romans 12-16.

The particulars show up in a series of eleven “one another” references tucked away in Romans 12-16. We're going to look at these “one another” references by walking through the final six sections of the book of Romans, where we discover that in light of what God has done for us in Romans 1-11, we have six responsibilities.

**A. We must see ourselves as living sacrifices (12:1-2).** Notice how Paul begins this application section of Romans in verses 1-2, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

In light of what God has done for us in Christ, we must see ourselves, not as those for whom God and the world exists, but as *living sacrifices*. We have died to ourselves, yet we now live for the Lord and others.

**B. We must see ourselves as members connected to one body (12:3-8).** Notice verse 3, “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

That was our problem. We were wrapped up in ourselves, and for that Jesus died in our place. And it's still our tendency, to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. And one of the ways that shows up is our tendency to isolate ourselves from the church, and act like we don't need our brothers and they don't need us.

Not so, says Paul in verses 4-5, “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others [or more literally, “and each one members one of another”].”

There's the first “one another” reference. We who belong to Christ are *members of one another*. We're connected. That's a fact. We belong to each other. We're a body. But we must choose to live that way.

Sadly, it's not uncommon these days that says, “I love Jesus, but I don't need the church.” There's a great contradiction in that, to say you love Jesus but not love His body. In your physical body no individual part is intended to function without being connected to the rest. So it is with you and the body of Christ.

Last week I mentioned the German pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who watched Hitler and Nazism take over the country he loved back in the 1930s. During that time Bonhoeffer began to understand just how important the *church* is.

Not the dream-world church, as he called it, the church that meets up to your standards. But the real church, warts and all. That's what we're called to value and live in connection with.

In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer offers this helpful insight: "The community of the saints is not an "ideal" community consisting of perfect and sinless men and women, where there is no need of further repentance. No, it is a community which proves that it is worthy of the gospel of forgiveness by constantly and sincerely proclaiming God's forgiveness...Sanctification means driving out the world from the Church as well as separating the Church from the world. But the purpose of such discipline is not to establish a community of the perfect, but a community consisting of men who really live under the forgiving mercy of God."<sup>3</sup>

That brings us to the third application section of Romans 12-16.

**C. We must work at honoring God in our relationships with one another (12:9-21).** And it does take work, hard work. Paul gives us three "one another" commands in this section.

1. *Be devoted to one another (12:10a).* That's verse 10, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love." The KJV says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." The verb *devoted* is a compound word made up of the Greek words *philos* ("friendly") and *storge* ("love of kindred, especially parents for children and children for parents"). And the preposition "in brotherly love" comes from *philadelphia*, from *philos* ("friendly") and *adelphia* ("from the same womb;" we've all been born again the same way and placed in God's forever family).

The call is clear. Christians are to be just as devoted to each other in the church as family members are in a close-knit family. And why would that be? Because we are a family, a forever family!

Remember Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn? One time these two friends signed a pact by using their own blood, and in so doing committed themselves to one another. Blood brothers will do anything for one another, even die for one another.

Beloved, the Bible makes it clear that we are blood brothers, for in Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins (Eph 1:7)."

It follows then that we are to *be devoted to one another*. How important is your church to you? Is it just a place you go to hear a sermon or enjoy some music or eat a potluck? Or is it a family that you value highly, to which you are indeed *devoted*.

How specifically do we show this devotion? The other "one another" commands show us. Notice the next...

2. *Honor one another (12:10b).* That's the end of verse 10, "Honor one another above yourselves." The KJV says, "In honor preferring one another." The phrase is actually a dependent clause which shows us how we are to express our devotion to one another. We are to *prefer* one another, a word that literally means "to go beforehand."

In recent years we've put two words together that don't belong in the same sentence. *Worship wars*. In church after church God's people are fighting over the styles of music, and if you ask them why they're fighting, they'll say, "Because I don't like the music they're using."

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<sup>3</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

But when we take this command seriously, it changes the focus completely. It's not what I like. It's what *you* like that should be my focus. I'm called to *honor* you, to *prefer* you, to look for ways for you to go first.

This command has all kinds of implications, ranging from how we eat a church fellowship meal, to how we treat a church member who offends us, to how much we talk versus how much we listen in a small group, to how we decorate the building, to how we do hospitality in our homes, and more. We're charged to give preference to one another.

Drop down in this section to verse 16 and you'll see a third, related command.

3. *Live in harmony with one another (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 KJV says, "Be of the same mind one toward another."

Why do people often get out of sorts with each other? It starts here, with the way they *think* about each other. They imagine things. They read into things. They assume they know motives for things. And they build cases against other on the basis of those thoughts.

"I'm upset at Steve," says John to you.

"Why?" you ask.

"Because he snubbed me," says John.

"How?" you return.

"He walked right past me and didn't even say hi. I just know he thinks he's too good to associate with me."

"Are you sure?" you ask. "I've never seen Steve treat anyone other than fairly."

"Oh, it's true. You better watch your back."

And so fellowship is fragmented, all on the basis of imagination and innuendo. I remember one time sensing a brother was upset with me, so I asked him about it. His response? "I am upset...because you walked past me, looked right at me, and didn't speak." I was stunned because I didn't even remember the event. "I'm sorry. I must have had something on my mind because I don't even remember that happening. But I can assure you that I value your friendship."

Brothers and sisters, it takes a ton of work, by the grace of God, to have Christ-honoring relationships. That's true in your marriage, with your kids and parents, at work, in a friendship, and certainly in the church.

"Live in harmony with one another," says our text. It wouldn't say that if harmony came naturally. On the other hand, when we accept the charge, when we purpose to live in community, to live in harmony with the members of this community, we can see the power of Romans 1-11 being put on display for the glory of our Savior.

In chapter 13 Paul moves outside the church to a fourth responsibility.

**D. We must work at honoring God in our response to governing authorities (ch 13).** How do we do that? According to verse 1, "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

Submit. Don't badmouth. Don't undermine. Place yourself under the governing authorities because God established them. Part of submission involves paying taxes, according to verse 6. And so verse 7 says, "Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor."

So Christians are to pay their debts. We're to be known as people who pay what we owe. But there is one debt we should never pay up. What's that? It's our next one another command.

Verse 8 says, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.” Jesus Himself said, “By this will all men know you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:25).”

We’re called to live with an upward and outward focus. Love God. Love others. If we see needs, we take action to meet those needs.

“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. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:16-18).”

It’s interesting to consider the next subject Paul addresses as he shows the Roman church the implications of the gospel. Here’s responsibility number five...

**E. We must work at honoring God in dealing with Christian liberties (chs 14-15).** When the Bible is black and white, no problem. We’ve got a standard to settle our differences. But what if our differences pertain to something the Bible doesn’t address, or doesn’t address clearly? What about gray areas? That’s what this section is all about, *Christian liberties*.

One Christian says, “I just can’t eat meat, especially meat that’s been offered to an idol, since I used to worship that idol.” But another Christian says, “I don’t have any problem with meat. I love a good steak.”

So what’s the menu going to be at next week’s church fellowship dinner, vegetarian or meat-lovers? That’s sort of what was challenging the unity of the church at Rome, disagreements over debatable matters.

Today it’s, “My momma always told me that you need to wear your Sunday best to worship God. I could never wear jeans in the church house.” Or, “I used to be wrapped up in the occult before Jesus saved me last year. I just don’t see how a Christian could ever celebrate Halloween.”

Growing up on the farm I found it interesting to watch how the animals related to one another. One time my father raised some baby pheasants. Who do you think would be the greatest threat to a baby pheasant growing up? The cat? A fox? Surprisingly, the biggest challenge at bringing a little pheasant to maturity are the other little pheasants. Those little creatures pecked at each other, and if one of them began to bleed, all the rest would swarm around it in cannibalistic fashion and literally peck it to death.

“Well, I don’t see what the big deal is. It’s just meat. Bill and his veggie-friends are just too sensitive, and their weak consciences are making extra work for the kitchen committee. I say go ahead and serve the sloppy-joes and tell Bill and the others to grow up!”

Is that the solution? Hardly. This is. Paul gives four more one another commands.

*1. Stop passing judgment on one another (14:13).* “Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.”

It’s one thing to judge the issue, and that’s fine (as Paul himself does in verse 14, “I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself”). But while you’re making judgments about issues, do *not* judge your brother. Don’t start pecking at him as though he was a dispensable commodity. Rather, make up your mind that you will not put any stumbling block in his way, like serving sloppy-joes at the potluck.

You say, “Okay, I see the patience part, but if we don’t eat the meat, how will my brothers with the weak consciences ever grow in their freedom?” That’s the next one another command...

2. *Pursue what edifies one another (14:19)*. “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.” More literally, it says, “The things of building up one another (YLT).” That’s what we’re after ultimately.

So we give our brother some time now. We don’t force him to violate his weak conscience. But we also look for opportunities sit down and open God’s Word together, so we can see what He says about eating meat, and idols, and everything else, too. We’re called to pursue what edifies, what builds up each other, so that we’re one strong church glorifying our Head together.

There’s a new puppy in our neighborhood, a Saint Berdoodle. It’s a cute little thing, at least from my perspective. Our dog isn’t so sure. I let our dog, Maddie, out the other morning and when she saw the puppy out two houses down from us, she charged it and went nose to nose with it. If I could put her thoughts into words, I think I would have heard her say, “Listen. This is my neighborhood, so don’t you be stepping on my turf. Don’t take my toys. Don’t take my food. And don’t, absolutely don’t, take my master’s attention and affection from me. Keep your distance and we’ll have a fine relationship.”

Quite frankly, if I could put the thoughts of some Christians into words, it might sound pretty similar. “This is my church, so don’t be stepping on my turf. Don’t take my pew. Don’t take my music preferences. Don’t take away the foods I like. Do the things that I like and we’ll have a fine relationship.”

But that’s not unity, is it? It’s an external uniformity and it ignores this command, “Pursue what edifies one another.” And this command too...

3. *Accept one another (15:7)*. “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”

When I was in seminary, there was a church that I preached at once that had a most unusual name. COTA. It stood for “Church of the Alcoholics.” Those were the only people there, people enslaved to drink. Quite frankly, that church was a bad idea and would not have existed if the other churches in that community had practiced this one another command. *Accept one another*.

What should we do with a brother who is struggling with a sin? Isolate him and put him with others who struggle with the same sin? No. We need to *accept* our brother and get involved in his life and pursue what will lead to his edification.

And the need for acceptance goes both ways. What should this brother who is struggling with a sin do? Isolate himself and identify only with others who share his particular sin? No, he too needs to work hard at accepting his brothers and sisters, all of them, those who struggle with his particular sin, and those who struggle with some other sin, and especially those who by God’s grace are experiencing power over their sin.

And we need to do this when we differ over disputable matters, too. Accept one another, just like Christ accepted us—with patience, with a determination not to treat us as we deserve, with a view to helping us mature in Him. Which leads to this...

4. *Admonish one another (15:14)*. “I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.” The Greek word for “instruct” is *noutheteo*, which means literally, “to put into the mind.” It’s translated elsewhere, “to admonish” and “to counsel.”

So sometimes we cover sins—that’s caring. But sometimes we confront—that’s caring too, caring enough to confront. We don’t judge one other. We seek to build up one other. We accept one another (rather than running to the next church). But at the right time and in the right way, we admonish one another.

Friends, that's what caring looks like. That's what a caring community looks like. And it's a beautiful thing to behold, for only Christ could make that happen, and when it does happen, He is put on display for the world to see.

Paul hits one more area of responsibility in chapter 16. In light of what God has done for us as explained in Romans 1-11...

**F. We must show we value our relationships with our brothers and sisters (ch 16).** What do you see in Romans 16? A bunch of names, right? But not just names. An exhortation to the church to greet those people. *Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers (3). Greet my dear friend Epenetus (5). Greet Mary (6). Greet Andronicus and Junias (7).* And so forth. Paul tells the church to greet more than 25 people he mentions by name. And then he gives his final one another command...

1. *Greet one another (16:16).* Specifically, verse 16, "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings." It seems so obvious, but just think what happens when we obey this command. When I greet you, I am acknowledging you and your presence and your value in my life. And greeting with a holy kiss involves taking time to make the kind of physical contact that's typically reserved for family.

Which again, is what we are. We are connected. We are a forever family.

This morning, we've learned that the God who saved us did so in order that we would become *a caring community*. We have the *power* to care—that's Romans 1-11. And we have *particulars* that show us how to care in Romans 12-16.

And because we have this power and these particulars, it shouldn't surprise us that this caring is already happening. I see it all the time as your pastor, brothers and sisters expressing their devotion to one another, and honoring one another, and seeking to edify one another, and admonishing one another at times.

Yet because sanctification is a process, it also shouldn't surprise us that when it comes to caring, we still have room to grow. That's one of the reasons we've restructured our deacon care groups and scheduled them to meet twice a month on Sunday evenings (the second and fourth Sundays each month).

#### Make It Personal: Questions to ponder and discuss in this evening's care groups...

Tonight when we return we're going to discuss two important questions...

1. *What obstacles must we overcome to show we care?* How would you answer that question? Think about it this afternoon, and come back with your answers, and suggestions for overcoming those obstacles.

Earlier Romans 12:10 exhorted us, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love." One of the things we're going to do in our Sunday evening groups this winter and spring is discuss how to express that devotion with various segments of our church. For instance, how do we care for the children of our church? How do we show we care for a brother or sister who's in unrepentant sin? How do we show a visitor we care? How do we show a brother or sister who's facing surgery, or lost a loved one, or lost a job, that we care? We're going to work on those real-life scenarios together in our care groups.

And tonight, we're going to begin with this one...

2. *In practical terms, how can we express our devotion to the elderly and infirmed in our church?* What special needs do they have, especially those who are shut-in? How can we organize our care groups to better meet those needs? Some of you are very gifted in this area. You may never teach a Sunday School class, but the Lord has given you a heart to make home and hospital visits. And you see the needs of our elderly and infirmed. Help your brothers and sisters to see what you see, and what we together can do to show in more effective ways we truly *care*.