

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Live As Those Who Are Awake!

By Dan Trygg

“Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For this, ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. ¹¹ And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹² The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”
Romans 13:8-14

Paul continues his practical admonitions. *Again, these are meant to be things that would stand out radically from the lives of others.* One who truly has Kingdom priorities, and is focused on God’s interests and the interests of others before his or her own, will live by different priorities and principles than the average person. This should and *will* produce very different results in their life. **Instead of “conforming” and falling into the unending “keep up with the Jones” trap, those who are radically living for Jesus will live by eternal values, focusing on what really matters in light of eternity.** As he wrote elsewhere, “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise people (without practical sense), but as wise (with practical skill in living), making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish (un-thinking), but understand (put-together) what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:15-17).

“Owe no one anything...” **This is a radical thought, isn’t it?** There have been books written about just this phrase. People have made this a life-motto. **Certainly, this is a very practical “word to the wise”.** Proverbs 22:7 says, “The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes slave to the lender.” **The more we are indebted to others, the more our lives and resources are tied up in obligations.** Our income is *not* freed up to use for Kingdom purposes, or to help others; it is committed to repay indebtedness to others. **This is symptomatic of a heart posture.** In Habakkuk 2:4-7, the prophet writes, “**the soul of the proud person is not right** (“straight, good, pleased”) **within him; but the righteous person will live by faith** (steadfastness, firmness, fidelity, trust, honesty). ...[The proud person] does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, and he is like death, never satisfied. ...Woe to him who increases what is not his -- for how long-- and makes himself rich with loans? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly, and those who collect from you awaken? Indeed, you will become plunder for them.” This sounds very similar to Ephesians 4:19, where Paul admonishes us to **no longer live as unbelievers live, who live in the futility of their minds.** They “have put their ‘pain’ (inner-emptiness, boredom, dis-ease) away from themselves and have given themselves over to sensuality unto the pursuit of any unclean thing with ‘having much’”. In other words, **they are trying to fill the emptiness or inner pain with pleasurable experiences,** but these never really satisfy, so they want more and more. Read down the page in Habakkuk 2, and you will see similar things listed there. Not being content with what you have, and always wanting the latest, newest, and flashiest thing is symptomatic of a heart that is not at peace within. Always wanting something new, ...a new experience, a new taste-sensation, a trip to new places..., can also be driven by the same desire to medicate the soul. **The alternative? To be content with what you possess. To live within the means you have.** To spend only what you actually are paid. To be content with older things that are still serviceable. **To be able to wait and buy things on sale, or shop wisely, and only for what is needed.** Some people do these things to be miserly, or to amass wealth. We are free to do these things because Christ can liberate us from the “hungry-heart”. Elsewhere, Paul tells us to not become slaves to people, because we have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 7:23). **Heal the heart and walk in wisdom. Live for the Kingdom, not to “get experiences to fill the empty heart.”**

“...except to love one another...” **The one debt that we can never fully repay is our obligation to love.** The apostle John wrote, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn. 3:16), and, again, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that *He* loved *us* and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 Jn. 4:10-11). Note that **John also describes love as a debt, and obligation, ...something we owe.** In Luke 17, Jesus used this word to describe our responsibility as slaves of God. (You see, we actually *have been* “bought with a price”, the price of Jesus’ own blood! – We are *not* our own.) Jesus said that a slave does not get special treatment because of a hard day’s work. He still has to do what his master commands him to do. Regarding us, Jesus said, “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to (are-obligated to, or indebted to) have done’” (Lk. 17:10). **AND, Jesus commanded us to love, ...to love one another,**

as He loved us. ***This is to be the most conspicuous and unequivocal identifying mark that indicates that we are His followers*** (Jn. 13:34,35). So, in our pursuit of financial independence or self-sufficiency, we are never to lose sight of our responsibility to care for one another. Note, too, that in the second occurrence, ***we are not just to love “one another” (i.e., those within our group), we are to love “the other”, ...the one who is different that we are, or who is outside of our group.*** In order for our love to be “outstanding”, it must be more extreme, more radical, almost incomprehensible! This goes right back to Jesus’ teachings, “...if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same” (Lk. 6:32-33). In the book of Acts, it was the radical, sacrificial giving of people in the Body of Christ to help the poor that was so amazing. ***When people are willing to make sacrifices to help others, that is always noticeable. It goes so against the grain of our self-interest.*** Here again, there is freedom to make such sacrifices when we own things free and clear. ***The other outstanding feature of Jesus-love was that Christians were willing to love the unlovely, ...the poor, sick, beggarly, foreigners, the worst of sinners, and the tax-collectors. Such love, ...especially when there seemed to be nothing to be gained by it..., was seen as radical, beyond normal, unexplainable except that this “Jesus-thing” is for real!***

Paul reminds us also of what Jesus had said: ***“Love is the fulfillment of the Law.” Jesus had said that He had not come to abolish the Law or the prophets, but to fulfill them*** (Matt. 5:17). The whole Law and the prophets depend upon love for God and love for your neighbor (Matt. 22:36-40). Love will do nothing wrong to the one near you, therefore love is the fulfillment (lit., the “filling-up”) of the Law.

“And this, knowing the time, that the hour is already now for you to awaken out of sleep...” This is a further admonition to add urgency. It is like saying, “Time’s a-wastin’!” NOW is the time to wake up and get actively engaged in these things. ***We can’t afford to put this off. Why? “For now our salvation is nearer now than when we believed.”*** Basically, we are running out of time and opportunity. ***“The night is nearly over, and the daylight is near...”***. This age of darkness is about to give way to the Kingdom of Light. ***“Therefore, let us put away from us the works of the darkness, and let us put on the weapons of the light.”*** In the Greek, these verbs are verbs of possibility: “we might-put-away-from” or “we-might-put-on”. Here, the translators chose to render it like an exhortation. ***The point is that the possibility NOW exists, which DID NOT EXIST BEFORE. But THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN BY ITSELF! If we want to experience freedom from darkness, we must choose to put away from us the practices or works of darkness.*** We do this in a variety of ways. Through renewing our minds by Bible study and through repentance, ...through definitive choices to turn from darkness to the Light. It may require exposing lies and replacing them with truth. At times, it will require prayer and maybe the help of a skilled counselor or helper to get to the root of certain bondages. The point is that *we must be determined, thorough and persevering* to put aside the lies, hurts and enslaving behaviors of the darkness. ***And then, we must also be conscientious to learn about the armor of Light, and become capable and consistent in putting on this protection.***

“As in the daylight, let us walk with decency: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in promiscuity and in sensuality; not in quarreling and jealousy.” We are to live as children of Light, not as children of darkness. We are to live as in the day. Paul lists three general areas: partying, sexual and sensual behavior, and in relational strife. We can either live “decently”, as in good order and respectful behavior, ...or we can live according to these old, worldly standards of behavior.

“Rather put on the Lord Jesus Christ...” Instead of the excesses of the past, we can now “put on Jesus”. Galatians 3:27 says that “as many of us as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” He is like a garment of righteousness, or a badge or uniform of service that a soldier would wear. When we were baptized into Christ, we were marked with His mark, and are now dressed in Christ. Nevertheless, ***we have the daily choice to put on Christ in our mindset and self-awareness.*** We are “clothed in Christ”, covered by His righteousness which we have received as a gift through our faith. Through Him, ***we have been made new, but we must also choose, to “put off the old man, and put on the new man”*** (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10). Earlier, Paul had talked about “putting on the armor of light”. Paul uses a similar word picture in Ephesians 6 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8. ***In these passages, God has made a provision for us, but we must consciously choose to “put it on”.***

“...and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” The word for “provision” means “forethought” or to “make a plan” in order to fulfill fleshly lusts. Clearly, such a circumstance implies premeditation. We have a choice to determine to NOT fulfill fleshly lusts, or we can allow ourselves to think about, ponder, daydream about, and even make plans to choose to sin. ***Clearly, we are NOT to give ourselves to such thinking or planning. Instead, choose to put aside such thoughts and plans.*** Make the choice to follow Jesus.

Regular living, or RADICAL LIVING; ...conformed lives, or TRANSFORMED LIVES, ...walking in darkness, or WALKING IN LIGHT. The choice is yours, ...the time is short, ...PUT ON JESUS, and LIVE!