

Focus on Romans 13:11–14

WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Paul J. Achtemeier

Love in the New Testament is thus based not on emotion, but on action. To love someone is actively to pursue that person’s good, however we may feel about him or her emotionally. That also points to how we are to love our neighbor “as our self.” The point is we are to do as little harm to our neighbor as we do to ourselves; emotional states are not involved here. Verse 9 makes clear that love means to cease actions that harm the neighbor. Verses 11–14 then are further examples of such love in action, given the current transition from the old age to the new age.

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by Patrick J. Howell

Within the context of the whole Epistle to the Romans, we of course hear Paul refining his earlier polemic against reliance on works of the law. As became clear in chapter 12, there is, after all, something to do. Shed your old clothes of darkness and ignorance and be clothed with the armor of Christ. In this new time, the Christian is swept up within a “solidarity in grace,” dramatically more powerful than the solidarity in sin inherited from Adam. The gift of righteousness now pervades the heart and soul of the believer. It has also spread throughout the whole world.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by
Cynthia M. Campbell

The clothing Paul wants us to put on is Jesus Christ: his life, his way of being are the garments that we are to put on as we get ready to meet the future. What concerns Paul here is that we adopt a new and more honorable way of life. Put aside partying and drunkenness—things that dull the senses or draw one’s attention away from what is really going on. Put aside quarreling and jealousy—things that destroy community and injure relationships with others (v. 13). The new day that God is bringing is a time when God and humanity will be reconciled; when peace, justice, and integrity will be the hallmarks of human society. What Paul wants is for Christians to start living *now* as though this new day has already begun.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective”
by Joanna M. Adams

We who have been baptized into the promises of God ought to have a different outlook. We are already citizens of the new age. We have glimpsed in Christ the glorious future God has for the world when “the great positive possibility” has finally carried the day. We make the moral decision to live in hope, rather than despair. We stay awake because we know salvation could bathe our hurting world with healing grace any day now. Let us pray for the dawning of the Day of Christ; and until it comes, let us dress ourselves in his light every morning.

Eschatology and Ethics

Eschatology concerns the theology of “last things.” The Bible sees God bringing the creation to fulfillment in the event of Christ’s cross, resurrection, and promised return. As a people who await their sovereign, Christians prepare for his coming by the ways they live in this world (ethics).

Choose two or more of the following passages. Read them and note the connections between eschatology and ethics.

 Philippians 4:4–7

 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11, 23

 Hebrews 10:24–25

 James 5:7–11

 1 Peter 4:7–11

 Matthew 25:31–46

 Mark 13:33–37

