

KINDLING FIRES

Romans 12:14-21

Introduction:

1. Fire under control is a good thing.
2. Fire out of control is a horrible thing!
3. Arsonists are some of the most brutal criminals.
4. A loose tongue starts some of the most serious fires of all according to the Bible, “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature and is set on fire of hell” (James 3:6).
5. The text passage of Romans instructs us on how to kindle constructive fires whereby the hearts of all of us can be warmed on earth for eternity.
6. What kind of fire have you been kindling?? Constructive or destructive??
7. In fact, Jesus has a biblical warning, for all of us would-be arsonists, “Every idle word we shall speak, we shall give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words, you shall be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37).
8. Right after Paul’s death with the use of spiritual gifts in the Roman church, in love he teaches us how to extinguish and build proper fires in the church.

[To kindle the right kind of fires, we must have:]

I. (vv. 14-16) CORRECTED ATTITUDES.

1. (vv. 14-15) Be determined to match their moods.
 - A. (v. 14) The challenge of disarming opposition.
 - 1) Wuest translates the Greek saying, “Be constantly blessing those who are constantly persecuting you, be blessing and stop cursing.”
 - 2) Example of Jack Hyles leaving a verbally ugly waitress \$20.00.
 - 3) The word “bless” in Greek is to eulogize or praise them.
 - 4) Counter hatred with love.
 - B. (v. 15) The challenge of discovering opportunity.
 - 1) Rejoicing with those blessed destroys envy and jealousy in us.
 - 2) Weeping with those who weep binds our hearts to reality.
 - 3) The first of Jesus’s 7 signs was at a wedding feast rejoicing and the last at the graveside weeping.
2. (v. 16) Mind your manners.
 - A. (v. 16a) Don’t be partial – make allowances for others.
 - 1) Share truth in tears and love—putting yourself in that position.

- 2) See Jesus’s attitude toward Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the dying thief, His mother at the cross, Judas and Peter.
- B. (v. 16b) Don’t be proud—don’t flaunt your importance.
 - 1) We learn grace and humility by sitting at the feet of Jesus.
 - 2) Mt 11:29 says, “Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.”
 - 3) In verse 16 it says, “Be not wise in your own conceits (opinion).”
 - 4) I Cor. 10:12 says, “He that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

[Kindling the right fires starts with corrected attitudes, but then moves to]

II. (vv. 17-21) CORRECTED ACTIONS (7 Actions).

1. (v. 17a) Bury evil toward all.
 - A. To reward good for evil is divine.
 - B. Examples: Joseph to his brothers, David to Saul, Jesus to the mob.
 - C. John 13:18 says, He that eats bread with Me has lifted his heel against Me.”
2. (v. 17b) Build equality toward all.
3. (v. 18) Be endeavoring to ensure peace toward all.
 - A. Matthew 5:9 says, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”
 - B. Ephesians 4:3 states, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
4. (v. 19a) Don’t try to get even—“Never take your own revenge” (ASV).
5. (v. 19b-e) Let God engage your enemies.
 - A. Give place to God’s wrath—he takes Christian persecution personally (example: Stephen and Saul at conversion)
 - B. Don’t handle God’s business--vengeance belongs to Him!
 - C. God repays for our justified wrongs suffered.
6. (v. 20) Burn up your enemies with loving embers.
 - A. Pray and plan Holy Spirit led acts of kindness.
 - B. It runs people crazy because it’s unnatural and it is supernatural because it can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit!
 - C. This will cause our enemies to either get meaner or melt! They can’t stand those hot coals of the fire of God upon their mean heads.
7. (v. 21) Balance your actions and emotions for the sake of eternity.
 - A. Who will be the overcomer?
 - B. Evil or you—both can’t be victorious!
 - C. Evil will overtake us by Satan’s power or we will overcome evil by God’s power—it’s our choice.