



EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



Daniel K. Davey, Th.D.

From My Window

The brilliant physicist, Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727), believed that white light was actually a spectrum of colors. To prove his thesis, he drilled a hole in his window shutter to allow a ray of light into his room. He then took a glass prism and placed it in front of the ray of light, and the result was that the light refracted out of the prism into a beautiful array of colors. Newton was the first to prove that what white light is to the eye is actually a variety of colors. The prism, then, allowed the human eye to see what was really there. This is exactly what Jesus did for mankind. John 1:18 says that Jesus displayed God to the human eye. To his disciples he said, "To see me is to see the Father." In John's words, Jesus is God's divine prism revealing "grace and truth."



David & Annalisa Wilson
North London, England

Alumni in Ministry Spotlight

David (M.Div, 2008) and Annalisa (MBS, 2006) came to VBTS as energetic, mission-minded students. While at college in Missouri, David began to sense God's direction to England. Annalisa's burden was nurtured by her parents who had ministered both overseas and in the USA. When they met, they both knew that God was directing them to minister together for His glory outside the USA. After they graduated from VBTS, they made preparation to minister in the church-restoration ministry of ABWE in England. After working three years in Chesham, they moved to North London so that David could become the pastor of High Road Baptist Church. "Our goal," writes David, "is to help reestablish this church, to lift up Jesus, and to open blind eyes to his glorious gospel." Thank you David and Annalisa for your servant hearts; we pray God's power upon you!

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Truth for the Agora: “Love without dissimulation” Romans 12:9 (KJV)

There are an estimated 783,137 words in the KJV of the Bible, and one of these words has recently captured my thinking: *dissimulation*. According to the 1828 edition of *Webster’s Dictionary*, “dissimulation” is a noun that means, “hiding under a false appearance; or, a counterfeit appearance.” The core Greek term is taken from the semantic domain of the theater, and denotes “one who acts; or one who is an actor.” Therefore, the expression *dis*-simulation profiles one “who is *not* acting, or *not* counterfeiting in appearance.”

The word “dissimulation” is significantly positioned in Romans 12:9: “Love without acting;” or better, “love without hypocrisy.” It is interesting to observe that the KJV translators use “dissimulation” only one other time in their translation and this is in Galatians 2:13. In this text they translate a related Greek noun to identify the beloved Barnabas as one “participating in dissimulation.” The idea of hypocrisy cannot be missed, and the meaning is less than flattering.

In the context of the book of Romans, the term “dissimulation” is instructive. Paul spends his first eleven chapters developing his understanding of the Gospel of God. Now, in these final chapters (12-16) he answers the question: What does the Gospel look like in the lives of those who embrace the truths that he has just celebrated? The heartbeat of Paul is not just “right doctrine” for which he has strenuously sought to describe, but “transformed living” which these Gospel truths undeniably produce. James Dunn explains that Paul “sets out the basis for all Christian lifestyle and relationships” in 12:1-2 (2:707), and in 12:9-21 he addresses “love as the chief mark of Christian discipleship” (2:740). For Paul, when anyone professes faith in the Gospel, he or she will not play-act the appearance of love, but will love “without hypocrisy.” Therefore, Paul gives commanding force to his short phrase: “love without dissimulation.”

The obvious question then, is this: Since there is so much play-acting at love, what does genuine love really look like? Paul answers this question two ways. *First*, he has already expressed in 12:1-2 that the genuine believer will inevitably manifest a transformed way of life. In fact, his body is now “a sacrifice, which is living, holy, and acceptable to God;” whereas, in his former days he used his bodily members in dishonorable ways (1:24) making his body his god (1:25). *Second*, not only has the Gospel transformed the way he used to worship his body, but also now in 12:9-21, Paul gives 18 specific ways, which reveal how complete this Gospel transformation really is. Narrowed down to one sentence: The genuine believer will use his body to sacrificially love, and this love is so unique that both the Christian church (cf. verses 10-13, 15-16) and the unsaved community (cf. verses 14, 17-21) will be affected.

In sum, I see two important applications: First, the Gospel is God’s power which creates a sacrificial (selfless) love in each believer; and second, this phrase moves my heart to specifically pray that my testimony (our testimonies) will be known by both the church and our neighbors as those who love without dissimulation.