

Group Conversation Guide

Week of July 21-27

Conversation Title: Living in Love and Light

Text Focus: Romans 13:8-14

This group conversation is designed to have a meaningful discussion on Romans 13:8-14, focusing on living in love and light as we anticipate the return of Christ and seek to fulfill God's commands through love.

Before Your Small Group Meeting:

Attend or Watch Pastor Mark Ragsdall's Message: churchatviera.com/live

What stood out to you in this week's message?

Beginning the Conversation

Read: Romans 13:8-14

Key Themes:

Share the following key themes with your group from this week's message:

1. **The Fulfillment of the Law through Love:** All commandments are summed up in loving your neighbor as yourself.
2. **The Urgency of Living in the Light:** Understanding the present time and living accordingly, with the awareness of salvation drawing nearer.

Discussion Starter Questions:

1. **Romans 13:8** - "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law."
 - What does it mean to have a "continuing debt to love one another"?
 - How can we practically fulfill this command in our daily lives?
2. **Romans 13:9** - "The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"
 - How does loving your neighbor fulfill the commandments?
 - In what ways can we show love to our neighbors?

3. **Romans 13:10** - "Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."
 - Why is it significant that love "does no harm"?
 - Can you think of examples where love prevented harm or resolved conflict?
4. **Romans 13:11** - "And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."
 - What does it mean to "wake up from your slumber" in the context of your spiritual life?
 - How does the awareness of our salvation drawing nearer affect the way we live?
5. **Romans 13:12** - "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."
 - What are some "deeds of darkness" we need to put aside?
 - How can we practically "put on the armor of light"?
6. **Romans 13:13** - "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy."
 - Why is it important to behave decently "as in the daytime"?
 - How can we hold each other accountable to live according to these standards?
7. **Romans 13:14** - "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh."
 - What does it mean to "clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ"?
 - How can focusing on Jesus help us overcome the desires of the flesh?
8. Why do you think Paul wrote these words to the Roman believers?

What would he write to us today, and why?

Sharing Your Story:

- Share a time when you experienced the power of love in fulfilling God's commands to love others.
- Discuss a situation where living in the light brought clarity to an uncertain situation and positive change to your life.

Worship Song: *(Optional - From YouTube)*

- "Yes I Will" by Vertical Worship - youtu.be/NrTv39-IG4M?feature=shared

Key Words: *(With Greek Definitions)*

- **Love (ἀγάπη, agapē):** Unconditional, selfless love that seeks the best for others.
- **Neighbor (πλησίον, plēsion):** Anyone we come into contact with.
- **Fulfillment (πλήρωμα, plērōma):** Completion or bringing to fullness.
- **Salvation (σωτηρία, sōtēria):** Deliverance from sin and its consequences, ultimate redemption.

- **Armor of Light (ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός, hopla tou phōtos):** Spiritual protection and righteousness.

Summary:

Romans 13:8-14 emphasizes the importance of love as the fulfillment of the law and urges believers to live in the light of Christ, putting aside deeds of darkness and clothing themselves with the character of Jesus. This passage calls us to an urgent, holy lifestyle that reflects the imminent return of our Savior.

Practical Application:

- **Personal Reflection:** Identify areas in your life where you need to put aside deeds of darkness and clothe yourself with Christ.
- **Group Activity:** Partner with another group member to pray and support each other in living out the call to love and light.
- **Community Outreach:** Look for opportunities this week to demonstrate the love of Christ to your neighbors/co-workers.