

ROMANS CHAPTER TWELVE : CHRISTIAN LIVING

Read Romans chapter 12 in its entirety.

Having communicated to us that God has extended His mercy to both Jews and Gentiles, Paul now addresses God's working in our lives as believers. As recipients of His mercy, now what? How does this affect our daily lives?

Present Your Bodies

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

present your body as

a living sacrifice = a sacrifice costs something, could involve pain, a living sacrifice (alive and dead)

holy = consecrated, set apart, hallowed

acceptable = well pleasing, fully agreeable to God

Learn to see your body as something that has been offered to God as a sacrifice.

Learn to see your body as something that has been set apart to be holy and well pleasing to God.

This is your "reasonable service" or this is your "sensible act of worship"

reasonable = logical, rational, sensible

service Greek 'latreia' = ministry to God, worship, sacred service, spiritual worship

Be Transformed

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

conformed = fashion ones self, pattern after

transformed Greek 'metamorphoo' = to change, transform, transfigure,

The renewing of our mind is us learning to think according to God's ways and God's thoughts.

The renewing of our mind brings about a transformation of our lifestyle. We do not pattern our way of living according to the world, but according to heaven.

As we renew our mind we are also able to prove what is good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

prove = to test, examine, discern

The renewed mind is able to test, examine and discern things and then arrive at what is God's will - what is good, acceptable and perfect before Him.

Think Soberly. Think As One, Many Membered, Body

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Romans 12:4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

Romans 12:5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Think humbly. Think soberly. Think with a right mind.

Don't esteem yourself 'overmuch'. Don't have a false, super-inflated estimation of yourself.

God has given to each one a measure of faith.

Think as one many membered body.

Understand that we are all parts of the same body.

Understand that each one has some function - usefulness - in the body.

Understand that our functions are different - so all are not going to be doing the same thing.

Understand that though we are different, we are still one body.

Use Your Grace Gifts

Romans 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

Romans 12:7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;

Romans 12:8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

gifts Greek 'charisma' = gifts of grace, divine endowments of grace

Our grace gifts are different. God has given each of us gifts according to the function we have in the body. Each of us must use these grace gifts.

This list of 7 grace gifts obviously is not an exhaustive or complete listing.

The expression of each grace gift can be varied and serve in different context. Example: the grace gift to teach can be used to teach children, youth, in church, in the marketplace, in specialized settings as leadership, etc. as well as in other contexts.

Exercise your grace gifts in proportion to your faith.

Your faith can grow and hence the exercise of your gifts can also grow.

Practical Christian Living

The apostle Paul now begins to share instruction on how to live practically as a Christian in a Christian community. Our walk as believers does not happen in isolation, but along with other believers. Here are clear instructions on how we are to do life together as believers.

Have Genuine Love. Hate Evil, Love Good.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

The first of all virtues that Paul addresses is love. Genuine love. Love that is not pretentious or put-on as a show.

Hate evil. Love good. This kind of a choice actually bring joy

Psalm 45:7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

Give Preference To The Other

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

The way we express kindness and genuine love is by giving preference to one another.

Paul put it like this in Philippians:

Philippians 2:3-4

3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Be Red-Hot In Zeal

Romans 12:11 I not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Be diligent (not sluggish, not slothful) and fervent (red-hot, zealous) when serving the Lord.

In Difficulties - Rejoice, Be Patient, Pray

Romans 12:12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

Hope gives us the ability to rejoice and to endure in the midst of difficulties.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

16 Rejoice always,

17 pray without ceasing,

18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Share

Romans 12:13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Share to the extent you can. Remember you are not God and you cannot possibly meet every need around you. Don't bring yourself under guilt or condemnation if you have to say 'no' to giving to meet some needs. God is the One who will take care of every child of His.

Bless, Do Not Curse

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

The Lord Jesus taught us to pray and bless our persecutors.

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Empathize

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Learn to share in other's joys and sorrows.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

burdens = load, weight

Be Right Minded

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

(English Standard Version) (English Standard Version)

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

There are three injunctions here:

Be of the same mind - or be of one mind. Live in harmony. Get along with one another.

Be of a humble mind - don't be high minded. Be willing to associate with the lowly.

Be of a true mind - have a proper opinion of yourself. When we do not have a proper opinion of ourselves, we become wise in our own sight and become self-deceived.

Paul has addressed this issue of thinking rightly - in the opening verses of this chapter, and once again presents this here.

Galatians 6:3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Self-deception leads to pride.

Lucifer was filled with pride (1 Timothy 3:6). How did pride enter Lucifer? Through self-deception. He thought of himself more highly than he should (Isaiah 14:13-14). When we are drawn by our own desires we can become self-deceived (James 1:14-16). Lucifer desired for something that only belonged to God and became self-deceived that he could have it.

Don't Take Revenge

Romans 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

(English Standard Version)

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

Instead of repaying evil for evil, do what is honorable.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

Live Peaceably

Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

"as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men"

In human relationships there will be some things outside your control.

You are not responsible for other people's actions, reactions, inability to handle difficult situations, etc.

Overcome Evil With Good

Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

Romans 12:20 Therefore "IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP COALS OF FIRE ON HIS HEAD."

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Do not take revenge or try to get justice done for yourself.

Let God vindicate you. Rest your case with God.

So you do good. Overcome evil with good.

Psalm 103:6 The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed.

Reflection



Q1, Discuss the practical challenges in presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God?

Q2, Discuss the process of renewing of our mind, that results in life transformation and in discerning God's will in life situations.

Q3, Twice in this chapter, Paul admonishes us to think soberly, having a right and proper estimation of ourselves. Why is this important?

Q4, Of the several practices in living out our Christian life as a community of believers, which one strikes you as most important, personally? Why?