

Romans Chapter 12

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

Beseech is a Greek word which comes from a root meaning to “call alongside to help”.

“Mercies of God”: The gracious, extravagant, divine graces Paul expounded in the first eleven chapters, including God’s love, grace, righteousness and the gift of faith.

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice”: Under the Old Covenant, God accepted the sacrifices of dead animals. But because of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice, those are no longer of any effect. For those in Christ, the only acceptable worship is to offer themselves completely to the Lord. Under God’s control, the believer’s yet unredeemed body can and must be yielded to Him as an instrument of righteousness.

“Reasonable service”: Reasonable is from the Greek for “logic.” In light of all the spiritual riches, believers enjoy solely as the fruit of God’s mercies. It logically flows that they owe God their highest form of service. Understood here is the idea of priestly, spiritual service, which was such an integral part of Old Testament worship.

1 Peter 2:5 "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Psalms 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

We can see from this that God expects our loyalty. We have been bought and paid for with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The least we can do is live for Him since He ransomed us from death.

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

Paul says, “Stop conforming yourselves”. They are to resist being poured into the mold of the present thinking, value systems, and conduct of this world. This term is used only here and in 1 Peter 1:14.

God’s will refers to His purpose for the life of the believer. It implies His guidance or direction in all of life’s decisions. Dedication is an act of surrender or submission to His will for our lives whereby we become a “Living sacrifice.”

The Greek word, for which the English word “metamorphosis” comes, connotes a change in outward appearance. Matthew uses the same word to describe the Transfiguration. Just as Christ briefly and in a limited way displayed outwardly His inner, divine nature and glory at the Transfiguration, Christians should outwardly manifest their inner, redeemed natures, not once, but daily.

The renewing of your mind is the kind of transformation that occurs only as the Holy Spirit changes our thinking through consistent study and meditation of Scripture (Psalms 119:11).

“Good, acceptable, and perfect is the Holy living which God approves. These words borrow from the Old Testament sacrificial language and describe a life that is morally and spiritually spotless, just as the sacrificial animals were to be.

The things that displeased God in the Old Testament are still what displease Him today. God wants us to be holy as He is holy. Jesus is coming back for those who are without spot or wrinkle. If you have sin in your life, repent and ask God to help you live free of sin.

Romans 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

The righteousness of God will cause the believer to conduct himself in humility in the local church. Paul meets two dangers that the individual faced in the exercise of his spiritual gifts. He might overestimate himself and try to exercise a gift God never gave him. Or he might underestimate himself and fail to exercise the gift God has given to him. Paul shows that God has given each believer specific gifts to enable him to do what God wants him to do. No one is excluded.

The grace and the divine, undeserved favor that called Paul to be an apostle and gave him spiritual authority, also gave him sincere humility.

To think soberly is the exercise of sound judgment, which will lead believers to recognize that in themselves they are nothing and will yield the fruit of humility.

The “measure” of faith is the correct proportion of the spiritual gift or supernatural endowment and ability the Holy Spirit gives each believer so he may fulfill his role in the body of Christ. “Faith” is not saving faith, but rather faithful stewardship, the kind and quantity required to use one’s own particular gift. Every believer receives the exact gift and resources he needs to fulfill his role in the body of Christ.

It seems so strange to some people how one person seems to have more faith than the other, if we have all received our measure of faith. The truth is that our faith grows as we use it and as we read the word of God.

1 Corinthians 12:7-9 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."
"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the

same Spirit;" "To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;"

We can see from these Scriptures that there is a gift of faith that we can pray and receive. This is not a normal amount of faith, but a supernatural faith; which is a gift of the Spirit.

Verses 4-8 list the general categories of spiritual gifts. The emphasis in each list is not on believers' identifying their gift perfectly, but on faithfully using the unique enablement God has given each. The fact that the two lists differ clearly implies the gifts are like a palette of basic colors, from which God selects to blend a unique hue for each disciple's life.

Romans 12:4-5 "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:" "So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

1Corinthians 12:12-14 "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also [is] Christ." "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." "For the body is not one member, but many."

A true church is many members making up one body. We see in that body that there are many different offices.

1 Corinthians 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Just as in the natural body, God has sovereignly given the body of Christ a unified diversity.

Romans 12:5 "So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Ephesians 5:30: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

We can see how important it is for us to be in one accord in the church. If we are one body as the Scripture says, then when we tear at someone else in the church we are tearing up the body.

Romans 12:6 "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith;"

"According to the grace that is given". Undeserved and unmerited. The gift itself, the specific way in which it is used, and the spiritual result are all sovereignly chosen by the Spirit completely apart from personal merit (see 1 Cor. 12:5; 12:11).

This “prophesy”, means speaking forth and does not necessarily include prediction of the future or any other mystical or supernatural aspects.

“According to the proportion of faith”; Literal “the faith,” or the full revealed message or body of Christian faith. The preacher must be careful to preach the same message the apostles delivered.

Or, it could also refer to the believer’s personal understanding and insight regarding the gospel.

So what exactly is this proportion of faith?

"According to the proportion of faith." The meaning is, that the utterances of the "prophet" were not to fluctuate according to his own impulses or independent thoughts, but were to be adjusted to the truth revealed to him as a believer, i.e., were to be accordance with it. In post-Reformation times this phrase was used as meaning that all Scripture was to be interpreted with reference to all other Scripture. I.e., that no words or expressions were to be isolated or interpreted in a way contrary to its general teaching. This was also called the "analogy of faith."

Romans 12:7 "Or ministry, [let us wait] on [our] ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;"

“Ministry” is from the same Greek word as “deacon,” “deaconess”, come from, it refers to those who serve. This gift, similar to the gift of helps, has broad application to include every kind of practical help.

“Teaching” is the ability to interpret, clarify, systematize, and explain God’s truth clearly. Pastors must have the gift of teaching, but many mature, qualified laymen also have this gift. This differs from preaching (prophecy), not in content, but in the unique skill for public proclamation.

Romans 12:8 "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."

"Exhortation" is the gift which enables a believer to effectively call others to obey and follow God’s truth. It may be used negatively to admonish and correct regarding sin, or positively to encourage, comfort and strengthen struggling believers.

"Giveth" or "Give" denotes the sacrificial sharing and giving of one’s resources and self to meet the needs of others.

"Simplicity" means liberality. Simplicity, single-mindedness and openhearted generosity. The believer who gives with a proper attitude, does not do so for thanks and personal recognition, but to glorify God.

He that ruleth or leads is a gift Paul calls “administration”, a word that means “to guide” and is used of the person who steers a ship. In the New Testament, this word is used to describe only

leadership in the home and the church. Again, the church's leaders must exercise this gift, but it is certainly not limited to them.

"Shows mercy" is one who actively shows sympathy and sensitivity to those in suffering and sorrow, and who has both the willingness and the resources to help lessen their affliction. Frequently, this gift accompanies the gift of exhortation.

"Cheerfulness" is an attitude crucial to ensure that the gift of mercy becomes a genuine help, not a discouraging commiseration with those who are suffering.

We see in all of this, that God calls each of us to do a specific job. Whether God has called you to be pastor of a church or a teacher in a Christian school, God will not call you to do a job that He will not equip you to do. What the Scriptures above are saying is that any job God calls you to do, you should do it through the power of the Holy Spirit and not in your own strength.

Ephesians 4:11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"

The passage from verses 9-21 provide a comprehensive and mandatory list of traits that characterize the Spirit filled life. Paul presents these characteristics under 4 categories:

- (1) Personal duties (verse 9);
- (2) Family duties (verses 10-13);
- (3) Duties to others (verses 14-16);
- (4) Duties to those who consider us enemies (verses 17-21).

Romans 12:9 "[Let] love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

"Without dissimulation" means to be sincere or to not be a hypocrite. Christian love is to be shown purely and sincerely, without self-centeredness or guile.

The Christian's conduct in the local church toward fellow believers is to be a volitional caring for others, loving faithfully despite the response received. The love is to be genuine and unfeigned.

We see from this then, that it is very important for our love to be sincere. Abhor means to detest or hate. This would be an extreme dislike for something or someone.

The supreme New Testament virtue, which centers completely on the needs and welfare of the one loved and does whatever necessary to meet those needs.

We can see from the following Scripture just how important it is to God for us to love our brothers and sisters in Christ and to love Him.

Hebrews 1:9 "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, [even] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Romans 12:10 "[Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;"

Meaning: to be devoted to other Christians with a family sort of love, not based on personal attraction or desirability. This quality is the primary way the world can recognize us as followers of Christ.

“Preferring one another” is to show genuine appreciation and admiration for fellow believers by putting them first.

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." "By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

All Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

You see, regardless where the Scripture is, we are taught the same thing; to love as we would want to be loved.

Romans 12:11 "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;"

Whatever a Christian does in this life is worth doing with enthusiasm and care. Sloth and indifference not only prevent good, but allow evil to prosper.

To be fervent in spirit means “to boil in spirit” or “boiling over.” This phrase suggests having plenty of heat to produce adequate, productive energy, but not so much heat that one goes out of control.

Romans 12:12 "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;"

The hope that we are to rejoice in is the hope of the resurrection; of Christ’s return and our ultimate redemption. We are warned not to be like those that have no hope of the resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

We also know that in this life there will be tribulation. Tribulation comes to make us strong.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

We see from this that we certainly face tribulation.

Romans 5:3 " And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;"

Ephesians 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

Prayer is the power available to the Christian. Prayer is so important that even Jesus went aside and prayed to the Father. The disciples that walked with Jesus saw the importance of prayer and asked Jesus to teach them to pray. When we pray, we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. We are told that anything we ask in the name of Jesus will be done.

John 14:13 "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Romans Chapter 12 Questions

1. How are we Christians to present our bodies to God?
2. In 1 Peter 2:5 we are lively stones which are built up into what?
3. In Psalms 19:14, what 2 things are we asking to be acceptable in God's sight?
4. We have been bought and paid for by what?
5. Be not _____ to this world.
6. Be ye transformed by the renewing of your _____.
7. What does Deuteronomy 18:10 warn against?
8. What are these sins called in Deuteronomy 18:12?
9. What is divination?
10. What does an observer of times study?
11. What does an enchanter practice?
12. What does a charmer do?
13. What does a wizard do?
14. Who is a necromancer?

15. God has dealt to every man the measure of _____.
16. We read in Matthew 18:3 Except ye become as _____ _____, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
17. Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
18. In Romans 10:17, we read that faith comes how?
19. What are the 2 great powers in the world?
20. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, we read of an extra amount of faith that we can receive by what?
21. So we being many, are one _____.
22. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, we read of the offices in the church, what are they?
23. In Romans 12:6-7 how are we to operate in these offices that God has trusted us with?
24. What is the 5 fold ministry mentioned in Ephesians 4:11?
25. What does without dissimulation mean?
26. What does abhor mean?
27. How will all men know that you are His disciples?
28. We are told to not be slothful in what?
29. What is the hope that we are to rejoice in?
30. Why does tribulation come?
31. Tribulation worketh what?
32. How are we instructed to pray?
33. What did the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to do?
34. What is the promise Jesus gave us in John 14:13?