

Romans 12:1-21 February 25, 2024 Meeker Christian Church

To this point in our Romans study Paul has laid the theological reasoning for living an abundant life in Jesus. In this chapter 12 he shifts gears to now make specific life habit adjustments to accomplish those sacred goals so we will know how to reflect Jesus to others..

**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.*

Have you ever been in the presence of a new born animal? Their is a survival instinct evident in the small creature, and for a time it is wholly dependent upon the mother. Our dependence on God is to be just like that throughout our lives. Wholly and totally dependent upon our Heavenly Creator. And now Paul helps us to realize that our basic inherent survival instinct includes our bodies belonging to and function best as our minds submit our bodies to God's righteous plan. It is simply the *reasonable service* of the created, logical, proper, respectful person, and a sacred duty to *present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.*

Paul is teaching what God instructs him to because of HIS eternal love for us and because as Creator He knows what is best for us on earth and into eternity!

Having God seeking parents is a tremendous "leg up" on life responses for a child to make the personal choice to *present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service.*

Look at the scriptures, listen, and receive a message from the Holy Spirit to you from as I read it again along with verse 2 first from our NKJV then from The Message version of the Bible: (We will leave them on the screen for you to glance at, or make a reference note from for a few minutes) NKJV **Romans 12:1-2** *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. 2 And do not be conformed to this world,*

2. *but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that** you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Now from **The Message Version: Romans 12:1-2** *So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*

What I called instinct is a created individual attribute that develops in the receptive mind and is then, throughout life modified, expanded, transformed by our personal decisions and experiences resulting in committing to *that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Paul in this inspired writing draws from his Pharisee Jewish training from the Old Testament and reiterates for his fellow new believers in Jesus a Proverbs like admonition here in **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.* Sober/clear minded thinking comes from a confident knowledge, understanding and application of God's eternal plan and our part in it. It is absolutely not conceited to recognize and admit your God given giftedness. Rather it is an expression of God's Sovereign agape' love brought down to earth and made real through you by encouraging others to do likewise as Paul helps us to understand in **Romans 12:4-5** *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

3. There is an incredibly significant and essential application in that description. Every single baptized Christian – from the youngest age in participation, the seriously handicapped to the oldest and infirm as well as the most robustly gifted are IMPORTANT AND CRITICAL PARTS OF GOD’S FAMILY AND THE LOCAL CONGREGATION. With that in mind, look at the application for each of us as explained in verses **Romans 12:6-8** *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; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. **Everyone** who accepts Jesus has something to offer the local church and God’s earthly Kingdom ministry and mission.*

This was really a big thing to Paul to help his fellow believers understand that God dramatically changed his pre-conversion life that had been based on culturally sanctioned climbing the leadership, prestige, I am better and more important than you social ladder – so Paul had personally experienced exactly what God is telling him to write as a lesson for joy, peace and happiness for Christians. Paul also is given to record the result in his personal life again in **Philippians 2:1-4** *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 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.* Another Bible version helps us to understand this marvelous revelation for walking and talking the Christian walk and talk: **The Message Philippians 2:1-4** *If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if His love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put*

4. *yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.*

Still being inspired and remembering the Old Testament instructions for an abundant life. Paul gives us further assistance in fulfilling verse 1's- "*reasonable service:*"

In our pew Bibles this last section of chapter 12 has the introductory heading: **Behave Like a Christian** in other words – the Christian's reasonable service:

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

Behaving like a Christian means to live love, hate the darkness of evil, and hold on to the light of good. Learn to love because their soul/spirit is Gods creation, not for the choices they have made or things they do on earth that violate all that is Righteous.

**Romans 12:10** *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;* Behaving like a Christian means for us to do to others exactly what you want them to do to you with special effort in encouraging fellow believers.

**Romans 12:11** *not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;* Behaving like a Christian means to be determined, faithful and dependable in word and application of our gifts which are inspired by and show to others our passion for serving Jesus our Savior.

It is instructive to insert here the old but true cliché concerning gifts – use them or lose them. If you know the bible record of Judas Iscariot, you understand gifts loosely, carelessly and wrongly utilized and resulting consequence.

**Romans 12:12** *rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;* Behaving like a Christian means being pleasant, respectful, kind in spite of every formidable obstacle in our experience, and through it all or perhaps because of it all to pray fervently.

**5. Romans 12:13** *distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.* Behaving like a Christian means to keep this priority list in mind: God, spouse, family, fellow Christians, then the rest of the world. To mix that up has the same result as misused gifts and talents.

**Romans 12:14** *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.* Behaving like a Christian means overcoming fallen human response with Christ inspired and modeled response.

**Romans 12:15** *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.* Behaving like a Christian means keeping our priorities in mind - sharing joyfulness and showing sincere empathy by our actions - all become mile markers on the faith maturity of our Christian lives.

**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.* Satan has won a tremendous victory from the moment of Adam and Eve's sin in the garden. The Greeks raised that plan of Satan to cultural acceptability and all societies have compromised, crumbled and will continue to do so as a result of that influence.

**Romans 12:17-18** *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

Behaving like a Christian has its own set of guidelines adapted from the Creator's revelation throughout the Bible. It is no longer possible in your Christ chartered character to continue doing evil in any degree, but rather think and act on God's revelation of righteousness.

Paul caps off this section by summarizing what becoming a Christian looks like

**Romans 12:19-20** *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to*

*6. wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. 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.”*

When possible - with other Bible doctrines in mind, a person could minister to an enemy when and as inspired by God- then the response would be God’s.

Our ministry, as was the apostles and all other Christians is to model Christ and follow HIS lead and focus on the heavenly inheritance, not the earthly tribulations.

Our conclusion is revisiting **Romans 12: 18 & adding verse 21: 18** *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

*21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Romans 12:1

**NKJV Romans 12:1-2**

**The Message Version: Romans 12:1-2**

**Romans 12:3**

**Romans 12:4-5**

**Romans 12:6-8**

**Philippians 2:1-4**

**The Message Philippians 2:1-4**

**Romans 12:9**

**Romans 12:10**

**Romans 12:11**

**Romans 12:12**

**Romans 12:13**

**Romans 12:14**

**Romans 12:15**

**Romans 12:16**

**Romans 12:17-18**

**Romans 12:19-20**

**Romans 12: 18 & 21**