

Romans 12:1-2 (2) (NKJV) "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". (Our "new" minds should now focus on "W.W.T.D." and no longer "What is best for me".) (38)

Romans 12:3 With this new mind, pride and exalting ourselves should must be changed to exalting God. We do all things now with gratitude to God because His grace now covers us.

Romans 12:4-7 Paul has been tasked to explain how the finished work of the cross has led to us being; (A) The church with Christ at the Head and, (B) A Body of believers with Christ at the head. And in the Son of God's foreknowledge He created us each unique; each with abilities and talents. And we are charged/ commanded to use those abilities and talents to enhance and complete this Body of Christ. Take for example an Olympic Gymnast. Every body part is used and necessary: Thumb: grasping, Fingers: securing, Toe: balance, Eyes: depth perception and targeting, legs: catapulting, Arms: upper body strength, neck: alignment of the body, Nose + mouth: replenishing oxygen, lungs: transforming oxygen to energy, Abdomen: flexibility, Joints: dexterity, ... and on and on and on.

In this same Olympian if just 1 body part is not operating at 100% capacity the whole body is affected.

In verse 7 Paul explains what this looks like in the Body of Christ: Some have the gift of prophecy* (professing God's word), serving, teaching, encouraging, giving to others, leading, showing mercy. (*It is my opinion that Paul and John were the last prophets and with 2 Timothy and Revelation everything in God's Word for us has been completed. No new revelations can be made. Beware when someone says, "God gave me a new revelation".)

Romans 12:9-21 Your/our mind has been changed and so has our heart! Love God above everything and love your neighbor above yourself. Therefore: Love others honestly!

and truly (remember love is an action word not a fuzzy feeling), enjoy serving the Lord filled with hope (knowing) that this is not our home and when we suffer have the peace that God is in the strife with you. Don't think too highly of yourself and when you want to judge someone, remember that you have been forgiven and leave the judging on to God. I believe this Proverb is talking about others in the faith and not the demonic people and nations. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY: Don't lower yourself to evil warfare but rather overcome it using the mindset of Stephan and Jesus, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do". In essence these 12 verses can only be accomplished by the Love that we now have. We had faith, and then God blessed us with grace, His grace resulted in us having hope and having this hope we can't help but love. And those who haven't gotten there yet don't have that same love. They can't.

Chapter 13

We have to put on our God glasses when we absorb verses 1-7. Because it has often been improperly applied. One example was in Nazi-Germany where the Church fell in line with Hitler even to the point of validating Hitler's genocidal intentions. Another example was 3 years ago when the Church (a vast majority) complied with closing its doors, stopping communion and music, and even altering its message (No longer was it "Christ and Him being crucified alone" but now it was "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and mother nature". And this will always happen when the focus is taken off of Christ and put instead on the government.

Romans 13:1-5 Indeed God has allowed Hitler, the Ayatollahs, and even the World Health Organization (the stepping stone to the Anti-Christ's One World Government to come to power, For His Purpose but that does not mean we are to bow to them. Verse (4) kind of hints that we are to pledge obedience to authority that serves God. And verse (5) gives us the assurance that we "will know it is right" (to obey). After all that is one of the many things that we get with the Holy Spirit Who lives within us.

Romans 13:6-7 This is the same principle except instead (40) of devotion, we are to financially support governmental authorities. I do struggle with this one as well. Especially, regardless of who is voted in as President our debt will go from \$35,000,000,000 (Trillion, which is \$110,000 per person) to \$43/45T in the next 4 years again, with absolutely nothing to show for it. (with 0.00% of it going to God).

Romans 13:8 Don't be indebted to anyone if you can help it. (The whole banking system and credit card system is a well designed trap. The thought of buying anything (other than a house) on credit hoping that you will be able to pay off the item you can't afford is not good. It's not Godly it's worldly. It's keeping up with the Jones. And trying to live outside our means, so that we elevate our status among others is the opposite of verses 9+10 ▽

Romans 13:9-10 Commandments 6-10 will always be kept if we love our neighbors above ourselves (seeking their highest good over ours). We can not covet, steal from, murder, lie, cheat, harm, out-do, or in any way do our neighbor wrong if we love them above ourselves. (Scripture says "as" our selves but in today's context "above" ourselves is more accurate, without changing the Scripture.

Romans 13:11 This was written 1900 years ago. And it was correctly written with Dire Urgency. The Holy Spirit placed this urgency in their hearts because of the "times" they were living in just as He does with us! When they turned on CNN they were convinced that Jesus' return was imminent, when Chuck Smith and Les Feldick were preaching in the late 1990's they too knew that Christ's return was not far off. Fast forward to today, that same urgency needs to be living in our hearts! When we become complacent we are "sleeping". Look at what John wrote (handout)

Romans 13:12 The "dark night of evil" has been nesting here on earth for approximately 6,024 years and will continue until Christ returns to reign and rule (the end of transgressions).

Romans 13:13-14 So until then we have to diligently seek to be led to the lost so that we can tell them about the "Light" that is available to all that call on the Light's name.

Roman's Chapter 14

(41)

This chapter is so important for the seasoned believer, who might have forgotten what it was like to be a new believer.

It also speaks to the seasoned believer who argues with another seasoned believer in the faith but of a different denomination! All true believers have Christ at their center but not all worship the same. A perfect example was the Jewish converts of the first century. Many believed on Christ for salvation, plus the need for circumcision, obeying the Sabbath, and abstaining from the eating of certain foods (like pork for example). Some modern day Christians worship on Saturdays, most on Sundays.

Some denominations do not have women as preachers. Some believe that the communion bread (Eucharist) is the actual body of Christ and some see communion as a symbolic remembrance of the Last Supper. Some believe in pre-tribulation rapture (us), some in mid-tribulation rapture and some post-tribulation rapture. Some believe that Christ will literally rule and reign for 1,000 years from Jerusalem (us), some believe this is symbolic. Some believe that we have to make this world good enough through revival that Christ can come back. Some believe that the Church has taken the place of God's forever people Israel, some believe that God has a plan for both (again us). Some believe that one can speak to Mary or one of the saints as intercessors. Some believe that they have the power to forgive sins or to retrieve lost souls from purgatory. Some worship to loud music and band like performances and some worship to classical hymns played on an organ.

We will see representatives from every one of these groups in Heaven!

The only criteria that will ever count is did you accept Jesus' death, burial, AND Resurrection, or did you reject it.

This is what we know as the Gospel and it is written out, I believe, most plainly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (which is also printed out).

Chapter 14 tells us to be hospitable and kind to others in how they worship Christ and never to be combative in things that have no eternal value.