

New Community Bible Study & Teaching

“Defining the New You”

Romans 12

Session 14

Thesis of Romans (Main Point): Romans 1:16-17

Outline of Romans

1. Introduction & Theme Of Romans (1:1-17)
2. The Doctrine of Justification (1:18—5:11)
3. The Doctrine of Sanctification (5:12—8:39)
4. God’s Plan & Purpose For Israel (9:1—11:36)
5. Living The New Life As A Jesus Follower (12:1-15:13)
6. Conclusions & Greetings To Friends (15:14—16:27)

Read Romans 12

Lectio Divina – the process of reading the Bible, and in doing so receiving divine insight from God

Step 1: Read the passage.

Step 2: Meditate on the passage.

Step 3: Pray

Step 4: Contemplate and discuss what stuck out to us from the passage.

In the last two sessions we talked about God’s plan and purpose for Israel, and in this session Paul is transitions once again as he begins to conclude his letter to the Church of Rome. In the next few chapters Paul begins to practically talk about what it looks like to live a new life (be born again) and be a true, and authentic follower of Jesus.

I. A Living Sacrifice (12:1-8)

Verses 1-2: Total dedication to God. These verses summarize the response to God's grace and serve as the introduction for all of Romans 12:1-15:13. They summarize what it means to live in a way that pleases God. God has good, pleasing, and perfect plans for His children. He wants us to be transformed people with renewed minds, living to honor and obey Him. This is because He only wants what is best for us, and because He gave, and sacrificed His son to make our new lives possible.

Verse 1: The word "Therefore" points back to the entire argument from Romans 1:18-11:36 (Every time you see a therefore in the Bible, understand what the therefore is there for). Christians are to give themselves entirely to God because of His saving grace. Christians are a living sacrifice, meaning that they are alive from the dead since they enjoy new life with Christ (Romans 6:4). The word "living" also means that they will not be put to death as Old Testaments animal sacrifices were, for Jesus Christ has fulfilled what was predicted by those sacrifices in the temple. Paul says "spiritual worship" in a broad sense, which means that one's whole life is offered to God.

Verse 2: The present age threatens those who belong to Christ, so they must resist its pressure. Their lives are changed as their minds are made new, so that they are able to discern God's will. The words "that you may discern" translates to "finding out the worth of something by putting it to use, or testing it out in actual practice."

Discussion Question: Paul commands believers: “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind” Why does the mind need to be “renewed” in order to worship God and know His will? What practical steps can we take to renew our minds?

Verse 3: Healthy self-esteem is important because some people think too little of themselves; on the other hand some people overestimate themselves. The key to honest and accurate evaluation is knowing the basis of our self-worth—our identity in Christ. Apart from Him, we aren’t capable of worthy service. Evaluating ourselves accurately is key to our spiritual growth.

Verses 4-5: The diversity and unity of the church is illustrated by comparison to the human body. Just as the human body is one with many members, so the church is united though it is composed of many members (1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4:4, 12-16). Ministry is not a self-centered competition; it is a collaboration to fulfill the Great Commission.

Verse 6: The variety of the body is evident from the various gifts God has given the church. The words “in proportion to his faith” means that God will give spiritual power necessary and appropriate to carry out each responsibility (<https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/>).

Verses 7-8: Christians should concentrate upon and give their energy to the gifts God has given them. Paul then spotlights three attitudes necessary in exercising particular gifts. First, those who have a special gift in helping others financially should never give grudgingly but always generously. Second, those who lead often have no one to whom they are accountable, and hence they must beware of laziness. Third, those who show mercy to the hurting must not grow weary, but continue to minister with gladness.

Discussion Question: *What is the difference (if any) between a spiritual gift and a natural ability? How many spiritual gifts do we get? Do we each have them all?*

II. Marks of a True Christian (12:9-21)

The presupposition here is the dedicated life, which enables one to discover and demonstrate the will of God. Though the division is not strictly adhered to, vs. 9-13 tend to deal with the relationship to fellow Christians, and vs. 14-21 deal with the Christian's stance toward those who are outside the faith. A considerable amount of material in this section is taken from Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5)."

Discussion Question: This section is entirely made up of wisdom when it comes to our relationship with other people. Should our relationship with believers look different than our relationship with non-believers? Why or why not?

Verses 9-12: The remainder of the chapter is a description of the life that is pleasing to God. Authentic love heads the list. Love cannot be reduced to sentimentalism. Paul then states a few more marks of a true Christian.

Verse 13: Christian hospitality differs from social entertaining. Entertaining focuses on the host, hospitality focuses on the guests and their needs.

Verses 14-17: Paul is quoting and reflecting on the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5.

Verses 18-21: Feelings of vengeance and revenge can be overcome by realizing that God will make all things right. Forgiveness involves both attitudes and actions. We need to do all we can to overcome evil with good.

Discussion Question: How are we to “keep our spiritual fervor [passion] in serving the Lord (12:11)”? Why is this connection vital to everything that follows?

Next week: George will be speaking on Romans 13. No Bible Study on August 25th (Harvest Crusade). Last session will be on September 1st with Pastor Ben.