



A Living Sacrifice: Part 5

Romans 12:14-21

Main Idea: In the grace God gives, the Lord calls believers to live their lives to reflect and to share God's grace with one another.

Treat others in a way that reflects your faith and displays God's grace (14-21).

In addition to dealing with our actions in relationship to enemies, the Lord also gave us instruction in verses 14-21 for our actions in relationship to others, both those outside of the church and within the church. As these verses intermingle, the Lord's purpose is clear. Our purpose as witnesses for Jesus Christ remains the same regardless of the actions of those around us and the circumstances of our situations. Just as we bless our enemies, we should also share each other's joys and bear each other's burdens. Verse 15 provides a beautiful picture of relationships in the church, which are reinforced in many other verses in Scripture. At times of joy and times of difficulty and sorrow, believers have a great opportunity to come alongside one another to reflect and to share God's grace. In fact, God's desire in the church is that relationships between his children would be harmonious. The word picture in this translation of verse 16 is that of harmony, but the literal translation is closer to "be of the same mind [with] one another." As such, believers must seek unity in their relationships with other believers, but that desire for healthy relationships with others doesn't stop within the church. Rather, in verse 18, the Lord called his people to pursue peace in their relationships with all people. While relationship takes two, the Lord demands that his people do their part, both in terms of relationships with each other as well as with those outside of the church. In all cases, we must treat others in a way that reflects our faith and displays God's grace.

Share each other's joys and bear each other's burdens (15).

1. How do you rejoice with those who rejoice? What are some examples of this that you've experienced? What are some joys in your life right now? Share, and together thank the Lord for these graces in your lives.
2. How do you weep with those who weep? What are some examples of this that you've experienced? What are some burdens in your life right now? Share, and together encourage one another in the grace of God in your lives.
3. How do small groups and family discipleship help to encourage and to grow the grace of sharing joys and bearing burdens in the family of God?
4. Why are we sometimes hesitant to rejoice or to weep with others?



Seek unity in your relationships with other believers (16).

1. What does it mean to be of the same mind with other believers in your church? Are you of the same mind with your brothers and sisters in Christ in your local faith family?
2. What are some practical ways that we pursue being of the same mind?
3. What do you do when there are disagreements over points of doctrine or preferences in practice at your church?
4. Are you praying regularly for unity in your church? Take time to do that right now.

Pursue peace in your relationship with all people (18).

1. How do you pursue peace with *all* people? Is that possible?
2. What's your responsibility in the effort to pursue peace with all people?
3. Is there someone you need to pursue peace right with? Is your heart ready to do that? If not, why not? If needed, ask for prayer for your heart and attitude. Pray for peace with those you need to pursue peace with?
4. What can you do this week to pursue peace with one another and with others?