

Romans Chapter 12

Chapter twelve marks the beginning of the fourth major section in Romans. Paul's theological introduction to the church at Rome would not be complete without a section dealing with the practical application of faith in a real world and church. The foundation for the application of our faith in the world and church is quickly revealed in verse two. Without transformation, our lives will not grow in their reflection of the nature of our Lord. Transformation is practical—it is to be lived out before the world and is to be an example to all within the Body of Christ.

Date: Monday, April 1

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Theme: The Goal: Transformation

- Paul begins, "I beg you in view of all the mercies of God."
 - Mercies—the compassions of God
 - Without the mercy of God, we would never be able to present anything to Him that would be accepted.
 - Love—Mercy—Grace. His nature—His reaction—His expression
- "Make a decisive dedication of your bodies"
 - Our sacrifice is now the presentation of a life that is justified and therefore acceptable through the indwelling righteousness of Jesus.
- Our bodies, presented through Christ, become both the temple and the instrument through which God is worshipped.
 - All that we do is to be an act of worship that glorifies the Lord. Colossians 3:17
 - "Worship is the offering of everyday life to God." This is in comparison to the superficiality of an attempt to keep a set of external rituals.
- Verse 2: "Do not be fashioned after" the world.
 - Conformed from the root word "schema" pertaining to the outward form. It is that which changes form to suit the current fashion. It is our first nature succumbing to the molding pressures exerted by the world.

- Transformed from the root word “morphe.” It is the unchanging shape—the new nature within us becoming who we are as the reflection of the image of Christ. It is development from an unchanging foundation. The essence remains the same.
- Consider it this way—change is human while transformation is spiritual.
- It is a renewed mind that enables transformation.
 - Renewed—“kainos” meaning that which was but is not that any longer.
 - What our minds were under our first nature is no longer what it is under the emerging control of our second nature.
 - Listen to your “mental language” and compare it to His will for your mind’s relationship with Him.
 - Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, our renewing minds are now able to demonstrate the nature of God’s will—good (right)—acceptable (to us and God)—perfect (complete)
 - The mind “includes the personality viewed in its deepest aspects.”

Date: Tuesday, April 2

Scripture: Romans 12:3-8

Theme: Know Self and Its Place

- The Christian life is lived out within the Body of Christ. This should explain the necessity for sacrifice—renewal—transformation.
 - Consider what the church would be if these three were not a part of the believer’s life.
 - No believer is called to an isolated faith.
- Paul is addressing an attitude within the church. The Gentile’s were exhibiting feelings of superiority over the Jews.
 - “Do not have high thoughts” concerning self but see the reality of self in Christ.
 - See yourself with a sober mind and not one that is drunk with a self-centered perspective to life.
 - Faith—the steps taken by the power of God stemming from our belief in Him.
 - Once again, the need for consistent renewal and transformation is asserted

- Verses 4-5 address the interdependence necessary within the church.
 - The moment a church ceases to be unified—it ceases to be church.
 - A church cannot be divided and function any better than a body can be divided and still function.
 - “There are no Lone Rangers or Loose Canons in the Body of Christ.”
- Our placement in the body is a result of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts given to us. 1 Corinthians 12:18
- Verses 6-8: All gifts are given to us out of the grace of God.
 - Therefore, we are to “exercise” them in a way that reflects the nature of the One who has given them.
 - Apply the human principles of exercise to the utilization of our gifts. The more you use them—the stronger they become. Neglect weakens as does limited and sporadic use. Exercise them without proper form and you will eventually suffer an injury.
- Paul lists seven gifts that obviously had special meaning for the church at Rome. These gifts are but a portion of those listed in his other letters.

Date: Wednesday, April 3

Scripture: Romans 12:9-13

Theme: Love within in the Church!

- “Love is so scarce that is it always in danger of substitution, and no substitute is more sickening than a love-substitute. It is hypocrisy.”
- Consider these words Paul uses and the effect they can have on the love experienced in the church.
 - Hypocrisy—no play-acting. The love of Christ is not to be a mask we put on when entering the church in order to disguise our most prominent nature.
 - Abhor—shrink from—turn in horror from. This is to be our initial reaction to anything that is evil—not of the nature of God. We cannot exhibit evil if we are busy running from it.
 - Cling—to cleave—to be glued to. Goodness is like Velcro. If we connect to it, it will connect and hold on to us.
 - Devoted—a family love expressed freely and welcomes all

- Preference—to show honor—to give priority to. This is the reason we cannot think more highly of ourselves than we should.
- Diligence—not being slothful in our zeal and intensity.
- Fervent—burning—boiling point.
- Hope—in hope rejoicing. Experiencing the certainty of Christ brings joy and praise that is a contagious element in the church.
- Perseverance—endurance in the face of opposition. It is the expression of all we are in Christ towards others in the church even when they are at their most unlovable.
- Constant in prayer—steadfastly continuing. All of what is needed to be church is beyond what we are humanly capable of so therefore, an uninterrupted devotion to prayer is necessary.
- Giving—used as an instrument to remove need.
- Hospitable—open door. Consider the church is to be a place of “hospital.”
- All that is both positive and warning in the list above is there so that when members of the body assume their place and begin to exercise their gifts, they do so in an atmosphere of **enabling reciprocity**. This reemphasizes the necessity of thinking “rightly” about self so that the flow of enablement remains balanced. I enable you as I offer my faith and gifts to the body and you do the same as you offer yours.

Date: Thursday, April 4

Scripture: Romans 12:14-16

Theme: Living It Part 2

- Verse 14: Some feel that this verse is better suited to follow verse 16.
 - Verse 17 begins the section on Christian living in the world while the preceding section deals more with life in the church.
 - But when the human side of the church is considered, it is understandable why this verse would apply to life in the church as well.
 - Psalm 55:12-15

- Verse 16: The way we view self will determine the restrictions placed on how and to whom we will offer love and ministry.
 - “The more we esteem the lowly, the better view we will have of self.”
- Within the church, pray for these things:
 - A reaction of blessing.
 - A heart of sympathy and understanding
 - A united mind. The single mind of Christ within the church
 - A humble lifestyle—never seeing self too high or someone else too low.

Date: Friday, April 5

Scripture: Romans 12:17-21

Theme: Live It in the World

- Love is not restricted to the church and to other believers.
 - Verse 17: The strongest proof of Christ in us is the unexpected expression of His nature towards those in the world.
 - Verse 14: To bless is defined as praying for their salvation
- Verse 18: We cannot be the beginning point of anger, hostility, separation, division, or anything that will damage peace.
 - We cannot control the actions and reactions of others, but we are to make sure we are not the igniting cause for that which damages peace.
- Verse 19: Justice is ultimately to be given out by God at the end but is now experienced as a function of the governing authorities to be introduced in 13:1.
 - It is difficult to be patient and endure the natural consequences that are associated with actions outside of the will of God.
- Verse 20: The only way to defeat evil is with righteousness.
- Don't give in to evil, but instead respond in such a way that you gain the victory in Christ—don't be conquered when you can be a conqueror.
 - Righteousness always gives us the upper hand.