

Romans Chapter 12

Before we begin studying Romans chapter 12, please review what we learned in Romans chapter 11 by circling the correct answers.

1. Romans 11:1 - Hath God cast away his people, Israel? **a.** Yes, **b.** No. **c.** God forbid.
2. Romans 11:1 - What is Paul's reasoning, that God has not cast away his people? **a.** I am a Jewish rabbi, **b.** I am an expert on growing olives, **c.** I am an Israelite and God hasn't cast me away.
3. Romans 11:5 - How large was the Jewish remnant in Paul's day? **a.** Around 7000, **b.** Around 10,000, **c.** Multitudes, perhaps as many as 60,000.
4. Romans 11:5 - How many times is the phrase, unconditional election, used in the Bible? **a.** 15 times, **b.** 23 times, **c.** 31 times, **d.** The phrase, unconditional election, is never used in the Bible.
5. Romans 11:11 - Through Israel's fall, salvation came to: **a.** The tribe of Reuben, **b.** The native Americans, **c.** European immigrants, **d.** The Gentiles.
6. Romans 11:25 - When will Israel's spiritual blindness go away? **a.** When the age of Aquarius ends, **b.** When the Gentiles get raptured up to heaven, **c.** When Israel reconquers Jerusalem, **d.** When Halley's comet can be seen again, **e.** When the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
7. Romans 11:26 - *And so all Israel shall be saved.* Does this verse teach that God is all through with Israel, completely and forever, or does Israel have a future? **a.** Nope, the TULIPs are right; God is all through with Israel. **b.** Nope, the Bible is right; Israel has a bright future because God is going to save all Israel.

VI. Consternation: Israel's Rejection of God's Righteousness (9:1–11:36)

- a. 9:1-33 - Why Israel rejected God's righteousness - Rebellion
- b. 10:1-21 - Why Israel rejected faith in Christ - Ignorance
- c. 11:1-36 - Why unbelieving Israel removed from olive tree - Rejection

Righteousness and the Gospel in Romans

- 1:1-3:20 - Man's need of righteousness
- 3:21-26 - God's provision of righteousness
- 4:1-25 - By faith, man receives this righteousness
- 5:1-21 - Jesus Christ is this righteousness
- 6:1-8:39 - Righteousness is produced in us by the Holy Spirit
- 9:1-11:36 - Why Israel rejected this righteousness
- 12:1-16:27 - **Practical righteousness in the Christian life**

12:1-21 - Application: How God's Righteousness Behaves

Introduction to Romans 12

Based on everything he has written to the Romans so far, now, in Romans 12, Paul begins to apply the great doctrinal truths of NT salvation in a practical way. He explains how we should live in light of the great doctrinal truths he has taught us. The Bible doctrines we believe should directly impact the way we live and should change the way we live. Think of it this way.

Romans chapter 12 is the Christian response to God's grace. Because God has given us all that He has given us in Christ, this is how we should live. It is a conscious choice, an intentional response to God's amazing grace. God's grace encourages our belief, commitment and personal sacrifice. Romans 12 explains rubber meets the road truths about what it means to be a genuine Christian.

Genuine Christianity is consonant with, meaning, in agreement with or in harmony with everything Paul has written in Romans, both doctrinally and practically. A Christianity that ignores Romans 12 is a deficient Christianity. Paul has laid the doctrinal foundation by telling us what a Christian is, what a Christian believes and by explaining our standing in Christ in Romans 1-8. Romans 9-11 explains national Israel's rejection of the gospel of Christ and the righteousness of Christ and where and how Israel fits into God's plan.

Romans 12 is about the state of Christians in this life.

Romans 12 is very much about the state of Christians in this life, how we ought to live in light of our salvation, our justification and sanctification by faith and what God intends for us to do in service to Him, Ephesians 2:10. Romans 12 describes what we call the normal Christian life. The indwelling Christ, Ephesians 3:17, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:19, provide the power to: present our bodies a living sacrifice, to live for Jesus and to obey God.

Many people think that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and getting saved makes you a Christian. It does not. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and getting saved makes you saved. That is just the beginning. People who are saved are not necessarily Christians.

Being a Christian means being Christ-like, being a serious evangelistic disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 11:19-26, one who has presented his body a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1. You can be saved and still live like a practical

atheist instead of living like a genuine Christian. You can be saved and still live a reprobate life instead of being a Christ-like follower of Messiah Jesus. You cannot be a Christian and live like a practical atheist or live a reprobate life. Being a Christian is doing what Paul says in Romans 12:1 - presenting your body a living sacrifice unto God - and then living each day in the reality of that living sacrifice, by the power of God.

Romans 12 is about sanctification, not justification.

**Justification is different from
sanctification in these ways:**

Justification

1. Our legal standing
2. A one time event
3. 100% God's work
4. 100% righteous in Christ
5. Every Christian has same

Sanctification

1. Our actual state
2. A continuous process our whole life
3. We cooperate with God
4. Growing toward righteousness in life
5. Every Christian at different stage

God declares us holy because, when He saves us, He transfers us from the power of darkness to the kingdom of his dear Son, Colossians 1:13, and takes us from condemnation to justification, Romans 5:1. Once we are saved, we are consecrated to God and are no longer consecrated to the world.

Where before we got saved, we were of our father the devil, John 8:44, once we are saved, our Father is God, 2 Corinthians 1:3, Ephesians 1:3, 1 Peter 1:3. But now, that being true, we work out our salvation for the rest of our lives, not to earn or keep salvation but to grow up into Christ, Ephesians 4:1-32, which by the way, is Paul's excellent commentary on Romans 12. That's why we should read Ephesians 4:1-32 now.

We call the process of working out our salvation, progressive sanctification. Positionally we are already sanctified in Christ, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11, Hebrews 10:10, 13:12. Progressively we are being sanctified moment by moment, day by day, which is our practical sanctification. It is progressive in the sense that it is an ongoing daily process by God, working in us to make us holy, for as long as we live. The process of our daily sanctification requires our daily cooperation.

Justification and sanctification are linked, but distinct. Sanctification never launches our justification and God's declaration of our right legal standing and our being born again. Works never launches our regeneration. Just the opposite.

Justification and our being born again and regenerated launches our sanctification process. For a Christian, sanctification never comes before justification. Justification always comes first, then sanctification. God's glorious salvation and justification by faith are intended to radically change our lives.

Justification by faith, Romans 5:1, and sanctification by faith, Acts 26:18, 1 Corinthians 1:2, are inseparably intertwined. God didn't just save you to keep you out of hell or to leave you where you are, wicked and worldly, living for the flesh. God saved you for a temporal purpose, as long as you're on earth and for an eternal purpose, once you enter eternity and heaven. In Romans 12:1, Paul begins to lay out how the doctrines he taught us in Romans 1-8, effect the changes in us that God intended when He saved us.

12:1 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, - This is God's winsome call of grace, not the insistent demand of the OT law. That's the difference between law and grace. Law commands and demands. Grace beseeches. Law compels while grace is softer and gentler and respects freewill. Paul uses the same Greek word for *beseech* in these verses.

"Now I beseech G3870 you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;" Romans 15:30.

"Now I beseech G3870 you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Romans 16:17.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech G3870 you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
2 Corinthians 5:20.

"We G3870 → then, as workers together with him, beseech G3870 you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." 2 Corinthians 6:1.

The mercy of God encourages us to respond in a way that recognizes God's mercy and grace toward us. Romans 1-8 builds the doctrinal foundation of the Christian life. Everything that has gone before leads us to this moment in Romans 12:1. What we've learned so far in Romans is now to be put into action. We are now to live out daily, the doctrinal truths we've learned. In plainer words, Bible doctrine is supposed to radically change our lives, is supposed to be a vital part of our daily life. That's why doctrine is important, 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

Bible doctrine isn't knowledge to learn and then file away and never think of it again. The twin doctrinal truths that we are justified by faith and sanctified by faith should affect how we live as Christians and how we walk in the Spirit day by day. We are to live the truths we believe, every day.

Paul also has another purpose for writing this, which purpose he describes in Romans 15:16. Paul is offering up the saved Gentiles to God, Acts 15:14-17, the Gentiles being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, Colossians 1:28-29. Remember that Romans 12 is about sanctification.

Sanctification is all about our heart holiness which is evident by the way we live our daily life. Heart holiness changes how we think, what we think about and what we say, meaning, what comes out of our mouth. Jesus put it this way.

*“O generation of vipers, how can ye,
being evil, speak good things?
for out of the abundance of the heart
the mouth speaketh.”*

Matthew 12:34.

All too often, we view sanctification as just another set of rules to keep yet outward sanctification is worthless if our heart isn't sanctified. That was Israel's problem all through the OT. They did the outward rituals of law keeping but their heart wasn't right with God; their heart wasn't sanctified.

**An unsanctified heart never
produces a sanctified life.**

Sanctification doesn't start on the outside. Sanctification starts on the inside, in the heart. Looking sanctified outwardly when our heart is not sanctified inwardly is not what God intends for us. Being sanctified in our heart means we do not become like the Pharisees, more focused on appearance than reality.

**Looking sanctified is not
the same as being sanctified.**

When our heart is sanctified, we will not be selfish and we will not chase after fleshly things. When our heart is sanctified, we will not make excuses for our sinful behavior. When our heart is sanctified, we will not run with the drugged and drunken crowd and revel in worldly things. When our heart is sanctified, we will not chase after worldly pleasures which lead us away from Christ. Christians with sanctified hearts walk *in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake*, Psalm 23:3, not in paths of sin.

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts:
and be ready always to give an answer
to every man that asketh you
a reason of the hope that is in you
with meekness and fear:”* 1 Peter 3:15.

Consciousness of impurity
and willful sin in our lives
and walking in paths of unrighteousness
often shuts our mouth
from being a witness for Jesus.

Christians should never walk in paths of unrighteousness, playing with the world and trying to see how close to the edge we can get, without going over. If that is the way you live, you need to start walking in the paths of righteousness, Psalm 23:3. God leads us in *the paths of righteousness* so if you're walking in paths of unrighteousness, you're not following God's leading. God never leads you in the paths of unrighteousness. Think about that the next time you are trying to figure out God's discerned will for your life.

After we are saved and justified by faith (declared righteous even though we are not righteous in our actual state), and sanctified by faith (declared holy in our standing with God, even though we are not holy in our actual state), then, for the rest of our lives, God will be progressively sanctifying us, making us holy and teaching us to live holy in our actual state and not just holy in our standing. Romans 12 then, is about sanctification, not justification.

No one is earning salvation by presenting his body to God as a living sacrifice. Instead, God is making us holy in practical ways, day in and day out, as long as we live. The process of making us holy is about teaching us to live by faith and walk by faith. It is about teaching us to trust God when circumstances are difficult and our heart is struggling to understand, struggling to not rebel. It is

about the grace of God which gets us through our most difficult struggles when, humanly speaking, we cannot see a path to victory.

Mount Sinai represents the law, Galatians 4:24.

Mount Calvary represents grace, Acts 20:24.

Justification is always by grace through faith,
never by law.

Mount Sinai can never justify you.

Justification always comes from Mount Calvary.

Sanctification is always by grace through faith,
never by law.

Mount Sinai can never sanctify you.

Sanctification always comes from Mount Calvary.

If you get those mountains confused, and try to find your justification and sanctification at Mount Sinai, your Christian life will stagnate and you'll not grow much beyond being a baby Christian. In essence, you'll just repeat the same baby steps year after year, instead of growing to spiritual maturity in Christ.

I beseech you therefore - *Therefore* was Paul's transition, Romans 8:1, from the doctrinal portion of Romans to the explanation for why Israel rejected Messiah Jesus and God's righteousness in Romans 9, 10 and 11. Here, *therefore* is Paul's transition from the three chapters which explain why Israel rejected Messiah Jesus and God's righteousness, to his conclusions in the practical portion or the application section, Romans 12-16.

The word, *therefore*, occurs 1,237 times in 1,220 verses in the King James Bible. Paul uses the word, *therefore*, 27 times in the book of Romans. Paul says *therefore* here because he is building on what he wrote in Romans 11:33-36. He is reaching a conclusion based on what he wrote earlier in Romans.

Because of the rich wisdom of God, because of the rich knowledge of God, because God knows more about everything than we know, because: of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, *I beseech you therefore, brethren. Therefore*, is the summary, the conclusion of Paul's case. Based on what I previously wrote, *therefore*, this is how you should respond.

*“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ:”* Romans 5:1.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1.

Offering our bodies to God as a living sacrifice is intended to radically change us. It isn't a quaint and ancient religious practice that is no longer necessary. Offering our bodies to God as a living sacrifice is practical, rubber meets the road Christianity. God intends the offering of our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice as the break with our old, fleshly, unsaved past and the start of our glorious new life-long spiritual adventure with Christ that lasts until our death or until the Lord calls us home in the rapture.

That's why Paul tells us, *Be not conformed to this world*, Romans 12:1-2. The carnal mind says: “There's nothing wrong with the world in moderation. Don't be a fanatic. People will think you're crazy.” Paul is blunt and in your face negative about the world. Paul says: *Be not conformed to this world*.

Many Christians try to have it both ways. They want to be conformed to the world and they want Jesus as an add-on. They don't sing: “Take the world but give me Jesus.” They sing: “Keep the world and add in Jesus.” We all need to break free from being carnal fleshly Christians who don't take the Bible seriously.

The carnal mind says: “Me first and after that, me, and if there's anything left, then maybe you.” Carnal (fleshly) Christians are, by definition, shallow, immature Christians whose lives center around their fleshly desires. Fleshly desires also include what the mind desires, plans and schemes to get since the mind is part of the flesh.

The fleshly mind will rarely follow Christ, will rarely be led by the Spirit. The carnal (fleshly) mind of the carnal (fleshly) Christian resists holiness, resists sanctification, resists being Christ-like, resists God's truth, resists presenting the body to God as a living sacrifice. You're to be a living sacrifice because God expects you to live for Him, through His power, Galatians 2:20. Everyone who has not memorized Galatians 2:20 should memorize this powerful verse.

A saved man's flesh:

1. Still Natural - Unsaved - 2 Corinthians 2:142.
2. Still Carnal - Flesh focused - Romans 8:13.
3. Still Enmity against God - Romans 8:7.
4. Still Cannot please God - Romans 8:8.

5. Still the Outward man - 2 Corinthians 4:16

Your flesh will be a problem as long as you live, Ephesians 2:3. God gave us spiritual blessing to counteract the flesh. The carnal mind, no matter its motives, loves to rebel and take up arms against God. The carnal mind never makes you a better Christian, never makes you more spiritual, never makes you a better witness for Jesus, never draws you closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. The carnal mind is always looking for something outside the Bible to help you be more spiritual because the carnal mind doesn't want to do what the Bible says.

That's why carnal Christians are always doing non-biblical religious stuff, in an attempt to become more spiritual. That's why spiritual Christians never try to add eastern meditation or religious practices from other religions into their Christianity. Carnal Christians always want to add religious practices from false religions into their spiritual life.

Carnal Christians always tend toward being ecumenical and interfaith. If someone was judging your life, would they see you as: **a.** A carnal fleshly Christian, **b.** A Christian who has presented his body to God as a living sacrifice, **c.** A lukewarm Christian that God wants to spew out of His mouth, Revelation 3:14-16?

Do you know that the God of the Bible doesn't bless or love anything about the carnal mind and false religions. God's intention is that you never follow your carnal mind. For the rest of your life, you will be a genuine disciple of Jesus or, you will follow your own fleshly path (carnal mind) or the path of some other fleshly leader (carnal mind), who leads you away from the Jesus of the Bible.

Christians already have renewed minds, Romans 12:1-2. The renewing of your mind happened at regeneration, when the Holy Spirit made you born again and spiritually baptized you into the body of Christ, Romans 12:1-2, Titus 3:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13. That is when He renewed your mind.

The Holy Spirit, indwelling our physical bodies as His temple, gives us authority and power to live for Christ, to walk by faith and to make God honoring decisions because of our renewed mind. For us as Christians, a large part of using our renewed mind is, reading the Bible, saturating our minds with the word of God so that we have a biblical worldview.

Then, we can live in the Spirit, Galatians 5:25, being led by the Spirit, Galatians 5:18, so we can walk in the Spirit, Galatians 5:16, 25. That ought to be the normal Christian life and yet, so many professing Christians these days do not read the word of God and refuse to be led by the Spirit.

If you cannot present your body a living sacrifice to the God Paul described in Romans 11:33-36, you need to repent of your worldliness and get your heart right with God. If you can trust your eternal soul to the God of Romans 11:33-36 but you fear to trust Him with your body, Romans 12:1-2, you have a big problem you need to fix. Now let's make sure we're on the same page.

brethren - Paul is writing to Christians. This is not an invitation to unsaved religious people to present their bodies to God as living sacrifices. This is only for people who are already saved, *brethren*, already spiritually baptized into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13, already blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, Ephesians 1:3, already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6, already indwelt by the Holy Ghost, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, with hearts already indwelt by the risen Christ, Ephesians 3:17.

present your body - Your body, meaning, your flesh, is not saved. Your soul got saved and your spirit got born again and you were spiritually circumcised, Colossians 2:11, meaning: your saved soul was cut loose from your unsaved body. But your body is still unsaved. Paul is being intensely practical here.

How do you, as a Christian, deal with your unsaved body, with all its demands and desires, with all its temptations and testings, with its daily compulsion to sin? The way to deal with your body is, you present your body a living sacrifice to God. Have you done that? _____ When? _____

When you present your body to God, you will not get it back. You give up all claim to your body and place it in God's hands. OT Jews couldn't go to the temple the week after they'd brought an offering and request their offering be returned to them. Paul employs the OT offerings as the model for NT Christians to present their bodies as living sacrifices.

He is comparing OT sacrifices with what NT Christians should be doing, to make clear that presenting your bodies a living sacrifice is serious stuff. Are you willing to live for Jesus? _____ He's got your soul because He saved your soul. He's got your spirit because He made your spirit born again.

Does He have your body as a living sacrifice? _____ Well, the biblical truth is, if you're saved, God already has your body and Paul knows that as he writes Romans 12. He wrote 1 Corinthians about five years before he wrote Romans.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God

in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." Philippians 1:20.

Are you crucified with Christ? _____ Have you presented your body a living sacrifice to God? _____ Is Christ magnified in your body? _____ If you are crucified with Christ and if you have presented your body as a living sacrifice to God, there will be many radical changes in your life. No one can do those things without experiencing radical life-altering changes. Memory verse:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20.

There's been a change in me!

1. A change of ownership
2. A change of authority
3. A change of direction
4. A change of desire
5. A change of destiny
6. A change of purpose
7. A change of power
8. A change in my beliefs
9. A change in my thinking
10. A change in my speech
11. A change in my goals
12. A change in my giving

"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." 1 Corinthians 6:13.

What does that verse mean to you? _____

Victory over sin

1. Present your body a living sacrifice to God - Romans 12:1.

2. Remember to whom you belong - 1 Corinthians 6:20.
3. Reckon yourself to be dead to sin - Romans 6:11.
4. Let not sin reign in your mortal body - Romans 6:12.
5. Neither yield your members unto sin - Romans 6:13.
6. Yield yourselves unto God... alive from the dead - Romans 6:13.
7. Yield yourself servants to righteousness - Romans 6:19.
8. Keep under your body... keep it in subjection - 1 Corinthians 9:27.
9. Bring every thought into captivity to Christ - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.
10. Flee fornication - 1 Corinthians 6:18, Genesis 39:12.
11. Come out from among them - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

Fornication is mentioned 32 times in the NT - always in a negative light. There is nothing biblical or Christian or clean or good or holy about fornication. God doesn't want any Christian anywhere to live a life of fornication. A life of fornication destroys your peace with God, destroys your joy in the Lord, destroys your spiritual power, destroys your effectiveness for God and makes you an unhappy Christian. Never content yourself with fornication. Fornication is a moral and spiritual dead end.

brethren - Do you feel some sense of obligation to God because of all He has done for you, because of His mercies? _____ Romans 12 is practical Christianity aimed at people who are already saved and justified by faith. In the Bible, no unsaved man is ever asked to present his body a living sacrifice to God. In Romans, Paul has carefully taught us the doctrinal foundation of Christianity.

Now Paul is teaching us practical truth about what it means to live as a Christian. Paul is talking to converted Israelites and to converted pagan Gentiles. The pagan Gentiles presented their bodies to their idol gods as living sacrifices. They engaged in drug fueled, sex-focused, religious rites to please their idol gods and the devils behind their idol gods, Exodus 32:15-35, 1 Corinthians 10:20-21.

God requires a lot of Christians. He wants you to present your body to Him as a living sacrifice. God does something for you - He saves you, takes away all of your sins and give you the perfect righteousness of Christ as a free gift. Therefore, God expects something of you. He beseeches you to present your bodies a living sacrifice. Put off the old man - put on the new man, Ephesians 4:24-25, Colossians 3:10, 2 Corinthians 4:4

by the mercies of God, - Mercy is one of the attributes of God. Paul uses the word, mercy, twelve times in Romans. An attribute of God describes what God is and how He interacts with us, His special creation. When we talk about the

attributes of God, one of our goals is to answer questions which help us understand God.

1. Who is God?
2. What is God?
3. What is God like?
4. Is God a personal God?
5. Is God knowable?
6. Is God loving?
7. Does God care about me?
8. If God cares about me, why doesn't He always give me what I want?
9. Is God really merciful?
10. Why is God's mercy necessary?

We can answer those questions because God has revealed Himself to us in the scriptures of truth, the holy Bible. What about the question: Why is God's mercy necessary? That question is answered by remembering the gospel, Romans 1:16-18, and justification by faith, Romans 5:1. When we were at our worst, God offered us His best - mercy through the risen Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What we needed most, mercy, the love and planning and provision of God supplied. Where can we find God's mercy? At Calvary. Mercy there was great, and grace was free; pardon there was multiplied to me. There my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary.

**God's mercy never
violates God's justice.**

Mercy is an active desire to help someone in need. Mercy is not passive feelings or meaningless virtue signaling. Mercy works. That being said, God's mercy never violates God's justice. God never dispenses mercy at the expense of truth. God's mercy is always in line with His holiness, His justice and His truth in the written scriptures of truth, the holy Bible.

**How wonderful it feels
to receive mercy!**

God is the ultimate source of the mercy we extend to others. Our fleshly human mercy doesn't stretch very far. We need the mercy of God, flowing through us, to be merciful. Have you ever experienced mercy? Have you ever experienced a

kindness and grace you didn't deserve? That is mercy. It is wonderful to experience mercy and because we have experienced mercy, it is good for us to extend mercy to others.

*"But I will sing of thy power; yea,
I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning:
for thou hast been my defence
and refuge in the day of my trouble."* Psalm 59:16.

*"The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."* Psalm 103:8-9.

*"Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;
yea, our God is merciful."* Psalm 116:5.

*"The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy:
teach me thy statutes."* Psalm 119:64.

*"Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD:
quicken me according to thy judgments."* Psalm 119:156.

*"The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion;
slow to anger, and of great mercy.
The LORD is good to all:
and his tender mercies are over all his works."*
Psalm 145:8-9.

Psalm 145:8-9 is God's general mercy to all His creation.
In the NT, Acts 17:25 explains it.

*"Neither is worshipped with men's hands,
as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all
life, and breath, and all things;"* Acts 17:25.

*"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed,
because his compassions fail not.
They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."*
Lamentations 3:22-23.

*"And that he might make known the riches of his glory
on the vessels of mercy,
which he had afore prepared unto glory,
Even us, whom he hath called,*

not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”
Romans 9:23-24.

*“But God, who is rich in mercy,
for his great love wherewith he loved us,
Even when we were dead in sins,
hath quickened us together with Christ,
(by grace ye are saved;)
And hath raised us up together,
and made us sit together
in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:”*
Ephesians 2:4.

*“Not by works of righteousness which we have done,
but according to his mercy he saved us,
by the washing of regeneration,
and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* Titus 3:5.

that ye present your bodies - This is a paradigm shift, a radical new way of thinking and living and worshiping God. The precedent for presenting *your bodies a living sacrifice* is found in the OT, Judges 5:2, 9, Nehemiah 11:2, but as Paul explains it in Romans 12, presenting your bodies a living sacrifice is only possible for saved people - *brethren* - after the resurrection of Christ, who are already indwelt by the living Christ and the Holy Spirit.

There is a Satanic counterfeit to presenting your bodies a living sacrifice, a religious version of presenting your bodies that has nothing to do with truth or obedience or true worship of God or love for God, 1 Kings 13:33-34. Don't be fooled by this religious counterfeit. Pagan religious activities and practices are not worship of the true and living God.

By of the mercies of God - We Christians are asked to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God - not to our church, not to our leaders, not to our pastor, not to our religion. What is the difference? _____

When Paul says, *present your bodies*, that is Paul exhorting us and giving us an example of exhortation, Romans 12:8, one of the seven gifts he mentions in Romans 12. Exhorting does not mean demanding. Exhorting is beseeching. Exhorting is providing information and encouraging people to make a spiritual decision based on the information provided. Exhortation encourages an obedient, thoughtful, freewill, spiritual response.

A saved man's unsaved flesh:

1. Still Natural - Unsaved - 1 Corinthians 2:14.
2. Still does what you hate - Romans 7:15.
3. Still has sin dwelling in it - Romans 7:17, 18, 20.
4. Still does evil - Romans 7:19, 21.
5. Still brought into captivity to the law of sin - Romans 7:23.
6. Still the body of this death - Romans 7:24.
7. Still serves the law of sin - Romans 7:21, 23, 25.
8. Still Carnal - Flesh focused - Romans 8:6.
9. Still Enmity against God - Romans 8:7.
10. Still Cannot please God - Romans 8:8.
11. Still the outward man - 2 Corinthians 4:16.
12. Still needs sanctified - 1 Thessalonians 5:23.
13. Still needs preserved blameless - 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

The carnal mind is focused on pleasing itself instead of pleasing God, therefore, the carnal mind rebels and goes against God. The carnal mind never makes you a better Christian, never makes you more spiritual, never makes you a better witness for Jesus. The carnal mind tries to live in the world and skirts the edge of being as worldly as it can be, while defending worldliness. The grace of God is never an excuse for living a worldly life. Why do Christians still struggle with the flesh? _____

that ye present your bodies. This is the Christian's Call To Action. Because of what God did, this should be the response of every Christian - *present your bodies a living sacrifice*. Let's talk about the body of someone who is saved. How is the unsaved body of a saved man different from the unsaved body of an unsaved man?

1. The unsaved body of a saved man is cut loose from his saved soul, Colossians 2:11.
2. The body of a saved man is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
3. The heart of a saved man is indwelt by the Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 3:17.
4. The old man of a saved man is crucified with Christ, Romans 7:23.
5. A saved man is dead to sin, but alive unto God, Romans 6:11.
6. None of that is true of an unsaved man, no matter how spiritual he thinks he is, no matter what his religion teaches.

Paul already taught this about the body

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”
Romans 6:6, 11, 12-14, 19, 22.

What can you glean from those verses, about your body and your position in Christ? Please go phrase by phrase and make a list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Romans 7:23-25.

What can you glean about yourself from those verses about another law in your members? Please go phrase by phrase and make a list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

7. _____
8. _____

a living sacrifice, - Under OT law, presenting the proper sacrifice was an act of obedience and worship. In a similar way, presenting *your bodies a living sacrifice* is an act of obedience and worship on the resurrection side of Calvary. A sacrifice was normally killed but here we are asked to present our bodies *a living sacrifice*. Why? Because we are already dead, spiritually speaking, Romans 6:3-11, and we are already risen with Christ, spiritually speaking, because we are, in Christ. What does it mean, to be in Christ? _____

The Bible assumes: **1.** that what Paul presents in Romans and the rest of the NT is true, **2.** that those truths will be embraced by us and therefore, **3.** our bodies will be a living sacrifice to God.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

About lost, unsaved, hell-bound, idol worshipers, there is no doubt. They dishonour their own bodies between themselves, Romans 1:24. That is the opposite of what Christians are called to do in Romans 12:1-2. We are called to present our bodies a living sacrifice to the one true God.

What does it mean to present your bodies a living sacrifice?

First, it means to acknowledge that Romans 6:3-11 is true of us. You cannot present your body a living sacrifice to God until you are dead with Christ and risen with Christ. You must acknowledge your personal identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection for your sins. In plainer words, no unsaved man can present his body to God as a living sacrifice. Only saved people who are identified with Christ can do that.

Second, it means surrendering your body to God, because you belong to God, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Surrendering your body to God is acknowledging your position as an obedient son, Galatians 4:7.

Third, it means your fresh new freedom in Christ, Galatians 5:1, comes with responsibilities, one of which is presenting your body to God a living sacrifice. Presenting *your bodies to God as a living sacrifice* should be one of the first things every new Christian does.

Fourth, it means you are the best gift you can give to God. God doesn't need your money and He doesn't need your service. He needs your body. Once God has your body as a living sacrifice, then He also has the rest of you - your mind, your heart, your interests, your passions, your money, your service, everything. Paul explains this in Galatians 2:20, which every Christian should have memorized by now. Have you memorized Galatians 2:20? _____

*"I am crucified with Christ:
nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live by the faith of the Son of God,
who loved me, and gave himself for me."* Galatians 2:20.

Think about it for a minute. Jesus gave His body for us. He was a sacrifice who died and rose again. We are asked to do what Jesus did but for us, the dying part is by way of spiritual identification, Romans 6:1-4, instead of being a literal death. Christ gave Himself for us and died for us. We give ourselves for Him to live for Him. He presented His body a sacrifice. We present our bodies a living sacrifice, exactly the opposite of what the world does.

*"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness
through the lusts of their own hearts,
to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:"*
Romans 1:24.

*"Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants
that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies,
that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."*
Daniel 3:28.

holy, - Isn't Daniel 3:28 a practical definition of holiness? _____ In the OT, God required in the law of Moses, that sacrifices be without blemish. Jews were not allowed to bring the crippled, the blind, the lame, the diseased of their flock to the LORD as an offering, Deuteronomy 15:21, Leviticus 1:3, Leviticus 1:10,

Leviticus 3:1, Leviticus 22:20, Deuteronomy 17:1, Malachi 1:8. God doesn't want our cast-offs, the worst that we have. God wants our best.

Do we have any personal holiness of our own to bring to God? _____
Christians have the righteousness of Christ as a present possession. Because we have the righteousness of Christ, we are holy in our standing before God. Since presenting our body as a living sacrifice is about sanctification, holy here also refers to our progressive sanctification - our day to day holiness as we grow more like Christ over the course of our life.

Holy means living for Jesus. Holy means not living a life of fornication, not living a flesh oriented life that chases fleshly things, not living a life of sin and degradation. Holy aligns with mental and moral purity, a purity of heart and mind that glorifies God and keeps us as usable vessels for God.

The reason for presenting your body to God is to be a living sacrifice. God isn't looking for unholy sacrifices and dead sacrifices. In the OT, the priests were corrupt and allowed the people to bring wounded and lame animals as sacrifices, Malachi 1:8. God didn't let them get away with that in the OT and He won't let you get away with that in the NT.

acceptable unto God, - Acceptable to God means, living and holy. It isn't up to us to decide that God will accept a dead sacrifice or an unholy sacrifice or a lame or crippled sacrifice. We must offer what God has told us to offer. Far too many professing Christians think that they get to decide what is acceptable unto God.

Newsflash! You as a saved man, you as a Christian don't get to live a dirty, unholy, rebellious life with a dirty, unholy mouth and dirty unholy activities and then present your dirty life and unholy body to God as a living sacrifice. Holy is acceptable to God. Unholy is not acceptable to God. God will not accept your unholiness as a living sacrifice.

which is your reasonable service. - Presenting your body as a holy, living sacrifice to God is your reasonable service because of the truth of Galatians 2:20. How does Galatians 2:20 teach us that what God asks in Romans 12:1 is reasonable? _____

_____ Have you memorized Galatians 2:20? _____

Becoming a living sacrifice, presenting your body a living sacrifice is your agreement, your commitment, your determination to obey and follow Jesus, to being changed by the power of God. Here Paul calls it, your reasonable service.

Why is it reasonable?

1. It is reasonable because you will never be much of a Christian until you are transformed by the power of God.
2. It is reasonable because you cannot fulfill God's will for your life in your own power, by your own strength, by your own knowledge and wisdom.
3. It is reasonable because God has made provision to supercharge your life by the power of the indwelling Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit.
4. It is reasonable because God intends every Christian to be transformed by the renewing of their minds so they may prove (in their own lives) what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
5. It is reasonable because the power of God is available to radically change and transform you and your Christian life.
6. It is reasonable because it is God beseeching us to give Him everything, to hold nothing back.
7. It is reasonable because presenting your bodies to God as a living sacrifice is the starting point to spiritual fruitfulness and spiritual growth.

12:2 - And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

And be not conformed to this world: - First things first. Not being *conformed to this world* is only possible if you have presented your body a living sacrifice to God. If you haven't presented your body a living sacrifice to God, then you are conformed to this world.

Presenting your body a living sacrifice to God is your responsibility. It takes obedience in presenting your body a living sacrifice to God first, before you can *be not conformed* to this world. It takes an act of your will and some serious thought and serious intention to obey this Bible command.

The truth is, most saved people have never presented their bodies a living sacrifice to God and therefore, they are conformed to this world. There is little difference between most professing Christians and the hell-bound unsaved people around them.

That means: little difference in their world view, little difference in what they love and what they hate, little difference in what they believe, little difference in their mad rush to conform to the world, little difference in their desire to be like the world. That is a cold, hard, sad fact.

but be ye transformed - The life of a Christian is a transformed life. Is your life transformed? _____ The Bible doesn't say, Get saved and then do things your way. The Bible never says: Get saved and then ignore what the Bible says about how you should live. The Bible never says: Once you get saved, you're in charge of your life and you can ignore God's will for your life.

There ought to be a difference between unsaved people and saved people. There ought to be a difference between unsaved people and born again Christians. *Be ye transformed* - Our transformation began with us believing the gospel, believing on the risen Christ, passing from death unto life, getting saved, being born again, being regenerated. being circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, being spiritually baptized into the body of Christ.

Nothing Paul says in Romans 12 is possible until we have been transformed by the renewing of our minds. The transformed believer can never be happy, can never be satisfied, can never be fruitful for God if he's living for the world.

by the renewing of your mind, - Christians tend to read Romans 12:2 in isolation from Romans 7:14-25. The truth is, Romans 7:14-15 explains Romans 12:1-2 and why God wants us to present our bodies a living sacrifice and be transformed by the renewing of our minds. If you are saved, there is a war going on inside you, between your unsaved flesh and your renewed mind, Romans 7:23.

For as long as we live after getting saved, our flesh doesn't gradually improve, doesn't slowly get saved. Our flesh never improves, never gets better, never gives up and goes all in for God. No matter how much you grow in the Lord, there will always be a struggle with your flesh. Okay, until you get to heaven, what is the solution? God's elegant solution is to indwell your physical body, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, and to indwell your heart by faith, Ephesians 3:17.

Your flesh is your body or the old man, which includes the desires and habits and proclivities and thoughts of the old man, Romans 6:19. Your body, your flesh, your old man is not saved. That's why God wants us to present our fallen, unsaved bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. Even though our spirit is born again and our soul is saved, our body has not yet been redeemed, Romans 7:23, 8:15,

23. Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, Philippians 3:21. The redemption of our body happens at the rapture or the resurrection, whichever comes first for us.

Every Christian has to deal with his unsaved flesh. The flesh isn't just a big problem for some Christians and only a small problem for other Christians. Everyone struggles with the lusts of the flesh. The flesh doesn't operate only in a certain type of person; it operates in everyone. Bob Jones Sr. used to teach that any Christian is capable of committing any sin. We don't become sin proof just because we are saved or just because we are Christians.

The transformation that comes to us as a result of our renewed mind at salvation is what separates unsaved religious people from real born again Christians. Your mind gets renewed when you get regenerated, Titus 3:5. When you get saved, you are in Christ. Everything Paul writes in Romans 12 has to do with our mind and our thinking, because we as Christians, in Christ, have a renewed mind. Truth is aimed at our heart and our mind because God created us to think in words and concepts.

Remember what we learned in Romans 6:12. We definitely have a say about serving God, even with the distractions of sin in our body. No Christian is set up in advance to be a failure or to live a sinful wretched life.

*“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,
that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

*Neither yield ye your members
as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:
but yield yourselves unto God,
as those that are alive from the dead,
and your members as instruments
of righteousness unto God.*

*For sin shall not have dominion over you:
for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”*
Romans 6:12-14.

If you go back and read Romans 6 and 7 again, while we study Romans 12, those chapters will make more sense to you now than they did when we first studied them. The reason is that you know more Bible now, therefore you have a clearer perspective on what Paul is teaching us in Romans 12 because he is building on chapters 6 and 7.

Presenting our bodies to God as living sacrifices is the biblical, Christian, intelligent, logical, obedient, spiritual, thoughtful thing to do. Not letting sin reign in our mortal bodies, Romans 6:19, lines up with presenting our bodies to God a living sacrifice. Based on everything we've learned so far in Romans, it is illogical and irrational for any Christian to serve *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life*, instead of serving God, 1 John 2:15-17.

Wholeheartedly serving God is just basic common sense. Christians are supposed to use our minds and bodies in serving God because we belong to God. Serving God should be intentional, deliberate and thoughtful because you're serving God with your renewed and transformed mind.

*“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear;
but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
” 2 Timothy 1:7.*

What does that mean for us today? _____

*“For which cause we faint not;
but though our outward man perish,
yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”
2 Corinthians 4:16.*

*“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man,
which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;”
Ephesians 4:22.*

*“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
And that ye put on the new man,
which after God is created in
righteousness and true holiness.”
Ephesians 4:23.*

*“And you, that were sometime alienated
and enemies in your mind
by wicked works,
yet now hath he reconciled”
Colossians 1:21-22.*

*“Let no man beguile you of your reward
in a voluntary humility
and worshipping of angels,*

*intruding into those things which he hath not seen,
vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,*
Colossians 2:18.

*“And have put on the new man,
which is renewed in knowledge
after the image of him that created him:”*
Colossians 3:10.

*“Unto the pure all things are pure:
but unto them that are defiled and
unbelieving is nothing pure;
but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”*
Titus 1:15.

*“Not by works of righteousness which we have done,
but according to his mercy he saved us,
by the washing of regeneration,
and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* Titus 3:5.

You must be saved by *the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost* before you can prove *what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God*. Your mind got renewed when you got saved but your old mind and your old man didn't get eradicated.

You also put off the old man and put on the new man when you got saved but for as long as your body is alive, the old man is still in there. The old man is more than your physical, fleshly, unsaved body. Your old man includes your old mind, your fleshly lusts and memories and desires and your fallen, unsaved, yet to be redeemed fleshly body. All of that together is your unsaved flesh.

Renewing your mind is one of the ways God helps you deal with your unsaved flesh on a daily basis. Your daily identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, Romans 6:1-4 is another way. And the indwelling Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit are more ways God helps you deal with your body and keep it in subjection.

You need your inward man renewed day by day. You need to be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Unsaved people who never get saved can never prove or testify to or vouch for or personally experience what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God but because you are in Christ, you can do all of that.

Christians are faced with a never ending onslaught of depravity and filth which attacks our renewed mind, in the battle between the new mind and the old man. The social media you consume, the movies and Youtube videos you watch, the Internet sites and pornography sites you visit, the books and magazines you read, the advertising you see - all tend to strengthen the flesh instead of renewing your inward man. As a Christian, you need to counterattack and keep feeding the new man, keep renewing your inward man day by day.

How is the inward man renewed day by day?

1. We are renewed by reading the Bible.
2. We are renewed by believing what we read in the Bible.
3. We are renewed by obeying what we read in the Bible.
4. We are renewed by putting off the old man.
5. We are renewed by putting on the new man.
6. We are renewed by fainting not, by continuing to fight.
7. We are renewed by living for Jesus by the grace of God.
8. We are renewed by fellowship with other Christians doing the same.

that ye may prove - If you're going to *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*, then the will of God must be knowable. In plainer words, the will of God is not hidden or hard to find. God wants us to know His will because He intends us to do His will.

Based on what Romans 12:1-2 says, what is the first step in proving the will of God? **a.** Having a tingly emotional feeling and getting goose bumps, **b.** Being the center of attention while speaking in tongues, **c.** Having hands laid on me, **d.** Presenting my body to God a living sacrifice, **e.** Having a wild charismatic experience at church, **f.** seeing angels dancing under the aurora borealis.

that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. - The Bible gives us a lot of information about the will of God. Every Christian has a desire to know and do the will of God. In approaching this topic, there are two correct ways to view the will of God in the Bible.

a. The declared will of God is what the Bible says is the will of God. In our Bible study on the following pages, some examples will be given about the declared will of God. For now, other examples of the declared will of God include Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, 1 Timothy 2:4-6, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 2:2, 5:13. Is some of God's will absolutely clear in the Bible? _____

b. The discerned will of God is what God has for you as an individual Christian to do in service to God if you are already obeying the declared will of God. Examples of the discerned will of God are Acts 8:26ff., 10:1-34, 11:1ff., 13:1-4, 46-49, 15:1ff., 16:1-12.

It is important to remember: If you're not obeying the declared will of God, don't expect God to ignore and overlook your disobedience and show you His discerned will anyway.

God had a goal, a plan, a purpose when He created Adam with the freewill ability to make choices, including sinful choices. God had a purpose in allowing Adam to sin and allowing Adam's sin to pass through the entire human race, Romans 5:12.

God had a purpose in sending the Lord Jesus to die as Israel's rejected Messiah, to pay for all the sins of all the world (including the sins of those who rejected Him, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 2:2), thereby reconciling the world to God and to rise again the third day from the dead, according to the scriptures, so that those whom He reconciled can get saved. God had a purpose in giving the glorious gospel of Christ as His truth for the 2000 years long church age.

Here is the bottom line. God intends to finish His plan and accomplish His purpose. God intends that His will be acknowledged, accepted and accomplished. Jesus taught His disciples to pray: *Thy will be done*. Every born again Christian who accepts the challenge of presenting *your bodies to God a living sacrifice* gets to be an active participant in proving the will of God and an active participant in doing the will of God.

that ye may prove - The word, *prove*, comes from the Greek word, δοκιμάζω dokimazō, pronounced, dok-ee-maad'-zo. It is translated in the NT as: discern, Luke 12:56, prove, Luke 14:19, like, Romans 1:28, approvest, Romans 2:18, alloweth, Romans 14:12, try (in the sense of testing), 1 Corinthians 3:13, examine, 1 Corinthians 11:28, approve, 1 Corinthians 16:3, allowed, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, tried (in the sense of testing), 1 Peter 1:7. It means to test, try, demonstrate by testing, to prove by testing. In some sense then, every Christian is a quality assurance inspector, a quality control manager for God's will.

God's intention for every Christian who presents his body to God as a living sacrifice is for that Christian to then experience in a practical, life-long way, that the will of God in every area is always: *good and acceptable and perfect*. That is why we sometimes refer to living the Christian life as, the adventure of faith. In

plainer words, there are not three distinct and separate wills of God for us to choose from.

There is only one will of God and regardless of how we may negatively perceive the will of God at some difficult, struggling point in our life, the will of God concerning anything in His universe and anything on earth and anything in our lives is always: *good and acceptable and perfect*.

When we present our bodies to God living sacrifices, it is our happy privilege to: discern, like, prove, approve, allow, try, examine and adorn the will of God. When all of that examining is done in the crucible of and on the test track of our daily lives, we will prove that the will of God is *good and acceptable and perfect*.

what is that good, - This verse is sometimes interpreted to mean that God has three wills for every Christian and you can choose any of the three - the good will of God, the acceptable will of God or the perfect will of God. That interpretation, of course, doesn't make much sense. Paul doesn't say: that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect wills of God.

God's will is clearly revealed and clearly stated in the Bible and can be known by anyone who wants to know the will of God, simply by reading, believing and obeying what the Bible says in context. The Bible has a lot to say about the will of God for Christians so we will examine here what the Bible says. We know absolutely for sure, in some areas, what the will of God is because the Bible clearly tells us what the will of God is.

The Will Of God

1. If you could know the will of God, would you want to know it? _____
2. If you could know the will of God, would you do the will of God? _____
3. Does God want you to know His will for your life? _____
4. Does God want you to do His will for your life? _____
5. What is the best way to find the will of God for your life? **a.** My imagination, **b.** My opinion, **c.** The opinions of my friends, **d.** My self-help books, **e.** By doing meditation, **f.** By reading and believing the Bible, **g.** By positive thinking, **h.** By guessing, **i.** By hoping I just stumble across God's will by accident.
6. Does the Bible say anything about the will of God for Christians? _____
7. Does every command in the NT, from the resurrection of Christ to the rapture in Revelation 4:1, indicate the will of God for us as Christians? _____
8. If God tells you in the Bible, to do something or not do something, does that indicate God's will for you? _____

What Does The Bible Say About God's Will?

The phrase, *will of God*, is found 23 times in the NT of the King James Bible. That exact phrase, *will of God*, is never found in the OT yet the OT, without using the phrase, *will of God*, is crystal clear in many verses which state what the will of God is. In the NT, Jesus mentions *the will of God* once in Mark 3:35. Paul mentions *the will of God* seventeen times. Peter mentions *the will of God* four times and the apostle John mentions *the will of God* one time.

Every Verse In The Bible Which Mentions *the will of God*

Write something true about the will of God
next to each verse below, based on what the verse says.

1. *For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.* Mark 3:35 - Jesus

2. *For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:* Act 13:36 - Paul

3. *Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.* Romans 1:10 - Paul

4. *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* Romans 8:27 - Paul

5. *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* Romans 12:2 - Paul

6. *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.* Romans 15:32 - Paul

7. *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,* 1 Corinthians 1:1 - Paul

8. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:* 2 Corinthians 1:1 - Paul

9. *And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 2 Corinthians 8:5 - Paul*

10. *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: Galatians 1:4 - Paul*

11. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 1:1 - Paul*

12. *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; Ephesians 6:6 - Paul*

13. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, Colossians 1:1 - Paul*

14. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Colossians 4:12 - Paul*

15. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 1 Thessalonians 4:3 - Paul*

16. *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 - Paul*

17. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 1:1 - Paul*

18. *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. Hebrews 10:36 - Paul*

19. *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 1 Peter 2:15 - Peter*

20. *For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. 1 Peter 3:17 - Peter*

21. *That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 1 Peter 4:2 - Peter*

22. *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1 Peter 4:19 - Peter*

23. *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* 1 John 2:17 - John

On the back of this paper, please list seven helpful things you've learned by reading and thinking about the 23 Bible verses which mention *the will of God*.

We Know With Absolute Certainty God's Will On These Issues

- 1. God's will is for no one to perish and everyone to get saved** - 1 Timothy 2:3-7, 1 Peter 3:9.
- 2. God's will is for every believer to be filled with the Spirit** - Ephesians 5:17-20, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Colossians 3:16.
- 3. God will is for every believer to be sanctified and abstain from fornication** - 1 Thessalonians 4:3ff., 1 Peter 4:2.
- 4. God will is for every believer to submit to God and resist the devil** - James 4:7.
- 5. God will is, it is better for you to suffer for well doing, than for evil doing, as part of your sanctification** - 1 Peter 3:17.

11:2 - that ye may prove what is that good - The will of God is good. Paul doesn't say, The will of God is easy or fun. He says: the will of God is good. Why is the will of God good? The will of God is good because God possesses indubitability. That means God knows every possible variable, every possible combination of events and circumstances. Therefore, whatever God deems good about His will for us is based on God's absolute knowledge, God's absolute wisdom, God's absolute truth, with no possibility of God being wrong.

We as human beings, do not possess indubitability. We can sometimes get close to indubitably when we believe what God says in the Bible in context. We are not God and we cannot make perfectly precise judgments like God makes. God's will for us is good but it can also be difficult to live out in our daily lives and sometimes the will of God can be hard to accept. Therefore God beseeches us: *Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.*

and acceptable, - The will of God is acceptable. It should go without saying but the will of God is acceptable because it is God's will. Acceptable means we should accept the will of God and stop struggling against it, stop rebelling against it. God who makes no mistakes, has plans for us, Ephesians 2:10. Those plans are the will of God for us. Do you have any idea what God's will is for your life? _____ What is God's will for your life? _____

and perfect, - The will of God is perfect. Our puny human minds cannot improve on the perfect will of God. We don't need to jury rig God's will or re-engineer God's will or rearrange God's will so that it no longer resembles God's will. Whatever God's will for me is, it is perfect, without blemish, flawless from the loving hand and heart of God and for that reason, I need to accept it.

will of God. - If you want to know the will of God, you need to read, believe and obey the Bible. The Bible tells you what the will of God is. You will never find the will of God in religion or works or good intentions or vision casting or daydreaming or logic or intellectual reasoning or philosophy.

Spiritual Gifts Require Clear Thinking

1. Spiritual Gifts Need Straight Thinking - 12:3
2. Spiritual Gifts Are Exercised For The Body of Christ - 12:4-5
3. Spiritual Gifts Require Consistency - 12:6-8

12:3 - For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, - Romans 1:5, 15:15 - Paul was an apostle by the grace of God. Being an apostle was Paul's calling and was one of his spiritual gifts. No one reading this has the spiritual gift or calling of a biblical apostle. The apostolic office has ceased to operate in the church.

An apostle had a special calling, gift and office. Are there any biblical apostles today? No, there are no biblical apostles today in the sense of men who were chosen by our Lord Jesus Christ to fill the scriptural office and who possess biblical apostolic authority and the apostolic office, Matthew 10:1ff., 1 Corinthians 12:28, personally called by Jesus and working with Jesus for 3.5 years in His earthly ministry, Acts 1:21-26. Do you see why no one today meets the qualifications of a biblical apostle? _____

Although some Christians believe that apostles working wonders, with signs and miracles, has been normal Christianity for the last two thousand years, the facts of history and scripture rightly divided, disagree. Since those who profess to be apostles today use the book of Acts to prove that they are also apostles, wise Christians will keep the following facts in mind.

A. Acts is a transitional book, segueing from ministry to Israelite Jews to ministry to Gentiles outside Israel, Num 25:14, Rom 11:1, KJV.

B. When events in Acts 2 occurred, the New Testament had not been written. For that reason, God used signs and wonders to authenticate the preaching of the apostles whom Jesus had chosen. One of the signs God used was speaking in tongues. No one spoke unintelligible gibberish at Pentecost, Acts 2 and no one spoke in prayer language tongues or heavenly tongues or tongues of angels at Pentecost because the biblical gift of tongues is the ability to speak a real earthly language one had not previously learned; not an angelic language, not a heavenly language, not a prayer language.

C. The Greek word, ἀπόστολος (apostolos or apostle) is found 81 times in 80 verses in the Greek New Testament. In the KJV, it is usually translated as some form of our English word, apostle.

D. Jesus is no longer in His earthly ministry to Israel, as he was 2000 years ago when He personally chose twelve men to fill the biblical office of apostle as they ministered to Israel before the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

For those reasons, it is wise to remember that there are no apostles today filling the biblical office as in Matthew 10, Luke 6, Acts 2, 1 Corinthians 12:28.

1. The original twelve apostles were personally chosen by our Lord, Luke 6:12-13, Acts 1:21-22, and given the spiritual gift of apostleship, 1 Corinthians 12:31.
2. The original twelve apostles had personally participated in our Lord's earthly ministry for 3.5 years, Acts 1:21-26.
3. The original twelve apostles had received the baptism of repentance by John the Baptist, Acts 1:22.
4. The apostles Jesus chose personally witnessed their resurrected Lord and Savior, Acts 1:21-22.

Two kinds of Apostles In The New Testament Apostles of Christ and Apostles of the Churches

There are a few others in the Bible who were called apostles but there is no biblical record that they exercised the same apostolic authority as the original twelve. Don't miss this distinction. The original Twelve plus Matthias who replaced Judas Iscariot, Acts 1:23-26, plus the apostle Paul were "*apostles of Christ*," 1 Thessalonians 2:6, denoting the biblical office of apostle.

Beware of false apostles, (2 Corinthians 11:13, Greek, pseud-apostolos or false apostles) because there is an enormous difference between false apostles and apostolos or genuine apostles. Barnabas and others listed below were called

apostles in the sense of messengers sent by God and were (Greek: ἀπόστολος apostolos) “messengers” (or apostles) “of the churches,” 2 Corinthians 8:23, without holding the biblical office of apostle.

a. Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot, Acts 1:23-26 - "*Matthias... he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*" See also Acts 6:2, Luke 24:9, 33.

b. The apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:9 - was "*the least of the apostles*" whose apostleship was "*out of due time,*" 1 Corinthians 15:8. Paul had a special gift and calling from God to be an apostle on a level with the original twelve, Romans 1:1.

c. Andronicus and Junia, Romans 16:7, "*who are of note among the apostles.*" - apostles of the churches.

d. Barnabas, Acts 14:4 - "*the apostles, Paul and Barnabas.*" - Barnabas was an apostle of the churches, not an apostle of Christ.

e. James, the Lord's brother, Galatians 1:19 - "*the apostles... James the Lord's brother.*" - James was an apostle of the churches.

f. Jesus Himself, Hebrews 13:1 - "*Jesus the Apostle...*"

Judas is the only one of the original twelve apostles who was replaced. He was replaced by Matthias, Acts 1:23-26. There is nothing in the Bible which indicates any other of the original twelve apostles was replaced when he died. If it was God's will that there constantly be apostles on earth like the original twelve, we would expect to see the apostle James replaced after his death in Acts 12:2.

However, nothing in the Bible indicates that James was replaced. The language of 1 Corinthians 12:28, using the word "*first...*" and then the words, "*after that,*" indicates chronological progression in time, not that the church would always have men with the same gift of apostleship that Jesus gave His original twelve apostles. When Paul died, he was not replaced by a successor apostle.

Paul refers to himself as "*the apostle of the Gentiles,*" not an apostle of the Gentiles. In plainer words, in the Bible, there was one apostle to the Gentiles, not many apostles to the Gentiles, even though many of Paul's companions were sent to the Gentiles. Please note also that Paul refers to himself as an apostle "*as of one born out of due time.*" 1 Corinthians 15:8. In other words, Paul was an anomaly, an apostle born outside the time frame of the 12 apostles.

The narrowly focused specific definition of a biblical apostle denotes the scriptural office as an apostolic gift, 1 Cor 12:31. That gift must be differentiated from the more general use of the word, apostle, in which a Christian sent by God can be called an apostle, meaning simply: one whom God has sent.

Calling someone an apostle in the general sense does not mean that individual holds the office of an apostle or that one worked with Jesus in His earthly ministry or that one was water baptized by John the Baptist or that one possesses the spiritual gifts of first century apostleship, including power to do sign gifts, wonders and healings, which Jesus gave to His original twelve apostles and to Paul.

For example, we might say of someone who is especially kind and loving, "(S)he is an angel." We don't literally mean an angel in the sense of that race of created beings who dwell with God in heaven. We are using the word angel in a general sense when we describe a fellow human being. In the same way, we can refer to some Christians as apostles in a general sense without intending to convey the impression that they hold the biblical office of an apostle, with the biblical authority and implications and powers that conveys.

Are we making an artificial distinction? No, we are making a biblical distinction. In 1 Corinthians 12:29, Paul asks rhetorical questions, to all of which, the correct answer is, No. "*Are all apostles?*" The correct answer is No, all are not apostles. We can certainly say that all Christians are chosen of God and sent for specific purposes, Ephesians 2:10, but according to the Bible, all are not apostles because no believers have been given the gift of apostleship since the original apostolic age ended almost 2000 years ago.

Christians are told to "*covet earnestly the best gifts,*" indicating that the gifts Paul listed in 1 Corinthians 12, including being an apostle, are gifts not possessed by every Christian. The Bible also warns of "*false apostles,*" 2 Corinthians 11:13. The way to tell a false apostle is found in 2 Corinthians 12:12. False apostles must fake their power. They cannot perform real signs, wonders and miracles like real apostles, Matthew 10:1.

*"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you
in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
2 Corinthians 12:12*

A true apostle had authority and spiritual power from God to perform miracles which glorify God (not the apostle) and which authenticate the biblical message because the New Testament had not then been completed, Acts 5:12-16, Romans 15:18-19, Acts 19:11-12, Hebrews 2:4.

In Ephesians 2:20, apostles are the foundation, not the walls, not the windows, not the roof, not the entire building. A foundation is laid only one time at the beginning of a building project. Today, no one has apostolic qualifications because a biblical apostle was:

- a. One who had been baptized by John the Baptist, Acts 1:21-26
- b. One who was personally called by Jesus, Matthew 10:1-6
- c. One who was personally empowered by Jesus, Matthew 10:1
- d. One who was personally commissioned by Jesus, Matthew 10:15-15
- e. One who had walked with Jesus in His earthly ministry, Acts 1:21-22
- f. One who had seen the risen Christ, Acts, 1:22, 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8-9, Acts 1:22.

The replacement for Judas had to have seen Christ in His earthly ministry, 1 John 1:1. Christ does not appear in person to men today, John 16:10, 1 Peter 1:8, because He has ascended into heaven.

For I say, through the grace given unto me - Whatever good you are as a Christian, you are that good by the grace of God. The saved saints at Rome were also recipients of the grace of God, Romans 1:7. Are you aware of how much the grace of God permeates your life and the Christian life? _____
Give testimony about God's grace in your life. _____

It is God's will that no Christian think of himself *more highly than he ought to think* because arrogance and pride should find no place in the life of a Christian. It is God's will that we be realistic, honest, humble. That takes the grace of God. Don't be one of the Christians who rely on their own inner power or the power of positive thinking as the source of their strength. That isn't spiritual; that is fleshly. It is better to walk in the Spirit, Galatians 5:16, 25, and rely on God for strength and grace to be humble and not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, Galatians 2:20.

The apostle Paul needed grace, just like the rest of us need grace. Paul was not a super-Christian. He was a sold-out for Christ Christian. Christians like that, look like super-Christians to us because they are serious about their Christian life. Isn't it odd that a serious, committed, Christian disciple of Jesus stands out as a rare and unusual Christian? Why is that? _____

Committed humble Christians should be the norm but sadly, they are not. Serious Christians have just as many problems and struggles as anyone else but they work at finding biblical answers and biblical solutions to their problems.

They focus their life on serving Christ. Is serving the Lord Jesus Christ the focus of your life? _____ Why? _____

The Bible is the foundation of the world view of every serious Christian. Is what you believe, your world view, based on what the Bible says, in context? _____ If so, then you may be a serious Christian. If what the Bible says in context is not the basis of your world view, then you are not a serious Christian. Serious Christians don't seek spirituality outside of the Bible.

Serious Christians never introduce eastern mysticism into their life in the mistaken belief that eastern mysticism will make them more spiritual. Serious Christians don't consistently disagree with what the Bible says and what Jesus believed and taught. Serious Christians don't view what the Bible says in a negative light. Serious Christians are people who actually believe what the Bible says, in context. You can become a serious Christian by believing what the Bible says and making what the Bible says in context, the basis of your worldview.

to every man that is among you, - This is not something only super-Christians do. This is God's will for every Christian. If you've presented your body to God as a living sacrifice, you will tend not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. When Paul writes: *to every man that is among you*, he means: this is for everyone in the body of Christ, meaning, everyone who is saved, everyone who is born again, everyone who is redeemed, everyone who is in Christ. This isn't an exclusive club for only a few really great Christians. God expects every Christian to follow this instruction and live the transformed life.

When you get saved, you're in an entirely different situation from when you were lost and that new and different situation requires you to learn and grow and present your body a living sacrifice to the God who saved you. You're no longer a lone ranger. Because you've presented your body to God as a living sacrifice, God intends you to now function as part of the body of Christ, a body that is exponentially larger than you. The body of Christ has different goals, different interests, different purposes, into which you must figure out how to fit and of which, you are an integral part, Ephesians 2:10.

not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; - That describes pride. Pride is a genuine problem for Christians, including Christians in Rome when Paul wrote Romans, otherwise, Paul wouldn't have brought it up. Paul is continuing his thought from **Romans 11:18, 20, 21, 25**. Beware of pride, beware of conceit, beware of exalting yourself while belittling, deprecating and disparaging others. Paul's warning is as accurate and hard hitting today as it was when he wrote it in the first century.

Don't think less of the Jews because God broke off some of their branches and grafted you Gentiles in, in their place. Don't allow your thought life to be too critical of unbelieving Israel and don't think that you're a great Christian because you replaced unbelieving Israelites. Part of presenting your body a living sacrifice to God is humility - not thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to think.

Thinking of yourself *more highly than you ought to think*, in the context of Romans 11 and 12, points at Roman Christians who thought they were God's gift to the church because they had been grafted into the good olive tree when the Messiah-rejecting Jewish branches were broken off. Don't think that you are great because God cast away unbelieving Israel and put you saved Gentiles in their place, is Paul's warning.

Don't embrace what has come to be known as the TULIP false teaching of replacement theology - that the church has replaced Israel (making God a liar), and then view yourself as spiritual because you were dumb enough to fall for the false teaching of replacement theology. If you start your Christian life with that arrogant, conceited, proud, false presupposition, which Paul warned against, it will stunt your spiritual growth and skew your understanding of God's will for your life.

There are other examples in the NT, of churches who thought of themselves more highly than they ought to think. Those churches are the two most fleshly churches in the NT, the church at Corinth and the church at Laodicea. We noted first, that thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to think, described the church at Rome, thinking too highly of themselves because God grafted them in to replace the Jewish branches He had broken off.

Our second example is the church at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 4:6-7, notorious as one of the most carnal churches in the NT, a church full of sin and wicked practices, a church where spiritual gifts were often abused and a church full of self, where it was not unusual to think of men more highly than they ought to think or, above that which is written.

“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” 1 Corinthians 4:6-7.

Our third example is the church at Laodicea, Revelation 3:14-22, as famous as the church at Corinth for their cold-hearted carnality. The church at Laodicea seriously overestimated themselves. They thought they were fine when the reality was, they were as spiritually decrepit as a dead mackerel on the beach.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” Revelation 3:17.

Having an inflated opinion of yourself as a Christian is always foolish. You don't need to waste time on that foray into fleshly pride. *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”* Proverbs 16:18. Pride also makes it more difficult for you to fit into the body of Christ and do what God has for you to do in His service in the body of Christ because serving God requires humility. Don't worry. If you lack humility, God will help you with that.

but to think soberly, - Here, *to think soberly*, means: to be of sound mind, to be in your right mind, to see things clearly, to see things as they are, to recognize reality, to exercise self control so that you realistically assess yourself.

Don't overestimate yourself. The Greek word, σωφρονέω sō-phro-nay-ō, *soberly*, means to think accurately about yourself, instead of over-estimating yourself. It is used six times in the NT, translated, *in his right mind*, Mark 5:15, *in his right mind*, Luke 8:35, *soberly*, Romans 12:3, *sober*, 2 Corinthians 5:13, *sober minded*, Titus 2:6, *be ye therefore sober*, 2 Peter 2:7. It is used one other time in the NT, as an adverb, σωφρόνως sōphronōs, in Titus 2:12.

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”
Titus 2:12.

Living and thinking soberly is the opposite of ungodliness and worldly lusts. Living soberly is to live righteously and godly in this present world because you have presented your body to God as a holy living sacrifice. We are to live soberly because our faith and our gifts do not come from ourselves; they come from God.

Thinking you are wonderful because of the faith and gifts God has given you, is a surefire way to kill your joy in Jesus and sabotage your spiritual life. What are

some pitfalls of thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to think?
_____ What are some benefits of
thinking soberly? _____

according as God hath dealt to every man - to every man - Again a reminder that presenting your body to God as a living sacrifice is not something only preachers and super-Christians do. Presenting your body to God as a living sacrifice is for everyone who is saved. God is the source of your faith. Your faith doesn't originate in you. Your faith isn't the product of your own spirituality or your vision casting or your vivid imagination.

Therefore, because faith comes from God and is based on the written word of God, you can be as faithful a Christian as anyone else, as powerful spiritually as any other Christian, because God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. Faith comes from God. Is that clear to you? _____ Your desire and determination to live a life faithful to God is vitally important. You have the ability to be as strong a Christian as anyone else, through the power of God, Galatians 2:20. Have you memorized this verse yet? _____

**I live by the faith
of the Son of God
Galatians 2:20**

the measure of faith. - This is the the proportion of faith, the amount of faith that God gives to every Christian, *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*, Romans 12:3. If you are saved, God has given you *the measure of faith* and a measure of grace, enough so that you can live a fruitful, productive, successful Christian life.

When Jesus came to earth, God didn't give the Spirit by measure unto Him. Because He was God in the flesh, Jesus had the full measure of the Holy Spirit. We have all of the Holy Spirit we need but we don't have the Holy Spirit the way Jesus had the Holy Spirit, as John the apostle points out.

*“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God:
for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”*
John 3:34.

*“But unto every one of us is given grace
according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”*
Ephesians 4:7.

“But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.” 2 Corinthians 10:13.

*“For I say, through the grace given unto me,
to every man that is among you,
not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;
but to think soberly, according as
God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”*
Romans 12:3.

No Christian has an advantage over you because their faith is bigger or better than yours. God has dealt *to every man the measure of faith*. If you are a born again Christian, Christ dwells in your heart by faith, Ephesians 3:17, whether you have faith to believe that or not. Review and read Galatians 2:20 . When are you going to memorize Galatians 2:20? _____

Always remind yourself that your faith is the faith of Christ, based on God’s eternal power, God’s eternal truth and God’s eternal righteousness. If your faith came from you, it wouldn’t be enough to take you around the block. Since your faith comes from God, it will take you as far as you are willing to believe God and follow Christ, however long you live. Faith from God is inexhaustible and unquenchable.

According to Galatians 2:20, where does your faith come from? _____

12:4 - For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

For as we have many members in one body, - Everyone in the body of Christ has precisely the same spiritual blessings, Ephesians 1:3 but everyone in the body of Christ doesn’t have the same spiritual gifts given to them by God, 1 Corinthians 12:4ff, to minister to the body of Christ. Spiritual blessings are not spiritual gifts. Every Christian gets the same spiritual blessings. Spiritual gifts are different than spiritual blessings. Everyone doesn’t get the same spiritual gifts.

People get different spiritual gifts and all of the spiritual gifts are necessary to the functioning of the body of Christ. Some gifts may seem better than others. Some gifts may get more notice because they are publicly exercised but all of the gifts are important. God, in His perfect knowledge, has given you everything you need to serve Him. When Paul talks about the one body, he is talking about the church, Ephesians 1:22-23.

*“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head
over all things to the church, Which is his body,
the fulness of him that filleth all in all.
That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body,
and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places
might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,”
Ephesians 1:22-23, 3:6.*

and all members have not the same office: - It is peculiar that many professing Christians these days, when it comes to spiritual gifts, focus on the two least important gifts, tongues and interpretation of tongues, 1 Corinthians 12:4-31.

Most people are not called to be pastors or bishops or elders or deacons. Those three offices are for men whom God has called and gifted for the office He has called them to. Everyone must play the part God has given him.

12:5 - So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, - The body of Christ is unified. God designed it to work together as a unit, not as a bunch of lone rangers, each doing his own thing. Working with others as a group is not second nature to all of us. Some are better at it than others. Some of us need to learn how to work with a group since that doesn't come naturally to us.

However natural or unnatural it is to us to be a productive part of a group, *we, being many, are one body in Christ.* What does it mean to you, to be *one body in Christ*? _____

Can we learn to be a more effective part of the body of Christ? _____ List three things that would make you a more effective part of the body of Christ.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Does the truth that *we are one body in Christ* indicate that we have responsibilities to our brothers and sisters in Christ? _____ Do you have financial responsibilities, 1 John 3:17-18, to the rest of the body of Christ? _____ Do you have prayer responsibilities to the rest of the body of Christ?

_____ Do you have spiritual responsibilities to the rest of the body of Christ?

Please list other responsibilities that you can think of, that you have to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

and every one members one of another. - In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes the body as a unified whole, each part necessary and needed, even the parts we deem less lovely. Now, five years after writing 1 Corinthians, Paul is writing Romans and he returns to his practical theme about the unity of the body of Christ. The body of Christ should be unified. The body of Christ should work together to serve God. We are stronger together than we are alone. If we have trouble fitting into the body of Christ, we need to bring that trouble to God in prayer and seek His help.

Paul is intensely practical here. The church at Rome was a mixture of saved Jews and saved Gentiles. They came from different backgrounds, had different levels of education and different social status. It didn't always come natural to them to appreciate each other, to love each other or respect each other or work together in their service to Christ. And so, Paul points out the obvious - you are all members one of another. You're not in this alone. You shouldn't be in this alone. Christ doesn't intend you to be in this alone.

What does the Bible mean: *and every one members one of another*?
_____ Does that imply harmony or discord? _____ Does that imply fighting with each other or blessing each other? _____ Does that imply working alone or working with your brothers and sisters in Christ? _____

What does Paul want the church at Rome to be? **a.** An angry bunch of lone ranger Christians. **b.** A group of fiercely independent loners who won't work with each other. **c.** A loving group of Christians united in their desire to serve their living Savior together.

Paul and God expect the body of Christ to function as Paul describes in Romans 12. God expects us to be interested enough and serious enough to do

what Romans 12 beseeches us to do. Have you presented your body to God as a living sacrifice? _____ Are you going to do that? _____

You cannot function effectively as part of the body of Christ until you have obeyed Romans 12:1-2. In fact, the only way you can function effectively as part of the body of Christ is by obeying Romans 12:1-2. If you won't present your body to God as a living sacrifice, your effectiveness as part of the body of Christ is diminished. It takes the power of God to get along with the brethren.

To live above with saints we love,
O that will be glory!
To live below with saints we know,
Well, that's a different story.

12:6 - Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Having then gifts differing -

Having then gifts differing - Keep in mind the spiritual order in Romans. First you must be justified by faith, Romans 5:1. Then you must present your body to God as a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1. You cannot minister effectively in the body of Christ until you are justified by faith and have presented your body a living sacrifice. What is a spiritual gift? A spiritual gift is an aptitude, skill or talent given by the Holy Spirit to a believer, to be used in ministering to the church and to the body of Christ.

God gives us spiritual blessings, Ephesians 1:3, and spiritual gifts that transcend the natural, Romans 12:6. God's spiritual gifts are supernatural. That doesn't mean they are always sign gifts. It means they are gifts necessary to do the ministry God has for you. God's spiritual blessings are not given to puff us up or make us proud. The spiritual blessings and spiritual gifts God gives us, because they are supernatural gifts, allow God to work in us to produce supernatural results which glorify God.

The spiritual gifts Paul lists here in Romans 12 emphasize our unity in Christ, not our uniformity. There are service gifts and there are sign gifts. We all have spiritual gifts but they are not always the same gifts. Our unity is based upon all of us being in Christ, not all of us being automatons or carbon copies of each other. Paul begins his discussion of spiritual gifts but these are not the sign gifts he lists in 1 Corinthians 12.

The sign gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 get the most publicity and are the most sought after because they are flashy and fun and yet, in modern TV Christianity, they are often faux spiritual. Being an emotions centered Christian is easier than being a doctrine centered Christian. All of us need to strike a balance between emotions and doctrine. We need warm, loving hearts of service and we also need to know doctrine so that our practical service to God is biblical and not fleshly.

Warm Heart + Right Practice
is better than

Cold Heart + Right Practice
or
Warm Heart + Wrong Practice

Service gifts are more rubber meets the road gifts. They require consistent self-discipline, grit, determination and humility. Proud and fleshly Christians tend to gravitate toward the sign gifts, even if they have to fake them. In Romans 12:6, Paul describes service gifts - gifts of service to God (not sign gifts), Romans 12:11, which spring from Jewish and Gentile Christians presenting their bodies to God a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1, to bless and benefit the body of Christ. Paul lists seven service gifts, beginning in Romans 12:6.

gifts differing - Isn't that a great phrase, *gifts differing*? Paul is continuing his train of thought from Romans 11:11-21. Since the resurrection of Christ, everyone who gets saved is baptized into the body of Christ (no water involved) by the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:13. Since God put every one into the body of Christ and gave us different gifts - *gifts differing* - all of us are important to the healthy functioning of the body of Christ.

God didn't make all of us alike. We do not all have the same gifts from God. That's why Paul writes: *gifts differing*. We are not clones and we were not given a hive mind. We are all individuals who have freewill and different spiritual gifts but our individualism and freewill and different spiritual gifts should not make us proud or cause us to overestimate our importance.

Because God gave us His different spiritual gifts by grace, we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. We are not the source of our spiritual gifts; God is the source of our spiritual gifts. When we think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, we are comparing ourselves with others, thinking them down and thinking ourselves up. That is a sinfully wrong way to think because it comes from human pride and it leads us astray. Our pride can sabotage our effectiveness for Christ.

*“An high look, and a proud heart,
and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.”
Proverbs 21:4.*

*“He hath shewed strength with his arm;
he hath scattered the proud
in the imagination of their hearts.”
Luke 1:51.*

*“But he giveth more grace.
Wherefore he saith,
God resisteth the proud,
but giveth grace unto the humble.”
James 4:6.*

*“Likewise, ye younger,
submit yourselves unto the elder.
Yea, all of you
be subject one to another,
and be clothed with humility:
for God resisteth the proud,
and giveth grace to the humble.”
1 Peter 5:5.*

*“For we dare not
make ourselves of the number,
or compare ourselves with
some that commend themselves:
but they measuring themselves by themselves,
and comparing themselves
among themselves, are not wise.”
2 Corinthians 10:12.*

*“But why dost thou judge thy brother?
or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?
for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”
Romans 14:10.*

*“But it shall not be so among you:
but whosoever will be great among you,
let him be your minister;
And whosoever will be chief among you,
let him be your servant:*

*Even as the Son of man came not
to be ministered unto,
but to minister, and to give
his life a ransom for many.”
Matthew 20:26-28.*

In the particular context of Romans, Paul is focused on Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles serving each other in the body of Christ and through the body of Christ because that is the practical result of presenting our bodies to God as a living sacrifice.

The local New Testament church is God’s plan of evangelism and discipleship from the resurrection of Christ to the rapture, or, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*, Romans 11:25. All seven of the spiritual gifts listed in Romans 12 are gifts we can use to serve others in *the church, Which is his body*, Ephesians 1:22-23. Never forget that because you are saved, you are part of the body of Christ.

When you get saved, you get in Christ, and, in Christ, you are *a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*, 2 Corinthians 5:17. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*, Ephesians 2:10.

I encourage you to memorize Galatians 2:20 and daily remind yourself of who you are in Christ and from Whom the power comes to live for and serve Jesus.

*“I am crucified with Christ:
nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live by the faith of the Son of God,
who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
Galatians 2:20.*

according to the grace that is given to us, - God richly blessed us with His grace, mercy and favor. **Grace** is God’s unearned and undeserved favor. We didn’t earn it and don’t deserve it but God gives spiritual gifts to us by His grace. What we should do is humbly receive the grace and the spiritual gifts given unto us and then, minister that grace to others, using the spiritual gifts God has given us to bless others in the body of Christ.

The spiritual gifts God gives you when you get saved are not necessarily the natural abilities you had before you got saved. The gifts God gives are

supernatural gifts, supernatural in the sense that God gave them so you can serve Him and the body of Christ. Here's the reasoning. If the abilities you had before you got saved are the same as the gifts God gave you when He saved you, then they're not really gifts. You already had them before you got saved. Does that make sense to you? Therefore, your natural abilities before salvation and your spiritual gifts after salvation are not necessarily the same.

Service Gifts And Sign Gifts Are Different

Service gifts and sign gifts are not the same. They have different purposes. Sign gifts were given to the first century church before the NT was written and available, to authenticate the message and ministry of the apostles. Remember that the early church was mostly Jews who believed on Jesus as their Messiah, Matthew 10:5. Acts 11:19, 15:5, 12, 14-17, 23-31. The Jews require a sign, 1 Corinthians 1:22, 14:22.

So God gave them sign gifts. As time progressed and the NT books began to be written and copied and circulated and, as Gentiles began to get saved, the sign gifts began to die out, 1 Timothy 5:23, 2 Timothy 4:20, 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, and more emphasis began to be placed on service gifts instead of sign gifts, Romans 12:6ff.

When God gives us spiritual gifts, He expects us to use those gifts to glorify Him by serving the body of Christ, *the church which is His body*, Ephesians 1:22-23. That God has given us gifts implies: **a.** that God wants to use us to evangelize the world and grow the body of Christ, and, **b.** that God has also given us responsibilities to use the gifts He gives us, in His service, for His glory.

1. Do you know any of the gifts God has given you? _____
2. Please list some of the gifts God has given you? _____
3. Are you using the gifts God gave you to minister to the body of Christ, meaning, to minister to other Christians? _____

The Seven Service Gifts Listed In Romans 12

1. The gift of prophesy, 12:6
2. The gift of ministry, 12:7
3. The gift of teaching, 12:7
4. The gift of exhortation, 12:8
5. The gift of giving, 12:8

6. The gift of ruling, 12:8
7. The gift of shewing mercy, 12:8

whether prophecy, let us prophesy - A service gift is a supernatural gift from God, enabling you to serve God by serving the body of Christ, usually in your local church. The gift of prophecy here is one of the gifts that the Bible tells us, will pass away, 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. The gift of predictive prophecy was an important gift in the early church, 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 29, and was operative in the first century AD, 1 Corinthians 14:5, 9, but the gift of predictive prophecy is not operative today, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, because the canon of scripture is closed now, Revelation 22:18-19.

Because the Bible is complete, we are now focused on illumination of the truth in the Bible instead of predictive prophecy about the future and new revelation from God outside the Bible. The biblical view is that the gift of prophecy (but not predictive prophecy), is still operative today in the sense of 1 Corinthians 14:3, to teach the Bible and give edification, exhortation and comfort to Christians.

That part of prophetic ministry fits perfectly with 1 Corinthians 14:3. Some charismatics and Pentecostals and prosperity gospel grifters teach that the gift of prophecy means that predictive prophecy is operative today, the ability to receive and speak revelation from God that is equal in authority to the written words of scripture. That is a view never mentioned or taught in the Bible. We should also point out that Paul's understanding about prophecy trumps anyone else's understanding about prophecy, 1 Corinthians 14:37. Apostles are over prophets and prophets are not over apostles, Ephesians 4:11.

*“If any man think himself
to be a prophet, or spiritual,
let him acknowledge that
the things that I write unto you
are the commandments of the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 14:37.*

Why are the biblical offices of apostles and predictive prophets not operative today? Those offices were necessary in the first century church because: **1.** the NT was being written in the first century but, **2.** The NT was not yet completed and compiled into one book in the first century, and, **3.** The books of the NT which had been written by the time Paul wrote Romans were not easily accessible or widely copied and distributed in the mid-first century AD.

Paul defines the gift of prophesy as the ability to explain, teach and preach the scriptures to believers, 1 Corinthians 14:3, 22, in a way that is easy to understand, 1 Corinthians 14:9, Nehemiah 8:8. That is the biblical definition of prophesy from the great apostle who wrote 14 books of the NT.

When we say explain, teach and preach the scriptures, we're talking about mainly OT scriptures which pointed to Jesus as Messiah and Savior, since the NT wasn't available or completed in the mid-first century AD when Paul wrote Romans and 1 Corinthians. Remember that Paul follows Christ and does as the resurrected Christ did in Luke 24:25-27. Now that we have the NT, of course, teaching and preaching the scriptures includes both OT and NT.

Paul defines prophesy as: **1.** edification, **2.** exhortation, Acts 15:32, **3.** comfort, 1 Corinthians 14:3, Romans 15:4, **4.** understanding, 1 Corinthians 14:5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 22, and **5.** something revealed - making known something not previously known or making a spiritual truth clear that was not previously clear, 1 Corinthians 14:29-30.

In the case of something revealed by prophesy, the other prophets are supposed to judge if what was prophesied is truly from God, 1 Corinthians 14:29, by: **1.** discerning the spirits, 1 Corinthians 12:10 and, **2.** by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things, 1 Corinthians 2:12-16, and **3.** testing it by scripture. The Holy Ghost, aka, the Spirit of God shows what is real and what is false. The goal of prophesy relates to the body of Christ, *that all may learn, and all may be comforted*, 1 Corinthians 14:31.

In case anyone doubts what Paul says or disagrees with Paul's definition of prophets and prophesy, here is Paul's plain spoken, unapologetic response.

*“If any man think himself to be
a prophet, or spiritual,
let him acknowledge that the things
that I write unto you
are the commandments of the Lord.
But if any man be ignorant,
let him be ignorant.”
1 Corinthians 14:37-38.*

according to the proportion of faith; - This is *the measure of faith* that Paul mentioned in Romans 12:3. God has given every Christian *a measure of faith* or *the proportion of faith*, so that we can exercise our spiritual gifts in the body of

Christ. The NT prophets prophesied according to the proportion of faith. In plainer words, what they prophesied was supposed to come from God. It was not to be made up nonsense that came from the emotions or imaginations or opinions of the prophet. What the prophet spoke was supposed to come from God.

The other men in the church with the prophetic gift were then supposed to listen and judge what the prophet was saying, 1 Corinthians 14:29. This is a different kind of prophesy from foretelling the future and is also different from the prophesy found in the Bible which foretells future events. The kind of prophesy Paul is talking about is teaching God's truth, explaining God's truth, making God's truth clear to God's born again followers.

Have you seen fake prophet televangelist grifters on TV? When they say something like this, mark it down, they are using fake prophesy to scam you.

That's gold dust from heaven.
Those are angel feathers from heaven.
You are entering a season of testing.
You are entering a season of difficulty.
You are entering a season of blessing.
You are entering a season of opposition.
You are entering a season of abundance.
You are entering a season of sacrificial giving.
Warning dream - A terrible fierce storm is coming.
You are entering a season of fake prophetic scamming.

12:7 - Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: - Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles, Acts 9:15, Romans 11:13, 15:16, with genuine apostolic authority from God, Ephesians 4:11, instructs the Roman Christians to exercise the spiritual service gifts that God gave to them. *Let us wait* means to use your spiritual gifts. In plainer words, don't try to exercise gifts God didn't give to you. If God gave you the gift of ministry, then exercise the gift of ministry.

The Bible defines ministry for us in the following verses. The Greek word, διακονία diakonia, pronounced: dee-ah-kon-ee'-ah, means, a *helper* or *one who serves* or, *servicing*, Luke 10:40. It is the word from which we get our English word, *deacon*, Acts 6:1-8. A deacon is a servant, not a lord, not a boss, not a dictator, not a spiritual overlord.

Diakonia is also used to describe the disciples, including Judas, and the work they did in their apostolic ministry with Jesus, Acts 1:17, 25. Ministry can include caring for widows and orphans and fellow Christians who are poor, Acts 6:1, what some refer to as, deaconing, as well as, to the ministry of teaching the word and writing the word, Acts 6:4, like the apostles did.

Ministry also includes giving financially to help poor Christians, Acts 11:29. Ministry is also the term used to describe evangelism, witnessing and preaching the glorious gospel of Christ, Acts 12:24, 2 Corinthians 5:18. Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 12:5, that there are differences of administrations, meaning different kinds of ministries.

In all of the verses we've just read, the same Greek word for ministry, diakonia, is used. The goal of biblical ministry will always be: "*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*" Ephesians 4:12.

let us wait on our ministering - *Wait on our ministering* means to do the work of ministering. Get active in using your spiritual gifts. It doesn't mean to wait in the sense of, sit back and do nothing. *Wait on our ministering* means, get busy doing what God gifted you to do, focus your attention on obeying God, devote yourself to ministry, get serious and get busy for Jesus.

1. In your Christian life, what ministries are you doing for God, similar to the ones we've looked at here? _____
2. What are you doing in your day to day, week to week life, to minister to the body of Christ? _____

or he that teacheth, on teaching; - If God gifted you to teach, you should be exercising your teaching gift. Don't try to be a prophet or some other gifting. Exercise the gift God gave you instead of trying to use a gift God didn't give you. God gave you your gift so you can use it to glorify Him. The gift of teaching is sometimes linked to the gift of prophesy, Acts 13:1, 15:32. If God gave you both gifts, then it's perfectly fine to use both gifts. Do what God gifted you to do.

The Greek word for teaching is, διδάσκω didaskō pronounced: did-das'-ko. This word describes the teaching ministry of Jesus in Matthew 4:23, 5:2, 5:19, 7:29, 9:35, and also the teaching ministry of false teachers, Matthew 15:9, since it is a general word that means, teaching.

Obviously, God doesn't give saved people the gift of being false teachers. We can discover how Jesus taught by reading the gospels. Teaching is conveying

information in such a way that the hearers listen to truth, learn truth, believe truth and live truth in their personal lives.

12:8 - Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: - There are various forms of public ministry in the NT. Those forms of public ministry include: preaching, teaching, prophesying, healing, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and exhortation and witnessing. Sometimes these things were done together,

The Bible defines what it means to exhort in these verses. Answer the question for each verse below. What does it mean, to exhort, in this verse?

- Acts 2:40 _____
- Acts 14:22 _____
- Acts 18:27 _____
- Acts 27:22 _____
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1 _____
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14 _____
- 2 Thessalonians 3:12 _____
- 1 Timothy 2:1 _____
- 1 Timothy 6:2 _____
- Titus 2:6 _____
- Hebrews 3:13 _____
- Hebrews 10:25 _____
- Jude 3 _____

1. What should exhortation be based on, Acts 13:15? **a.** The Harry Potter novels, **b.** The daily horoscope, **c.** The teachings of Buddha, **d.** The written scriptures of the Bible, **e.** The latest news headlines, **f.** Plots from TV shows.

2. List three improper ways to do exhortation, according to 1 Thessalonians 2:3.

3. Is the Bible exhortation for Christians, Hebrews 12:5? _____ What are we exhorted not to do in Hebrews 12:5? _____

4. Are the books of the Bible exhortations to us, Hebrews 13:22? _____

5. Is using the Bible to challenge, encourage and exhort our brothers and sisters in Christ a good way to use scripture? _____ Why? _____

he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; - The Greek word translated, simplicity, here, is: ἀπλότης haplotēs, pronounced, hap-lot'-ace. It occurs eight times in eight verses in the Greek NT, where it is translated: *simplicity*, Romans 12:8, 2 Corinthians 1:17, 2 Corinthians 11:3, *liberality*, 2 Corinthians 8:2, *liberal*, 2 Corinthians 9:13, *singleness*, Ephesians 6:5, Colossians 3:22.

Simplicity as used here means, with singleness of heart, without hypocrisy or pretense, with sincerity and mental honesty, not with an ulterior motive, not self-seeking, with liberality, with generosity. Paul is our example for giving with simplicity. Some people like to make simple things complex, meaning, they do things with an ulterior motive which isn't always apparent upfront. Paul tells us not to do that when we're giving - *he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.*

Paul may also have Matthew 6:1-4, Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4, in mind when he speaks of *simplicity* in giving. Jesus warned His hearers not to give like the hypocrites, who made a big spectacle of their giving, parading through the streets so everyone would know how generous they were.

Some commentators believe that wealthy hypocrites, when they distributed their alms, had a trumpet sound before them, to let the poor know that alms were being distributed. Jesus cast a negative light on this practice because He knew they were hypocrites, giving to make themselves look good, not giving with simplicity from a loving heart toward God.

According to Jesus, the hypocrites had a trumpet sound even when they were giving in the synagogue. That is not giving with simplicity. If Paul came from a rich Jewish family, as seems likely, perhaps he personally witnessed his family or friends not giving with simplicity. Jesus says not to give in that loud flashy way because it indicates they are seeking *glory of men*, Matthew 6:2. According to Jesus, *glory of men* is the only reward they will get.

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.” 2 Corinthians 1:12.

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:” 2 Corinthians 9:7-8.

“But I fear, lest by any means,

*as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty,
so your minds should be corrupted
from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

2 Corinthians 11:3.

he that ruleth, with diligence; - ruleth - This refers to bishops, 1 Timothy 3:4-5, deacons, 1 Timothy 3:12, and elders, 1 Timothy 5:17, Proverbs 12:24. When we talk about ruling, the Bible defines ruling with diligence, in Proverbs 16:32.

The first thing to keep in mind, if you're going to rule, is, you need to know how to govern your own spirit before you can rule over someone else. If you can't rule yourself, you shouldn't be ruling your fellow Christians. There may be practical application here to the woke crowd who tell everyone else what to do when they have not even a tenuous grasp on reality.

Have you ever had a boss with a temper, who couldn't rule his own spirit, yet who often got angry and took out his anger on you and your co-workers? _____

*"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."*

Proverbs 16:32.

The second thing to keep in mind is, he that is slow to anger is the one that ruleth his spirit. It is possible to rule your spirit and not give in to your anger impulse. *Slow to anger* and *ruleth his spirit* go together. Think about that. A ruler should be slow to anger. If you have a hair trigger temper and can't even rule your own spirit, then you don't have the gift of ruling with diligence. A ruler should be someone who rules his own spirit. This service gift of ruling is not for everyone.

Ruling is a spiritual calling and a spiritual service, not a volunteer position. God calls men to rule with diligence. Ruling as Paul uses it in Romans 12:8 is about serving God, with the gift God gave you, in the local church, as a bishop, a deacon or an elder.

Pastors are not perfect people but if you're pastoring and you're constantly getting angry at your flock, you need to consider if you are man-called or God-called. If you have a temper you cannot control, you may be man-called and you may not have this service gift of ruling. If you cannot control your temper and you are quick to anger, you shouldn't be ruling over others until you learn to govern your own temper.

If you cannot control your temper, you cannot rule with diligence over others. God expects every man to govern his temper as a basic part of being a working, functioning human being. How much more should *he that ruleth* as a service gift have his temper under firm control?

*“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”
James 1:19-20.*

If you’re trying to exercise the service gift of ruling or bishoping or deaconing or eldering when you don’t have that service gift from God, lacking that service gift can lead to all kinds of trouble.

“All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.” Ecclesiastes 8:9.

“The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.” Ecclesiastes 9:1.

with diligence - Diligence is careful, persistent, hard working effort to complete your task or to reach your goal. Diligence comes from the Latin word, diligere, meaning: to value highly or to take delight in. When you do something with diligence, you delight in doing it the right way. Diligence is making an effort or going the extra mile to do everything right. Diligence means to delight in working efficiently, paying attention to small details so that you do it right.

The Bible comments on how to rule and explains what it means to rule with diligence, in 2 Samuel 23:3-4.

*“The God of Israel said,
the Rock of Israel spake to me,
He that ruleth over men must be just,
ruling in the fear of God.
And he shall be as the light of the morning,
when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds;
as the tender grass springing out of the earth
by clear shining after rain.” 2 Samuel 23:3-4.*

he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. - This reminds us of the teaching of Jesus. *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”* Matthew 5:7.

God blesses you when you are merciful. When you give out mercy, you get mercy in return, therefore, it's good to be merciful.

mercy with cheerfulness - This may be aimed at those in the church who ministered to the aged, the poor, the sick and the orphans and widows. Cheerfulness is part of the Christian gift of mercy. Have you ever been the recipient of uncheerful mercy? If you have, you know what Paul is talking about here. Sometimes people think they are showing mercy but they're grudging about it instead of cheerful. If you're showing mercy, you ought to be cheerful about it. Cheerful mercy makes a huge impact; grudging mercy not so much.

Why? Because with *cheerfulness* is how the Bible says to shew mercy. Notice how ruling and showing mercy are supposed to be done with delight and cheerfulness. Have you ever been the recipient of grudging mercy? They shewed you mercy but there was nothing cheerful about the way they showed mercy. That's the wrong way to show mercy. Shewing mercy should always be a cheerful endeavor. Godly mercy is happy, cheerful, delighted to show mercy.

After all, showing mercy is from God. Showing mercy is a ministry that originated in the love of God and when you show mercy you're representing God. That's why showing mercy should be a cheerful endeavor. Remember 2 Corinthians 9:7 - *God loveth a cheerful giver*. Be cheerful when you're giving financially and be cheerful when you're showing mercy to someone who needs mercy.

**Shewing mercy is your chance
to stand in for God
with a smile on your face.**

Do you think Christians are too unfriendly and unkind? _____ Do you think Christians represent Christ badly? _____ Here's your chance to represent Christ well by showing mercy with a kind word and a pleasant smile, with cheerfulness.

Step up to the plate and
show the rest of us how to do it right.

Coming up in verses 9 to 21 is a list of things that Christians who have presented their bodies to God as a living sacrifice should be doing. When we have presented our bodies to God a living sacrifice, we are enabled to do what the rest of Romans chapters 12-16 tells us. The question we should ask is:

Do I do any of that? _____ Could anyone look at my life and say, Yes, he does that; that's the way he lives his life as a Christian? _____ Every Christian should examine himself, to see if he is living as a genuine, Bible believing Christian. It's not as easy as some might think. Here is what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:5.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”
2 Corinthians 13:5.

Conclusions about our service gifts

1. Serve God instead of being a benchwarmer.
2. Serve God instead of boasting about your gifts.
3. Serve God instead of competing with the brethren.

12:9 - Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Let love be without dissimulation. - Why? Because if you're saved, love lives inside you so there's no reason for a Christian to fake love. Dissimulation means to fake love. God doesn't want us counterfeiting love, acting a part, faking it till we make it. As Christians, we already have real love inside us because Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. Two biblical examples of dissimulation by unbelievers are: Ezra 4:1-4 and Matthew 2:1-8.

Anyone can fake love. Actors do that all the time. God wants to produce genuine love in us and flow that love through us and out to a lost and lonely world. God doesn't need actors and actresses to put on a religious show. If you are faking love for others, then you probably haven't presented your body a living sacrifice unto God which is your reasonable service.

Dissimulation means: fakery, to disguise or conceal under a false appearance, to act like you love someone when you really don't. Dissimulation is duplicity, pretense, pretending it, faking it. Why on earth would Paul give us this warning about faking love? There must be a danger that we face concerning love.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” 1 John 4:8.

*“And because iniquity shall abound,
the love of many shall wax cold.”
Matthew 24:12.*

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,
gentleness, goodness, faith,” Galatians 5:22.*

*“And hope maketh not ashamed;
because the love of God is shed abroad
in our hearts by the Holy Ghost
which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5.*

*“But whoso hath this world's good,
and seeth his brother have need,
and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him,
how dwelleth the love of God in him?
My little children, let us not love in word,
neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”
1 John 3:17-18.*

*“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” 1 John 3:16.*

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.*

Is my love without dissimulation, hypocrisy, fakery? _____

Abhor that which is evil; - Abhor means to hate, to reject, to turn from, to abandon, to avoid. What Paul writes here is the opposite of Micah's prophesy about Judah's wickedness in Micah 3:2. Paul still has Israel/Judah's desperately rebellious condition on his heart and conscience, Romans 9:2-3, 10:1.

*“And I said, Hear, I pray you,
O heads of Jacob, and
ye princes of the house of Israel;
Is it not for you to know judgment?
Who hate the good, and love the evil;
who pluck off their skin from off them,
and their flesh from off their bones;”
Micah 3:2.*

*“Hate the evil, and love the good,
and establish judgment in the gate:
it may be that the LORD God of hosts
will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.”*
Amos 5:15.

Paul encourages Christians not to follow the example of ancient Israel, *Who hate the good, and love the evil*. We can sum up Romans 12:9 by saying: Christians should love what God loves and hate what God hates. That doesn't mean going around all day in a fury, full of hate and loathing and negativity, attacking people who disagree with you, God and the Bible.

Instead, it means standing with God and the Bible on whatever issues are the issues of the day. It doesn't mean caustic calumny, hurtful hatred and vicious vitriol. It means agreeing with God, loving what God loves and hating what God hates. That is impossible to do in our own strength. The only way we can do that is to present our bodies *a living sacrifice unto God* and be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

My renewed mind makes what the Bible says, in context, the basis of my worldview, so that I agree with God and the Bible. Then and only then can I love what God loves. Do you get it yet? This is supernatural living by the power of God. It isn't something we can do on our own. Have you memorized Galatians 2:20 yet? _____

**In the Bible, what does God hate?
Wise Christians hate what God hates.
Do you hate what God hates? _____**

1. A proud look
2. A lying tongue
3. Hands that shed innocent blood
4. An heart that divested wicked imaginations
5. Feet that be swift in running to mischief
6. A false witness that speaks lies
7. He that soweth discord among brethren. Proverbs 6:16-19
8. Evil
9. Pride
10. Arrogancy
11. The evil way.
12. The froward mouth. Proverbs 8:13
13. Your new moons and sabbaths (worship without faith). Isaiah 1:14
14. Robbery for burnt offering. Isaiah 61:8 (1 John 5:17)

- 15. Worshiping false gods. Jeremiah 44:4-5
- 16. The deeds of the Nicolaitans. Revelation 2:6
- 17. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Revelation 2:15

We need to do both parts of this command in Romans 12:9; otherwise we're doing it wrong. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. The problem with modern Christians is: They don't abhor that which is evil. Modern Christians hate to abhor that which is evil. They are so weak willed they don't want to abhor or hate anything. Abhor means: to hate extremely; to loathe, detest and abominate; to cast off, to despise, to reject. Do you have enough spiritual backbone to take a stand and *abhor that which is evil?* _____

Many Christians are so woke they cannot bring themselves to hate anything, especially evil. Instead of obeying this verse, they make nice with sin and evil. They don't hate sin. They don't hate lust. They don't hate cursing. They don't hate false teaching. They don't hate wickedness. They don't abhor evil. The problem is, we Christians don't feel about sin like God feels about sin because we don't take the Bible seriously. Christians often disagree with God about sin.

Do you know why this simple command in Romans 12:9 is so difficult for saved people to obey? They don't agree with God. They think God is too extreme. We need to remind ourselves: God can only be love if He hates evil. King David was not a born again Christian, since he lived under the law of Moses in the OT, before the time of Christ, yet King David was a man after God's own heart, 1 Samuel 13:14, Psalm 89:20, Acts 13:22. You can also be a man after God's own heart if you love what God loves and abhor/hate what God hates, Psalm 119:104, 128, 163.

We don't always know and don't like to think about the horrible effects of sin and the horrible consequences of evil in our lives and in the lives of unsaved sinners. We don't like to think about hell and the eternal lake of fire. God made evil to be the consequence of sin (or the result of sin). God made hell and the lake of fire to be the eternal destiny of all who reject God's salvation. God knows the horrors of hell because He created hell and He sustains hell and the lake of fire.

*“Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house,
lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it,
and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.”*

Deuteronomy 7:26 - Idolatry.

How do I know something is evil, so I can abhor it? What is my standard for determining what is evil? **a.** I decide based on how I was brought up. **b.** I decide

based on what the government says. **c.** I decide based on what cancel culture and modern society says. **d.** I decide based on what my pastor or priest tells me to think. **e.** I decide based on what the Bible says, in context.

Do I *abhor that which is evil* or do I entertain evil my daily life, through my habits? _____ Do I invite evil into my life through what I listen to, _____, through what I watch on TV, _____, through what I watch online, _____, through what I read, _____, through what I look at in a book or magazine, _____, through what I tolerate _____?

Do I make friends with and tolerate evil in my life or do I obey Romans 12:9 and abhor evil? _____ Do I need to make some changes? _____

cleave to that which is good. - Cleave is from the Greek word for glue. It is an hapax legomenon, one of many used by Paul, who had a large Greek vocabulary. Hapax legomenon transliterates the Greek phrase, *being said once*, meaning: a word that is only used one time in the Greek NT.

Do I cleave to that which is good or do I cleave to that which is evil? _____

Should I have a biblical standard for determining *that which is good*? _____ Should I know what the Bible says in context, to know what is evil and what is good in the eyes of God? _____ Can I wait until I'm retired, to take time to read the Bible and learn what the Bible says or should I be learning that now? _____

Verses about cleaving. Deuteronomy 4:4, 10:20, 11:22, 13:4, 30:20, Joshua 22:5, 23:8, 12, Jeremiah 13:11, Acts 11:23, 2 Samuel 23:9-10, 2 Kings 18:1-6.

Based on what the Bible says in those verses, what does it mean to cleave to something? _____

Do I cleave to that which is good? _____ List some things you cleave to that are good. _____

**In the Bible, what does God love?
Let's love what God loves.
Do you love what God loves? _____**

1. God loves Israel. Deuteronomy 7:6-8, Jeremiah 31:1-4
2. God loves the world. John 3:16
3. God loves Jewish disciples. John 15:12, 16:27
4. God loves born again Christians. John 16:27, 1 John 3:1

5. God loves righteousness. Psalm 11:7, 33:5
6. God loves judgment. Psalm 37:28
7. God loves the gates of Zion. Psalm 87:2
8. God loves the righteous. Psalm 87:8
9. God loves the Son. John 3:35, 5:20
10. God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

12:10 - Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Be kindly affectioned one to another - When Paul wrote this, the context was Gentile and Jewish Christians struggling to get along in the Roman churches. They didn't always understand each other and probably, they didn't always like and appreciate each other. Some of the brethren in Christ are easier to be kindly affectioned toward than others. Some are pretty easy to be kindly affectioned toward. Paul is giving practical advice to real people in the Roman churches.

Jesus is our example for being kindly affectioned and so is Paul. Paul put this at the beginning of the list of service ministry gifts because you cannot exercise the gifts he lists in verses 11-17, unless you practice Romans 12:10 first. If you aren't living Romans 12:10, you're living a sub-standard Christian life and you need to up your game.

Here is a difficult truth: As long as you are self-centered and self-focused, your practice of biblical Christianity will be anemic and weak. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you can change and grow and live Romans 12:10-17 but Romans 12:10 must be your starting point.

List seven kind and generous things you can and should do to stop being self-centered. _____

Am I kindly affectioned to my brothers and sisters in Christ? _____ In Romans 12-15, Paul intends to promote peace and harmony in the body of Christ, first in the church at Rome and also, in every church around the world for however long Christians read the Epistle to the Romans. This section of Romans is practical, rubber meets the road, kind and loving Christianity 101.

Kindly affectioned?
The default position of a Christian's unsaved flesh
is against God, for evil, for wickedness
because your flesh didn't get saved.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”
Romans 7:18.

Please let this truth become part of your biblical Christian thinking so that you're never again confused on this topic. The default position of your unsaved flesh is against God, toward evil, toward wickedness, Romans 7:18. Your flesh didn't get saved, didn't get eradicated, didn't get improved when you got saved. You can mark it down; your flesh hasn't gotten better since you got saved.

Your flesh isn't Godly, isn't Christian, isn't pro-truth, isn't pro-holiness. If you live to be 100, your unsaved flesh will always lean toward doing wrong, will always want to sin against God, will always rebel against God. Don't try to live as worldly as you can and hope that you can somehow manage your flesh. If you try that, your unsaved flesh will end up managing you. The only way to manage our unsaved flesh is by us presenting it to God as a living sacrifice.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:1-2.

That is the way God intends us to deal with our unsaved flesh. We present our bodies - that's your unsaved flesh - to God as a living sacrifice. People sometimes ask, How often must I present my body to God? You present your body to God as often as necessary. Do it on a daily basis or on an hourly basis if you are struggling with your flesh.

What is God's way to deal with your flesh?

Justification by faith - Roman 3:25-26
Identification - Romans 6:3-8.
The Spirit - Romans 7:24-8:1
Presenting your bodies - Romans 12:1-2.

Some Christians, even though they are saved, seem geared toward disagreement and disharmony. They are unhappy and they love spreading their

misery far and wide. Based on what Paul writes in Romans 12-15, there were simmering arguments and feuds between some of the Jewish Christians and some of the Gentile Christians in the church at Rome and everywhere else in the Roman Empire where the body of Christ gathered to worship God by learning Bible truth.

Some people thrive on conflict and since that trait is part of the flesh, that trait didn't get eradicated when they got saved. Paul wants none of that disharmony and disunity for the body of Christ. He wants saved Jews and saved Gentiles to get along with each other, to appreciate each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The idea is that the conflicts between Jews and Gentiles prior to getting saved, should not continue after salvation. Since both are in Christ, and both are part of the family of God and no longer enemies, Jews and Gentiles should exhibit the love of Christ for each other, Romans 13:8-9, 1 Peter 4:8.

with brotherly love; - Do I show brotherly love to my brothers and sisters in Christ? _____ Is my love for the rest of the family of God evident in the way I relate to others? _____ What does it mean to treat the brethren with brotherly love? _____

*“But as touching brotherly love
ye need not that I write unto you:
for ye yourselves are taught of God
to love one another.”
1 Thessalonians 4:9.*

How does God teach Christians to love one another? _____

in honour preferring one another; - Do I prefer my brothers and sisters in Christ, over unsaved folks? _____ Romans 15:26, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Acts 20:4, 2 Corinthians 8:9. The idea here is that your brothers and sisters in Christ should get first consideration. Paul has a purpose.

He knows there is discord between saved Israelites and saved Gentiles in the church at Rome. He is encouraging them to prefer one another, to become friends, to get to know and appreciate each other because of their bond in Christ. This applies not only to the church at Rome but to Christians in other churches, who have needs that can be met.

*“As we have therefore opportunity,
let us do good unto all men,
especially unto them
who are of the household of faith.”
Galatians 6:10.*

Have you ever mused on this? There is no little record, after the resurrection of Christ, of Paul and the apostles feeding unsaved folks or distributing money to unsaved folks. There was the Judean famine in AD 46-47, when disciples sent relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea, Acts 11:27-30, but that was for the Christian brethren.

The body of Christ took care of the body of Christ and preached the life saving gospel to the lost folks around them. In early Acts, the disciples had all things common and shared with each other for a while but that didn't last very long because of events like the Ananias and Sapphira incident in Acts 5.

Jesus fed multitudes of unsaved folks in the gospels. And when the children of Israel came out of Egypt and wandered for forty years in the wilderness, most of them were unsaved and God faithfully fed them. What about that? Should we keep doing that, feeding unsaved folks? Is that our biblical responsibility as Christians on the grace side of Calvary? _____ What is your biblical support for your view? _____

In the gospels, the Jewish Messiah was ministering in person to the Jewish nation, to bearded, circumcised, pork abstaining, law keeping, Moses following, sacrifice offering, temple worshipping, sabbath keeping Jews living under the law of Moses in the land of Israel. After the resurrection of Christ, everything changed.

Evangelism continued to be focused on Israel for a while, although national Israel continued to reject the glorious gospel of Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Timothy 1:11. Because of that rejection, there was a gradual turning away from Israel, because Israel rejected the gospel and their Messiah and so, the gospel of Christ segued to the Gentiles, as recorded in Acts 13:46, 18:5, 28:28.

12:11 - Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Not slothful in business; - As long as you are slothful, you will never be a good Christian. That should be on a tee shirt. Slothful means lazy, shiftless, idle, layabout, sluggard, unwilling to work. Some people are not lazy in their job but

they tend to be lazy in their Christianity and their spiritual life. The Bible has a lot to say about lazy/slothful and none of it is good.

“And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.”

Judges 18:9.

“The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.” Proverbs 12:24.

“The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.” Proverbs 15:19.

“He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.” Proverbs 18:9.

“Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” Proverbs 19:15.

**You cannot be slothful,
and still be a good Christian.**

“A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.” Proverbs 19:24.

“The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.” Proverbs 21:25.

“The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.” Proverbs 22:13.

*“I went by the field of the slothful,
and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
and nettles had covered the face thereof,
and the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I saw, and considered it well:
I looked upon it, and received instruction.
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth;
and thy want as an armed man.”* Proverbs 24:30-34.

“The similitude is drawn from the two sources of Eastern terror: the "traveler," i.e., "the thief in the night," coming suddenly to plunder; the "armed man," literally "the man of the shield," the armed robber. The habit of indolence is more fatally destructive than these marauders.” Barnes’ Notes On The Bible, Proverbs 6:11.

*“The slothful man saith,
There is a lion in the way;
a lion is in the streets.
As the door turneth upon his hinges,
so doth the slothful upon his bed.
The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom;
it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.
The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit
than seven men that can render a reason.”*
Proverbs 26:13-15.

*“By much slothfulness
the building decayeth; and
through idleness of the hands
the house droppeth through.”*
Ecclesiastes 10:18.

*“His lord answered and said unto him,
Thou wicked and slothful servant,
thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not,
and gather where I have not strawed:”*
Matthew 25:26.

The Lord was angry with this man, not because he didn’t have talent and opportunity but because he was slothful and didn’t use his talent and opportunity for the Lord. According to Jesus, this man was wicked and slothful.

Did you get that? Being slothful is wicked. Slothfulness isn’t neutral. It’s not a minor transgression. Jesus said, Being slothful is wicked. In what ways are you slothful in your Christian life? _____

*“That ye be not slothful,
but followers of them
who through faith and patience
inherit the promises.”*
Hebrews 6:12.

Slothful is about more than physical laziness. Spiritual slothfulness is as bad or worse than physical laziness. Slothful means lazy, indolent, sleeping when you should be working. Don't be lazy. Keep up! Don't be lazy. Follow us! Don't be lazy. Treat serving Jesus like you're a serious Christian! Don't be lazy. Work for Jesus consistently, day in, day out, even when you're not getting recognized! Don't be spiritually lazy. Jesus is watching you!

*“And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her,
Thou God seest me: for she said,
Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?”
Genesis 16:4.*

*“For the ways of man
are before the eyes of the LORD,
and he pondereth all his goings.”
Proverbs 5:21.*

*“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes:
but the LORD pondereth the hearts.” Proverbs 21:2.*

*“If thou forbear to deliver
them that are drawn unto death,
and those that are ready to be slain;
If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not;
doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?
and he that keepeth thy soul,
doth not he know it?
and shall not he render to every man
according to his works?
”Proverbs 24:11-12.*

They're passing, passing, fast away,
Two hundred thousand souls a day;
They're passing to their doom!

Am I slothful in business? _____ Am I slothful in doing the Lord's business?
_____ Am I lazy and slap dash in the way I live my life? _____
Do I serve God as if God is watching me? _____ Do I serve God as if I will
surely give account to Him some day, Romans 14:10? _____

fervent in spirit; - *Fervent* means to burn with a passionate intensity. Being *fervent in spirit* is to be on fire for Jesus, to be fired up for Jesus. If you are not *fervent in spirit*, you will never be much of a Christian, therefore you need to

figure out how to be *fervent in spirit*. How does a Christian cultivate a *fervent spirit*? Using the list below, list three or four ways you can do each of the following nine points.

1. Let go of the world.
2. Stop feeding the flesh.
3. Stop starving the spirit.
4. Start walking in the Spirit
5. Start walking in holiness.
6. Start reading the Bible.
7. Start studying the Bible.
8. Start memorizing Bible verses.
9. Start loving the brethren.
9. Start living for Jesus every day.

*“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord;
and being fervent in the spirit,
he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord,
knowing only the baptism of John.”
Acts 18:25.*

*“And not by his coming only,
but by the consolation wherewith
he was comforted in you,
when he told us your earnest desire,
your mourning,
your fervent mind toward me;
so that I rejoiced the more.”
2 Corinthians 7:7.*

*“Confess your faults one to another,
and pray one for another,
that ye may be healed.
The effectual fervent prayer*

of a righteous man availeth much.”

James 5:16.

*“And above all things
have fervent charity among yourselves:
for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”*

1 Peter 4:8.

Am I fervent in spirit? _____ Do you know any Christians who are fervent in spirit? _____ Apollos in Acts 18:25, was fervent in the spirit. How was the fervency in spirit, of Apollos, made known? _____
What can I learn from the example of Apollos? _____

**Only one life, 'twill soon be passed.
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

- C.T. Studd

serving the Lord; - At the judgment seat of Christ, you are going to be judged according to how you served the Lord. Were you fervent in spirit? The life you are living now is not a dress rehearsal. The life you are living now is the real thing. You will not get a do-over of your Christian life. You should be serving God now instead of putting off serving God while you waste your Christian life doing things that will not count for eternity.

**If you are not serving the Lord,
you are serving your fleshly lusts.**

You can try to dress it up and make excuses but those are the only two options. If you are a Christian, you should be serving God now. If you're not serving God now, whatever else you're doing, according to Titus 3:3, you are living like an unsaved man.

*“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind,
and with many tears, and temptations,
which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:”*

Acts 20:19.

*“Unto which promise our twelve tribes,
instantly serving God day and night,
hope to come.*

*For which hope's sake, king Agrippa,
I am accused of the Jews.” Acts 26:7.*

*“For we ourselves also were sometimes
foolish, disobedient, deceived,
serving divers lusts and pleasures,
living in malice and envy,
hateful, and hating one another.”*
Titus 3:3.

serving the Lord - No one serves the Lord by accident. Serving the Lord is intentional; it takes thoughtful preparation and planning. Serving the Lord is responding in obedience to God’s call upon your life. God’s call upon your life is found in Romans 12:1-2. God has asked you to serve Him. Are you serving Him? _____ How are you serving God? _____

**What does it mean to serve the Lord?
Using the list, can you figure out
ways to serve the Lord?**

Acts 20:19 tells us that serving the Lord requires humility. Here are some indicators about serving the Lord. Circle the ones below, which indicate you are serving the Lord.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. I am proud. | I am humble. |
| 2. I am obedient. | I am disobedient. |
| 3. I read my Bible. | I don’t read my Bible. |
| 4. I witness to the lost. | I don’t witness to the lost. |
| 5. I give money to the Lord’s work. | I don’t give money to the Lord’s work. |
| 6. I pray for lost folks to get saved. | I don’t pray for lost folks to get saved. |
| 7. I pray for wisdom to serve God. | I don’t pray for wisdom to serve God. |
| 8. People know I am a Christian. | People don’t know I am a Christian. |
| 9. I am willing to help others. | I am not willing to help others. |
| 10. I seek ways to serve God. | I do not seek ways to serve God. |
| 11. I want my life to count for Christ. | I don’t care if my life counts for Christ. |
| 12. I hang out in bars and don’t witness there. | I don’t hang out in bars. |
| 13. I listen to vulgar music. | I don’t listen to vulgar music. |
| 14. I’ve never listed ways to serve the Lord. | I’ll list ways I can serve the Lord. |

**When is the right time
to serve the Lord?**

Serving the Lord doesn’t mean, I’ll serve the Lord in ten years, after I get my career established. *Serving the Lord* doesn’t mean, I’ve got a lot on my plate right now but by next fall, I’ll have some free time to serve the Lord.

Ultimately, for a Christian who has presented his body to God as a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1-2, every part of your life is sacred. Whatever you do, keep in mind that you are God's, your body is God's, God has a plan for your life, Ephesians 2:10, and everything you do should glorify God.

*“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee,
but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways,
and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God
with all thy heart and with all thy soul,”
Deuteronomy 10:12.*

According to Deuteronomy 10:12,
how should you serve the LORD?

*“Serve the LORD with gladness:
come before his presence with singing.”
Psalm 100:2.*

*“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed,
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
Colossians 3:17.*

*“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do,
do all to the glory of God.”
1 Corinthians 10:31.*

*“If any man speak,
let him speak as the oracles of God;
if any man minister,
let him do it as of the ability which God giveth:
that God in all things may be glorified
through Jesus Christ,
to whom be praise and dominion
for ever and ever. Amen.”
1 Peter 4:11*

12:12 - Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Rejoicing in hope; - This is possible because of the mercies of God, Romans 12:1. The source of our rejoicing is the risen Christ, indwelling our hearts by

faith. Having a rejoicing heart in difficult circumstances is not always easy. The way to have a rejoicing heart is to remember who you are and Who indwells your heart by faith, Ephesians 3:17.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.
-Helen Howarth Lemmel, 1922, 1863-1961

Do you stop rejoicing when something annoying happens to you? _____

patient in tribulation; - This is possible because of the mercies of God. It helps greatly to be patient in tribulation if you're already rejoicing in hope, since those things go together. This is rubber meets the road truth. Everyone who lives in this world, saved or unsaved, is going to have trouble and tribulation. Unsaved people have tribulation and they don't have the indwelling Holy Spirit and the indwelling Christ to help them through it.

And yet, some unsaved people have such a good attitude in their trouble and tribulation. No one gets through life without sorrow and suffering, trials and tribulations. The question is, Am I as a Bible believing Christian, patient in tribulation? _____ How can I do better? _____

Are you as a Christian, patient in your daily life, under normal circumstances? If not, how are you going to be patient in tribulation? _____

continuing instant in prayer; - This is possible because of the mercies of God. *Continuing instant* means, praying to God is your first go to when you're facing a problem or when your temper and your big mouth has got you into trouble. *Continuing instant in prayer* doesn't mean, I'll try everything else first, before I pray to God. *Instant* means, I'll pray right NOW. *Instant* means, prayer is my first resort, not my last resort. *Instant* means, I've developed or am developing a consistent prayer life and I'm not a stranger to prayer since prayer is a daily part of my life.

Continuing instant in prayer also means, to be consistent in your prayer life, to keep praying, regardless of opposition and tribulation, 2 Timothy 4:2. Part of growing up is learning how to live and then, consistently doing the things that make you a successful adult. One of the most important parts of growing up in Christ is prayer. Does anyone know you as a prayer warrior? _____ Do

people ask you to pray for them in their troubles and trials? _____ Are you working to develop a consistent prayer life? _____

Many Christians have a slapdash approach to the Bible and to their Christian life. It can be difficult to identify them as Christian because they live just like a lost man lives. They have not developed a consistent way of Bible reading, a consistent way of Bible study, a consistent way of memorizing scripture, a consistent prayer life, a consistent approach to giving financially to the Lord's work, a consistent approach to witnessing. Think about that. Meditate on that anomaly among Christians and puzzle over it for a while. An anomaly is that which deviates from the standard, from what is normal, from what is expected.

If you needed open heart surgery, would you want a surgeon who was lazy and inconsistent in his home work assignments in med school, a surgeon inconsistent in his surgical skills and techniques, a surgeon who never bothered to memorize the heart with its arteries and chambers? Christians need to develop consistency in living the Christian life, consistency based on what the Bible says in the Pauline epistles about living the Christian life.

Do I continue instant in prayer, even when I don't get an immediate answer from God to my prayers? _____ If not, why not? _____

12:13 - Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Distributing to the necessity of saints; - This is possible because of the mercies of God. *Saints* here is from the Greek word, ἅγιος *hagios*, pronounced: hag'-ee-os. It means, holy, and is translated, holy, 181 times in the NT. When your KJV says Holy Ghost, it is translating the Greek word, *hagios*, as Holy.

When used to describe saved people, saints means: believers, followers of God in the OT and, in the NT, born again believers wherever the word, *saints*, is used. The word *saints* occurs in the Bible 96 times and the word *saint* occurs 5 times. Never in any of those 101 uses does *saint* or *saints* ever refer to Mormons or Latter Day Saints.

Distributing to the necessity of saints is biblical instruction about how to live in helpful harmony with your fellow Christians. Do you help fellow Christians when you know they have genuine needs? _____ Why? _____
What do you think they were distributing? _____
What needs were they meeting? _____

Notice that Paul isn't telling us, in Romans 12, to go feed and clothe the unsaved. If you feel led by the Holy Ghost to feed and clothe the unsaved, go ahead and obey. But when you do that, prioritize the value of their soul over the needs of their physical body. Care enough about the unsaved folks you are feeding to give them the glorious life-saving, life-changing gospel of the risen Christ to them. Have I ever helped fellow Christians who are poor and needy? _____ Here are some people you may be able to help by *distributing to the necessity of saints*.

1. Do you know any Christians in a wheelchair?
2. Do you know any Christians with mental problems?
3. Do you know any Christians with spiritual problems?
4. Do you know any Christians with financial problems?
5. Do you know any Christians with emotional problems?
6. Do you know any Christians with a chronic health condition?
7. Do you know any Christians with a severe chronic health condition?

given to hospitality. - The hospitality Paul recommends here in Romans 12:13 is hospitality to fellow Christians. This is in the context of: *distributing to the necessity of saints*. Hospitality is for people in need. Hospitality isn't throwing a party for your healthy and wealthy friends. Hospitality is Bible code for ministering to broken, hurting, needy saved sinners, whom God wants to love through you. Are you given to hospitality? _____ Can God love the broken, the hurting, the needy in your life, through you? _____ Am I a Christian who is given to hospitality? _____ If I practice hospitality, what would that look like? _____

Hospitality or, loving strangers was a necessary part of life in the ancient near east. Everyone in Bible times was familiar with what it meant to be hospitable. Can you write down a Bible example, OT or NT, of being hospitable or not being hospitable? _____

Hospitality was vitally important to God in the OT. Not only was OT Israel commanded to treat strangers with kindness, God also commanded OT Israel to love strangers as they love their neighbors. All of the strangers Israel was commanded to love were Gentiles, meaning, non-Jews, people who didn't love the true and living God, people who didn't keep the law of Moses. In other words, loving strangers wasn't an easy command to obey.

The problem in the church at Rome was, Jewish Christians didn't always love Gentile Christians and Gentile Christians didn't always love Jewish Christians. Paul intends to correct that problem by telling Roman Christians to do the right

thing because doing the right thing, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will help all of you get your hearts right and start treating each other right.

*“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge
against the children of thy people,
but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself:
I am the LORD.”*
Leviticus 19:18.

*“But the stranger that dwelleth with you
shall be unto you as one born among you,
and thou shalt love him as thyself;
for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.
I am the LORD your God.”*
Leviticus 19:34.

The OT is clear about hospitality and loving strangers. What does the NT say about hospitality and loving strangers?

1. The Testimony of Jesus About Hospitality.

Capernaum was one of the places Jesus lived during His earthly ministry to Israel. It was the scene of several important stories in the gospels. The Pharisees were often adversarial and once asked Jesus this question. *“Which is the great commandment in the law?”* Matthew 22:36-40.

Jesus looked the Pharisee legalists in the eye and calmly paraphrased Leviticus 19:18 and 34, the hospitality ethic. *“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*

I'll bet those ancient Pharisees were as angry and disappointed with the answer Jesus gave as modern Pharisees seem to be. What is it about Pharisees in any age that they love to disagree with Jesus? It's almost as if they've taken seminars on how to be obnoxious or how to always get it wrong or how to claim to be a Christian while disagreeing with the Lord Jesus Christ.

For Jesus, life was about "loving strangers" and showing hospitality to people who were rejected. For Jesus, life was about "philoxenia" or hospitality. For Jesus, life was about ministering to people about whom no one else cared.

According to Jesus, loving God and loving neighbor were the most important commandments in the law. If we had to boil down all of the law and the prophets to just two succinct and pithy propositions, according to Jesus they would be:

1. Love God.
2. Love your neighbor.

These two commandments sum up the entire Old Testament but have you ever tried to obey those two simple commands? It's not as easy as it sounds. Modern Christians need to meditate on Jesus' response to the Pharisees in Matthew 22:36-40.

2. The testimony of Jesus about inhospitality.

Jesus points out the rude inhospitality He received from Simon the Pharisee, Luke 7:44-46. In the ancient near east, a host showed hospitality to his guest by treating him with loving kindness.

Providing water for washing the feet, greeting a guest with a kiss on both cheeks, offering olive oil scented with fragrant spices to anoint the hair, demonstrated hospitality - loving strangers - in a practical way.

Inhospitality, which could be defined as not loving strangers, was a huge and grievous sin to our pre-Christian ancestors and to Jesus. The Sodom story in Genesis 19 is an example of Inhospitality but what about Inhospitality in the New Testament?

During His earthly ministry, when Jesus visited the home of Simon the Pharisee, Simon performed none of those hospitable acts and Jesus publicly remarked on it to Simon.

*"I entered thine house,
thou gavest me no water for my feet...
Thou gavest me no kiss...
My head with oil thou didst not anoint."
Luke 7:44-46.*

In Psalm 23:5, David is full of thanksgiving because Jehovah anointed his head with oil. Simon the Pharisee is not at all like our heavenly Father and Jesus points out Simon's inhospitality. Hospitality was such an important issue to our Lord Jesus that it is the only sin He mentions when He discusses Sodom, Matthew 10:15. When Simon the Pharisee did not treat Him hospitably, Jesus rebuked Simon publicly, in front of the other guests. Isn't that interesting? Isn't that remarkable?

3. The testimony of the New Testament about hospitality.

In the New Testament, under grace, there is as much emphasis on "loving strangers" and showing hospitality as there is in the Old Testament, under law.

a. Christians are commanded to be hospitable to strangers.

*“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers:
for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”
Hebrews 13:2.*

b. Paul tells us Christians should be “*given to hospitality.*” Romans 12:13.

The Greek word *philoxenia*, translated “*entertain strangers*” in Hebrews 13:2, is translated “*hospitality*” in Romans 12:13. *Philoxenia* literally means “loving strangers.”

c. One of the requirements for the office of bishop in the New Testament Church was to be “*given to hospitality.*” 1 Timothy 3:2.

d. One of the requirements for an ordained elder was to be “*a lover of hospitality.*” Titus 1:8.

e. Peter reminds Christians to “*Use hospitality one to another without grudging.*” 1 Peter 4:9.

12:14 - Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

Bless them which persecute you: - This is possible because of the mercies of God. That wasn't the attitude of the disciples of Jesus in Luke 9:51-56. They wanted to kill the Samaritans for rejecting the gospel. The disciples of Jesus were just as human as you and me. They were not super-Christians who did everything right. The Christian life is about growing spiritually and learning to live for Jesus day by day until our lives are fruitful for God, day in and day out.

Bless them which persecute you? “Really Lord? Can't I just tithe?” Judges 2:1-5, Acts 10:13-15, 28, 11:5-9.

Have I ever blessed people who persecute me? _____ 1 Corinthians 4:12-17 provides good commentary on Romans 12:14. List three lessons we can learn from 1 Corinthians 4:12-17, about blessing them which persecute you.

- 1.
- 2.

3.

bles, and curse not. - Have you ever responded to persecution with cursing? _____ Have you ever responded to persecution with blessing instead of cursing? _____ Can you testify to how this worked out for you in a real situation in your life? _____ Is this an area of your life in which you need to improve? _____

*“But I say unto you, Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them which
despitefully use you,
and persecute you;”
Jesus - Matthew 5:44.*

12:15 - Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, - This is possible because of the mercies of God. This requires a balanced Christian life. The Christian life isn't all rejoicing and isn't all weeping. Romans 12:15 is about ministering. It's about getting over yourself and reaching out to people who are hurting more than you. It seems counterintuitive but when you minister to others, in the midst of your hurting, in the midst of your storm, God blesses your faithfulness and magnifies your influence for Him.

Do I rejoice with them that do rejoice? _____ Proverbs 26:4-5

and weep with them that weep. - This is possible because of the mercies of God. Jesus could weep with them that weep in John 11:33-46. Follow Paul's reasoning here. He has given us instructions about the body of Christ in Romans 12:4-5. We are one body. We are related to each other by the blood of the risen Christ. This command grow out of the truth that we are all one body in Christ.

We are members one of another, 1 Corinthians 12:26-27. We are a family because we are all adopted into the family of God, Romans 8:15, 23, Ephesians 1:5. For those reasons, we are to weep with them that weep. We share the same heavenly Father. For that reason, we share loving sympathy with those of the local body who are enduring heartache and loss. Do I follow the example of Jesus and weep with them that weep? _____ How can I be helpful to my brothers and sisters in Christ who are hurting? _____

12:16 - Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Be of the same mind one toward another. - This is possible because of the mercies of God, Romans 12:1. On a practical level, in the first century context of the Roman church, this is Paul's instruction to help saved Jews and Gentiles in the church at Rome get along with each other in the body of Christ. Early in Acts, in the Jerusalem church, there were problems between saved Grecians and saved Hebrews, Acts 6:1.

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.”
Acts 6:1.

To God, there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, Acts 15:9, Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11, as far as salvation and spiritual blessings are concerned, therefore, saved Israelites should not treat saved Gentiles differently than they treat other saved Israelites. And by the same token, Paul warns saved Gentiles not to think themselves better than saved Jews just because God removed some of the unbelieving Jewish branches from the olive tree.

1. *“Boast not against the branches”* Romans 11:18.
2. *“Be not high-minded, but fear”* Romans 11:20.
3. *“take heed lest he also spare not thee”* Romans 11:21.
4. *“I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant”* Romans 11:25.
5. *“lest ye should be wise in your own conceits”* Romans 11:25.
6. *“not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think”* Romans 12:3.
7. *“Be not wise in your own conceits.”* Romans 12:16.

Be of the same mind - Problems between saved Jews and saved Greeks were common as Jews and Gentiles spent much of the first century learning to live together and get along as members of the body of Christ, Romans 11:18, 20-21, Acts 10:15, 28, 35, 15:1, 5, 19-20, 30-31, 21:20, 24-25, Ephesians 2:11-19, 1 Timothy 5:19-21, 2 Peter 3:8.

Because we all share the same Savior, there should be unity in the body of Christ. *Be of the same mind* is talking about unity of purpose, sharing the common goal of living for the Lord, glorifying God and preaching the gospel to evangelize the world. The church after all, is supposed to demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God. Ephesians 3:1-11. That is Paul's explanation of what it means to *be of the same mind*.

*“Finally, brethren, farewell.
Be perfect, be of good comfort,
be of one mind, live in peace;
and the God of love and
peace shall be with you.”
2 Corinthians 13:11.*

*“Fulfil ye my joy,
that ye be likeminded,
having the same love,
being of one accord, of one mind...
For it is God which worketh in you
both to will and to do
of his good pleasure.”
Philippians 2:2, 13.*

*“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche,
that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”
Philippians 4:2.*

*“I charge thee before God,
and the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the elect angels,
that thou observe these things
without preferring one before another,
doing nothing by partiality.”
1 Timothy 5:21.*

*“Finally, be ye all of one mind,
having compassion one of another,
love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:”
1 Peter 3:8.*

Mind not high things, - Paul warns against being hoity-toity, high and mighty. He warns against thinking yourself better than other believers, warns against the kind of conceit that makes you think less of your brothers and sisters in Christ.

On the other hand, God expects us to recognize reality. We are not supposed to ignore sin or refuse to call sin sin. Do I mind high things? _____

but condescend to men of low estate. - This is possible because of the mercies of God. *Condescend* means: to voluntarily put aside your dignity or superiority and assume equality with someone you regard as inferior in ability, education and knowledge. Condescend can also mean: to yield to.

As Paul uses it here, condescend does not mean to have a patronizing attitude or a superior attitude toward others. This instruction may be aimed particularly at saved Jews who were well educated, sometimes well off financially and well instructed in OT law. Men of low estate may be the rude, crude, not as well educated Gentiles who got saved out of pagan religions. Paul wants the wealthy educated saved Jews to treat the rude crude saved Gentiles with lovingkindness, Romans 12:10.

1. How might *condescend to men of low estate*, look in our twenty first century world? _____

2. Do I *condescend to men of low estate*? _____

Be not wise in your own conceits. - This is possible because of the mercies of God. Paul repeats his argument from Romans 11:25 - *lest ye should be wise in your own conceits*. Wise in your own conceits refers specifically to saved Gentiles thinking they're better than unsaved Jews because God cut some Jewish branches out of the good olive tree and grafted in some Gentile branches from the wild olive tree. Why does Paul mention this twice in such close proximity, Romans 11:25 and 12:17?

There was a problem in the church at Rome, unnecessary friction between saved Gentiles and saved Israelites. That is probably why Paul spends time in Romans 12, 13 and 14, teaching about how the body of Christ ought to work. Paul wants the pride and conceit stopped because conceit springs from unwarranted pride and *pride goeth before destruction*, Proverbs 16:18.

“Seest thou a man
wise in his own conceit?
there is more hope of a fool
than of him.” Proverbs 26:12.

What is an example of being wise in your own conceits in the twenty first century? _____

12:17 - Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

**How Christians should respond
to antagonism and hostility.
Romans 12:17-21**

Recompense to no man evil for evil. - This is possible because of the mercies of God. Another way to say this is, Be merciful. *Recompense* here means to repay in kind, for harm done. If you are wise in your own conceits, you will recompense evil for evil. Bad behavior produces more bad behavior. Paul doesn't want that kind of behavior in the body of Christ. Is that difficult to understand or is it crystal clear? _____ Are there any exceptions or loopholes in Romans 12:17? _____

Is this a suggestion or a command? _____ Why? _____

Why should we *recompense to no man evil for evil*? Because God says in Romans 12:19, I will handle that for you myself, therefore, you don't need to worry about seeking vengeance. You are a soldier, not the Commander In Chief. You can leave this up to your Commander In Chief and let Him handle it.

**Those who seek revenge are
conquered by evil.
Those who forgive are conquerors.**

The Bible says this because people are going to treat you in an evil way. It is going to happen and it's going to happen to you. Sometimes, your fellow Christians are going to do you wrong and they may even do it on purpose. That's just a fact of life. Paul gives the same advice in 1 Thessalonians 5:15.

*"See that none render evil for evil unto any man;
but ever follow that which is good,
both among yourselves, and to all men."*
1 Thessalonians 5:15.

*"Not rendering evil for evil,
or railing for railing;
but contrariwise blessing;
knowing that ye are thereunto called,
that ye should inherit a blessing."*
1 Peter 3:9.

When people mistreat you, don't try to avenge yourself; don't try to get even. Don't make it your goal in life to repay evil for the evil they did you. It's not up to you to settle the score or punish them or hurt them back. If you do that, you become the evil doer and that isn't the way a Christian should live.

*“He that hath no rule
over his own spirit
is like a city
that is broken down,
and without walls.”
Proverbs 25:28.*

As believers, we should rule our own spirit. Circumstances shouldn't rule your spirit. A Christian who seeks revenge when he is wronged and wants to repay evil for evil: **a.** *Hath no rule over his own spirit,* **b.** *Is like a city that is broken down, and without walls,* **c.** Is a good Christian.

It is not Christian to recompense evil for evil to a fellow Christian or to an unsaved man who does you wrong. David, before he became King of Israel, is a biblical example of putting Romans 12:17 into action, *recompense to no man evil for evil*, 1 Samuel 24:1-17. How did David put this into action? _____

Remember, Romans 12 is God's instruction for the body of Christ, how we must treat our saved brethren in the church. We can treat unsaved people like this too since it is good admonition for how to treat everyone but this is particularly aimed at how Christians should treat Christians. Paul wants to calm and cure the friction between saved Jews and saved Gentiles in the local churches. When a fellow Christian treats us in an evil way, we are not to avenge ourselves. It is counterintuitive because our natural human tendency is to repay evil for evil.

Have you been injured or wounded or treated in an evil way by a fellow Christian? _____ Did you recompense evil for evil? _____ Where does the power come from, to respond in kindness and mercy, Romans 12:10, when a fellow Christian has treated you in an evil way? _____

Provide things honest in the sight of all men. - This is possible because of the mercies of God, Romans 12:1. This is a general instruction without specifics and it gives discretion to the individual Christian, to decide what is honest, when there isn't a specific Bible verse on which to rely. As you wrap your mind around Romans 12:17, think of it this way. We don't need a biblical commandment for everything in life. What we need is basic honesty and a loving heart. That

sounds easy but try doing that when you've been wronged. Sometimes it can be challenging.

**Not everything in life
requires a rule.**

We can *provide things honest in the sight of all men* without a particular biblical command for every situation we encounter. The idea is, we ought to live honestly in the sight of all men, even if there isn't a biblical command about a particular situation. Christians should be known for our honor and integrity, for our character and honesty, for doing the right thing, for going the extra mile as the normal course of life. Be like the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:26.

*"She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
and in her tongue is the law of kindness."*
Proverbs 31:26.

Do I provide things honest in the sight of all men? _____

12:18 - If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

If it be possible, - This is possible because of the mercies of God. This is good advice for dealing with unsaved folks but the context here is not just unsaved folks. The context in Romans 12 is how to deal with the brethren too, and sometimes, that is not an easy task. It is not always easy living peaceably with the brethren.

**Paul speaks from difficult
personal experience with Christians
1 Timothy 1:16 & 2 Timothy 3:10-12**

1. The Judaizers - Acts 15:1-2
2. The Bible corrupters - 2 Corinthians 2:17
3. More Judaizers - Galatians 1:6-8, 5:11-12
4. Hymenaeus and Alexander - 1 Timothy 1:19-20
5. Phygellus and Hermogenes - 2 Timothy 1:15
6. Hymenaeus and Philetus - 2 Timothy 2:16-19
7. Jannes and Jambres - 2 Timothy 3:4-9
8. Demas - 2 Timothy 4:10
9. Alexander - 2 Timothy 4:14-15
10. All men forsook me - 2 Timothy 4:16-18

Paul recognizes the truth that it will not always be possible to *live peaceably with all men*. When you encounter difficulties, handle them like a Christian. *Provide things honest in the sight of all men*, Romans 12:17. That is the first step toward living peaceably with all men. When you live honestly, you don't have to keep track of your story and wonder what you said.

Honest living helps anyone have a good report of them which are without, 1 Timothy 3:7. The second step is living *by the faith of the Son of God*, Galatians 2:20. Living peaceably with all men doesn't mean you never have conflicts or that you avoid conflicts. Our example is the apostle Paul, Acts 15:36-41, Galatians 2:11-14.

To live above, with saints we love,
Oh, that will be glory!
To live below, with saints we know,
Well, that's a different story!

as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. - *as much as lieth in you* - those are the operative words. It should go without saying that some people will insist on not getting along with you no matter how hard you try. This reminds me of Ruckman's Axiom: "You can't do right and get away with it. Someone will try to stick you in the neck every time."

Live peaceably with all men is at least a possibility because of the mercies of God, Romans 12:1. God knew that some people, saved or unsaved, would be difficult, unpleasant and sometimes, impossible to live with. That's why he says, *as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*. This is about you knowing how to live with them, not them knowing how to live with you. How you respond to unpleasant people is in your control. You're not responsible for what they do or say but you are responsible for how you respond to what they do and say.

Our examples for living peaceably with all men, are always Jesus, 1 Peter 2:19-23, and the apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 Timothy 1:16. Being treated badly by people who rejected Him did not change the love of Christ for wicked, unsaved sinners, Luke 13:34-35. They stoned the prophets God sent unto them and still, Jesus wanted to gather them under His wings to save, comfort and protect them. Being stoned didn't make Paul quit either, Acts 14:19-23.

**Jesus didn't let their evil
rob Him of His good.**

Those wicked, Christ rejecting Jews rejected and crucified their own Messiah, using Rome as their executioner, Acts 3:14-15. About seven weeks later,

because Jesus didn't let their evil rob Him of His good, three thousand sinners were saved by the resurrected Christ on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:41, and a few days after that, 5000 more sinners were saved by the same resurrected Christ they had been rejecting, Acts 4:4. If you quit loving people and quit witnessing, you will miss the glorious work of God in the lives of poor lost sinners. Those 8000 precious souls were saved because: **Jesus didn't let their evil rob Him of His good.**

**Are you allowing evil people
to rob you of your good.**

People abusing and misusing and taking for granted your kindness and love and generosity doesn't mean you are defeated or the gospel is defeated or God is defeated. Don't give up. Don't quit when your ministry or your witnessing seems like one giant failure. Your trust isn't in your wisdom and power. Your trust is in the wisdom and power of the God who created the universe. He is never defeated and Jesus never fails. Can a human being really triumph over evil? Paul triumphed over evil by the grace and power of God, 2 Corinthians 11:18-30.

Living for Jesus, being a witness for Jesus and winning souls, is not a positivity marathon. Instead, it is lots of negativity and hard work, loneliness, rejection, abuse and mistreatment, even sometimes by saved folks but if you persist, if you refuse to quit, if you keep ministering and witnessing even when they reject your message, you will bear fruit for God and eventually, people will get saved.

Being treated badly by people who violently rejected his gospel preaching, teaching and witnessing did not change Paul's loving heart for the lost, 2 Corinthians 6:1-10. Christ rejecting Jews couldn't rob Paul of his good work for God. And that's the point. You cannot control what they do or how they respond but you can control how you respond, 1 Corinthians 13:8. Never forget how things work in the spiritual realm.

*“And hope maketh not ashamed;
because the love of God is shed abroad
in our hearts
by the Holy Ghost
which is given unto us.”
Romans 5:5.*

Remember the context of Romans 12. Paul has asked us to, **1. By the mercies of God, present our bodies a living sacrifice to God.** He has also told us **2.** not to be conformed to this world **3.** but be transformed. Those three things are

absolute requirements so that we can minister the way God wants us to minister in the rest of Romans 12. It is not always easy to get along with the Christian brethren. This was a problem in the church at Rome precisely because Jews and Gentiles were part of the same body, Ephesians 2:11-22.

Paul preaches getting along, having unity based on being in Christ, learning to love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. A loving family doesn't happen by accident. It takes lots of effort and prayer and hard work. It takes love and forgiveness. It works the same way in the family of God.

That does not in any way mean going along with false teaching and false teachers. It does not in any way mean avoiding doctrinal truth or compromising with doctrinal error. It does not in any way mean, teaching feel good, positive thinking instead of teaching the Bible. How do we know that? We know that because of Paul's example in Galatians 2:11-16 and 1 Timothy 1:19-20. Do I work hard to live peaceably with all men? _____

12:19 - Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, - This is possible because of the mercies of God. *Dearly beloved* - There is a kindness in the heart of the great apostle, a genuine love for his brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Paul knows human nature. He himself spent years avenging Judaism against the imagined slights of Christians, persecuting followers of Christ even unto death. This is Paul's fatherly advice for saved Jews and saved Gentiles about how to get along together in the church and how to get along with the unsaved Jews and unsaved Gentiles they interacted with every day.

avenge not yourselves - Avenging yourself means: trying to get even when someone has wronged you. Don't avenge yourselves. Don't try to get revenge. Leave it up to God. This is not talking about being a passive Christian. This is not saying, If you're mugged or robbed or worse, you have no right to call for law enforcement. This isn't about giving up your rights, as is clear from other passages of scripture. Romans 12:19 is about interpersonal relations between Christians in the body of Christ, in the local church.

**It's not just about giving up your rights;
It's about trusting God.**

1. John 18:23
2. Acts 9:22-25, 16:37-38, 23:1-3
3. 1 Peter 2:14

avenge not yourselves - This is the biblical command, no matter what your fleshly impulse is. It is the NT version of Leviticus 19:18, 34 and Proverbs 20:22.

*“Thou shalt not avenge,
nor bear any grudge against
the children of thy people,
but thou shalt love thy neighbour
as thyself: I am the Lord.”*
Leviticus 19:18.

*“Say not thou, I will recompense evil;
but wait on the LORD,
and he shall save thee.”*
Proverbs 20:22.

*“See that none render evil for evil unto any man;
but ever follow that which is good,
both among yourselves, and to all men.”*
1 Thessalonians 5:17.

*“Not rendering evil for evil,
or railing for railing:
but contrariwise blessing;
knowing that ye are thereunto called,
that ye should inherit a blessing.”*
1 Peter 3:9.

Think of it this way. We are not to try to do God’s job because we are not God. We are not to try to do law enforcement’s job because we are not law enforcement. That’s why we don’t seek our own vengeance for wrongs done to us. This doesn’t say we cannot talk to someone with whom we have a grievance or who has a grievance with us.

This is not about talking things out in a loving and peaceful way. This about taking vengeance. Do not take vengeance because that is the command of God. Remember Paul’s objective is keeping peace and harmony, between saved Israelites and saved Gentiles in the church at Rome. It is a mark of spiritual growth to live out the Christian life as Paul himself lived it, 1 Timothy 1:16.

Do I try to avenge myself when I am wronged by a fellow Christian, by someone at my church? _____ This follows on from the previous verse. The thoughts are connected. If we are to live Romans 12:19 in our day to day life, what must we do? How is living Romans 12:19 going to happen as a practical reality?

1. We must live by faith. **2.** We must trust God. **3.** We must love each other. **4.** We must believe that God keeps His word and will avenge us, which frees us from the need to avenge ourselves. If we do those things, we can cheerfully obey Romans 12:19.

Discussion topics: Does Paul aim this at not avenging yourself on your Christian enemies or is he also talking about your unsaved, religious fanatic enemies? Do we have enough faith to put this into practice with violent Muslim jihadists? How about with non-jihadist Muslims?

Not avenging ourselves is part of being a real Christian but it's not part of being a CINO - a Christian In Name Only. Real Christianity takes faith and extending grace to those who wrong us. Real Christianity requires us to show mercy to our enemies, Christian and non-Christian. Real Christianity requires us to read, believe, obey and live the Bible. Living a genuine Christian life is easy to talk about but a lot more difficult to do day by day.

but rather give place unto wrath: - This is possible because of the mercies of God Romans 12:1. Wrath has a place, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. The *wrath* here is probably the wrath of God. The other possibilities are, the *wrath* here is the wrath of our enemies or the *wrath* here is our own wrath. Our instruction is, Don't take vengeance yourself because that's not your job.

Give place unto wrath. Give place unto wrath by waiting on God instead of taking vengeance yourself. Waiting on God may take some time. You may never see God take vengeance. Are you willing to leave it up to God and move on?

Are you willing to trust God to take care of the problem, to right the wrong, to execute *wrath* if He chooses to do so, in His own way, in His own time? God is the avenger of evil, not us. If vengeance is to be taken, trust God to take it.

Remember, God's judgment and God's timing are always perfect. When God takes vengeance against evil, He always does it with perfect justice, in the right way, in the right proportion, not too much, not too little. *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil*, Psalm 34:16.

We are Christians. We are supposed to believe God. We are supposed to trust God. We are supposed to live by faith and walk by faith, right? _____ Then we ought to trust God enough to leave vengeance to Him. God doesn't need us interfering with His plan and trying to do His job for Him.

Paul is not superhuman. He hurt just like we hurt. He got angry and wrathful when wronged, just like we get angry and wrathful when wronged. It is normal and human to get angry when we're mistreated. The question is: How are we going to respond? Are we going to control our anger? _____ Are we going to *give place unto wrath*? _____ Do I give place unto wrath in my personal life? _____ In what ways should I *give place unto wrath* when someone has wronged me? _____

for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. - Christians ought to believe the Bible when they read it. If you read it and don't believe it, you're missing the point. There's not much comfort in the Bible if you read it and don't believe it. There is no comfort in unbelief, only anger, bitterness and frustration. Do you believe and practice Romans 12:19? _____

Do you believe God will take vengeance? _____ Are you willing to trust God to take vengeance in His way, on His timetable of justice? _____ Does trusting God to take vengeance indicate you are growing spiritually or does it indicate that you are still flesh focused instead of trusting God? _____

God And Vengeance
Can I trust God
to execute vengeance?

1. Deuteronomy 32:35
2. Isaiah 35:3-4
3. Jeremiah 51:36-37
4. Ezekiel 25:17
5. Micah 5:15
6. Nahum 1:2-7
7. Jude 7

What is the biblical reason we should *give place unto wrath*? _____
Do I believe that I can give place unto wrath and leave it up to God to avenge me? _____ Can I trust God to do the right thing when I've been wronged? _____ Is trusting God in matters like this an area in which I still need more spiritual growth? _____ Is it always safe to trust God? _____

12:20 - Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Therefore if thine enemy - The allegedly “vengeful” God of the OT insisted, in 1450 BC, that Israel must treat their enemies with compassion and kindness, Exodus 23:4.

*“If thou meet thine enemy's
ox or his ass going astray,
thou shalt surely
bring it back to him again.”*
Exodus 23:4, Deuteronomy 22:1-4
Leviticus 19:18, 34.

*“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
and let not thine heart be glad
when he stumbleth:
Lest the LORD see it,
and it displease him,
and he turn away his wrath from him.”*
Proverbs 24:17-18.

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; - This is possible because of the mercies of God. Has the thought ever popped into your mind, Hey, I should feed my enemies? _____ Are you uncomfortable around your enemies? _____ Are you at ease around your enemies? _____ *Therefore*, meaning, because God WILL avenge you, *therefore*, you have more latitude to reach out to your enemies, to try to befriend them, to talk with them and possibly lead them to Christ. Paul must have had Matthew 5:44 in mind, 1 Corinthians 11:1, when he wrote Romans 12:20? Blessed is the man who makes his enemy his friend.

*“When a man's ways please the LORD,
he maketh even his enemies
to be at peace with him.”*
Solomon - Proverbs 16:7.

**Did one of the early Christians whom Saul arrested,
persecuted and tortured offer to eat a meal with Saul?**

Some NT scholars assign a late date to the Gospel of Matthew, from AD 70-90, but what if Matthew was written earlier, in the AD 40s or at least, before AD 58, when Paul wrote Romans? Leon Morris for example, puts Matthew's Gospel in the AD 50s-60s timeframe. If Matthew did write his gospel after Paul wrote Romans, the Holy Spirit still knew what Matthew would write and made sure Paul was in line with what Jesus taught in Matthew 5.

Here's what Jesus taught about dealing with your enemies. Israel had a centuries long history of dealing with enemies and their most popular option was to hate their enemies, Matthew 5:43, Deuteronomy 23:5-6. What spiritual lessons can we learn from this?

Spiritual lessons about your enemies

1. God can turn the curse of an enemy into a blessing, Deuteronomy 23:5.
2. God expects us to love our neighbors and our enemies, Matthew 5:43-44.
3. God knows we will pay a price for loving our enemies.
4. God will not help us not love our enemies - passive.
5. God will not help us hate our enemies - active.
6. The Jesus of the Bible is a life-changer.
7. The Jesus of the Bible saved Saul of Tarsus, 1 John 2:2.
8. Jesus died on the cross to save our enemies, 2 Peter 2:1.

*“Ye have heard that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour,
and hate thine enemy.*

*But I say unto you,
Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them
which despitefully use you,
and persecute you;*

*That ye may be the children of your Father
which is in heaven:
for he maketh his sun to rise
on the evil and on the good,
and sendeth rain
on the just and on the unjust.”
- Jesus, Matthew 5:43-45.*

What does Romans 12:20 mean, *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him?*
_____ How does, *Therefore*, help
us understand this verse? _____ What is the *therefore* there for?
What does *thine enemy* mean? _____ Is this an enemy
personally known to you but outside your local church? _____ Is this
enemy a member of your local church? _____ Is this enemy an invading
army that you have already defeated? _____ Is this an enemy who, if he

wins, will kill you and your family? _____ Is this pie in the sky advice or is it real and practical instruction for a local church? _____

Discussion topics: On a practical level, is this talking about having your enemy, someone from church who doesn't like you, over for a home cooked meal or taking your enemy out to eat? In what ways should you feed your enemy? Is Paul suggesting sitting down for a meal with your enemy so you can get to know each other and perhaps stop being enemies? Have you ever sat down for a meal with your enemy? What are some biblical examples of sitting down for a meal with your enemies?

1. Esther and Haman - Esther 3:1-6, 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-25
2. *a table... in the presence of mine enemies* - Psalm 23:5
3. Jesus eating with Simon the Pharisee - Luke 7:36-50

Now Paul explains what it means on a practical level to: *give place to wrath*. And we will see, when we get to Romans 13, that Paul's explanation about giving place to wrath continues. He isn't making it up as he goes; he is presenting a logical, cogently reasoned argument about how Christians must live.

We should learn, from Paul's example in quoting Proverbs 25:21-22, that the OT has helpful practical advice for us today. That's another rock solid reason we should never try to unhitch Christianity from the OT. In Romans 12:20, Paul is quoting Proverbs 25:21-22.

*"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;
and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,
and the LORD shall reward thee."
Proverbs 25:21-22.*

if thine enemy hunger, - This kindhearted behavior toward an enemy is possible because of the mercies of God, Romans 12:1. This may be a personal enemy who personally knows you, *thine enemy*. Biblical examples of this include King David and Shimei, 2 Samuel 16:5ff., who cursed King David and King Solomon and Joab, against whom King David warned Solomon.

Rome and the Roman Empire could, in some ways, be viewed as the enemy of Christians. It is possible Paul has representatives of Rome in view when he says, *if thine enemy hunger*. Remember that Paul is a follower of Christ. Do you

remember what Jesus taught in the sermon on the mount about how to treat people who were enemies, Matthew 5:38-48, Luke 6:27-36?

Romans 12:17-21 is Paul's allusion to and commentary on the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:38-48. Some scholars place the writing of Matthew's Gospel around AD 66-80. If that were true, all fourteen books written by Paul would have been on the table and the unique teaching of Paul would have been common knowledge yet Matthew mentions nothing from the Pauline corpus. If Matthew wrote his gospel in the AD 40s to late 50s time frame, then Paul most likely had access to it and may actually be quoting Jesus from Matthew's gospel here in Romans 12.

It is difficult to live out this behavior with enemies in real life but this is genuine New Testament Christianity. Given Paul's numerous run ins with Jewish and Roman And Syrian authorities, he is speaking from personal experience. This is not theoretical advice from Paul about dealing with enemies. He lived it over the course of his ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles. How is living like this even possible? Romans 12:1-2 is the answer. "*I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God...*"

Other Illustrations Of Enemies From The OT

The enemies in the following examples were not personal enemies of an individual. They were national enemies of national Israel. When dealing with personal enemies of an individual, there are additional considerations. Also, OT Israel was more theocratic than our situation today, so, as God's chosen, elect nation, Isaiah 45:4, God often intervened in Israel's affairs in a dramatic way to protect Israel.

Therefore, while these examples provide insight, they are not precisely the same as dealing with our personal enemies in our personal lives. 2 Kings 6:13-23 and 2 Chronicles 28:1-15 provide two real life OT examples of the nation of Israel doing what Proverbs 25:21-22 says and what Paul says.

Discussion Topic: What are the differences between individual Christians in a local church dealing with a personal enemy and the nation of Israel in the OT, dealing with enemy nations around them.

if he thirst, give him drink: - This is possible because of the mercies of God. Am I the kind of Christian who will give my enemy a drink if he is thirsty?
_____ This is not the normal way we treat an enemy but it seems Paul has

primarily in mind relations between saved Jews and saved Gentiles in the local churches of mid-first century Rome. This is also not the normal way to treat an invading enemy army who intends to capture, enslave or kill you.

*“And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them:
wouldest thou smite those
whom thou hast taken captive
with thy sword and with thy bow?
set bread and water before them,
that they may eat and drink,
and go to their master.”*
2 Kings 6:22.

*“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:
Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him,
and he turn away his wrath from him.”*
Proverbs 24:17-18.

*“If thine enemy be hungry,
give him bread to eat;
and if he be thirsty,
give him water to drink:
For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,
and the LORD shall reward thee.”*
Proverbs 25:21-22.

*“Ye have heard that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour,
and hate thine enemy.
But I say unto you, Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them
which spitefully use you,
and persecute you;
That ye may be the children
of your Father which is in heaven:
for he maketh his sun to rise
on the evil and on the good,
and sendeth rain
on the just and on the unjust.”
Matthew 5:43-45.*

What Paul is NOT saying

1. Paul isn't saying we should give in to evil.
2. Paul isn't saying we should never fight evil.
3. Paul isn't saying we should never defend ourselves.
4. Paul isn't saying we are not allowed to stand against evil.
5. Paul isn't saying Christians are bad karma magnets.

for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. - This is possible because of the mercies of God, Romans 12:1. This is metaphor and is not meant to be taken literally. If it is literally true, it is not a metaphor. This is not punitive, get even with your enemies behavior.

Paul isn't saying: Kill your enemy by setting his head on fire and burning him to death. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or an action to which it is not literally applicable. Paul teaches us a lesson in love from Proverbs 25:21-22, Solomon's great collection of ancient Jewish wisdom. The coals of fire are conviction by the Holy Spirit and conviction by an enemies own conscience. The desired result is that the enemy gets saved and becomes a friend. Paul's instruction about how to treat an enemy is evangelistic. Paul intends all of his and our enemies to get saved.

So artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
By heaping coals of fire upon its head:
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
And pure from dross the silver runs below.
- Samuel Wesley, Proverbs 25:4-5.

12:21 - Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Be not overcome of evil, - This is possible because of the mercies of God and the power of God. This is contextual wisdom. Paul is explaining how he understands and how we should understand the verses from Proverbs 25:21-22, which he has just quoted. In the context of how to respond to your enemies, Paul says: *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* The idea is, if you respond in the flesh, if you respond in kind, if you respond in haste and anger and evil, without giving your Lord time to work, you are being overcome of evil.

Some Christians witness and evangelize but they also allow unsaved people and backslidden Christians to evangelize them. Don't ever allow your unsaved friends to evangelize you, to habituate you to their booze, their bars, their world

views, their music, their disregard for the Bible, their disregard for Jesus, their disregard for spiritual things. In what ways have your unsaved friends evangelized you? _____

Am I the kind of Christian who is overcome of evil? _____

Does that mean you have to let people walk all over you? No, it does not.

Does that mean you are not allowed to defend yourself? No, it does not.

Does that mean that you have to let a killer take your life? No, it does not.

Does that mean that you have to let a dishonest government leader falsely imprison you? No, it does not. - Paul didn't in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33, Acts 9:23-25. Would you have handled that differently? _____

but overcome evil with good. - It is possible to overcome evil with good because of the mercies of God. How can I be the kind of Christian who overcomes evil with good? _____

How do you overcome evil with good? Live out Romans 12:19-20 in your personal life, when you are confronted with evil. You overcome evil by staying focused on living for your Lord, who died for you and rose again from the dead.

**You overcome evil
by living by faith,
Galatians 2:20.**

*"I am crucified with Christ:
nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live by the faith of the Son of God,
who loved me, and gave himself for me."
Galatians 2:20.*

Remember who you are as a Christian. You are in Christ. You have already been blessed with *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*, Ephesians 1:3. You are already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6. The Holy Spirit dwells in your body as His temple, 1 Corinthians 6:19. The Lord Jesus Christ dwells in your heart by faith, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:27.

Review Questions for Romans 11

1. Romans 12:1 - presenting our bodies to God a living sacrifice, is: **a.** the duty of every unsaved person, **b.** the duty of every church member, **c.** the Christian's response to God's amazing grace.
2. Romans 12 is about: **a.** Justification by faith, **b.** Sanctification by faith, **c.** Religiosity by faith, **d.** A mixture of faith and works for salvation.
3. Romans 12:1 - What makes it possible for us to present our bodies to God a living sacrifice? **a.** The mercies of God, **b.** The glory of God, **c.** The power of God, **d.** The power of the church.
4. Romans 12:1 - Presenting our bodies a living sacrifice is: **a.** The way to get saved, **b.** The way to get rid of our sins, **c.** The way to get power in the church hierarchy, **d.** The way to give God our reasonable service.
5. Where does sanctification come from: **a.** Mount Calvary, **b.** Mount Sinai, **c.** Mount of Olives, **d.** Mount Kilimanjaro.
6. Romans 12:1 - Why does God ask us to present your bodies a living sacrifice? **a.** To help us stay saved, **b.** To make us more religious, **c.** Because our flesh isn't saved, **d.** Because presenting our bodies a living sacrifice is the key to serving God, **e.** Because presenting our bodies a living sacrifice is part of our sanctification.
7. Romans 12:1 - We are asked to present our bodies a living sacrifice to: **a.** Our church, **b.** Our community, **c.** Our friends, **d.** Our neighbors, **e.** Our pastor, **f.** Our religion, **g.** To God.
8. Romans 12:1 - How saved is your flesh? **a.** 25% saved, **b.** 50% saved, **c.** 75% saved, **d.** 100% saved, **e.** I'm saved but my flesh isn't saved.
9. Romans 12:1 - In the OT, sacrifices were normally killed. Why are we asked to present our bodies a living sacrifice? _____
10. Romans 12:1 - What does *holy* mean in this verse? **a.** Holy means propitiation, **b.** Holy means justification, **c.** Holy means sanctification.
11. Romans 12:1 - What is acceptable unto God? **a.** Holy is acceptable, **b.** Unholy is acceptable.
12. Romans 12:1 - When the Bible says, *holy*, does that mean it's okay with God if I live a wicked, sinful, self-willed life? _____
13. Romans 12:1 - Is it reasonable for God to ask me to present my body a living sacrifice? _____
14. Romans 12:1 - Can I be a good Christian if I refuse to present my body to God a living sacrifice? **a.** Yep, God doesn't care about that stuff, **b.** Sure, as long as I'm religious, **c.** Certainly, as long as I help my fellow man, **d.** No way dude. You can't disobey God and still be a good Christian.
15. Romans 12:2 - Okay, once I've presented my body to God a living sacrifice, I can still be conformed to this world, right? _____

16. Romans 12:2 - Okay, being transformed by the renewing of my mind, means: **a.** I'm still allowed to think like a hell-bound unsaved man, **b.** I don't have to submit my mind and thoughts to God, **c.** I don't need to be serious about my Christian walk, **d.** I should live and think like a Bible believing Christian because my mind is renewed and that is exactly what I am.
17. Romans 12:2 - Is it a contradiction for a Christian to be conformed to this world? _____ Why? _____
18. Does Romans 12:2 leave room for Christians to be conformed to this world? **a.** Yes, it does, **b.** No, it does not, **c.** Depends on whether or not words have meaning, **d.** I'd give the skeptical side eye to any saved person who says Yes.
19. Romans 12:2 - What does a genuine Christian have? **a.** A brand new Mercedes, **b.** A renewed mind, **c.** A transformed life, **d.** Secret healing powers.
20. Romans 12:2 - There are three separate wills of God and Christians can choose any one of them and be okay? **a.** That's mind-wrenchingly dumb, **b.** That is shockingly stupid, **c.** There is only one will of God which is good, acceptable and perfect.
21. Romans 12:2 - Does God expect me to serve Him with my mind and my body? _____
22. Romans 12:2 - What is the declared will of God? _____
23. Romans 12:2 - What is the discerned will of God? _____
24. Romans 12:2 - Is the will of God important or unimportant in the life of a Christian? _____ Why? _____
25. Romans 12:2 - Can we know the declared will of God with absolute certainty? _____ Why? _____
26. Romans 12:2 - If the will of God is good, does that mean the will of God is always easy and fun? _____
27. Romans 12:3 - Don't think of yourselves more highly than you ought to think, means: **a.** Don't be proud, **b.** Don't act like you're God's gift to the human race, **c.** Don't live your life on an ego trip, **d.** Be humble and sober minded.
28. Romans 12:3 - Does every Christian have a tendency to be proud and think too highly of himself? _____ Why? _____
29. Romans 12:3 - Christians should never think that they have replaced Israel and God is through with Israel forever. **a.** True, **b.** False.
30. Romans 12:3 - What has God dealt to every man? **a.** A tough hand of cards, **b.** An abundance of mercy, **c.** Plenty of money, **d.** The measure of faith.
31. Romans 12:4 - The body of Christ has: **a.** Only a few members, **b.** Many members.
32. Romans 12:4 - All the members of the body of Christ: **a.** Have the same job, **b.** Have the same office, **c.** Have different offices or gifts or tasks to do for God.
33. Romans 12:5 - The Bible says that: **a.** Christians are one body in Christ, **b.** We are members one of another.

34. Romans 12:5 - Because we are one body in Christ and members one of another, there should be: **a.** Unity in the body of Christ, **b.** Brotherly love in the body of Christ, **c.** Harmony in the body of Christ, **d.** Cooperation in the body of Christ, **e.** All of the above.
35. Romans 12:6 - The members of the body of Christ have differing gifts, by the grace of God, to minister to the rest of the body of Christ. What does that mean to you? _____
36. Romans 12:6 - Having then gifts differing, means, **a.** Christians get the same spiritual gifts, **b.** Christians get different spiritual gifts.
37. Romans 12:6 - What is the difference between sign gifts and service gifts?
Sign gifts - _____
Service gifts - _____
38. Why did service gifts replace sign gifts? **a.** As Israel rejected the gospel and their Messiah, evangelism began shifting to Gentiles, **b.** The NT was being written and there was less need for sign gifts, **c.** All of the above.
39. Sign gifts were to authenticate the truth of God's message to the Jews. **a.** True, **b.** False.
40. Service gifts were to bless the body of Christ and encourage evangelism of Jews and Gentiles. **a.** True, **b.** False.
41. Romans 12:6 - The gift of prophesy was about: **a.** Foretelling the future, **b.** Exhortation, **c.** Edification, **d.** Explaining spiritual truths.
42. Romans 12:7 - The gifts of ministry were about being a deacon who served the local church. **a.** True, **b.** False.
43. Romans 12:7 - What does it mean to wait on our ministering? **a.** It means, don't minister, just wait, **b.** It means, go ahead and minister.
44. Romans 12:7 - What was the gift of teaching? **a.** It was to teach plumbing, **b.** It was to teach mathematics, **c.** It was to teach Middle Eastern languages, **d.** It was to teach the Bible and the doctrines contained in the Bible.
45. Romans 12:8 - What was the gift of exhortation? **a.** It was to get in someone's face and yell at them, **b.** It was to encourage brothers and sisters in Christ to live right and serve God, **c.** It was to be a Christian encourager, **d.** It was to be a constant negative nagger of your fellow Christians.
46. Romans 12:8 - What was the gift of giving? **a.** It was only for rich people, **b.** If you're not rich, you don't need to give, **c.** It was a special ability to give to your brothers and sisters in Christ.
47. Romans 12:8 - Since I don't have the spiritual gift of giving, I don't need to give, right? **a.** The Bible doesn't say that, **b.** Yes, all Christians should give to support the Lord's work, **c.** Romans 12:8 is not an excuse for not giving financially to the Lord's work.

48. Romans 12:8 - What was the gift of *ruling*? **a.** The gift of ruling was only for Kings and Queens, **b.** The gift of ruling was about drawing straight lines, **c.** The gift of ruling was for bishops and pastors.

49. Romans 12:8 - What is the gift of *shewing mercy*? **a.** The gift of shewing mercy was about cheerfully ministering to the aged, the sick, the orphans and widows, **b.** The gift of shewing mercy was about doling out small doses of unsmiling kindness to those who didn't deserve it.

50. Romans 12:9 - What does it mean, *Let love be without dissimulation*? **a.** Don't fake your love for others, **b.** Don't be a hypocrite putting on an act as if you love others, **c.** Let your love be the genuine love of God flowing through you to others, Romans 5:5.

51. Romans 12:9 - Do Christians really need to abhor evil? **a.** God doesn't care if you do or not, **b.** Yes, Christians should abhor-hate evil, **c.** Can't I just tithe?

52. Romans 12:9 - Is it okay if I don't abhor evil and just focus on the positive part, *cleave to that which is good*? **a.** I'm having a rebellious day today, **b.** Don't be a cafeteria Christian, picking and choosing what you will obey, **c.** No, we all need to be Bible Christians, not worldly, Bible rejectors.

53. Romans 12:10 - What does it mean, to be kindly affectioned one to another?

54. Romans 12:10 - For the church at Rome in the first century AD, did kindly affectioned mean for Jewish and Gentile believers to love and appreciate one another? _____

55. Romans 12:10 - List three practical ways they could be kindly affectioned one to another. _____

56. Romans 12:10 - What does it mean, *in honour preferring one another*?

57. Romans 12:10 - Where does the power come from, to be *kindly affectioned to one another*? **a.** From my human will power, **b.** From the power of the Holy Spirit in me, Romans 5:5.

58. Romans 12:11 - What does it mean to be *slothful*? **a.** To be physically lazy, **b.** To be spiritually lazy, **c.** To be no account, good for nothing, **d.** To expect others to work so I don't have to, **e.** All of the above.

59. Romans 12:11 - Can I be a good Christian if I am slothful and lazy? **a.** Yes, God doesn't care if I'm slothful, **b.** No, slothful and good Christian are opposites.

60. Romans 12:11 - What does it mean to be *fervent in spirit*? **a.** It means to be on fire for Jesus, **b.** It means to be a serious Christian, not someone just putting on a religious act, **c.** It means to be a Bible Christian, not a religious do-gooder, **d.** It means you are actively serving the Lord.

61. Romans 12:11 - What does it mean, *serving the Lord*? _____

62. Romans 12:11 - When is the best time to serve the Lord? _____

63. Romans 12:12 - What does it mean, *Rejoicing in hope*? _____

64. Romans 12:12 - What does it mean, *patient in tribulation*? _____

65. Romans 12:12 - How does *rejoicing in hope* help you be *patient in tribulation*? _____

66. Romans 12:12 - What does it mean, *continuing instant in prayer*? _____

67. Romans 12:12 - How is *continuing instant in prayer* related to *rejoicing in hope* and being *patient in tribulation*? _____

68. Romans 12:13 - What does it mean, *Distributing to the necessity of saints*? _____

69. Romans 12:13 - What does it mean, *given to hospitality*? _____

70. Romans 12:13 - *Given to hospitality* means: **a.** Throwing a lavish party for your rich friends, **b.** Ministering to broken, hurting, needy saved sinners, **c.** Grilling steaks for your friends most weekends, **d.** Doing something tangibly helpful for needy Christians.

71. Romans 12:14 What does it mean, *Bless them which persecute you*? **a.** It means take the fight to them and get even, **b.** It means an eye for an eye style of revenge, **c.** It means to trust God and do not try to even the score with them.

72. Romans 12:14 - What does it mean, *bless and curse not*? _____

73. Romans 12:15 - What does it mean, *Rejoice with them that do rejoice*? _____

74. Romans 12:15 - What does it mean, *weep with them that weep*? _____

75. Romans 12:16 - What does it mean, *Be of the same mind one toward another*? **a.** You have to treat everyone exactly the same, **b.** Saved Jews and saved Gentiles should get along and not think poorly of each other, **c.** Don't have any close Christian friends.

76. Romans 12:16 - What does it mean, *condescend to men of low estate*? _____

77. Romans 12:16 - What does it mean, *Be not wise in your own conceits*? **a.** Jews thinking they were better than Gentiles, **b.** Gentiles thinking they were better than Jews, **c.** Christians thinking they were better than non-Christians, **d.** Romans thinking they were better than any other nation.

78. Romans 12:17 - What does it mean, *Recompense to no man evil for evil*? **a.** Attack them if they attack you, **b.** Lie about them if they lie about you, **c.** Do not

respond to them like they responded to you, **d.** Be ferocious in your own defense.

79. Romans 12:17 - What does it mean, *Provide things honest in the sight of all men?* **a.** It means, everything in life doesn't need a written rule, **b.** It means, live honestly even when there are no rules, **c.** It means, do the right thing even when no one is watching, **d.** It means, be the honest trustworthy man of God that God expects you to be. **e.** All of the above.

80. Romans 12:18 - What does it mean, *as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men?* **a.** God expects me to be a doormat for every miscreant who comes down the pike, **b.** God intends that I never be allowed to defend myself, **c.** God really wants me to live a genuine Christian life, **d.** God expects me to walk in the Spirit and the living Christ to actually live in me.

81. Romans 12:19 - What does it mean, Dearly beloved, *avenge not yourselves?*

82. Romans 12:19 - When I am wronged, what should I do instead of avenging myself? _____

83. Romans 12:19 - What does it mean, *give place unto wrath?* **a.** It means, do not avenge yourself, **b.** It means, walk by faith and trust God to correct the situation on His timetable, **c.** It means, live like what you profess to believe is really true, **d.** It means, trust the power of God to set right things that are wrong.

84. Romans 12:19 - What does it mean, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord?* _____

85. Romans 12:19 - Do I personally trust God to take vengeance for me instead of trying to avenge myself? _____ Why? _____

86. Romans 12:20 - What does it mean, *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him?* _____

87. Romans 12:20 - What does it mean, *if he thirst, give him drink?* _____

88. Romans 12:20 - What does it mean, *for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head?* _____

89. Romans 12:21 - How does a Christian *overcome evil?* **a.** By living by faith and trusting God, **b.** By talking softly and carrying a big stick, **c.** By getting a concealed carry permit, **d.** By practicing martial arts.

Thanks so much for studying the Bible with us.

We love and appreciate you.

God bless you all.