

The Epistle To The Romans



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Epistle To The Romans

Table Of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Called To Be Saints (1:7) | 3 |
| Finding A Way In The Will Of God (1:10) | 7 |
| Not Ashamed Of The Gospel (1:14-17) | 9 |
| The Wrath Of God (1:18-32) | 12 |
| The Goodness Of God (2:4-11) | 15 |
| The Righteousness Of God Revealed (3:21-31) | 17 |
| Shall We Continue In Sin? (6:1-23) | 20 |
| God's Gift Of Eternal Life (6:22-23) | 23 |
| Two Dilemmas (7:14-25) | 26 |
| Freedom From Sin (8:1-25) | 28 |
| Do Not Be Conformed To This World (12:1-2) | 31 |
| Be Transformed (12:1-2) | 34 |
| Finding Our Function In The Body (12:3-8) | 38 |
| A Love That Can Hate (12:9-10) | 41 |
| An Exhortation To Diligent Service (12:11) | 44 |
| The Key To A Joyful, Productive Life (12:12) | 47 |
| Benevolence To Saints And Strangers (12:13) | 50 |
| To Bless And Curse Not (12:14) | 53 |
| The Empathetic Christian (12:15) | 56 |
| The Renewed Mind (12:16) | 59 |
| Responding To Evil (12:17-21) | 62 |
| The Christian's Duty To Government (13:1-7) | 65 |
| Indebted To Love (13:8-10) | 68 |
| It's Time To Wake Up! (13:11-14) | 70 |
| Admonitions To Strong And Weak Brethren (14:1-15:7) | 73 |

Called To Be Saints

Romans 1:7

INTRODUCTION

1. In his epistle to the Romans, Paul said he was “called to be an apostle” - **Ro 1:1**
 - a. I.e., he was summoned to be an apostle, one sent by Jesus for a special purpose
 - b. That purpose involved the gospel, which Paul was sent to proclaim to the nations - **Ro 1:1,5**
2. All Christians likewise have their “calling”...
 - a. We are the “called of Jesus Christ” - **Ro 1:6**
 - b. We are “called to be saints” - **Ro 1:7**
3. The term “saint” is frequently misunderstood and misapplied...
 - a. One might get the wrong impression of what Paul is saying
 - b. A proper understanding is important, serving as motivation for proper conduct

[So let us ask our first question: **What is a “saint”...?**]

I. THE DEFINITION OF A SAINT

A. ONE SET APART, CONSECRATED, HOLY ONE...

1. “The word mean set apart, consecrated, sacred...In the NT the word **hagios**, when used as a noun, usually refers to members of the...church. All believers are called ‘saints,’ even when their character is dubiously holy.” - **Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia**
2. “A NT believer, belonging exclusively to God. The saints are the church, people called out of the world to be God’s own people.” - **Zondervan Topical Bible**
3. “Set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His...this appellation is very often in the NT transferred to Christians, as those whom God has selected out of the world” - **Thayer**
4. “It is used of men and things in so far as they are devoted to God. These are called **hagoi**, saints, i.e., ‘sanctified’ or ‘holy ones.’ This sainthood is not an attainment, it is a state into which God in grace calls men” - **Vine**

B. APPLIED TO ALL CHRISTIANS...

1. Summarizing what these sources say, a “saint” is:
 - a. A Christian, a member of the body of Christ
 - b. As such, Christians are considered by God to be...
 - 1) Set apart, holy
 - 2) Consecrated for His purpose
 2. A quick survey of the NT confirms this definition and use of the term “saint”
 - a. Addressing those in various congregations - **Ro 1:7; 1 Co 1:2; 2 Co 1:1; Ep 1:1; Ph 1:1; Co 1:2**
 - b. Describing the subjects of brotherly love - **Ep 1:15; Co 1:4; Phe 4-7**
 3. A “saint” is not some super-spiritual Christian...
 - a. Now dead and having lived a long time ago
 - b. Who is canonized and venerated as an object of worship
- **Indeed, every Christian is a saint!**

[However, we find both now and then that not all Christians behave like saints. This raises the question: **How should saints live...?**]

II. THE LIFE OF A SAINT

A. AS DESCRIBED IN EPHESIANS...

1. Saints should live in a manner worthy of their calling - **Ep 4:1**
 - a. Walking in unity - cf. **Ep 4:1-16**
 - b. Walking in truth - cf. **Ep 4:17-32**
 - c. Walking in love - cf. **Ep 5:1-7**
 - d. Walking in light - cf. **Ep 5:8-14**
 - e. Walking in wisdom - cf. **Ep 5:15-17**
 2. Saints should avoid things not befitting their calling - **Ep 5:3-4**
 - a. Fornication, uncleanness, covetousness
 - b. Filthiness, foolish talking, coarse jesting
- **Saints strive to live this way; they do not always live up to their calling**

B. AS DESCRIBED IN COLOSSIANS...

1. Saints should be filled with the knowledge of God's will - **Co 1:9**
 - a. Involves a good knowledge of the Bible
 - b. Accompanied by wisdom and understanding (via prayer - **Ja 1:5**)
 2. Saints are to walk worthy of the Lord - **Co 1:10**
 - a. We are called to be Christians as well as saints - cf. **Ac 11:26**
 - b. Our behavior should properly reflect the One whose name we wear!
 3. Saints are to fully please Him - **Co 1:10**
 - a. By being fruitful in every good work
 - b. By increasing in the knowledge of God
 4. Saints are to be strengthened with all might - **Co 1:11**
 - a. According to God's glorious power - cf. **Ep 3:16,20; 6:10,13**
 - b. For all patience and longsuffering with joy
 5. Saints are to give thanks to the Father - **Co 1:12-14**
 - a. He has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of saints
 - b. He has delivered us from the power of darkness
 - c. He has conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love
 - d. He has provided redemption and forgiveness of sins, through His Son's blood
- **The epistles were written to saints; from them we learn how saints ought to live!**

[We noted that one reason saints are to be thankful is because God has qualified us to partakers of "*the inheritance of the saints*". This raises a third question: **What is the hope of saints...?**]

III. THE HOPE OF A SAINT

A. RICH AND GLORIOUS...

1. Which Paul wanted the saints at Ephesus to know - **Ep 1:18**
 2. Which involves the exceeding riches of God's grace - **Ep 2:7**
 3. Which is presently reserved in heaven for us - **1 Pe 1:4**
- **Paul and Peter describe our inheritance in general terms**

B. NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH...

1. Promised by God, anticipated by Peter - **2 Pe 3:13-14**
 - a. A future realm in which righteousness dwells
 - b. Motivating us to live now in peace, without spot and blameless
 2. Revealed by Jesus, described by John - **Re 21:1-7**
 - a. Replacing the present earth and universe
 - b. Involving the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven
 - c. In which God will dwell with men, providing wonderful blessings
- **Peter and John describe our inheritance in figurative terms**

[Questions may remain as to the ultimate nature of the saints' inheritance, but enough is revealed to motivate us to become saints and live in a manner worthy of our calling. This leads to our fourth and final question: **How do we become saints...?**]

IV. THE BEGINNING OF A SAINT**A. CALLED BY THE GOSPEL...**

1. We become saints by being "called" - cf. **Ro 1:7**
 - a. The idea of being "called" is one of being "summoned"
 - b. But we are not called or summoned by a small still voice, or bolt of lightning
2. We are "called" by the gospel - **2 Th 2:14**
 - a. God calls people by the gospel
 - b. For the obtaining of the glory of our Lord

B. PRODUCED BY THE GOSPEL...

1. The gospel reveals God's plan for saving man from his sins
 - a. With facts to believe - e.g., **1 Co 15:1-3**
 - b. With commands to obey - e.g., **Mk 16:16; Ro 10:9,10**
 - c. With promises to receive - e.g., **Ac 2:38-39; Ro 6:23**
2. When people respond, they become saints
 - a. Saved and called by the grace of God - **1 Ti 1:9**
 - b. Even though sinners, as were the saints in Corinth - **1 Co 1:2; 6:9-11**
3. Every time the gospel is preached, God is calling people to become saints
 - a. Those who hear are exhorted to obey
 - b. Those who obey are washed, sanctified, justified
 - c. Those who are sanctified are set apart, consecrated for God's purpose; i.e., saints

CONCLUSION

1. By the wonderful grace of God...
 - a. We can be His saints, His holy ones, set apart for His purpose!
 - b. We can look forward to the wonderful inheritance reserved in heaven for us!
2. Yet as saints, we must walk in a manner worthy of our calling...
 - a. We must make our "calling and election sure" - **2 Pe 1:10-11**
 - b. Even Paul, called both as an "apostle" and a "saint", realized the risk of his being rejected after preaching to others - **1 Co 9:27**

Are you a saint? You are if you have responded to the call of God through obedience to the gospel! Are you living as a saint should? May the hope of saints motivate you to walk worthy of your calling!

Finding A Way In The Will Of God

Romans 1:10

INTRODUCTION

1. "What is God's will for my life?"
 - a. What devout person has not asked a question like this?
 - b. Often asked even pertaining to mundane things like one's career, where to live, etc.-- **How can we live in harmony with the will of God?**

2. Paul mentioned his desire to live in harmony with God's will...
 - a. As he made plans to visit his brethren in Rome
 - b. As he prayed regarding such plans - cf. **Ro 1:9-10**-- **He sought to "find a way in the will of God" to come to them**

[Paul's comments provide an opportunity for us to consider some thoughts related to the will of God, especially on how to determine God's will for our lives. It might be of benefit to first review some...]

I. FACETS OF GOD'S WILL

A. THERE IS GOD'S PROCLAIMED WILL...

1. God has made His will known in many respects - e.g., **1 Th 5:18; 1 Pe 2:15**
 2. This He has done through revelation
 - a. By sending inspired prophets in the past - **He 1:1**
 - b. By sending His own Son - **He 1:2**
 - c. By having the Spirit guide the apostles - **Jn 16:12-13; e.g., 1 Co 14:36-37**
 3. It is this proclaimed will of God that we must do to be saved - cf. **Mt 7:21**
-
- That which is essential to know, God has revealed through Scripture - 2 Ti 3:16-17**

B. THERE IS GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL WILL...

1. God acts providentially in our lives, as implied in our text - cf. **Ro 1:10; also 15:32**
 2. For such reason we are to pray regarding our plans - cf. **Ja 4:13-15**
 3. Our requests are answered as it may suit God's will - cf. **1 Jn 5:14**
-
- We may not have certainty as to what is God's providential will for us**

C. THERE IS GOD'S PERMISSIVE WILL...

1. God allows things to happen that are not necessarily according to His desired will
 2. He permits people to sin and even hurt other people
 - a. He is not pleased, and will one day render judgment - **Ac 17:30-31**
 - b. He is able to fulfill His own will, despite such rebellion - cf. **Isa 10:5-7**
 3. God permits people to do things that are indifferent to Him
 - a. There are some matters of indifference to God - e.g., **Ro 14:5-6**
 - b. Likewise, some decisions we make might not really matter to God
-
- Thus not all choices please God, nor are they necessarily required by God**

[With these thoughts in mind, let's now consider some thoughts on...]

II. FINDING GOD'S WILL

A. FOCUS ON THE PROCLAIMED WILL OF GOD...

1. I.e., study diligently to learn what God has revealed
 - a. If you don't embrace and practice the revealed will of God...
 - b. ...what difference does it make to seek areas of God's will unknown to you?
2. The value of focusing on the proclaimed will of God
 - a. We will not be ignorant of what is essential for us to know and do
 - b. We can avoid choices that are clearly contrary to God's will

B. SEEK ADVICE FROM OTHERS...

1. Discuss your alternatives with older, mature Christians - **Pro 11:14; 12:15**
2. Consult the wisdom found in the Bible (especially in books like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)

C. ASK GOD FOR WISDOM...

1. I.e., pray diligently for the ability to discern wisely - **Ja 1:5-8**
2. Wisdom is that spiritual insight that enables you to evaluate situations clearly, and helps utilize what options and abilities you have
3. Use such wisdom to eliminate what appears less acceptable

D. COMMIT YOUR WAY TO THE LORD...

1. Whatever you do, do it for the Lord's sake - cf. **Psa 37:5-6,23-26**
2. Make your plans subject to God's will, both proclaimed and providential - **Ja 4:15**
 - a. Give God permission to close the door on your choice if that is His will
 - b. If He closes the door on your choice, look for alternatives

E. OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER...

1. God is not like a train; he is able to run on more than one track
2. A choice may not be between good and bad, but between good and better
3. God can use us in many different ways
4. If need not choose right away, wait; that will give you time to grow and gain wisdom
5. Whatever your hands find to do in your existing circumstances, do it with all your might

CONCLUSION

1. Our goal should be to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" - cf. **Co 4:12**
 - a. Especially as it pertains to the proclaimed will of God
 - b. Even as much as possible in the providential and permissive will of God
2. Epaphras' desire for his brethren serves as a good example; as does that of our Lord...
 - a. Who taught us to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it in heaven" - **Mt 6:10**
 - b. Who Himself prayed, "Not as I will, but as You will..." - **Mt 26:39-42**

Are you seeking to "*find a way in the will of God*" as it pertains to the plans in your life?

Not Ashamed Of The Gospel

Romans 1:14-17

INTRODUCTION

1. As Paul began his grand epistle to the Romans, he wrote of his desire to see them...
 - a. His diligent prayers toward that end - **Ro 1:9-10**
 - b. His desire to encourage them through mutual edification - **Ro 1:11-12**
 - c. His plans to come, that he might have some fruit among them - **Ro 1:13**
2. His desire to see them was related to the gospel...
 - a. Which he served as an apostle of Christ - **Ro 1:1**
 - b. The good news concerning Jesus - **Ro 1:3**
 - c. Of which he was not ashamed - **Ro 1:16**
3. Are we ever ashamed of the gospel of Christ...?
 - a. Embarrassed to tell others about Jesus?
 - b. Could this be a reason why many are not active in personal evangelism?

[Perhaps by examining **how** and **why** Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, we might be more diligent in our efforts to share the good news of Jesus Christ...]

I. PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

A. HOW HE WAS NOT ASHAMED...

1. **He felt obligated to preach the gospel to everyone**
 - a. To Greeks and barbarians (non-Greeks), to wise and unwise - **Ro 1:14**
 - b. His obligation due partly to favor God had shown him - **1 Co 15:9-10; 1 Ti 1:12-14**
 2. **He was ready to preach the gospel in Rome**
 - a. Whatever opportunity was given him, he would take it! - **Ro 1:15**
 - b. Even though his preference was to preach where Jesus had not been proclaimed before - **Ro 15:20**
- **Paul showed that he was not ashamed by his willingness and preparedness to preach the gospel anytime and anywhere!**

B. WHY HE WAS NOT ASHAMED...

1. **It is the power of God to salvation**
 - a. For everyone who believes, both Jew and Greek (Gentiles) - **Ro 1:16**
 - b. For it tells of Christ, the power of God and wisdom of God - **1 Co 1:23-24**
 2. **It reveals the righteousness of God in salvation**
 - a. How the just shall live by faith - **Ro 1:17**
 - b. How God is both just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus - **Ro 3:21-26**
- **Because of its power and message, Paul was not ashamed to preach the gospel to anyone willing to listen!**

[From Paul, then, we should note several reasons why...]

II. WE SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

A. THE GOSPEL REMAINS THE SAME...

1. **It is still God's power to save**
 - a. The power to produce faith in the hearts of those who hear it - **Ro 10:17**
 - b. The power to produce fruit in those who hear and know the truth - **Co 1:5-6**
 2. **It still reveals God's righteousness in salvation**
 - a. How Jesus died for our sins - **1 Co 15:1-4**
 - b. How we can receive remission of our sins in Jesus through faith, repentance, and baptism - **Ac 2:36-38; 22:16**
- **The passing of time has not weakened the power and message of the gospel of Christ!**

B. THE NEED REMAINS THE SAME...

1. **Souls are in need of salvation**
 - a. All have sinned - **Ro 3:23**
 - b. The wages of sin is death - **Ro 6:23**
 2. **Both wise and foolish, both near and afar**
 - a. Jesus is still the only way to the Father - **Jn 14:6**
 - b. His gospel still needs to be preached to every creature - **Mk 16:15-16**
- **The passing of time has not lessened the need and scope of the gospel of Christ!**

[From the example of Paul, we can know the proper attitude and conduct of..]

III. THOSE NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

A. WILL FEEL A SENSE OF OBLIGATION...

1. **To God who saved them**
 - a. Are we not thankful for what God has done for us?
 - b. Will this not affect how we live our lives? - cf. **Ga 2:20**
 2. **To those who are lost**
 - a. Are we not concerned about their eternal destiny should they die in their sins?
 - b. Will this not move us to do something? - cf. **2 Co 5:11**
- **Those not ashamed of the gospel will feel an obligation similar to Paul's - Ro 1:14**

B. WILL MAKE THEMSELVES READY...

1. **To share the gospel as they have opportunity**
 - a. If uncertain what to say, they will learn it (even relearn it) - cf. **1 Pe 3:15; He 5:12**
 - b. They will not rest until they have found some method, aids, or tools, whereby they can communicate the gospel to others
 - c. Then they will be looking for "open doors" to teach others - cf. **1 Co 3:5**
 2. **To spread the gospel as they have opportunity**
 - a. They may not be in a position to go, but they can still send - cf. **Ro 10:14-15; 3 Jn 5-8**
 - b. They may not be in a position to teach, but they can still invite - e.g., **Ac 10:24,33**
 - c. Then they will be looking for "open doors" to send - e.g., **Ph 4:15-16**
- **Those not ashamed of the gospel will make themselves ready like Paul - Ro 1:15**

CONCLUSION

1. Are you ashamed of the gospel of Christ? You may be, if you are not...
 - a. Doing anything to share the gospel yourself
 - b. Involved in helping others to spread the gospel

2. You have no reason to be ashamed, it is still the same gospel!
 - a. With power to save the souls of men
 - b. Revealing the wonderful righteousness of God to save men

May we never be ashamed of the gospel, or of Jesus Himself...

“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” (Mk 8:38)

“Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.” (1 Pe 4:16)

The Wrath Of God

Romans 1:18-32

INTRODUCTION

1. The Scriptures speak of the **coming** day of God's wrath...
 - a. Revealing the righteous judgment of God - cf. **Ro 2:4-6**
 - b. A day of judgment of the ungodly - cf. **2 Pe 3:7**

-- **In which the fullness of God's righteous indignation is made known**
2. The Scriptures also speak of how God's wrath has **already come**...
 - a. Revealed from heaven - **Ro 1:18a**
 - b. Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men - **Ro 1:18b**

-- **In which a foretaste of God's righteous indignation is manifested**

[Why does God manifest this "foretaste" of His wrath? How does He express His righteous indignation even now, long before the day of judgment? Our text (**Ro 1:18-32**) provides the answers...]

I. WHY GOD MANIFESTS HIS WRATH

A. BECAUSE MAN STIFLES GOD'S REVEALED TRUTH...

1. By suppressing the truth in unrighteousness - **Ro 1:18**
 - a. Rejecting what is true
 - b. Justifying what is ungodly and unrighteous
2. By spurning what God has revealed - **Ro 1:19-20**
 - a. Things about God that are manifest in man himself
 - 1) E.g., man's intelligence and personality, implying the same of his Creator
 - 2) E.g., man's sense of ought, implying a righteous Creator
 - b. Things about God that are manifest in creation around him - cf. **Psa 19:1-2**
 - 1) Invisible attributes of God, seen and understood by things that are visible
 - 2) E.g., design and order of the universe imply eternal power and Deity

-- **When man fails to listen to the beauty and design of the universe that declares "God exists!", God is angry!**

B. BECAUSE MAN IS UNGRATEFUL AND FOOLISH...

1. Not being thankful to God - **Ro 1:21a**
 - a. Even when they knew Him
 - b. Yet failing to glorify Him as God
2. Becoming futile in their thoughts and foolish in their hearts - **Ro 1:21b-23**
 - a. The consequence of not glorifying God
 - b. Leading to idolatry (the worship of creation instead of the Creator)
 - 1) E.g., making God into their own image
 - 2) E.g., making God into the image of other animate objects
 - c. Modern man has his own idols:
 - 1) E.g., secular humanism (worshipping self)
 - 2) E.g., covetousness (worshipping money) - cf. **Ep 5:5; Co 3:5**

-- **When man ceases to be thankful to God, and esteems created things over Him,**

then God is angry!

[The wrath of God at the last day will involve a fiery end (cf. **2 Pe 3:10; 2 Th 1:7-9**). God's wrath being revealed today is more subtle, but terrible nonetheless...]

II. HOW GOD MANIFESTS HIS WRATH

A. HE "GIVES MAN UP" TO MORAL UNCLEANNESS...

1. God "gave them up" (paradidomi) - **Ro 1:24a**
 - a. No fire from heaven striking them down
 - b. But simply leaving man to his own desires
2. To (moral) uncleanness - **Ro 1:24b**
 - a. In the lusts of their hearts (wherever their wicked hearts led them, cf. **Mk 7:21-23**)
 - b. Dishonoring their bodies among themselves (in what way, see below)
3. Why? Because they exchanged the truth of God for the lie - **Ro 1:25**
 - a. Worshipping and serving that which is created
 - b. Rather than He who is the Creator and worthy to be blessed forever

B. HE "GIVES MAN UP" TO VILE PASSIONS...

1. Again, God "gave them up" (paradidomi) - **Ro 1:26a**
 - a. No lightning from heaven striking one down
 - b. But simply leaving man to his vile passions
2. Case in point, lesbianism - **Ro 1:26b**
 - a. Women exchanging the natural use for what is against nature
 - b. Using bodies designed for procreation in ways that do not procreate
3. Case in point, homosexuality - **Ro 1:27**
 - a. Leaving the natural use of women (to procreate, to avoid fornication, cf. **1 Co 7:2**)
 - b. Burning in their lust for one another, committing with men what is shameful
 - c. Receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due (e.g., AIDS?)

C. HE "GIVES MAN UP" TO DEBASED MINDS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS...

1. Yet again, God "gave them over" (paradidomi) - **Ro 1:28**
 - a. Since they did not like to retain God in their knowledge
 - b. God gave them over to a debased mind, to do things not fitting
2. The result of being "given up": being filled with all unrighteousness - **Ro 1:29-31**
 - a. Wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness
 - b. Envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness
 - c. Whisperers, backbiters, haters of God
 - d. Violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents
 - e. Undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful
3. They know the righteous judgment of God, that such are deserving of death - **Ro 1:32**
 - a. Yet they still do it
 - b. And they approve those who do it

CONCLUSION

1. **God's wrath** is manifested today by simply allowing man to go his own way...
 - a. To follow the desires of his heart
 - b. To follow the passions of his lusts

-- Stumbling in blind ignorance to increasing degrees of depravity - cf. **Ep 4:17-19**

2. **God's mercy** is manifested today for those willing to turn back to Him...
 - a. Willing to acknowledge His revelation
 - 1) That given through creation
 - 2) Even more so that given through His Son! - cf. **1 Jn 4:9,10**
 - b. Willing to be thankful to Him
 - 1) With the attitude of gratitude - cf. **Co 1:12; 2:7; 3:15,17; 4:2**
 - 2) Showing gratitude through repentance - cf. **Ro 2:4**

Are we thankful? Do we show it by turning from our sins and turning to God? If not, we have every reason to fear the wrath of God - not just the day of judgment, but the consequence in this life of God simply "giving us up" to our own desires!

The Goodness Of God

Romans 2:4-11

INTRODUCTION

1. Many people live their lives with little regard to the goodness of God...
 - a. Unaware of how gracious God has been and is willing to be toward them
 - b. Unaware of how their neglect will one day come back to haunt them
2. Have you given much thought to the goodness of God...?
 - a. The many blessings He bestows?
 - b. The consequences if you fail to respond properly?

[One passage of Scripture that ought to give us pause is the one written in **Ro 2:4-11**, in which Paul expounds upon “**The Goodness Of God.**” From **verse 4**, we can glean some things about...]

I. THE NATURE OF HIS GOODNESS

A. HIS RICHES...

1. He is rich in grace - **Ep 1:7**
2. He is rich in mercy - **Ep 2:4**
3. He is rich in supplying need - **Ph 4:19**
4. He is rich in giving things to enjoy - **1 Ti 6:17**
5. He is rich in the strength He provides the Christian - **Ep 3:16,21**

B. HIS FORBEARANCE...

1. “Forbearance” (**anochē**) means “a holding back” - **ISBE**
2. We see God’s forbearance...
 - a. In the days of Israel - cf. **Psa 78:38**
 - b. In our present day (since the fullness of God’s wrath has yet to come)

C. HIS LONGSUFFERING...

1. “Longsuffering” (**makrothumia**) describes “a slowness in avenging wrath” - **Strong’s**
2. We see God suffering long...
 - a. In the days of Noah, prior to the flood - cf. **1 Pe 3:20**
 - b. In our present day, prior to the day of judgment - cf. **2 Pe 3:9-15a**

[The Psalmist summarizes well the nature of God’s goodness: “***But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.***” (**Psa 86:15**). As we return to our text in Romans, we are told of...]

II. THE PURPOSE OF HIS GOODNESS

A. SHOULD LEAD ONE TO REPENTANCE...

1. God’s goodness is intended to cause man to repent - **Ro 2:4**
2. Based on Paul’s description of repentance elsewhere, God’s goodness should produce...
 - a. Godly sorrow which leads to repentance - cf. **2 Co 7:9-10**

- b. A change of mind (the actual meaning of **metanoia**, repentance) - **Strong's**
- c. A turn from sin to God (as evidence of repentance) - cf. **2 Co 7:10-11**

B. SHOULD LEAD ONE TO DO WHAT IS GOOD...

- 1. As just described, an indication of true repentance - cf. **2 Co 7:11**
- 2. As later described in our text, it should lead to doing good...
 - a. With patient continuance - **Ro 2:7a**
 - 1) Where God was longsuffering (**makrothumia**) before
 - 2) We are to do good patiently (**hupomone**) now - cf. **Lk 8:15**
 - b. Seeking glory, honor, immortality - **Ro 2:7b**
 - 1) Glory and honor that will come at the revelation of Jesus Christ - cf. **1 Pe 1:7; 2 Co 4:16-18**
 - 2) Immortality (incorruption) that will be given at the same time - **1 Co 15:51-54**

[Thus “eternal life” will be given to those who are properly motivated by God’s goodness to repent and do good (**Ro 2:7**). But what of those who spurn the riches of God’s goodness...?]

III. THE REJECTION OF HIS GOODNESS

A. INDICATIVE OF A HARD HEART...

- 1. For they despise God’s goodness - **Ro 2:4**
- 2. For they evidently are insensitive and unappreciative of God’s goodness - **Ro 2:5**
- 3. For they remain impenitent in their heart - **Ro 2:5**

B. STORES UP WRATH FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT...

- 1. The wrath of God’s righteous judgment - cf. **Ro 2:5**
- 2. A day of wrath involving indignation, tribulation, and anguish - **Ro 2:8-9a**
- 3. A vivid description of which is found in **2 Th 1:7-9**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Such is the end of one who does not properly respond to God’s goodness...
 - a. Especially as that manifested through the gospel of Jesus
 - b. Which Paul will expound upon later in this epistle to the Romans
- 2. As we close, be careful to note: there is no partiality with God! - **Ro 2:9-11**
 - a. Those who do evil will be punished
 - b. Those who do good will be blessed

Have you allowed “**The Goodness Of God**” to lead you to repentance, especially that repentance called for in the proclamation of the gospel? - cf. **Ac 2:36-39; 3:19; 17:30-31**

The Righteousness Of God Revealed

Romans 3:21-31

INTRODUCTION

1. A major theme in the book of Romans is the righteousness of God...
 - a. It is mentioned in connection with the gospel of Christ - **Ro 1:16-17**
 - b. It is the major subject of discussion in **chapters 1-11**

2. The phrase “righteousness of God” can be understood in two ways...
 - a. God’s own personal righteousness (i.e., His justice)
 - b. God’s system of making man righteous (i.e., forgiving man of sin)
 -- **Both concepts are addressed in the book of Romans, but the latter in particular**

3. In **chapters 1-3**, Paul describes man’s need for righteousness...
 - a. How the Gentiles are in need of salvation - **Ro 1:18-2:16**
 - b. How the Jews are in need of salvation - **Ro 2:17-3:20**
 -- **Concluding that all the world is guilty, even Israel who had the Law - Ro 3:19-20**

[But now in our text (**Ro 3:21-31**), Paul explains how the righteousness of God has been revealed. It was revealed in part even...]

I. BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

A. RIGHTEOUSNESS APART FROM LAW...

1. “A righteousness that does not spring from perfect obedience to law “ - **B. W. Johnson**
 2. “In a way different from personal obedience to the law.” - **Barnes**
 - a. “It does not mean that God *abandoned* his law; or that Jesus Christ did not *regard* the law, for he came to “magnify” it, (**Isa 42:21**) or that sinners *after* they are justified have no regard to the law;” - **Barnes**
 - b. “But it means simply what the apostle had been endeavoring to show, that justification could not be accomplished by *personal* obedience to any law of Jew or Gentile, and that it must be accomplished in some other way.” - **Barnes**
- **I.e., a system of justification that does not depend upon one’s perfect obedience**

B. WITNESSED BY THE LAW...

1. How? Through shadows and figures (e.g., animal sacrifices) - **He 10:1-4**
 - a. The need for animal sacrifices showed that man’s perfect obedience was inadequate
 - b. Of course, animal sacrifices themselves were not adequate, but a shadow
 2. How? Through prophetic utterances - **Gen 15:6; Isa 53:4-6,10-12; Hab 2:4**
 - a. E.g., that Abraham’s faith was reckoned for righteousness
 - b. E.g., that suffering Servant would bear our iniquities
 - c. E.g., that the just would live by faith
- **God’s ultimate system of justification (making one righteous) was attested to throughout the law and the prophets!**

[But what was witnessed through figures and prophetic utterances has now been fully revealed...]

II. BY THE GOSPEL AND THE APOSTLES

A. DEMANDS FAITH IN JESUS...

1. God's way of making men righteous requires faith in Jesus Christ - **Ro 3:22**
 - a. We must believe in Him, or die in our sins - **Jn 8:24**
 - b. We must believe in Him, if we desire eternal life - **Jn 20:30-31**
 2. A way of salvation available to all who believe in Jesus - **Ro 3:22-23**
 - a. There is no difference (between Jew and Gentile)
 - b. For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God (chapters 1-3)
- **It is not just faith that saves, but faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins!**

B. INVOLVES JUSTIFICATION BY GOD...

1. Offered freely by His grace - **Ro 3:24-25**
 - a. Through redemption in Jesus (His blood, the purchase price) - **Ep 1:6,7; 1 Pe 1:18-19**
 - b. Jesus offered as a propitiation (a sacrifice to appease God's wrath) - **1 Jn 2:2; 4:10**
 2. Demonstrating God's righteousness - **Ro 3:25-26**
 - a. He is **just** (righteous)
 - 1) How could God be righteous when He had "passed over" sins previously committed (the blood of animals did not truly remove sin)?
 - 2) He knew that Christ would one day bear the sins of the world! - cf. **He 9:15**
 - b. He is the **justifier** (the one who makes others righteous)
 - 1) His grace makes redemption possible!
 - 2) His propitiation (Jesus) makes forgiveness possible!
- **Yet this justification is only for the one who has faith in Jesus! - Ro 3:26**

C. ELIMINATES BOASTING BY MAN...

1. Excluded by the law of faith - **Ro 3:27-30**
 - a. One cannot boast about the works they do - cf. **Lk 17:10**
 - b. That faith is required implies that works cannot save
 - c. The "law of faith" (principle of faith) revealed that Christ's sacrifice was necessary
 2. Establishing the principle of law - **Ro 3:31**
 - a. Justification by faith does not render obedience obsolete - cf. He 5:9
 - b. Whether it was the Law of Moses under the Old Covenant, or the Will of Christ under the New Covenant, God calls for obedience! - cf. **Mt 28:20; Ti 2:11-12**
 - c. "It does not mean that God *abandoned* his law; or that Jesus Christ did not *regard* the law, for he came to "magnify" it, (**Isa 42:21**) or that sinners *after* they are justified have no regard to the law;" - **Barnes**
- **God's way of making man righteous by an obedient faith eliminates boasting in one's works, while upholding God's call for holy living!**

CONCLUSION

1. The mistake made by many Jews...
 - a. Believing their obedience and animal sacrifices (i.e., the Law) was all they needed
 - b. Failing to heed the Law and the Prophets, who bore witness regarding God's justification - cf. **Ro 10:1-4**
2. The mistake many people make today...

- a. Believing that faith only saves, and obedience is not necessary
- b. Failing to heed the gospel and the apostles, that the faith which saves is an obedient faith - cf. **Ro 1:5; 6:17-18; 16:25-26**

When one is careful to note “**The Righteousness Of God Revealed**”, they learn that God saves those whose faith in Jesus prompt them to obey His Word. Their obedience does not **earn** or **merit** salvation, but **receives** the grace of God who has given Jesus as the propitiation for their sins.

Has your faith in Jesus led you to obey His Word? - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; Re 2:10**

Shall We Continue In Sin?

Romans 6:1-23

INTRODUCTION

1. In Romans, Paul addresses the problem of sin...
 - a. In the first two and a half chapters, he demonstrates that all have sinned - cf. **Ro 3:23**
 - b. In the next two and a half chapters, he declares how we can be justified through faith in Jesus Christ - cf. **Ro 5:1-2**
 - c. He concludes that where sin abounded, grace abounded much more - **Ro 5:20-21**
2. Paul then anticipates an erroneous inference...
 - a. "Let's continue in sin, that grace may abound!" - **Ro 6:1**
 - a. A conclusion that is repulsive to him - **Ro 6:2a**
3. Today, many Christians may live in reference to sin as though they had the same idea...
 - a. Living as though there is no need to be diligent in overcoming sin
 - b. Perhaps reasoning, "If I sin, I can simply confess and God will forgive"
-- **I.e., continue in sin that grace may abound!**
4. Yet a careful study of the sixth chapter reveals why such a thought is absurd...
 - a. Paul provides four reasons why we should not continue in sin
 - b. When understood, they will prompt us to say with Paul: "**Certainly not!**"

[Shall we continue in sin...?]

I. NO! WE DIED TO SIN! (2)

A. WE WERE CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM (3-4)

1. Baptism is a burial into the death of Christ
2. Baptism is where we were crucified with Christ - cf. **Ro 6:6**
3. Thus baptism (not repentance) is where we die to sin
-- **Having been crucified with Christ should impact how we live - cf. Ga 2:20**

B. WE CAN NOW WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE (4-5)

1. Just as Christ rose from the grave, so we rise from baptism to walk in newness of life
2. We are now a new creation in Christ - cf. **2 Co 5:17**

C. WE ARE NO LONGER SLAVES OF SIN (6-7)

1. The very purpose of dying to sin in baptism, to be free from sin!
2. A point Paul will expound upon later

D. WE CAN NOW LIVE WITH CHRIST (8-10)

1. Christ now lives with God in newness of life
2. Because we died with Christ, so can we! - cf. **Ep 2:4-6**

[The idea of being alive in Christ leads to Paul's second major point in response to the question "Shall we continue in sin?"...]

II. NO! WE ARE ALIVE TO GOD! (11)

A. SIN DOES NOT HAVE TO REIGN IN US (12)

1. We who were dead in sin can now choose not to let it reign in us!
2. We are no longer debtors to sin - cf. **Ro 8:12-13**

B. OUR BODIES CAN NOW BE INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (13)

1. We can present ourselves to God...
 - a. As alive from the dead
 - b. As instruments of righteousness to Him
2. I.e., we can now glorify Him even with our bodies - cf. **1 Co 6:19-20**

C. GOD'S GRACE FREES US FROM SIN'S DOMINION (14)

1. Sin no longer needs to be our master
2. In Christ, we have been set free! - cf. **Ro 8:1-2**

[This freedom is not license to sin. On the contrary, consider Paul's third point in response to the question "Shall we continue in sin?"...]

III. NO! WE ARE TO BE SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS! (19)

A. WE ARE SLAVES TO WHATEVER WE OBEY (15-16)

1. Grace is no excuse to sin
2. We are either slaves of sin, or slaves of righteousness
3. If we continue in sin, we once again become slaves of sin! - cf. **Jn 8:34**
4. For Christians to continue in sin makes things worse - cf. **2 Pe 2:20-22**

B. WE BECAME SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (17-18)

1. We were slaves of sin
2. But when we obeyed from the heart the doctrine (i.e., the gospel which commands baptism), we were set free from sin
 - a. Not just sin's condemnation - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16; Ro 8:1-2**
 - b. But also sin's dominion - cf. **Ro 8:12-13**
3. We were set free from sin so we could become slaves of righteousness!

C. WE ARE TO SERVE RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE WE ONCE SERVED SIN (19)

1. We previously offered our bodies as slaves of sin
2. So now offer our bodies as slaves of righteousness for the purpose of producing holiness - cf. **1 Pe 1:14-16**

[Finally, we note Paul's concluding point in response to the question "Shall we continue in sin?"...]

IV. NO! THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH! (23)

A. THE FRUIT OF SLAVERY TO SIN IS DEATH (20-21)

1. The end of those enslaved to sin is "death"

2. Such “death” is separation from God
 - a. Living in sin separates us from God now - cf. **Isa 59:1-2**
 - b. Dying in sin will separate us from for eternity - cf. **Re 21:8**

B. THE GRACE OF GOD OFFERS ETERNAL LIFE (22-23)

1. By His grace we have been set free from sin, via baptism! - **Ro 6:2-14**; cf. **Ti 3:4-7**
2. By His grace we can now be slaves to God, through continued obedience! - **Ro 6:15-19**
3. By His grace we can bear the fruit of holiness, which in turn leads to eternal life! - **Ro 6:22**; cf. **2:4-11**

CONCLUSION

1. Shall we continue in sin?
 - a. If we understand what Paul has written in this chapter...
 - b. ...then we will cry out with him: “Certainly not!” (NKJV) - **Ro 6:2,15**
2. Paul’s strong response has been variously translated...
 - a. “It is not to be thought of!” (Knox)
 - b. “Not at all!” (Williams)
 - c. “That be far from us!” (Conybeare)
 - d. “Of course not!” (Phillips)
 - e. “May it never be!” (NASB)
 - f. “Far be it!” (Rotherham)
 - g. “Never!” (Moffatt)
 - h. “By no means!” (Goodspeed, NRSV)
 - i. “Certainly not!” (NEB, NKJV)
 - j. “Heaven forbid!” (TCNT)
 - k. “God forbid!” (KJV, ASV)

-- **May we develop the same response to taking sin lightly!**

Have you been set free from sin...? Have you become enslaved to sin once again...? Let the grace of God deliver you from the guilt and power of sin by responding to the gospel of Jesus Christ!

God's Gift Of Eternal Life

Romans 6:22-23

INTRODUCTION

1. An familiar verse is that found at the end of Romans six...

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 6:23)

2. This passage is often used to suggest that eternal life is...
 - a. A gift given when one becomes a Christian
 - b. A gift requiring no effort on the part of the recipient(s)
3. It is true that elsewhere we learn that...
 - a. Eternal life is described as a “present possession”, enjoyed now by the Christian - **1 Jn 5:13**
 - 1) Referring to a relationship made possible by knowing God and Jesus - cf. **Jn 17:2-3**
 - 2) A feature of that which Jesus describes as the “abundant life” - cf. **Jn 10:10**
 - b. Salvation is not merited or earned - cf. **Ti 3:4-7**
 - 1) Even though it does require obedience - **He 5:9**
 - 2) The gospel contains that which must be obeyed - cf. **2 Th 1:8; 1 Pe 4:17**
4. But in the context of Romans six, the gift of eternal life as described by Paul...
 - a. Is not a present possession, but something received at the end of life! - cf. **Ro 6:22**
 - b. Is received not without effort, but as the result of a holy life! - cf. **Ro 6:22**

[As we carefully consider **verse 22** along with the rest of the chapter, note first that eternal life is...]

I. GIVEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN

A. BY DYING TO SIN...

-- **Paul begins chapter six by revealing:**

1. One who dies to sin should no longer live in sin - **Ro 6:1-2**
2. He who has died has been freed from sin - **Ro 6:7**

B. IN BAPTISM...

-- **He then explains how and when one dies to sin:**

1. Where we are baptized into His death - **Ro 6:3-4**
2. Where we are united together in the likeness of His death - **Ro 6:5**
3. Where our old man was crucified with Him - **Ro 6:6**
 - a. That the body of sin might be done away with
 - b. That we should no longer be slaves of sin

[Those who have died to sin in baptism have been set free from sin. But now note that according to **verse 22** eternal life is...]

II. GIVEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME SLAVES OF GOD

A. NO LONGER SLAVES OF SIN...

-- **Consider what Paul wrote:**

1. We have died to sin - **Ro 6:1-2**
2. We now live with Christ - **Ro 6:8-11**
3. We are not to let sin reign and have dominion over us - **Ro 6:12,14**

B. NOW SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...

-- **Consider what is now the duty of Christians:**

1. We are to present ourselves to God as alive from the dead - **Ro 6:13**
2. We are to present our members as instruments of righteousness to God - **Ro 6:13**
3. We have become slaves of righteousness through obedience - **Ro 6:16-18**

[As slaves of God, we are now to be obedient slaves of righteousness. From **verse 22** we learn that eternal life will therefore be...]

III. GIVEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE THE FRUIT OF HOLINESS

A. WHO WERE ONCE SLAVES OF SIN...

-- **They were slaves of sin:**

1. When they presented their members as slaves of uncleanness and lawlessness - **Ro 6:19**
2. When they were free in regard to righteousness - **Ro 6:20**
3. When they produced shameful fruit leading to death - **Ro 6:21**

B. WHO ARE NOW SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...

-- **They are now slaves of righteousness:**

1. For the purpose of holiness - **Ro 6:19c**
2. For the fruit leading to holiness - **Ro 6:22**

[Finally, from **verse 22** we learn that for those who have the fruit of holiness, eternal life is...]

IV. GIVEN AT THE END OF LIFE

A. AT THE END...

-- **Eternal life is given to those:**

1. Having died to sin - **Ro 6:22a,1-11**
2. Having become slaves to God - **Ro 6:22b,12-18**
3. Having had the fruit of holiness - **Ro 6:22c,19-21**

B. ETERNAL LIFE...

-- **Some observations concerning that which comes at the end:**

1. Some translations say “everlasting life” (KJV, NKJV), but it is the same expression translated “eternal life” in **verse 23**
2. Here Paul speaks of our “**future hope**”, given at the Judgment:
 - a. Of which Jesus often spoke - **Mt 25:46; Mk 10:29-30**
 - b. As Paul did elsewhere - **Ro 2:4-7; Ti 1:2; 3:7**
 - c. Pertaining to that life with God we enter into in the age to come - cf. **Re 21:3-7**

CONCLUSION

1. From our study of the context of **Ro 6:22-23**, we have seen that eternal life is...
 - a. Given to those who have been set free from sin
 - b. Given to those who have become slaves to God
 - c. Given to those who have the fruit of holiness
 - d. Given at the end of life

2. If so, then how is eternal life called a “gift” (or “free gift”)...?
 - a. Because it requires the kindness, love, mercy and grace of God - cf. **Ti 3:4-7**
 - b. Despite our obedience, we have not earned or merited this gift of eternal life

3. Do we desire to receive “**God’s Gift Of Eternal Life**”? Then one must ask...
 - a. Have I been set free from sin by dying to sin in baptism?
 - b. Have I become a slave to God, presenting myself as a servant of righteousness?
 - c. Am I bearing the fruit of holiness in my life?

Let Jesus be your author (source) of eternal life as you humbly obey Him... - cf. **He 5:9; Mk 16:15-16**

Two Dilemmas

Romans 7:14-25

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ro 7:14-25** Paul describes a great struggle...
 - a. Between one who knows to do good, but cannot do it
 - b. Between a desire to keep the law of God, and a war with the law of sin
2. This is a challenging passage that contains not one, but two dilemmas...
 - a. The **textual** dilemma
 - b. The **human** dilemma

[**Dilemma:** (informal) any difficult and perplexing situation; predicament. To appreciate the difficulty of the passage itself, let's first look at...]

I. THE TEXTUAL DILEMMA

A. DESCRIBED BY PAUL...

1. Is it his struggle as a Christian?
 - a. The use of first person pronoun ("I", "me", "my") is certainly indicative
 - b. That Christians so struggle is taught elsewhere - **Ga 5:16-17; Ja 4:1; 1 Pe 2:11**
 2. Is it his struggle as a Jew?
 - a. While living under the Law of Moses?
 - b. Many think so, including myself
- **So first there is the dilemma of how to understand the text**

B. DETERMINED BY CONTEXT...

1. Consider the **overall context** of the **book of Romans**
 - a. Justification by faith in Christ, not by keeping the Law of Moses - **Ro 3:28-30**
 - b. The promise to Abraham comes through faith, not the Law - **Ro 4:13**
 2. Consider the **immediate context** of **chapters 7 and 8**
 - a. Paul's comments are especially to those who know the law - **Ro 7:1**
 - b. Those once married to the Law, die to the law through Christ - **Ro 7:4**
 - c. Those once held by the Law have been delivered from the law - **Ro 7:6**
 - d. The law referenced to clearly includes the Ten Commandments - **Ro 7:7**
 - e. The law, though good, brought death not deliverance - **Ro 7:7-13**
 - f. A deliverance appealed to, alluded to, and then explained - **Ro 7:24-25; Ro 8:1-2,12**
- **The context helps to resolve the textual dilemma**

[That Paul is describing the struggle he experienced as a Jew under the Law becomes more apparent as we now examine the text itself regarding...]

II. THE HUMAN DILEMMA

A. DESCRIBED AS A MAN...

1. Who is carnal, sold under sin - **Ro 7:14-15**

- a. Desires to good, finds himself unable
 - b. Desires to abstain from evil, finds himself unable
 - 2. Who agrees the law is good, but finds that sins dwells in him - **Ro 7:16-20**
 - a. In his flesh nothing good dwells
 - b. The desire to do good is present, the ability to perform is not
 - c. The good he desires he does not, the evil he desires not he does
 - d. Thus sin dwells in him
 - 3. Who is enslaved to a "law" (of sin and death, cf. **Ro 8:2**) - **Ro 7:21-23**
 - a. Where evil is present in one who desires to do good
 - b. Where a law in his members (flesh) wages war against the law of his mind
 - c. Where the law in his members brings him into captivity to the law of sin
 - 4. Who finds himself wretched - **Ro 7:24**
 - a. "O wretched man that I am!"
 - b. "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"
- **A wretched dilemma: sold under sin, indwelt by sin, enslaved to a law of sin!**

B. DELIVERED BY CHRIST...

- 1. Expressed in chapter seven - **Ro 7:25**
 - a. By way of anticipation, interrupting his train of thought
 - b. "I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!"
 - c. But again, the dilemma: willing to serve the law of God with the mind, but with his flesh he serves the law of sin!
 - 2. Explained in chapter eight - **Ro 8:1-6,11-14**
 - a. There is no condemnation for those in Christ, provided they walk according to the Spirit
 - b. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ frees one from the law of sin and death!
 - 1) Christ's death fulfills the righteous requirement (death for sin)
 - 2) Becoming spiritually minded is life and peace, for submission to God is now possible
 - 3) Indwelt by the Spirit, He imparts life to our mortal bodies - cf. **Ro 6:12-13; Ep 3:16**
 - 4) We are no longer debtors (enslaved) to the flesh, to live according to the flesh
 - 5) By the Spirit we can put to death the deeds of the flesh, and live as sons of God!
- **A blessed condition: no longer enslaved to sin, but empowered by the Spirit!**

CONCLUSION

- 1. In **Romans 7**, Paul vividly illustrates the weakness of the Law of Moses...
 - a. The Law was holy, just, and good, but it did not offer true deliverance
 - b. It did not offer deliverance from the guilt and power of sin - cf. **Jn 8:34**
 - c. One can will to do good, but the ability to truly do as one should is not there
- 2. In **Romans 8**, Paul provides deliverance from this dilemma...
 - a. First, no condemnation to those in Christ
 - b. Second, empowerment over the flesh by aid of the Holy Spirit
 - c. The struggle is still present, but the ability to perform is now possible - cf. **Ro 7:18** with **Ga 5:16**

Have you experienced freedom from **the guilt of sin** through the blood of Christ (**Ep 1:7**)? Are you experiencing freedom from **the power of sin** through the indwelling Spirit (**Ro 8:12-13**)?

Both blessings begin when one receives Christ (and the Spirit) in baptism... - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16; Ti 3:5; Ga 4:6; 1Co 12:13**

Freedom From Sin

Romans 8:1-25

INTRODUCTION

1. How seriously do we take the problem of sin...?
 - a. The guilt of sin?
 - b. The power of sin?
 - c. The corruption of sin?
2. Do we really appreciate the freedom from sin...?
 - a. That we can experience now in our lives?
 - b. That we can look forward to in the future?

[In **Ro 8:1-25**, Paul writes about the freedom from sin that one finds in Christ. To appreciate more fully the blessings we have in Christ, consider that there is first...]

I. FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN (1-4)

A. THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN...

1. Everyone is guilty of sin - **Ro 3:23; 1 Jn 1:8**
 2. Even if one committed just one sin (if such were possible!) - **Ja 2:10-11**
 3. Unforgiven sin separates us from God - **Isa 59:1-2**
 4. The ultimate condemnation is death (esp. the 'second' death) - **Ro 6:23; cf. Re 21:8**
- **That all are guilty of sin is the main point of Romans 1-3**

B. THERE IS FREEDOM....

1. From condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus - **Ro 8:1; cf. Ga 3:27**
 - a. For in Christ there is propitiation, redemption, justification - **Ro 3:24-26**
 - b. For in baptism there is death to sin, newness of life - **Ro 6:3-8**
2. Who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit - **Ro 8:1,4**
 - a. Explained more fully later in the chapter (and in this lesson)
 - b. Also in Paul's epistle to the Galatians - cf. **Ga 5:16-26**
3. Made possible by:
 - a. The law (principle) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus - **Ro 8:2**
 - 1) Which sets one free from the law of sin and death - cf. **Ti 3:4-7**
 - 2) The law of sin and death which enslaves, mentioned in **Ro 7:21-25**
 - b. The death of Christ - **Ro 8:3-4**
 - 1) Doing what the Law of Moses could not do
 - 2) Condemning sin in the flesh
 - 3) Fulfilling the righteous requirement of the Law for us

-- **That justification (no condemnation) is found in Christ is the theme of Romans 4-7**

[Thus the freedom from sin that we enjoy in Christ involves freedom from the **condemnation** of sin. But there is more! There is also...]

II. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (5-17)

A. THE POWER OF SIN...

1. The problem of sin is not limited to guilt
 - a. As if the guilt of sin weren't bad enough!
 - b. Sin also has power to enslave a person so they can't do what they want to do!
 2. Jesus described the power of sin - **Jn 8:31-34**
 - a. The freedom under consideration is freedom from the slavery of sin!
 - b. When one commits sin, they become a slave of sin!
 3. Paul vividly depicted his life under the bondage of sin - **Ro 7:14-24**
 - a. He was "sold under sin"
 - b. He could not do what he wanted, and what he did not wish to do, he did
 - c. He found that "sin dwells in me"
 - d. Though he desired to do good, "how to perform what is good I do not find"
 - e. He was brought "into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"
 - f. It made him "wretched", crying out for deliverance from "this body of death"
- **Sin has the power to enslave, and mankind needs deliverance!**

B. THERE IS FREEDOM...

1. For those who live according to the Spirit, not the flesh - **Ro 8:5-8**
 - a. By setting their minds on the things of the Spirit, not the things of the flesh
 - b. Whereby they can enjoy life and peace, not death
 - c. Whereby they can submit to God and please Him, while those in the flesh cannot
 2. For those who have the indwelling Holy Spirit - **Ro 8:9-11**
 - a. A blessing for those who belong to Christ - cf. **Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:38; Ti 3:4-7**
 - b. Providing life to our mortal bodies that were dead because of sin - cf. **Ro 6:12-14**
 3. For those who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**
 - a. Who are no longer indebted to live according to the flesh - cf. **Ro 6:16-19**
 - b. But can now live according to the Spirit - cf. **Ga 5:25; Ep 3:16**
 4. For those who are children of God, joint-heirs with Christ - **Ro 8:14-17**
 - a. Led by the Spirit of God, by Whom they cry, "Abba, Father" - cf. **Ga 4:6**
 - b. Heirs of glory with Christ, if willing to suffer with Him
- **With help from the Holy Spirit, we can break free from the bondage of sin!**

[Freedom from the **condemnation of sin** and the **power of sin**! What more could we ask for? How about...]

III. FREEDOM FROM THE CORRUPTION OF SIN (18-25)

A. THE CORRUPTION OF SIN...

1. Because of sin, mankind experiences physical death - cf. **1 Co 15:22a; Gen 3:22-24**
 - a. Adam and Eve were cast from the Garden of Eden
 - b. Access to the tree of life was lost, thus physical death ensued
 2. Because of sin, even the creation was placed under a curse - cf. **Gen 3:17**
 - a. Subjected to futility - **Ro 8:20**
 - b. In bondage to corruption - **Ro 8:21**
 - c. Groaning and laboring with birth pangs - **Ro 8:22; cf. Isa 24:4-6**
- **The effects of sin has permeated all of creation!**

B. THERE WILL BE FREEDOM...

1. The glorious liberty of the children of God! - **Ro 8:18-22**
 - a. To be revealed one day - cf. **Co 3:4; 2 Th 2:10; 2 Pe 1:13**
 - b. Making any present suffering unworthy to be compared
 - c. Even the creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption
 - 1) Note that Paul does not say that the creation will be delivered into its **own** liberty
 - 2) But **into** the glorious liberty of the children of God
 - 3) The present heavens and earth will “pass away”, and there will be new heavens and a new earth - cf. **2 Pe 3:10-14; Re 21:1-7**
 2. Involving our own resurrection, for which we hope - **Ro 8:23-25**
 - a. The redemption of our body, which we eagerly await - cf. **Ac 23:6**
 - b. Saved for this very hope, for which we wait with perseverance - cf. **Ac 24:15-16**
- **With the resurrection of the dead, the creation of a new heaven and new earth, the corruption of sin will be no more!**

CONCLUSION

1. The freedom from sin that is available in Christ involves...
 - a. Freedom from **the condemnation of sin**
 - b. Freedom from **the power of sin**
 - c. Freedom from **the corruption of sin**
2. Unless we receive the freedom from sin found only in Christ...
 - a. We remain **guilty of sin**
 - b. We remain **enslaved to sin**
 - c. We remain **under the corruptive influences of sin**

But by responding to the gospel of Christ with an obedient faith, freedom from the devastating effects of sin can be ours, with a hope of glorious liberty when Christ returns...!

Do Not Be Conformed To This World

Romans 12:1-2

INTRODUCTION

1. In our text, we note the command: *“And do not be conformed to this world...”*
2. What does the word “conformed” mean to you...?
 - a. Is it just a word that we quickly glance over?
 - b. How does it relate to your daily living?
3. We need to be very familiar with the concept of “conformity”...
 - a. Not just to understand what Paul is saying
 - b. But because this word plays a very important role in our lives, whether young or old

[That we might properly apply the exhortation of the apostle Paul, let’s examine the concept of conformity...]

I. UNDERSTANDING CONFORMITY

A. DEFINITION...

1. To conform to another’s pattern (RWP)
2. E.g., the desire to be like someone else
 - a. Do what they do
 - b. Say what they say
 - c. Wear what they wear
3. To accept the ideas, the fashions, way of walking and talking, etc., that is popular
4. A conformist, therefore, is someone who:
 - a. Is afraid to be different
 - b. Feels a need to be like everyone else

B. CONFORMITY IN OUR SOCIETY...

1. There is tremendous pressure to conform to the standards of the group
 - a. Even adults feel a need to conform
 - b. Also many young people (in their clothes, cars, etc.)
2. The pressure to conform is often strongest during adolescence
 - a. The young often have low-esteem
 - b. They want desperately to be accepted and esteemed by others
3. Advertisers often complicate the problem
 - a. Trying to market and sell their products
 - b. Trying to get people to conform to use their products (an old ad campaign: “Wethead is dead!”)

C. THE DANGER OF CONFORMITY...

1. It can easily lead you to do things you know are wrong
 - a. E.g., boys in a car for a joyride, and one begins popping pills
 - b. E.g., men at a business luncheon, where drinks are served

2. When others follow suit, the pressure to conform is great
 - a. Ridicule to conform is often applied
 - b. Once you give in, the next time conformity is easier
3. Conformity to the things of this world can separate us from God! - cf. **1 Jn 2:15-17**
 - a. By giving in to the lust of the flesh (immorality)
 - b. By succumbing to the lust of the eyes (materialism)
 - c. By yielding to the pride of life (arrogance)

[We now understand why Paul commands us “do not be conformed to this world”! There are grave dangers in conforming to another’s pattern. How shall we deal with the pressures of conformity...?]

II. DEALING WITH THE PRESSURE TO CONFORM

A. BE A TRANSFORMIST, NOT A CONFORMIST...

1. A **conformist** (as used here) is one who...
 - a. Undergoes a superficial, shallow change
 - b. Becomes a cheap imitation, letting others do their thinking for them
2. A **“transformist”** is one who...
 - a. Undergoes a real change (like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly)
 - b. Experiences a true “renewal”
 - 1) That begins with conversion - **Ti 3:5**
 - 2) That involves a renewal of the mind - **Ro 12:2**
 - 3) That continues as we go through life - **2 Co 4:16**
3. Becoming a “transformist”...
 - a. Addresses the reasons why many conform
 - 1) A feeling of insecurity (yet we learn that God loves us, we are special! - **1 Jn 3:1**)
 - 2) A desire to follow the crowd (yet we learn the ultimate end of following the world - **1 Jn 2:15-17**)
 - b. Marks the difference between...
 - 1) Christians who are truly converted
 - 2) Those who are shallow imitators of true disciples

B. BE A LEADER, NOT A FOLLOWER...

1. A transformist is a leader
 - a. Who “proves” to others what is good, acceptable and perfect - **Ro 12:2**
 - 1) Presents their bodies as living and holy sacrifices - **Ro 12:1**
 - 2) Has the courage to say “no” to things that are wrong
 - b. Whose example helps others fight off the pressures to conform
 - 1) Giving others the strength to say “no”
 - 2) Encouraging others to do what is right - e.g., Joshua, **Josh 24:14-15; Judg 2:7**
2. A conformist is but a simple follower
 - a. Letting others do their thinking for them
 - b. Letting others lead them into harm’s way

CONCLUSION

1. Everyone experiences the pressure to conform to the standards and practices of the world...
 - a. Especially the young who are so impressionable
 - b. But even those who older are persuaded by those in positions of power and influence

2. We have a choice...
 - a. Either to buckle under and be led by those destroying their own bodies, minds, and souls
 - b. Or look to Jesus, the true nonconformist, and allow ourselves to be transformed by the renewing of our minds

3. If we are to conform, let us conform to the image of Jesus - cf. **Ro 8:29**
 - a. For that will require a true transformation of the inner man
 - b. And we can demonstrate what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God!

Be Transformed

Romans 12:1-2

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ro 12:1-2**, Paul makes the following plea regarding transforming our lives:

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

2. As we consider this text, several questions come to mind...
 - a. What does it mean to be transformed?
 - b. What is the goal of transformation?
 - c. What should motivate us to undergo transformation?
 - d. What does one do in order to experience transformation?

[Starting with the first question (“What does it mean to be transformed?”), let’s consider...]

I. THE DEFINITION OF TRANSFORMATION

A. THE WORD...

1. The Greek word is **metamorphoo** (met-am-or-fo’-o)
 - a. Lit., “**to change into another form**” (Vine’s)
 - b. From which comes the word “metamorphosis”
 - c. Used to describe a change of form (e.g., when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly)
2. In the NT, this word is used to describe:
 - a. What happened to **Jesus** on the Mount of Transfiguration - **Mt 17:1-2**
 - b. What is to happen to Christians in their service to God - **Ro 12:1-2**

B. THE CONCEPT...

1. The idea being commanded by Paul is this:
 - a. Christians are “**to undergo a complete change, which under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct**” (Vine’s)
 - b. I.e., we who are “**caterpillars**” are to become “**butterflies**”
2. Note that Paul uses the **passive voice**
 - a. Indicating that “transformation” is something we allow to be done to us
 - b. Not something we do by our own power alone
 - c. Rather, we submit to God’s power and by His grace...
 - 1) We are “changed into another form”
 - 2) We become a “new creation” - cf. **2 Co 5:17**

[But this leads us to our second question (“What is the goal of transformation?”)...]

II. THE GOAL OF TRANSFORMATION

A. TO BECOME LIKE CHRIST...

1. As expressed by Paul - **2 Co 3:18**
2. As predestined by God - **Ro 8:29**
3. The purpose of being a disciple (to become like his teacher) - **Lk 6:40**
4. The goal of Christian living - cf. **Co 3:9-10**

B. TO LIVE LIKE CHRIST...

1. To present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God
 - a. Is this not what Jesus did on earth? - cf. **He 10:5**
 - b. So we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices - **Ro 12:1**
2. To prove that God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect
 - a. Was this not Jesus sought to do on earth? - cf. **Jn 6:38**
 - b. So we are to demonstrate that God's will is right - **Ro 12:2**

[Such is the goal of being transformed; indeed, it is the goal of being a Christian! Yet why do many never experience the transformation God offers? Why do they remain "caterpillars"? Perhaps they lack the proper motivation...]

III. THE MOTIVATION FOR TRANSFORMATION**A. THE MERCIES OF GOD...**

1. In our text, Paul appealed to transformation based on God's mercies - **Ro 12:1**
 2. What mercies of God had Paul discussed earlier in his epistle?
 - a. Freedom from sin - **Ro 6:16-18**
 - b. Gift of eternal life - **Ro 6:23**
 - c. Peace with God - **Ro 5:1**
 - d. Access to the grace of God - **Ro 5:2**
 - e. Saved from the wrath of God - **Ro 5:9**
- **Should not God's mercy move us to repent and seek transformation? - cf. Ro 2:4-5**

B. THE LOVE OF CHRIST...

1. Elsewhere, Paul revealed the motivating power of the love of Christ - **2 Co 5:14-15**
 2. Such love compelled him to live for Jesus - cf. **Ga 2:20**
- **Does not the love of Christ move us to live FOR Him and LIKE Him?**

C. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE...

1. The alternative to being transformed is being conformed to this world - **Ro 12:1**
 - a. The word **conformed** (**suschematizo**, soos-khay-mat-id'-zo) as used here implies that which is "**transitory, changeable, unstable**" (Vine's)
 - b. I.e., at the most we can only be an imitation, a cheap copy
 2. If not transformed, we will either be conformed to...
 - a. **The world**
 - 1) Act like the world, be like those in the world
 - 2) In which we will bring shame to the name of Christ
 - b. **Other Christians**
 - 1) Outwardly we may act like Christians, appear like them
 - 2) But it will be just a cheap "copy", which eventually reveals its true nature!
- **Is that what we want? To bring shame to the name of Christ? To be "plastic" Christians, or to be the real thing?**

[Why not let the mercies of God and the love of Christ motivate us to seek transformation? The process is not as difficult as one might think...]

IV. THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

A. IN THE BEGINNING...

1. Remember, transformation is a passive process (“be transformed”) - **Ro 12:2**
 - a. We cannot change ourselves by our own strength or meritorious works
 - b. As Paul vividly illustrated his dilemma prior to his conversion - **Ro 7:14-24**
-- **We must submit to God’s working on us!**
 2. It begins when we are baptized into Christ!
 - a. For there we experience the working of God - **Co 2:11-13**
 - 1) Spiritually circumcised as our sins are removed
 - 2) Buried then raised with Christ
 - 3) Made alive with Christ, forgiven of all trespasses
 - b. For there we experience the renewal of the Spirit - **Ti 3:5**
 - 1) Saved by the mercy of God
 - 2) Involving a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit
 - c. For there we rise to walk in newness of life - **Ro 6:3-8**
 - 1) Having been buried with Christ by baptism into His death
 - 2) Having been crucified with Christ that we might be free from sin
 - 3) Having been raised to live with Christ
- **When joined with faith and repentance, baptism becomes the starting point in which true transformation can take place! - cf. Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38**

B. RENEWING THE MIND...

1. The process of transformation continues as we renew the mind
 - a. As indicated in our text - **Ro 12:2**; cf. also **Ep 4:20-24**
 - b. Unless there is a renewing of the mind, any change in our lives will be superficial
2. Renewing the mind is made possible by where we set our minds
 - a. Setting our minds on things above - **Co 3:1-2**
 - b. Setting our minds on the things of the Spirit - **Ro 8:5**
 - c. I.e., feeding our minds with the Word of God, prayer, fellowship, etc. - **Ac 2:42**
3. With our minds “renewed” we can experience a true transformation!
 - a. By putting off the old man and putting on the new man - cf. **Co 3:2,5-10**
 - b. By living according to the Spirit - cf. **Ro 8:5,13**
4. The process of transformation is really quite simple
 - a. Set your minds on things above in order to renew your mind; for example...
 - 1) Meditate and contemplate on God and His Word
 - 2) Keep your mind in communication with God via prayer
 - 3) Involve your mind in spiritual worship via frequent assembling with others
 - 4) Center your mind on Jesus via the Lord’s Supper
 ...and your mind will gradually be renewed!
 - b. With renewed minds, it becomes possible to put off the old, and put on the new!
 - 1) To put off the old man with its sins
 - 2) To put on the new man patterned after the example of Christ
5. Modern studies in self-improvement confirm this truth
 - a. We become what we think

- b. We can change attitudes and behavior by filling our mind with positive mental images
- **In our efforts, we are not alone; God is at work with us! - cf. Ph 1:6; 2:12-13**

C. WHAT HINDERS MANY CHRISTIANS...

1. If it is so easy, why do many Christians remain “caterpillars”?
 - a. Were they not regenerated at their baptism? (yes)
 - b. Don’t they have the promise of God’s help? (yes)
 2. The problem is likely a failure to renew the mind
 - a. Can a mind be renewed on a **starvation diet?** (e.g., irregular Bible study)
 - b. Can a mind be renewed on a **junk-food diet?** (e.g., trashy movies and novels)
 3. Why many Christians do not experience transformation...
 - a. They **become** what they think, and much of what they think upon is not **becoming!**
 - b. They spend more time watching things of the **devil** than reading things of the **Spirit!**
- **Our attitudes and behavior is but a reflection of what goes into our minds!**

CONCLUSION

1. We have been called to be “transformed” into the image of Christ...
 - a. We have all the motivation we need (God’s mercies and Christ’s love)
 - b. We have the opportunity to start anew by the washing of regeneration
 - c. We must allow our minds to be renewed by setting them on things above-- **Are we submitting to “brain surgery” by the Great Physician...?**
2. God wants to give us a complete “make over”...
 - a. He has provided the means (Jesus’ blood) to remove the deformity of sin
 - b. He provides the tools (Bible study, prayer, fellowship) to fashion a new person-- **Are we making good use of the mercies of God?**

In light of God’s wonderful grace, this is our “reasonable” service. Shall we not prove to the world that God’s will is “good, acceptable, and perfect”...?

Finding Our Function In The Body

Romans 12:3-8

INTRODUCTION

1. In our text, we find Paul expressing several principles concerning the church...
 - a. Christians are one body in Christ
 - b. As one body, we are individually members of one another
 - c. **The members do not have the same function**
 - d. **We should serve in whatever function God has given us ability**
2. The last two principles often cause one to ask...
 - a. **“What is my function in the body of Christ?”**
 - b. **“How do I determine what function(s) I have?”**
3. It may help to compare it to choosing a vocation...
 - a. There are principles used in determining one’s aptitude and vocational direction
 - b. These principles may help one determine what our functions might be in the body of Christ

[For example, when people contemplate career choices, one thing they do is acquaint themselves with job descriptions. So let’s...]

I. EXAMINE THE FUNCTIONS

A. PROPHECY (Preaching)...

1. The Greek word **propheteia** is defined as “the speaking forth of the mind counsel of God” - **Vine’s**
2. Originally, this referred to the gift of the Spirit by which one was inspired to reveal God’s truth
3. Today, the service most akin to prophecy is **preaching**
 - a. Where one proclaims the counsel of God as already revealed
 - b. By expounding upon the Word of God, not through direct inspiration

B. MINISTRY (Serving)...

1. The Greek word **diakonia** means “to serve”
2. It is often used to describe any sort of service
 - a. E.g., the service offered by Timothy - **2 Ti 4:5**
 - b. E.g., the service offered by Phoebe - **Ro 16:1-2**
3. In a more official capacity, it is used to describe those qualified and appointed to serve as **deacons** (diakonos)

C. TEACHING (Instructing)...

1. Involves instructing others of the Word of God
2. There are variations of this function
 - a. Private teaching - e.g., **Ac 18:26**
 - b. Older women teaching the younger women - **Ti 2:4**
 - c. Teaching in more formal sense, which not all were to do - cf. **Ja 3:1**

D. EXHORTING (Building up)...

1. The ability to build up and strengthen others
2. Some may do this publicly (e.g., preachers, teachers) - e.g., Barnabas
3. Others may be adept to it more privately and daily - **He 3:12-13**

E. GIVING (Sharing)...

1. Some people find themselves abundantly blessed
2. I.e., God has given them “seed for sowing fruits of righteousness” - cf. **2 Co 9:8-11**
3. Thus it is within their ability and responsibility to give and bless others - **1 Ti 6:17-19**

F. LEADING (Shepherding)...

1. This likely refers to the work of elders (pastors, overseers) - cf. **Ac 20:17,28; 1 Pe 5:1-2**
2. They have the responsibility of watching out for our souls - **He 13:17**
3. They must meet specific qualifications to serve in this function - cf. **1 Ti 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9**

G. SHOWING MERCY (Loving)...

1. Perhaps this service is best illustrated in **Mt 25:35-36**
2. Can involve visiting the sick, the dying, the bereaved; ministering to those in prison, etc.

[I doubt Paul’s list is meant to be exhaustive; but it illustrates that there is a great variety of functions in the body of Christ. With an understanding of the options of service available, how do we know which one(s) we may be best suited for? Those in career counseling would suggest that one...]

II. EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITIES

A. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES...

1. E.g., training programs offered in teaching, preaching, evangelism, etc.
2. E.g., experienced brethren (going with them as they fulfilled their service; “job shadowing”)
3. Even if you prove not to have the potential for a certain work, you gain understanding and appreciation for what others do

B. TRY SERVING IN ALL AREAS OPEN TO YOU...

1. Be willing to try everything you can
2. You may have a talent you did not know you had!
3. You may find yourself to have many talents!

C. DON’T GIVE UP AFTER THE FIRST FEW TRIES...

1. Failures may be due to inexperience, not lack of potential
2. Only with time and many efforts can we know what might be our forte

[As you explore the opportunities given you, be open to advice and counsel from others...]

III. INQUIRE FOR ADVICE

A. OTHERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE OBJECTIVE...

1. Pride can get in the way - cf. **Ro 12:3**
2. Others may see our strengths and weaknesses more clearly
3. They may see where weaknesses are due to inability and not inexperience

B. ESPECIALLY MATURE CHRISTIANS...

1. Such as elders
 - a. Who must be multitalented men of experience
 - b. Part of their role as elders
2. Other older Christians are often very helpful

CONCLUSION

1. The more diligent one can be to...
 - a. Examine the functions of service in the body of Christ
 - b. Explore the opportunities to learn and serve in the different functions
 - c. Inquire for advice from others
 - The sooner one should be able to discern what is their function in the body of Christ
2. Then the challenge becomes one of being diligent in utilizing our function...
 - a. As Paul admonishes his readers in our text - cf. **Ro 12:6-8**
 - b. As Peter admonishes his readers in his epistle - cf. **1 Pe 4:10-11**

Brethren, there is much work to do. Let us be diligent to do it ***“with the ability God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...”*** - **1 Pe 4:11**

A Love That Can Hate

Romans 12:9-10

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Romans 12**, Paul discusses the practical side of the Christian life
2. In the first part of the chapter, he establishes the general principle of self-sacrifice...
 - a. As the foundation of all goodness - **Ro 12:1**
 - b. Accomplished through a transformation - **Ro 12:2**
 - c. Manifested in humble service of one's abilities - **Ro 12:3-8**
3. Beginning with **verse 9**, we find a series of exhortations...
 - a. That continue to the end of the chapter
 - b. That at first glance, may at time seem disconnected
4. For example, consider the exhortations in our text (**Ro 12:9-10**)...
 - a. The first and last relate to **love**
 - b. But the intervening clause pertains to **hate**
 - But upon careful reflection, these exhortations may not be disjointed

[One way to connect these exhortations is to describe them as depicting “**A Love That Can Hate**”. To see how that is possible, consider that a Christian must first have...]

I. AN HONEST LOVE

A. LOVE WITHOUT HYPOCRISY...

1. We are to have a love that is honest, sincere and genuine - **Ro 12:9a**
2. Whereas a love that is faked is repulsive
 - a. In which someone claims to love you
 - b. But their actions speak otherwise
3. Yet sometimes our words do surpass our true feelings
 - a. We talk about love, sing about it
 - b. But don't always live up to it!
4. Making us feel guilty when we read a passage such as our text
 - How can we love sincerely and without hypocrisy?

B. DEVELOPING AN HONEST LOVE...

1. The position of this exhortation in Paul's writing may serve as a clue
 - a. After discussing the need for being transformed by the renewing of our minds
 - b. An honest love can't be experienced or shown without this transformation
2. This transformation occurs the more we contemplate the love and mercies of God - cf. **1 Jn 4:7** (“for love is of God”)
3. Only as we let the mind of Christ be in us can we love as we should - cf. **Ph 2:2-5**

[So we need to develop an honest love, one that comes by contemplating God's love for us. But as we continue in our text, we see that it can also be “**A Love That Can Hate**”...]

II. ABHORRING EVIL, CLINGING TO WHAT IS GOOD

A. ESSENTIAL TO HAVING AN HONEST LOVE...

1. A mutual hatred of evil and clinging to good is necessary for an honest love - **Ro 12:9b**
2. Why? If not careful, love can easily lose its purity and depth
 - a. The lusts of the flesh are strong
 - b. They can easily pervert the nature of our love
 - c. Profession of love can easily become a cover for evil
3. Therefore the need to “abhor what is evil” - cf. **Ep 5:2-5**
 - a. Walk in love as Christ loved us
 - b. But eschew any perversion of love!

B. DEVELOPING A PROPER HATRED OF EVIL...

1. Comes by clinging to what is good, not vice versa!
2. Why do some hate evil?
 - a. There are those who very quick to hate evil (e.g., “hobby riders”)
 - b. Such are mostly negative and rarely positive in their attitudes
 - c. They hate evil, but do not cling to what is good, creating an unbalance
 - d. Motivated by carnal desires (power, fame), not by the spirit of Christ
3. Hatred of evil should come from first clinging to that which is good
 - a. As implied by the Psalmist in **Psa 119:103-104**
 - b. The powerful emotion of hate can then be properly balanced by a love of good!

[So the love that is to characterize Christians is to be “**A Love That Can Hate**” when that hate is properly motivated and directed. But now let’s consider how such love is to be manifested toward our brethren...]

III. AFFECTIONATE AND PREFERENTIAL

A. WITH GREAT TENDERNESS AND AFFECTION...

1. The expression “kindly affectionate” means “to love as family” (**philostorgos**) - **Ro 12:10a**
 - a. Just as you would your own family members
 - b. To stress the point, Paul adds “in brotherly love” (**philadelphia**)
 2. We are to have great feeling of love towards those in Christ
 - a. As Paul had toward the brethren at Philippi - **Ph 1:8**
 - b. As the Ephesian elders had toward Paul - **Ac 20:36-38**
- **Such is “A Love That Can Hate”!**

B. DESIRING TO OUTDO ONE ANOTHER IN SHOWING HONOR...

1. This is the meaning of “in honor giving preference to one another” - **Ro 12:10b**
 - a. “The word preferring means going before, leading, setting an example.” - **Barnes**
 - b. “Thus in showing mutual respect and honor, they were to strive to excel; not to see which could obtain most honor, but which could confer most, or manifest most respect.” - **ibid.**
2. Thus we are to delight in exalting our brethren over ourselves!
 - a. As commanded in **Ph 2:3**
 - b. Freeing us from petty jealousies that can threaten true love

CONCLUSION

1. What is the kind of love that God desires for His children? **“A Love That Can Hate”!**
2. Such is the love that God has shown toward us...
 - a. A love that is honest and sincere, demonstrated by the sending of His Son to die for our sins
 - b. A love that hates evil and clings to what is good, revealed throughout the Word of God
 - c. A love that is affectionate and delights in showing honor, as God has done toward His children who obey Him!

If we are in Christ, is this the kind of love we display? If you are not in Christ, won't you respond to this love in obedience to the gospel of Christ...?

Note: The main idea for this lesson came from a sermon by Alexander MacLaren, in his Expositions Of Holy Scripture.

An Exhortation To Diligent Service

Romans 12:11

INTRODUCTION

1. The twelfth chapter of Romans contains many exhortations pertaining to daily Christian living...
 - a. E.g., to be transformed by the renewing of our minds - **Ro 12:1-2**
 - b. E.g., to utilize what abilities we have as members of the body - **Ro 12:3-8**
 - c. E.g., to love the brethren and hate what is evil - **Ro 12:9-10**

2. In our text (**Ro 12:11**), we find “**An Exhortation To Diligent Service**”...
 - a. Contained within a triad of simple commands
 - b. Which are worthy of careful examination

3. We might begin by asking: How is a Christian to act...?
 - a. In his or her service to the Lord?
 - b. In his or her business or job?

4. Sadly, the word “slothful” would apply to some Christians...
 - a. Who do as little as they can while at work
 - b. Who are similar in their service to the Lord

[As we take a close look at our text, let's first ask...]

I. WHAT DOES PAUL SAY?

A. “NOT LAGGING IN DILIGENCE...”

1. The KJV translates it “not slothful in business”
 - a. Which may give some the wrong impression
 - b. Some may conclude the exhortation is limited to our jobs
2. The word “business” in Greek is **spoude** (from which we get the word “speed”) and denotes “**diligence, haste, earnestness**”
3. The idea is that we should be diligent in all that we do - cf. **Ecc 9:10**
 - a. In secular work, yes - cf. **Co 3:22-23**
 - b. Also in the work of the Lord - cf. **1 Co 15:58**
4. Areas of spiritual labor in which we are to be diligent:
 - a. In our efforts to enter the heavenly rest - **He 4:11; 6:9-12**
 - b. To found without spot, blameless - **2 Pe 3:13-14**
 - c. In our handling of the Word of God - **2 Ti 2:15**
 - d. In keeping our hearts pure - **Pro 4:23; cf. Mk 7:21-23**
 - e. Repenting of sins - **2 Co 7:10-11**
 - f. Developing Christ-like character - **2 Pe 1:5-11**
 - g. Keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace - **Ep 4:1-6**

B. “FERVENT IN SPIRIT...”

1. This defines the enthusiasm or attitude of mind to have as we labor
2. Some are diligent, but begrudgingly so

3. The word “fervent” is **zeo** and means “to bubble, boil”
4. Therefore we are to do our work **heartedly** - cf. **Co 3:23**

C. “SERVING THE LORD...”

1. This is the motivation behind enthusiastic labor
2. We are motivated by the fact it is the Lord we serve, even in secular work! - e.g., **Ep 6:5-8**

[Since it is the Lord we serve in both secular and spiritual work, we are to labor with enthusiasm and diligent effort. But let’s now ask...]

II. WHAT IS TOO OFTEN THE CASE?

A. DILIGENT IN OUR OWN PURSUITS...

1. Physical necessity often prompts diligence in secular jobs
2. Heightened interest often prompts enthusiasm in personal hobbies

B. SLOTHFUL IN THE LORD’S BUSINESS...

-- **Some examples of the contrast:**

1. Some work 40 hours a week (and more) for physical needs, then balk at spending 4 hours a week in worship and Bible study!
2. Some get up early to work or play, yet complain about getting up even later on Sunday to worship God!
3. Some will watch TV an average of 14 hours per week, but can’t find 3 hours a week to read the Bible!
4. Some will take courses at night to improve their skills, but aren’t willing to attend gospel meetings or Bible studies!
5. Some can learn the stats for their favorite team, but say they can’t memorize scripture!
6. Some let or even encourage their children to miss services for a sports event or school function, but not vice versa!
7. Some will make their children brush their teeth, make the bed, etc., but make them attend services...never!

C. CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH SLOTH...

1. Apathetic in attitude and service to the Lord
2. Of little use to the Lord in His fight against Satan!

[When such is the case, here’s a third question to consider...]

III. HOW DOES THE LORD FEEL?

A. WE KNOW HOW JESUS FEELS...

1. He taught that those who put personal pursuits first would not enjoy heaven - **Lk 14:15-24**
2. He taught the danger of sloth in the parable of the talents - cf. **Mt 25:24-30**
3. He condemned the church of Laodicea for their lukewarmness - **Re 3:14-16**

B. WE CAN IMAGINE HOW GOD FEELS...

-- **Lagging in diligence is:**

1. A destructive hindrance to the work of His Son, who died for us - cf. **Pro 18:9**
2. An ungrateful response to the mercy of God, destined for God’s wrath - cf. **Ro 2:4-11**

CONCLUSION

1. If after self-examination, we admit that we have been slothful in our service to the Lord, then the final question might be: **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?**
2. Some will probably do nothing...
 - a. Being dull of hearing and hard of heart
 - b. Continuing on as before
3. Some might make an effort...
 - a. Because their hearts are still tender
 - b. Yet soon grow weary and return to a service of sloth
4. My prayers is that all will make whatever changes are called for by Paul's exhortation...
 - a. Those who have yet to serve the Lord, will begin a new life of faithful service!
 - b. Those who have been lagging in diligence, will now give the Lord His due!

Shall we not take to heart this exhortation of the apostle Paul...?

The Key To A Joyful, Productive Life

Romans 12:12

INTRODUCTION

1. I suppose that we all have known Christians who go through life...
 - a. Looking like they were “weaned on a pickle”
 - b. Useless for any good work when things were going rough for them
2. But we have also known Christians who are the opposite...
 - a. Joyful, steadfast in doing good
 - b. Even though they are experiencing the same kind of hardships
3. Why the difference?
 - a. I believe that the joyful, steadfast Christian has found the secret expressed in the Scriptures
 - b. One place this “secret” is found is in Ro **12:12**...

“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer;”

[As we consider this verse, there are several observations we can make. First...]

I. THE JOYFUL LIFE IS BASED ON HOPE

A. MANY HAVE THE WRONG CONCEPT CONCERNING “JOY”...

1. That joy is a matter of personal temperament (heredity)
2. That joy is a matter of circumstances (environment)
3. But how can that be when being joyful is enjoined upon us all?
 - a. It is a command, a duty - **1 Th 5:16; Ph 4:4**
 - b. Commanded even when things are rough - **1 Pe 4:13**

B. TRUE JOY IS ABLE TO RISE ABOVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE...

1. Seen in the example of the Hebrews - **He 10:34a**
2. Also in the example of Christians in Asia Minor - **1 Pe 1:6**

C. THIS IS BECAUSE THE KEY TO JOY IS “HOPE”...

1. Notice our text: “rejoicing **in hope**”
2. It should be easy to see how hope is the source of joy in our lives...
 - a. A student, in hope of enjoying summer vacation, is happy as he thinks about it
 - b. Likewise, it was the strong hope of the Hebrews that gave them joy despite the seizure of their property - **He 10:34**
 - c. Again, the source of the Christians’ joy in Asia Minor was their hope of salvation - **1 Pe 1:5-6**

D. TO BE JOYFUL IN LIFE, WE MUST HAVE HOPE...!

1. If Christians are not joyful, it is because they are not full of hope!
 - a. And that is only because their minds are so preoccupied with things of this life
 - b. I.e., they are just religious enough to be miserable!

2. If they spent more time contemplating the hope we have as Christians, joy would automatically follow!
 - a. Of course, hope is based upon faith - **He 11:1**
 - b. And faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**
 - c. But if people do not read the Word, their faith is weak, their hope is shallow, and their joy is minimal

[But if we let God’s Word produce the faith necessary for a strong hope, then we too can have that joy which will help us no matter what the circumstances. This leads us back to our text, where we wish to make another observation...]

II. A LIFE OF JOYFUL HOPE WILL BE PATIENT IN TRIBULATIONS

A. FIRST, LET’S DEFINE OUR TERMS...

1. **“patient”**
 - a. Means more than simply enduring, forbearing
 - b. It also takes in the thought of activity despite the hardship
 - 1) It is continuing to do good, regardless of the trials
 - 2) Not just sitting there, refraining from doing something bad
2. **“tribulations”**
 - a. These could be trials suffered for the cause of Christ
 - b. Or those common to all (sickness, death, etc.)
3. Paul is therefore talking about pressing on in doing good despite hardships

B. THE KEY TO SUCH PATIENCE IS “JOYFUL HOPE”...

1. This can be illustrated in several ways...
 - a. The **athlete**
 - 1) Why does he or she endure the hardships of training?
 - 2) The joyful hope of attaining victory!
 - b. The **Pilgrims**
 - 1) Why did they endure the hardships of sailing across the ocean?
 - 2) The joyful hope of finding freedom from religious oppression!
 - c. The **college student**
 - 1) Why does he or she endure the hardships of study and examinations?
 - 2) The joyful hope of a successful career!
 - d. The **early Christians**
 - 1) Why did they endure persecutions, pressing on in their faithfulness to Christ?
 - 2) The joyful hope of their inheritance in heaven! - **He 10:34**
2. Does this not explain why some Christians do not remain steadfast when things get rough?
 - a. They do not have the “joyful hope” necessary
 - b. And why not? Their minds are so preoccupied with worldly things!

[One last observation I would like to make, based on our text...]

III. OUR LIVES WILL BE AS HOPEFUL, JOYFUL, AND PATIENT, AS THEY ARE PRAYERFUL

A. “CONTINUING STEADFASTLY IN PRAYER” IS ESSENTIAL...!

1. The relationship between prayer and the joyful life is implied elsewhere in the Scriptures
 - a. Notice **1 Th 5:16-18**
 - b. If we pray without ceasing, we can rejoice always!
2. For in proper prayer, we are constantly reminded of our **hope** (the source of joy and patience)
 - a. In prayer, we should be made constantly aware of the **reason** for our hope (forgiveness of our sins through Jesus' blood)
 - b. In prayer, we should be made constantly aware of the **object** of our hope (to one day be with God eternally)

B. SO “PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!” BUT IS THIS POSSIBLE...?

1. Not if we mean formal words of supplication and petition
2. But prayer does not always have to be with formal words - cf. **1 Chr 5:20**
3. Prayer can also be:
 - a. A mental attitude of devotion
 - b. An unspoken reference to God in all that we do

CONCLUSION

1. Are our lives as joyful and productive as they should be?
2. If not, then let God's Word sink into our hearts: *“Continue steadfastly in prayer”*
3. Do this, and we will more likely *“rejoice in hope”* and be *“patient in tribulations”!*

Benevolence To Saints And Strangers

Romans 12:13

INTRODUCTION

1. As Christians we have the responsibility to...
 - a. Present our bodies as living sacrifices - **Ro 12:1**
 - b. Prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God - **Ro 12:2**
 - Made possible by the transformation that comes by renewing our minds

2. A remarkable transformation that characterized early Christians was their benevolence...
 - a. Toward their brethren
 - b. Toward those who were strangers

3. As commanded in our text (**Ro 12:3**), they...
 - a. Distributed to the needs of the saints
 - b. Showed hospitality even to strangers
 - Which was in keeping with God's good, acceptable, and perfect will

[What about us today? How is our benevolence to saints and strangers? Perhaps we might do well to take a closer look at the two commands in our text...]

I. DISTRIBUTING TO THE NEEDS OF THE SAINTS

A. THE COMMAND EXAMINED...

1. **Distributing** - "The word used here denotes having things in common, (**koinwnountev**). It means, that they should be communicative, or should regard their property as so far common as to supply the wants of others." - **Barnes**
2. **to the needs** - "That is, distribute to them such things as they need -- food, raiment, etc. This command, of course, has reference to the poor." - **ibid.**
3. **of the saints** - "Of Christians, or the friends of God." - **ibid.**
- "Making the needs of fellow saints your own and helping them." - **B. W. Johnson**

B. THE COMMAND EXEMPLIFIED...

1. By the church at Jerusalem (a church helping its members) - **Ac 2:44-45; 4:32-36; 6:1-6**
2. By the church at Antioch (a church helping other churches) - **Ac 11:27-30**
3. By the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (many churches helping one church) - **Ro 15:25-26; 1 Co 16:1-2; 2 Co 8:1-24; 9:1-15**

C. THE COMMAND EXERCISED...

1. The collection on the Lord's day is designed for this very purpose - **1 Co 16:1-2**
2. If brethren are in need, we should not hesitate to use the collection for this purpose
 - a. For needy saints in the local congregation
 - b. For needy saints in other places
 - Though there are some limitations - e.g., **1 Ti 5:9-16; 2 Th 3:6-15**
3. Our assistance is based upon ability and opportunity
 - a. According to our ability - **2 Co 8:12-15**; though note **2 Co 8:1-4**

b. According to our opportunity - **Ga 6:10**

[The Lord has provided a systematic method to meet the needs of His saints. Of course, this does not preclude helping one another as individuals (**1 Ti 6:17-18**). Nor does it mean we have no responsibility toward those not saints, for we are commanded to be...]

II. GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY

A. THE COMMAND EXAMINED...

1. **given to** - "Pursuing (as if in a chase or hunt)..." - **Robertson's Word Pictures**
2. **hospitality** - Love to strangers (**philoxenia**)
3. "This expression means that they should readily and cheerfully entertain strangers."
- **Barnes**
 - a. A duty often enjoined in the Scriptures - **He 13:2; 1 Pe 4:9**
 - b. A qualification for both bishop (elder) and needy widow - **1 Ti 3:2; 5:10**
4. "The 'hospitality' of today, by which is meant the entertainment of friends or relatives, hardly comes within the Biblical use of the term as denoting a special virtue." - **ISBE**

B. THE COMMAND EXEMPLIFIED...

1. By Abraham, extending hospitality to "three men" - **Gen 18:1-8**
2. By Lot, pursuing hospitality to "two men" - **Gen 19:1-3**
3. By Job, who left no stranger in the street - **Job 31:32**
4. By Jethro, who rebuked his daughters for neglecting Moses - **Exo 2:20**
5. In the support of early missionaries - **Mt 10:11,42; 25:35; 3 Jn 5-8**

C. THE COMMAND EXERCISED...

1. The **principle** of hospitality presumes **ability** and **opportunity**
 - a. Our responsibility is based upon ability - e.g., **2 Co 8:12-13**
 - b. Our responsibility is based upon opportunities - cf. **Ga 6:10**
 2. The **pursuit** of hospitality is enabled through **preparation**
 - a. You are more likely to offer hospitality without grumbling if prepared beforehand
 - b. Cheerful giving is made easier by purposeful planning - e.g., **2 Co 9:7**
 - c. Why not have a place in your personal budget for entertaining strangers?
 3. The **practice** of hospitality can take various forms, if safety or wisdom is a concern
 - a. Housing can be provided through arrangements with a local motel
 - b. Food can be given in the form of vouchers or gift certificates
 4. The **potential** of hospitality for good can be seen in regards to evangelism
 - a. Supporting those who travel to preach the gospel
 - b. Touching the hearts of those who may be in need of the gospel
- "The primitive Christians made one principle part of their duty to consist in the exercise of hospitality; and they were so exact in the discharge of it that the very heathens admired them for it." - **Cruden's Concordance**

CONCLUSION

1. As we seek to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"...
 - a. Do not neglect to provide for the needs of your brethren
 - b. Do not hesitate to show love for those who are strangers

2. Let the words of Jesus Himself challenge us to a higher plane of giving...
 - a. That we might be more like our Heavenly Father - cf. **Lk 6:32-36**
 - b. That we might be repaid at the resurrection of the just - cf. **Lk 14:12-14**

Speaking of such things as our Heavenly Father and the resurrection to come, have you received the hospitality that God extends to all who are lost...? - cf. **Ro 5:8-10**

To Bless And Curse Not

Romans 12:14

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ro 12:1-2**, we are called to...
 - a. Present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God
 - b. Be transformed by the renewing of our minds
 - c. Prove (test, demonstrate) what is God's good, acceptable, and perfect will
2. Previous studies have examined how a transformed life includes such graces as...
 - a. Love without hypocrisy, while abhorring what is evil - **Ro 12:9**
 - b. Loving brethren with family affection, esteeming one another highly - **Ro 12:10**
 - c. Serving the Lord diligently, with fervency of spirit - **Ro 12:11**
 - d. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, steadfast in prayer - **Ro 12:12**
 - e. Having fellowship in the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality toward strangers - **Ro 12:13**
3. Another indication of transformation is how one responds to mistreatment:

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” (Ro 12:14)

[This certainly goes against “human nature”, which seeks to respond in kind. But as we consider what is revealed in the Bible regarding this command, we might better understand why this is part of God's holy and acceptable and perfect will for us. Let's begin with...]

I. THE COMMAND DEFINED

A. TO BLESS...

1. The Greek word is **eulogeo**; as defined by **Strong's**:
 - a. To praise, celebrate with praises
 - b. To invoke blessings
 2. “The word bless here means to speak well of or to. Not to curse again, or to slander, but to speak of those things which we can commend in an enemy; or if there is nothing that we can commend, to say nothing about him.” - **Barnes**
 3. “i.e., to pray for them, wish well to them” - **Poole**
 4. We find this command given by Christ and Peter - **Mt 5:44; Lk 6:28; 1 Pe 3:9**
- **Note that Paul gives the exhortation twice in our text; perhaps implying the challenge of this duty**

B. TO CURSE NOT...

1. The Greek word for curse is **kataraoimai**, which **Strong's** defines as “to curse, doom, imprecate evil upon”
 2. “... to implore a curse from God to rest on others; to pray that God would destroy them. In a larger sense still, it means to abuse by reproachful words; to calumniate; or to express one's self in a violent, profane, and outrageous manner.” - **Barnes**
 3. “When he saith, curse not, he means, wish no evil to your enemies.” - **Poole**
- **“He who can obey this precept is a transformed man”. - B. W. Johnson**

[As challenging as this precept may seem, we have several examples to show us it is possible...]

II. THE COMMAND DEPICTED

A. IN THE CHARACTER OF JOB...

1. Described by God as “a blameless and upright man” - **Job 1:8**
2. Who claimed innocence in reference to cursing others - cf. **Job 31:29-30**

B. IN THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS...

1. As He hung upon the cross, praying for those who crucified Him - **Lk 23:34**
2. Though the object of abuse, mockery and blasphemy - **Lk 23:35-39**; cf. **1 Pe 2:23**

C. IN THE CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS...

1. Such as Stephen, when he was being stoned - **Ac 7:60**
2. Such as Paul and the apostles, who were often abused - **1 Co 4:12**

[So while the command may be difficult, we know it is possible to obey. Why and how, then, should we seek to carry it out...?]

III. THE COMMAND DEPLOYED

A. IT IS OUR CALLING...

1. We have been called:
 - a. To follow in Jesus’ steps - **1 Pe 2:21-23**
 - b. To bless, that we might inherit a blessing - **1 Pe 3:9**
 2. We have been called:
 - a. To be partakers of the “divine nature” - **2 Pe 1:2-4**
 - b. To be sons of our Father in heaven - **Mt 5:44-45**
- **It may be “human nature” to respond to evil with evil, but we have a higher calling!**

B. IT IS NEEDED...

1. At work, school
 - a. When employers or fellow employees malign us
 - b. When classmates make fun or otherwise hurt us
 2. At home
 - a. When spouses say or do hurtful things to one another
 - b. When sibling rivalry raises its ugly head
 3. With brethren - **Ja 4:11; 1 Pe 3:8-9**
 - a. When they say or write bad things about us
 - b. When they malign or misrepresent us
- **Not just when persecuted for Christ’s sake, but whenever mistreated by others!**

CONCLUSION

1. But what about the example of..
 - a. Prophets like David and Elisha? - e.g., **Psa 69:22,23; 2 Kin 2:24**
 - b. Apostles like Paul? - e.g., **Ac 8:20; 13:10,11; 23:3**
 - c. Christ Himself? - e.g., **Mt 23:13-33**

2. Perhaps **Poole** stated it best: “These did it by a special vocation and instinct of the Spirit”...
 - a. Such inspired men had **the calling** and **the aid** to administer God’s wrath and judgment
 - b. We have the calling to administer mercy, and to leave vengeance to God - cf. **Ro 12:19**

May we therefore pray that God enable us to faithfully carry out our calling:

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” (Ro 12:14)

*“not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing,
knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”*

(1 Pe 3:9)

Who knows? Perhaps by living such transformed lives, it may lead to the transformation of others...!

The Empathetic Christian

Romans 12:15

INTRODUCTION

1. In the twelfth chapter of Romans, we find answers to questions such as...
 - a. What is indicative of a true transformation?
 - b. What constitutes God's good, acceptable, and perfect will for the Christian?
2. We have seen in previous lessons that it includes...
 - a. Fulfilling our function in the body of Christ - **Ro 12:3-8**
 - b. Love without hypocrisy, while abhorring what is evil - **Ro 12:9**
 - c. Loving brethren with family affection, esteeming one another highly - **Ro 12:10**
 - d. Serving the Lord diligently, with fervency of spirit - **Ro 12:11**
 - e. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, steadfast in prayer - **Ro 12:12**
 - f. Having fellowship in the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality toward strangers - **Ro 12:13**
 - g. To bless those who persecute us - **Ro 12:14**
3. Now we note the twofold exhortation...
 - a. "Rejoice with those who rejoice" - **Ro 12:15a**
 - b. "Weep with those who weep" - **Ro 12:15b**

[In this text we are called to display the virtue of "empathy" towards one another. What this entails will be the focus of our study...]

I. DEFINING EMPATHY

A. COMPARED TO SYMPATHY...

1. **Sympathy** - An inclination to support or be loyal to or to agree with an opinion
2. **Empathy** - Understanding and entering into another's feelings
- **One may be sympathetic while not empathetic; the latter requires a deeper emotional involvement than the former**

B. ITS PLACE IN THE CHURCH...

1. The Lord intended such connection between the members of His Body ("if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it") - **1 Co 12:26**
2. "This command grows out of the doctrine stated in Ro 12:4,5 that the church is one; that it has one interest; and therefore that there should be common sympathy in its joys and sorrows." - **Barnes**
- **If we are truly one, members of the same body, then we will be empathetic towards one another**

[Our text commands two ways to demonstrate empathy; we have several examples of individuals...]

II. DEMONSTRATING EMPATHY

A. REJOICING WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE...

1. Neighbors and friends of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist - **Lk 1:58**
2. Barnabas at Antioch, when he saw the grace of the Lord at work - **Ac 11:23**
- **Two good examples of sharing in others' happiness and success without envy or jealousy**

B. WEEPING WITH THOSE WHO WEEP...

1. David with his sick friends - **Psa 35:13,14**
2. Jesus with the family and friends of Lazarus grieving over his death - **Jn 11:33-35**
3. Paul with his weak and stumbling brethren - **2 Co 11:29**
4. Christians with their brethren in prison - **He 13:3**
- **People of God truly understanding and entering into the feelings of their friends and brethren**

[The quality of empathy certainly prepares one to be of greater service to those around them. How can we rise above simple sympathy for others to truly become "The Empathetic Christian"...?]

III. DEVELOPING EMPATHY

A. TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MINDS...

1. We must submit to the transformation that comes by renewing our minds - cf. **Ro 12:1-2**
2. Which will involve the development of such graces as:
 - a. Being kindly affectionate to one another in brotherly love - **Ro 12:10a**
 - b. Giving preference to one another in honor - **Ro 12:10b**
- **Note how being affectionate aids in being able to weep, and learning to give preference will enable us to rejoice**

B. DEVELOPING THE MIND OF CHRIST...

1. Note the virtues that characterize the mind of Christ - cf. **Ph 2:3-5**
 - a. Doing nothing through selfish ambition or conceit
 - b. In lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than oneself
 - c. Looking out for the interest of others
2. Note the goal of having the mind of Christ - **Ph 2:2**
 - a. To be like-minded
 - b. To have the same love
 - c. To be of one accord, of one mind
3. Note what having the mind of Christ is necessary for to experience - **Ph 2:1-2a**
 - a. Consolation in Christ
 - b. Comfort of love
 - c. Fellowship of the Spirit
 - d. Affection and mercy
 - e. Fullness of joy
- **As one develops the mind of Christ, there will be no envy or jealousy to prevent true empathy; with the mind of Christ, we will be able to truly rejoice and weep!**

CONCLUSION

1. It is God's good, acceptable and perfect will that Christians be a people...
 - a. Who are glad when others rejoice
 - b. Who are moved when others weep

-- **For only then can we be useful in sharing the joy and comfort of Christ with others**

2. Are we truly an “empathetic” people? The development and display of true empathy will greatly...
 - a. Increase our usefulness to the Master
 - b. Enhance the fellowship we have in the Lord
- **Simple sympathy is not enough; we must be able to understand and enter into one another’s feelings!**

Develop the mind of Christ, be transformed by the renewing of your mind, and you cannot help but become **“The Empathetic Christian”**...!

The Renewed Mind

Romans 12:16

INTRODUCTION

1. The Christian life is to be a transformed life...
 - a. One that does not conform to things of this world - **Ro 12:2a**
 - b. But seeks to prove (demonstrate) that God's way is better - **Ro 12:2b**
2. The Christian life requires a renewing of our minds...
 - a. In which we learn what is God's will - **Ro 12:2b**
 - b. In turn making it possible to be transformed - **Ro 12:2a**

[What are some indications of a renewed mind? In **Ro 12:16**, we find the mind or attitude that is to be found among Christians. Note first that there is to be...]

I. SAMENESS OF MIND

A. WHAT THIS MEANS...

1. The NKJV reads "Be of the same mind toward one another..."
 2. Literally, "thinking the same thing" - Robertson's Word Pictures
 3. An exhortation frequently commanded of Christians
 - a. The Christians in Rome - **Ro 15:5**
 - b. The Christians in Corinth - **1 Co 1:10**
 - c. The Christians in Philippi - **Ph 1:27; 2:2-3; 3:16; 4:2**
 - d. The Christians in Asia - **1 Pe 3:8**
- **As Christians are renewed in mind, they will begin having similar goals, aims, views**

B. HOW THIS IS POSSIBLE...

1. Seek the mind of Christ - cf. **Ph 2:5**
 - a. Each should strive to develop and emulate the mindset of Christ
 - b. The more we become like Him, the sooner we become "of the same mind"
 2. Set our minds on things above - cf. **Co 3:1-2**
 - a. Each should focus their attention more on spiritual matters
 - b. Distracted by worldly matters and human opinions, will destroy oneness of mind
- **Where there is not unity, someone (perhaps everyone) is not setting their mind on Christ and things above!**

[As we return to our text (**Ro 12:16**), we find that another indication of "**The Renewed Mind**" is...]

II. LOWLINESS OF MIND

A. WHAT THIS MEANS...

1. "Do not set your mind on high things" (NKJV); other translations:
 - a. "Do not be haughty" (RSV)
 - b. "Do not be too ambitious" (Goodspeed)
 - c. "Do not aspire to eminence" (Berkley)

- d. “Don’t become snobbish” (Phillips)
- 2. “but associate with the humble” (NKJV); other translations:
 - a. “but associate with the lowly” (RSV)
 - b. “but accept humble tasks” (Goodspeed)
 - c. “but willingly adjust yourselves to humble situations” (Berkley)
 - d. “but take a real interest in ordinary people” (Phillips)
- **A renewed mind makes a concerted effort not to be snobbish or ambitious, and is willing to be associated with humble tasks and lowly people**

B. HOW THIS IS POSSIBLE...

- 1. By taking heed to what we learn from:
 - a. The attitude of David - **Psa 131:1-2**
 - b. The warning to Jeremiah - **Jer 45:5**
 - c. The teaching of Jesus - **Lk 22:24-27**
- 2. By noting what we learn from:
 - a. The example of Jesus - **Ph 2:5-8**
 - b. The teaching of James - **Ja 2:1-5**
- **When one has the mind of Christ, their lowliness of mind will be manifested by the nature of their goals and the company they keep**

[Finally, similar to lowliness of mind, “**The Renewed Mind**” also possesses...]

III. HUMBLENESS OF MIND

A. WHAT THIS MEANS...

- 1. “Do not wise in your own opinion” (NKJV)
- 2. Some other translations:
 - a. “Do not think too highly of yourselves” (Twentieth Century NT)
 - b. “Do not be conceited” (Goodspeed)
 - c. “And don’t think you know it all!” (Living Bible)
- 3. Similar warnings are found elsewhere:
 - a. Given by Solomon - **Pro 3:7; 26:12**
 - b. Lamented by Isaiah - **Isa 5:21**
 - c. Cautioned by Paul - **1 Co 3:18**
- **A renewed mind will maintain a strong sense of humility, an awareness that one has much to learn from God and others**

B. HOW THIS IS POSSIBLE...

- 1. Hopefully, by listening to the scriptures
 - a. Such as that found in **1 Co 8:2**
 - b. The wisdom of this world is foolishness to God - **1 Co 1:20**
 - c. Not many wise are receptive to the gospel - **1 Co 1:26**
 - d. God has chosen to confound the arrogant in their wisdom - **1 Co 1:27-29**
- 2. Hopefully, aided by knowledge and experience
 - a. Often, the more you learn, the more you realize how much you don’t know
 - b. Often, the older you get, the more you realize how little you know
- 3. Hopefully, by the example of Christ
 - a. Who was willing to submit to the will of His Father - **Jn 6:38; 5:30**
 - b. Who did not think so highly of Himself that He viewed equality with God something to

- be exploited - **Ph 2:6** (cf. NRSV)
-- **Adopting the mind of Christ will go a long way to helping maintain humility about one's self**

CONCLUSION

1. Such are the qualities of **“The Renewed Mind”**...
 - a. Sameness of mind
 - b. Lowliness of mind
 - c. Humbleness of mind

2. The more we adopt the mind of Christ, and make it our own...
 - a. The more we will think the same
 - b. The less we will be snobbish, and ambitious over the wrong things
 - c. The more we will associate with the less fortunate
 - d. The less conceited and arrogant we will be

Such are the qualities of those who have the mind of Christ, and are being transformed by the renewing of their minds. Are we setting our minds on things above, where Christ is (**Co 3:1-2**)? If we have been raised with Christ (via baptism, **Co 2:12**), that is our duty!

If we have not yet been raised with Christ, why not today? Render obedience to the gospel in faith, repentance, and baptism, that you might begin to walk in newness of life...! - **Ac 2:38; Ro 6:3-4**

Responding To Evil

Romans 12:17-21

INTRODUCTION

1. The twelfth chapter of Romans has much to say about what is expected of Christians...
 - a. In general terms - **Ro 12:1-2**
 - 1) They are to present themselves as living sacrifices to God
 - 2) They are not to be conformed to this world
 - 3) They are to be transformed by the renewing of their minds
 - 4) They are to prove what is God's good, acceptable, and perfect will
 - b. In more specific terms - **Ro 12:3-16**
 - 1) They are to fulfill their function in the body of Christ - **Ro 12:3-8**
 - 2) They are to love without hypocrisy, abhorring what is evil - **Ro 12:9**
 - 3) They are to love brethren as family, esteeming one another highly - **Ro 12:10**
 - 4) They are to serve the Lord diligently, with fervency of spirit - **Ro 12:11**
 - 5) They are to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, steadfast in prayer - **Ro 12:12**
 - 6) They are to share in the needs of saints, pursue hospitality toward strangers - **Ro 12:13**
 - 7) They are to bless those who persecute them - **Ro 12:14**
 - 8) They are to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep - **Ro 12:15**
 - 9) They are to be of the same mind, with humility and lowliness of mind - **Ro 12:16**

-- **Such behavior is certainly an indication of a transformation!**
2. But perhaps one of the greatest signs of transformation...
 - a. Is how one responds to evil
 - b. Is how one treats their enemy

-- **Human nature responds in kind, with vengeance; is this how Christians are to respond?**
3. In our text (**Ro 12:17-21**), we find what **Barnes** describes as...
 - a. "...probably one of the most difficult precepts of Christianity, but the law of Christ on the subject is unyielding."
 - b. "It is a solemn demand made on all His followers, and it must be obeyed."

[This "difficult precept" pertains to how one reacts when mistreated by those who are evil...]

I. HOW WE ARE TO RESPOND TO EVIL

A. REPAY NO ONE EVIL FOR EVIL...

1. Thus Paul writes in **Ro 12:17a** and elsewhere - **1 Th 5:15**
 2. He is not alone in this prohibition
 - a. Solomon's counsel in Proverbs - **Pro 20:22**
 - b. Jesus' teaching in the sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:39**
 - c. Peter's writing in his epistle - **1 Pe 3:9**
- **Thus we are prohibited against responding to evil in kind**

B. REPLY TO EVIL WITH GOOD...

1. Note first what our concern is to be - **Ro 12:17b,18**

- a. To have regard for good things in the sight of others
- b. To live peaceably with others if at all possible
- 2. Therefore, our response to evil is to reply with good - **Ro 12:20**
 - a. As the Law of Moses instructed - **Exo 23:4-5**
 - b. As David exemplified in his dealings with King Saul - **1 Sam 24:17**
 - c. As Solomon counseled, and Paul quoted - **Pro 25:21,22**
 - d. As Jesus taught in His sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:38-44**
- **Note carefully that the response is to be one of aggressive good will and kindness**

[People normally respond differently, depending upon their ability (e.g., vengeance, self-defense, passive resistance, running away, helpless victim). Yet Christians are taught to respond with love. Why? Paul explains...]

II. WHY WE ARE TO RESPOND WITH GOOD

A. VENGEANCE BELONGS TO GOD...

- 1. Vengeance is a Divine prerogative - **Ro 12:19**
 - a. He certainly possesses the ability to administer it justly - cf. **Nah 1:1-8**
 - 1) He is slow to anger
 - 2) He knows the hearts of men
 - b. He has the tools to administer vengeance
 - 1) E.g., governing authorities - cf. **Ro 13:1-4; 1 Pe 2:13-14**
 - 2) E.g., giving man up to the depravity of his sins - cf. **Ro 1:18-32**
 - 3) E.g., the coming of the Lord in flaming fire - cf. **2 Th 1:7-9**
- 2. Therefore we are to give place to wrath
 - a. The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God - **Ja 1:19-20**
 - b. The wrath of man is more often a work of the flesh - **Ga 5:19-21; Ep 4:31; Co 3:8**
- **It is a mistake to presume that every example of Divine conduct means we can do the same!**

B. VICTORY OVER EVIL IS MORE LIKELY...

- 1. Our goal is to overcome evil - **Ro 12:21**
- 2. How can we best hope to overcome evil and change the evil person?
 - a. If we react as:
 - 1) Avenger, defender or passive resister
 - 2) We only convince the opposition that might makes right
 - b. If we react as:
 - 1) Runner or helpless
 - 2) We may only confirm the opposition's view that we are cowardly or weak
- 3. The most likely way to both overcome evil and change the evil person is by reacting with active good will!
 - a. Is this not how God sought to change the world? - **Ro 5:8; Jn 3:16; Ro 2:4**
 - b. Is this not how Jesus sought to change the world? - **1 Pe 2:21-25**
- 4. Certainly Jesus' example demonstrates a better way to handle conflict and evil...
 - a. His humility and sacrificial love has motivated many to turn from sin
 - b. And we are called to walk in His steps!
- 5. Those who do follow Jesus' example often make a powerful impact on others:
 - Kim Joon-gon has seen 2,000 out of 20,000 people on Chunnam Island murdered by the Communists. They dragged his family to a spot where 160 people from two villages had

gathered to beat the Christians. There Kim's father and wife were beaten to death and Kim was left for dead. When he revived and sought safety at an acquaintance's house, he was turned over to the Communists. Only the sudden appearance of an American ship off the island coast saved him this time, for the Communist soldiers hurried away to battle.

He hid out in the countryside until the South Korean army captured the island. The Communists who had killed his wife and father were arrested. Because it was wartime, the police chief had authority to execute without trial. But as the chief prepared to kill the men, Kim pleaded, 'Spare them. They were forced to kill.'

The police chief showed great surprise. 'It was your family they killed! Why do you now ask for their lives?'

Kim replied quietly, 'Because the Lord, whose I am and whom I serve, would have me show mercy to them.'

The Communists were spared execution because of Kim's plea. News of his action spread among other Communist supporters in the area. When Kim later ascended a mountain to preach to Communists hiding out, he was not killed. Many of the Communists became Christians, and when Kim finally left the island there was a flourishing church of 108 members.

- **Dictionary Of Illustrations, p. 188**

CONCLUSION

1. We may never be called upon to manifest the power of responding to evil with good in such a remarkable way, but...
 - a. We can begin by how we respond to personal abuses we often receive from others
 - b. We can react to evil treatment even on a small scale with active good will
2. Reacting to evil with good will does not always convert the evildoer...
 - a. Jesus was crucified on the cross, enduring hostility by sinners - **He 12:2-3**
 - b. In such cases we must commit our cause to God, as did Jesus - **1 Pe 2:21-23; 4:19**
3. But there other reasons for responding to evil with good...
 - a. To be different than sinners - **Lk 6:32-34**
 - b. To be like our Heavenly Father - **Lk 6:35-36**
 - c. To receive a blessing (more likely to love life and see good days) - **1 Pe 3:9-12**

Do you desire to "love life and see good days"? Then be transformed by the renewing of your mind and demonstrate that God's will for responding to evil is indeed good, acceptable, and perfect...!

The Christian's Duty To Government

Romans 13:1-7

INTRODUCTION

1. Christians are blessed to be citizens of a heavenly kingdom...
 - a. Our citizenship is in heaven - **Ph 3:20**
 - b. We have been conveyed into the kingdom of God's dear Son - **Co 1:13; Re 1:9**
 - **As such, we are described as "sojourners and pilgrims" in this world - 1 Pe 2:11**
2. As "pilgrims", we live and work under the governments of men...
 - a. With a variety of political systems: democracies, kingdoms, dictatorships, etc.
 - b. Offering varying degrees of freedom, responsibilities, etc.
 - **What is our duty to such governments?**
3. The Lord's church began and thrived during the Roman Empire...
 - a. To Christians in the capital city of Rome, Paul wrote of their responsibility
 - b. To Christians dispersed in outlying areas of the Empire, Peter did also
 - **The Christian's duty to government is made very clear by the apostles**

[Using Paul's comments in **Ro 13:1-7** as our starting point, let's review what our duties are...]

I. BE SUBJECT

A. THE RULE...

1. Stressed twice by Paul
 - a. "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities" - **Ro 13:1**
 - b. "Therefore you must be subject..." - **Ro 13:5**
 2. Peter likewise taught this duty - **1 Pe 2:13-14**
 - a. "Therefore submit yourselves..."
 - 1) Submit means "be subject to"
 - 2) Signifying "to place one's self under subjection; to render one's self subordinate"
 - b. We are to submit "to every ordinance of man"
 - 1) The word "ordinance" literally means "a creation"
 - 2) The Greeks and Romans described the appointment of officers as the "creation" of them
 - 3) Thus the expression "ordinance" actually refers:
 - a) Not to a particular law passed by government
 - b) But to the civil government or institution itself
 - c) Cf. "to every human institution" (NASB, NRSV)
 - 4) Note that we are to submit to **every** human institution (whether it be a monarchy, democracy, totalitarian state, etc.)
- **Our responsibility is clear: "Let every soul be subject" - Ro 13:1**

B. THE REASON...

1. Governing authorities that exist have been appointed by God! - **Ro 13:1**
 - a. As emphasized in the book of Daniel - **Dan 2:20-21; 4:17,25a,32a**

- b. Even those that are evil, which God often uses for His divine purposes and then replaces - cf. **Exo 9:16** (Egypt); **Isa 10:5-12** (Assyria)
 - 2. Therefore to resist government means to resist God Himself! - **Ro 13:2-4**
 - a. To resist is to bring judgment upon one's self
 - b. For government is a minister of God, designed to avenge evil
 - 3. Peter adds two good reasons - **1 Pe 2:15**
 - a. First and foremost, "this is the will of God"
 - 1) Cf. also, "for the Lord's sake" - **1 Pe 2:13**
 - 2) This will suffice for all true servants of God
 - b. That we may "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"
 - 1) Because of their allegiance to a heavenly king, Christians are often falsely accused of sedition or treason - e.g., **Ac 17:5-8**
 - 2) By doing good (e.g., by submitting), we can "silence" (lit., muzzle) ignorant charges
- **To avoid wrath and have a good conscience, "you must be subject" - Ro 13:5**

C. THE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE...

- 1. It is not whenever government is oppressive
 - a. Consider the government and conditions when Paul and Peter wrote
 - b. The government was totalitarian, under Nero's evil and despotic rule as emperor
 - c. Under Nero's reign, Christians suffered greatly - cf. **1 Pe 4:12-13; 5:8-9**
 - d. Paul and Peter were eventually martyred
 - 2. The only exception: we must obey God rather than man!
 - a. As illustrated by Peter and the apostles - **Ac 4:18-20; 5:27-29**
 - b. When government tries to force us to disobey God, we must disobey the government
 - c. Even then, we may break only the particular law designed to force disobedience to God
 - d. We have no authority to break other laws in protest to the unjust law
- **When government seeks to stifle our service to God, we must obey God rather than man!**

[As we return to our text, we note additional duties to government...]

II. PAY WHAT IS DUE

A. WE ARE TO PAY TAXES...

- 1. As an act of submission we should pay our taxes - **Ro 13:6**
 - 2. Also other fees that are due, such as customs - **Ro 13:7**
- **We may not approve of how the taxes are spent, but I doubt the early Christians approved of how Nero spent the government's money either**

B. WE ARE TO PAY RESPECT...

- 1. Fear to whom fear is due - **Ro 13:7**
 - a. Such as police officers, judges
 - b. And if you do evil, be afraid! - **Ro 13:4**
 - 2. Honor to whom honor is due - **Ro 13:7; cf. 1 Pe 2:17**
 - a. Such as presidents, kings, governors, local leaders
 - b. Out of respect for the office, if not for the man (or woman)
- **Our duty is not limited to those whose political or personal behavior we approve**

[Before we end our study, we should certainly note another duty to government that is ours...]

III. PRAY

A. FOR KINGS AND ALL IN AUTHORITY...

1. We are to offer supplications, prayers, intercessions - **1 Ti 2:1-2**
 - a. Praying for those who lead, not only our country, but those around the world
 - b. Praying that they rule with wisdom, righteousness, and mercy
 2. We are to offer thanks - **1 Ti 2:1-2**
 - a. Taking time to thank God for those who rule well
 - b. Thanking God for when we live in peace and prosperity, and for protecting us when we do not
- **An invaluable contribution Christians can give their country are their prayers**

B. THAT WE MIGHT LEAD GOOD LIVES...

1. Good in a material sense, to enjoy quiet and peaceful times - cf. **1 Th 4:11; He 12:14a**
 2. Good in a spiritual sense, free to be godly and reverent - cf. **He 12:14b**
- **As God works through the governments of men to bestow peace, prayer should be a priority for those who wish to live in peace**

CONCLUSION

1. The duties placed on Christians toward their earthly governments are clear and simple...
 - a. Be subject to governing authorities
 - b. Pay what is due in taxes and respect
 - c. Pray for all those in positions of authority
2. Beyond this, our involvement in the affairs of government may fall into the realm of judgment...
 - a. Should we enter politics, serve in law enforcement, enlist in the military?
 - b. Such questions have been debated by Christians for centuries

-- **One thing is clear, we must obey God rather than man, and avoid becoming entangled with the affairs of this life to the neglect of our service to God (2 Ti 2:4)**

As a Christian, are you faithfully fulfilling your duty to earthly government, while sojourning as a citizen of a heavenly kingdom...?

Indebted To Love

Romans 13:8-10

INTRODUCTION

1. In our duty to government, Paul commanded to pay what is due (taxes and customs, fear and honor - cf. **Ro 13:7**)
2. He then proceeded to discuss our duty to our fellow man (to owe no one anything, except to love one another) - cf. **Ro 13:8**
3. This does not forbid borrowing where contract obligations are met...
 - a. Otherwise Jesus would not have permitted borrowing - cf. **Mt 5:42**
 - b. Certainly debts should be paid - cf. **Psa 37:21**
4. This appears to be a use of the comparative “not”...
 - a. Where “not” is not used as a literal prohibition
 - b. But to compare one thing to another (not this..but this)
 - c. For example, look at **Jn 6:27**
 - 1) Did Jesus condemn working for food?
 - 2) No, He was emphasizing what is most important
5. **The point is this:** we owe a debt to always love one another...
 - a. “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another” (NIV)
 - b. “Leave no debt unpaid except the standing debt of mutual love” (Weymouth)

[Thus Christians should always feel “**Indebted To Love**”. As to reasons why, consider...]

I. WHY WE OWE THE DEBT

A. IT FULFILLS THE LAW OF MOSES...

1. Jewish Christians were slow to give up the Law - e.g., **Ac 21:20ff**
 2. Some tried to bind elements of the Law on Gentiles - e.g., **Ac 15:1,5**
 3. The apostles (and Holy Spirit) withstood such efforts - cf. **Ac 15:28; Ga 5:1-4; Ro 7:4-6**
 4. The command to love fulfilled much of the Law - **Ro 13:8-10**
- **Jewish Christians could take comfort in knowing that keeping the command to love one another fulfilled the Law**

B. IT FULFILLS THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST...

1. Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment - **Jn 13:34,35; 15:12**
 - a. To love one another
 - b. As He loved us
 2. The gospel reveals that God is love, and love is of God - **1 Jn 4:7-11**
 - a. Those who love are born of God and know Him
 - b. God loved us, and so we ought to love another
- **As disciples of Christ, it is only natural that we emulate the love shown us**

[For such reasons, we “ought” (indebted) to love one another. How can we pay this “debt”...?]

II. HOW WE PAY THE DEBT

A. THROUGH IMITATING JESUS...

1. Jesus sets the standard - **Jn 13:34; 15:12**
 - a. We are to love as He loved us
 - b. This raises the quality of love (compared to loving one as yourself)
 2. Jesus sets a high standard - **Jn 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16-18**
 - a. By laying down His life for His friends
 - b. We also ought to lay down our life for the brethren
- **In principle, the example of Jesus illustrates how we pay the debt we owe**

B. THROUGH ACTIVE GOOD WILL...

1. Paul defined true love - **1 Co 13:4-8**
 - a. Defined by what it does
 - 1) Suffers long and is kind, rejoices in the truth
 - 2) Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things
 - b. Defined by what it does not do
 - 1) Does not envy; does not parade itself, is not puffed up
 - 2) Does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil
 - 3) Does not rejoice in iniquity, and never fails
 2. We can pay on the debt by treating one another in this way
 - a. Be patient and kind; rejoicing in what is truth
 - b. Forbearing with one another, believing and hoping for the best in one another
 - c. Free from envy, arrogance, pride, and selfish interests
 - d. Thinking no evil of a brother, and grieved when seeing one transgress
 - e. Never failing to love as Christ loved us
- **In practice, Paul’s description provides guidance on how we pay the debt we owe**

CONCLUSION

1. The debt we owe can never be fully paid...
 - a. For we are to love one another as Christ loved us
 - b. Yet His love “passes knowledge” - cf. **Ep 3:19**
2. Thus we should always feel an indebtedness...
 - a. To increase in love - cf. **1 Th 4:9-10**
 - b. To abound in love still more and more - cf. **Ph 1:9**

In this way we can “approve the things that are excellent” and “be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.” (**Ph 1:10**). Is this not sufficient motivation to be “**Indebted To Love**”...?

It's Time To Wake Up!

Romans 13:11-14

INTRODUCTION

1. Apathy and lethargy are problems that often afflict the people of God...
 - a. Many Christians simply “go through the motions”
 - b. Many Churches exist, but with little zeal or progress
2. Such problems were common in New Testament times...
 - a. The church in Ephesus left their first love - **Re 2:4**
 - b. The church in Laodicea became lukewarm - **Re 3:15-16**
3. Paul felt the need to exhort the brethren in Rome to awake from sleep - **Ro 13:11-14**
 - a. “To awake from carelessness and indifference” - **B. W. Johnson**
 - b. “To shake off slothfulness, security, and all former sinful courses” - **Poole**
 - c. To awake from “stupid, fatal indifference to eternal things” - **JFB**

[Have we become lethargic and indifferent to eternal things? If so, “**It's Time To Wake Up!**” With Paul's exhortation before us, consider some reasons...]

I. WHY WE NEED TO WAKE (11-12a)

A. KNOWING THE TIME...

1. Knowing the nature of time
 - a. Time is short
 - b. Time is fleeting - **Ja 4:14-17**
2. Knowing what time it is
 - a. Now is the time to obey the Lord
 - b. Now is day of salvation - **2 Co 6:1-2**

B. OUR SALVATION IS NEARER...

1. Our salvation is nearer - in what way?
 - a. The Lord's return is nearer
 - b. Our own death is nearer, should we die before the Lord returns - cf. **He 9:27**
2. Than we first believed
 - a. Every day brings us closer
 - b. Think of how much time has gone by since we believed!

C. THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT...

1. The night - referring to the moral darkness of this world - cf. **1 Jn 2:8**
2. Is far spent - lit., “is cut off” It is becoming short; it is hastening to a close - cf. **1 Co 7:31b**
3. This world and time as we know it will not last long

D. THE DAY IS AT HAND...

1. “The day of eternal blessedness is at hand - is about to dawn on us in our glorious resurrection unto eternal life” - **Clarke**

2. Until which the Word of God serves as a light shining in the dark - cf. **2 Pe 1:19**

[Since these things are true, let us walk (conduct ourselves) properly...]

II. HOW WE OUGHT TO WALK (12b-14)

A. CASTING OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS...

1. Such things as mentioned in this text:
 - a. Revelry, drunkenness, lewdness
 - b. Lust, strife, envy
2. Such things as mentioned in other texts:
 - a. Adultery, fornication, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissension's, heresies, murders - cf. **Ga 5:19-21**
 - b. Passion, evil desire, covetousness, anger, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, lying - cf. **Co 3:5-8**

B. PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT...

1. The breastplate of faith and love, the hope of salvation as a helmet - **1 Th 5:8**
2. That armor of God including truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, the hope of salvation, the Word of God - cf. **Ep 6:10-17**

C. PUTTING ON THE LORD JESUS...

1. First, in **baptism**
 - a. For in baptism we "put on" Christ - **Ga 3:27**
 - b. We are raised "with" Christ, "made alive together with Him" - **Co 2:11-13**
2. Then, in **developing Christ-like character**
 - a. Putting on the new man, renewed in knowledge, with tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiving one another, love - **Co 3:10-14**
 - b. Being renewed in mind, a new man in true righteousness and holiness - **Ep 4:20-24**
 - c. Growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ - cf. **2 Pe 1:5-8; 3:18**

D. MAKING NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH...

1. Something we must do!
 - a. If we want to live spiritually - cf. **Ro 8:12-13a**
 - b. If we desire the love of the Father - cf. **1 Jn 2:15-17**
2. Something we can do!
 - a. With the aid of the Spirit - cf. **Ro 8:13b; Ep 3:16,20; Ga 5:16-17**
 - b. With the aid of God's providence - cf. **1 Co 10:13**
 - c. With the aid of watchful prayer - **Mt 26:41**; cf. **1 Pe 4:7; 5:8**
3. How serious are we in this regard?
 - a. Do we avoid circumstances that might tempt the flesh?
 - b. Do we abstain from activities that arouse fleshly lusts?

CONCLUSION

1. Brethren, are we sleeping...?
 - a. Indifferent to matters of the spirit, careless about things eternal?
 - b. Lethargic in our service to the Lord, apathetic about our spiritual well-being?

2. If so, then **“It’s Time To Wake Up!”**...
 - a. The time to change and grow will be soon be gone!
 - b. The day of eternity will arrive and we won’t be ready!

3. Let us be children of the day, not of the night...
 - a. Put on the Lord Jesus
 - b. Put on the armor of light
 - c. Walk properly
 - d. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its fleshly lusts

...and we can look forward to obtaining salvation through Jesus Christ! - cf. **1 Th 5:1-11**

Admonitions To The Strong And Weak

Romans 14:1-15:7

INTRODUCTION

1. An important part of the Christian life is getting along with brethren...
 - a. Jesus prayed for unity among believers - **Jn 17:20-23**
 - b. Paul condemned division among Christians - **1 Co 1:10-13**
 - c. Jesus died to make Jew and Gentile one new man and one body - **Ep 2:14-16**

2. Unity did not come easily in the early church...
 - a. Jewish Christians were reluctant to accept Gentile Christians - cf. **Ac 15:1-5**
 - b. Knowledgeable Christians were not always considerate - cf. **1 Co 8:10-12**

3. Unity does not come easily in the church today...
 - a. People come into the kingdom from all sorts of religious backgrounds
 - b. Their level of knowledge, their rate of spiritual growth, varies widely

[To ensure that brethren receive one another as they should, Paul wrote a lengthy discourse in which he provides “**Admonitions To The Strong And Weak**” (**Ro 14:1-15:7**). As we consider these admonitions, let’s do so in the form of answering some key questions...]

I. WHO IS A ‘WEAK’ BROTHER?

A. ONE WHO IS ‘WEAK’ IN THE FAITH...

1. Who has doubts about certain things - **Ro 14:1**
 2. One who eats only vegetables - **Ro 14:2**
 3. One who esteems one day above another - **Ro 14:5-6**
 4. One who stumbles over meat and wine - **Ro 14:21**
- **E.g., a new Jewish Christian whose conscience had been trained by the Law to abstain from certain foods, to observe certain holidays**

B. NOT ONE ‘IGNORANT’ IN THE FAITH...

1. The weak brother was certainly not ignorant after reading this epistle
 - a. He is told that God accepts the other brother - **Ro 14:3**
 - b. He is told that God declares all foods clean - **Ro 14:14,20**; cf. **Mk 7:18,19**; **1 Ti 4:4**
 2. But his conscience was not yet ready to accept what the Lord allows
 - a. There are still lingering doubts - **Ro 14:1**
 - b. He is not yet fully convinced - **Ro 14:5b**
 - c. He is grieved by certain foods - **Ro 14:15**
 - d. He cannot eat without offense - **Ro 14:20**
 - e. He is prone to stumble and become weaker - **Ro 14:21**
 - f. He cannot eat with faith (a strong conviction) - **Ro 14:23**
- **E.g., a Jew or Muslim who becomes a Christian, yet still struggles with their newfound liberty in Christ**

[The weak brother knows what is right, but his conscience has yet to be sufficiently retrained to partake in that which for so long had been a sin for him. On the other hand, consider...]

II. WHO IS A 'STRONG' BROTHER?

A. ONE WHO IS STRONG IN 'THE' FAITH...

1. He knows that God has received him - **Ro 14:3**
2. He knows what the Lord has revealed - **Ro 14:14,20**; cf. **Mk 7:18,19**; **1 Ti 4:4**
- **I.e., a Christian who is well taught in the ways of the Lord**

B. ONE WHO IS STRONG IN 'HIS' FAITH...

1. Who believes he may eat all things - **Ro 14:2**
2. One who observes every day alike - **Ro 14:5-6**
3. One who does not condemn himself in what he approves - **Ro 14:22**
- **I.e., a Christian who can enjoy God-given freedom without qualms of conscience**

[In any congregation, you are likely to find both strong and weak brethren as described in this passage. What is expected of those who are weak...?]

III. ADMONITIONS TO THE WEAK

A. DO NOT JUDGE (CONDEMN) YOUR BROTHER...

1. For God has received him - **Ro 14:3**
 - a. God has revealed that what he does is acceptable - cf. **Mk 7:18,19**; **1 Ti 4:4**
 - b. The weak brother knows this; by reading this epistle, if not before - **Ro 14:14,20**
2. He is Christ's servant, not yours - **Ro 14:4**
 - a. We cannot judge or condemn another servant whom God has accepted - **Ro 14:4**
 - b. Such judgment belongs to Christ, before whom we will all stand - **Ro 14:10-13a**; cf. also **Ja 4:11-12**
- **The weak brother is not told to accept a brother whom he believes to be in error; rather, he is not to condemn a brother who is doing what God has revealed**

B. DO NOT VIOLATE YOUR CONSCIENCE...

1. Do that which you are able to do with full conviction - **Ro 14:5b**
2. Refrain from doing anything about which you have doubts - **Ro 14:22-23**
3. Serving the Lord with a clear conscience is important
 - a. Jesus shed His blood to cleanse our conscience - **He 9:14**; **10:22**
 - b. The goal is to have a good conscience - **1 Ti 1:5,19**; **2 Ti 1:3**
 - c. The conscience can be rejected, seared, and defiled - **1 Ti 1:19**; **4:1-2**; **Ti 1:15**
- **Paul would not have the brother whose faith is weak to do anything to weaken his conscience**

[Paul's concern for the weak is evident elsewhere (cf. **2 Co 11:29**), and in our text by noting that the bulk of this passage is actually directed toward the strong brother...]

IV. ADMONITIONS TO THE STRONG

A. RECEIVE YOUR WEAK BROTHER...

1. Not for the purpose of disputing over what he has doubts - **Ro 14:1**

2. Don't despise your brother - **Ro 14:3**
3. Don't show contempt for your brother - **Ro 14:10**
4. Bear with their scruples - **Ro 15:1**
- **A strong brother must be careful not to be arrogant, but considerate**

B. DON'T PUT UP STUMBLING BLOCKS...

1. Don't put up occasions for him to fall - **Ro 14:13b**
2. Don't grieve your brethren with your liberty - **Ro 14:15a**
3. Don't destroy your brother with your liberty - **Ro 14:15b,20a**
4. Don't let your good be spoken of as evil - **Ro 14:16**
- **A strong brother must be careful lest his abuse of liberty lead to his own downfall**

C. PURSUE PEACE AND EDIFICATION...

1. For the kingdom of God is not about food - **Ro 14:17-18**
 - a. It is about righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit
 - b. He who serves Christ in such things is acceptable to God, approved by men
2. Strive for that which brings peace and edifies one another - **Ro 14:19**
 - a. Blessed are the peacemakers - cf. **Mt 5:9; 2 Co 13:11; 1 Pe 3:10-11**
 - b. Our goal should be one of building each other up - cf. **Ro 15:2**
- **A strong brother must care more for his brother than for himself - Ro 15:1-3**

CONCLUSION

1. What is the goal of such admonitions to the strong and weak...?
 - a. That brethren be like-minded toward one another - **Ro 15:5**
 - b. That brethren might glorify God with one mind and one mouth - **Ro 15:6**
 - c. That brethren might receive one another to the glory of God - **Ro 15:7**
 - **Is this not sufficient motive to take Paul's admonitions seriously?**
2. Thus we are to receive one another as Christ received us...
 - a. He received us in our weakness - **Ro 5:6**
 - b. His longsuffering works toward our salvation - **2 Pe 3:15**
 - **Should not we who are strong extend the same courtesy to our weaker brethren?**

Speaking of Christ having received us...have we received Him in faith and baptism? - cf. **Jn 1:12; Ga 3:26-27**