

## ROMANS 12

*Paul now begins a second major section that contains practical exhortations for those who have been justified by faith in Christ Jesus. They are to exhibit a transformed life because of their renewed mind in the gospel. This will involve obligations and responsibilities in various personal, civil, and spiritual relationships. It illustrates the Christian way of life.*

### **I) Being a Living Sacrifice (12:1-2)**

- A) “Therefore” – based on the truth of the gospel that we are justified by faith in Christ, Paul beseeches his brethren, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice – make application to the life of the Christian
  - 1) “Beseech” – (Gk. *parakaleo*) to admonish, exhort (Thayer); ask urgently, entreat, implore, solicit (Webster); an appeal based on what God has done for us
  - 2) “Mercies of God” – based on the fact that God has freely provided salvation by His grace
  - 3) Our obligation as justified individuals is to present our bodies as a living sacrifice
    - a) “Present yourself” – a call to offer oneself voluntarily to God for His use
    - b) “Living sacrifice” – body dedicated to God and His service in this life (Rom. 6:13)
- B) This “living” sacrifice is to be holy (set apart, sanctified) and acceptable to God
  - 1) It is our “reasonable service” – it is rational service to God from the heart based on truth
- C) Do not be conformed to this world (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Eph. 2:2), but instead be transformed (Gk. *metamorphoo*) – we are *in* the world but not *of* the world
  - 1) “Not conformed to this world” – not fashioned according to the pattern of the world
  - 2) “But be transformed” – be changed into another form
  - 3) Transformation is by the renewing of the mind (Eph. 4:17-24; Col. 3:1-11; Rom. 8:6-8)
    - a) Accomplished by the knowledge and understanding of the truth of God (2 Cor. 10:5)
  - 4) Goal is to “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”
    - a) Test and approve God’s wisdom in our service to His will (Eph. 3:8-12)

*This chapter begins the second and last major section of this epistle. Paul now turns to more hortatory language of practical applications of living for those justified by faith in Christ.*

*Those justified by faith (beneficiaries of the mercies of God) are to present their bodies as living sacrifices in the service of God (recall his admonitions in 6:12-19). These sacrifices are “living” in that we have been raised from the death of sin to newness of life (6:5, 13). This is to be for “reasonable service” – rational and spiritual worship in service to God as opposed to mindless ritual. Since salvation is a free gift of God, we most certainly are obligated to offer ourselves fully to the service of God.*

*They are also not to be conformed (fashioned according to) this world, but be transformed (changed, metamorphosed – see also Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; 2 Cor. 3:18) by the renewing of the mind [soul, heart, inner man]. This is accomplished in and through the understanding and application of the wisdom of God revealed by the Spirit in the word of God. This is for the goal of proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God in our life. This is a most serious decision and pledge of total allegiance to God. In everything and everywhere we are to be devoted to the service of God.*

### **II) Obligations of Service as Members of the Body of Christ (12:3-8)**

- A) Paul speaks by the grace given to him (to preach the gospel, Eph. 3:8)
  - 1) No one is to think of himself more highly than he ought to think – pride, haughtiness (11:20)
  - 2) Should think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith

- a) God gives faith by the hearing of His word (10:17) and we function within that faith to serve God
- B) Many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function
  - 1) The church is one body with many members – individually members of one another (1 Cor. 12:14, 20; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
- C) Differing spiritual gifts and talents given by God's grace to be used in His service
  - 1) Prophecy – in proportion of faith (revelation)
  - 2) Ministry – in ministering (service)
  - 3) Teaching – in teaching (instruction)
  - 4) Exhortation – in exhorting (encouragement)
  - 5) Giving – with liberality (generosity)
  - 6) Leading – with diligence (attentiveness)
  - 7) Mercy – with cheerfulness (kindness)

*As a transformed individual, the Christian has certain obligations, which Paul explains in the following sections. One must not be prideful, but soberly serve as a member among other members in the one body. Service can be offered with differing spiritual gifts and helpful talents possessed by each individual. Each member offers something that contributes to the good of the whole body. No one is less or more important to their function than others. There is a definite lack of self in the life of the Christian (Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:15).*

### **III) The Behavior of the Christian (12:9-21)**

- A) Series of admonitions concerning godly conduct
  - 1) Love without hypocrisy [*genuine, sincere*]
  - 2) Abhor what is evil, cling to what is good [*spiritual discernment*]
  - 3) Kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another [*loving, humble treatment of brethren*]
  - 4) Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord [*work ethic*]
  - 5) Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer [*inner strength*]
  - 6) Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality [*helping the needy*]
  - 7) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse [*loving our enemies*]
  - 8) Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep [*sincere empathy*]
  - 9) Be of the same mind toward one another; do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble; do not be wise in your own opinion [*humility*]
  - 10) Repay no one evil for evil; have regard for good things in the sight of all men [*goodness*]
  - 11) If possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men [*peacemaker*]
- B) Do not avenge yourselves (do not take law into own hands)
  - 1) Give place to divine wrath (Deut. 32:35; Heb. 10:30)
    - a) God is the proper and perfect judge in divine and civil matters
  - 2) Not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Proverbs 25:21-22)
    - a) Be Christ-like, and seek to touch the heart of enemies for good
    - b) Fires of coal on the head – burning reminder of shame in an evil conscience

*With an impressive list of admonitions, Paul here reveals the godly conduct of the Christian beginning with the need for unfeigned love. He touches upon such things as the discernment, labor, brotherliness, empathy, benevolence, humility, and goodness of the Christian. He particularly focuses on the evil of avenging oneself instead of giving place to God's wrath. One is not to be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good. In this way the Christian demonstrates a renewed mind and transformed life.*