**Romans 12 “Your Gift – His Will”**

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**Romans 11:17-18“**If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been ***grafted in*** among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, **18**do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.”

**Omnipotent** – Able to do all things, Allowed to do anything. *Power AND Prerogative.*

**Mercy, like grace, is *“undeserved”.***

*GRACE = “undeserved favor”, MERCY = “undeserved pardon”.*

In Romans 12 *(and 13)* Paul shifts from heavy doctrinal statements and assertions to a list of practical exhortations and impartations of wisdom, much like the book of Proverbs. He talks about proper worship, the will of God, humility, Spiritual gifts, and how to respond to enemies and adversaries.

We will walk through each passage individually as the Holy Spirit speaks to us through Romans 12;

**Romans 12:1 “**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s *mercy*, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper *worship*.

Having already established the concept God’s mercy in the previous chapter as a *pardon we don’t deserve*, he exhorts us to worship from a position of gratitude and humility. This is *proper worship* that is *holy and* *pleasing to God*.

He connects the issue of *sacrifice* to the topic of *worship*. In Old Testament times, worship at the temple *was* sacrifice and meant bringing your choice animal to the altar, to be sacrificed in accordance with the Lord’s commands. It was not a self-gratifying, feel-good, entertainment experience; it was an offering to God and a sacrifice of something valuable to you. Jesus was our ultimate sacrifice; we are no longer required to offer the blood of animals. But worship, should still be presented with the same heart of sacrifice to God, holy and pleasing Him. Not coming with the intention to please ourselves or satisfy our own desire to feel good, or be entertained and amused. It’s all about Him! [ *“worship was so good, I loved it!”]* 🡪*(Heart of Worship – It’s all about you, Jesus!)*

**v. 2“**Do not conform to the *pattern of this world,* but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

The pattern of the world is influenced by the Devil. Jesus calls him the *ruler of this world* (John 12:31), and Paul calls him “the god of this age”;

**2nd Cor. 4:4** “*The god of this age* has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Being transformed by the renewing of our minds, means submitting our will to the Holy Spirit and allowing him to transform our minds (souls) with the light of the gospel and the wisdom of the will of God. It’s more than just a reprogramming, like you would do with a computer that had gotten corrupt; it’s a renewal, or rebirth of the Spirit from death to life.

Once this happens, you can *see* and *think* with the wisdom and clarity of God in your mind. Then (and only then) can you understand what His will is.

**v.3“**For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. **4**For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **5**so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

We must remain humble and not become self-serving or self-seeking. We are all parts of a body, and are only healthy when all the parts are also healthy. Not only can a body not operate of certain parts are inactive (hands, feet), but it cannot live if certain parts become inactive (lungs, heart). Work to the health and good of the whole body, not just yourself.

**Spiritual Gifts:** *(explained at the end of this teaching)*

*v.****6****We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;****7****if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;****8****if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

**Hate what is evil, cling to what is good;**

**v.9“**Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.”

Once in a while I run into a Christian who will speak about sin with a strange affection and a sense of fondness, instead of disgust and abhorrence. It’s almost as if to say, I know I’m not allowed to engage in that lifestyle anymore, but it sure was fun and appealing…, or there is an attitude of tolerance of evil instead of a hatred for evil in society in an effort to be *compassionate and loving.*

Paul is saying that it’s possible to have sincere *love* for others, while still maintaining a hatred for the evil things in this world that destroy lives, ruin relationships, and displease the Lord. In fact one characteristic of love is that it *does not delight in evil*.

**1st Cor. 13:6** “*Love does not delight in evil,* but rejoices with the truth.”

Paul continues to talk about loving one another, which is what Jesus gave us as a “New Commandment – “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 13:34)

 v.**10**Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Love = “willing the highest good for another, regardless of self”. The opposite of selfishness (sin).

**v.11**Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. **13**Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

The hallmarks if a person who is truly “walking in the Spirit of the Lord” are these things. They don’t become more and more worn out and indifferent about the things of God over the years, they become more excited (zeal, spiritual fervor). They also radiate joyful hope, are patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, recognizing more and more how important it is as the years go by. They are also usually very hospitable.

I am so encouraged by older Christians who still maintain their zeal for the Lord, sometimes more so than young Christians. Billy Graham was this way, even as he got into his elderly years, he remained joy filled, faith-filled, full of zeal and spiritual fervor, and prayed a lot. In fact late in life they asked him what he would have done differently in life if he could do it again, he said; *“I would’ve prayed more”.*

**v. 14**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15**Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Sometimes we feel that it’s our job to change the environment of someone’s emotions. If they’re too happy we need to say something somber. If they are grieving, we need to cheer them up. This is not so.

Paul tells us to “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” Sometimes the best way to show someone you love them, is to celebrate their moments of joy with them, or grieve with them in their sorrow.

**v. 16“**Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”

Jesus could have easily spent most of his time with high profile people if he wanted to; Joseph of Arimathea, the Rich Young Ruler, maybe even Nicodemus; but instead he went to the outcasts and the non-elite members of society; a tax collector, a woman of ill-repute, a demoniac, a Samaritan adulteress, etc. Paul tells us to do the same, and not be so conceited that you will not associate with the lowly.

REVENGE! What about jerks?, what are we supposed to do about them? If we’re honest, most of us have had some type of experience where someone wronged us. Maybe it was a major offense, or perhaps just a small but hurtful offense. What should you do?

**v. 17“**Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. **18**If it is possible, *as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone*. **19**Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. **20**On the contrary: *“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”* ***21****Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

Burning Coals?, This is a direct quote;

*Prov. 25:21-22 “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.”*

It’s easy to be overcome with evil. In other words, if we are not careful we get pulled into the fray of vengeance, retaliation, and retribution for the evil that done to us or to someone we care about. When that happens we often find ourselves consumed with bitterness, anger, and negativity. We become to our enemy what they were to us, and in turn they often become more adversarial, not less.

Think about how this church in Rome was treated by the Roman Empire that existed all around them.

Jesus said;

**Matt 5:38-39** “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.”

Why would Jesus tell us this? Did He want us to be mistreated and abused by evil people? No, because He knows that the way to overcome evil, and is not with *more evil, it is with goodness. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*“

Paul tells us; *“…as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

Sometimes it’s not possible. You can’t force someone to live at peace with you, but for your part, live peacefully, with the peace that passes understanding. Not the peace the world gives, but the peace that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life; “love, PEACE, joy…”.

**\*\*\* Spiritual Gifts:****DISCOVERING YOUR GIFT**

The Holy Spirit empowers us with special gifts, ministries and manifestations that allow us to operate far beyond our human abilities and enable us to reach the lost, minister to the church, worship God, and impact the world on a spiritual level that can only happen in the Spirit.

**THE SEVEN MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS*:***

**Romans 12:4-8**  “**4**For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, **5**so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. **6**Having then ***gifts*** differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them:*

if prophecy, *let us* *prophesy* in proportion to our faith; **7**or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; **8**he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

1. Prophecy – proclaiming truth
2. Ministry – Serving, meeting practical needs
3. Teaching – clarifying truth
4. Exhorting (or Encouraging) – building up faith
5. Giving – able to provide resources for ministry
6. Leading – Organizing, coordinating efforts
7. Mercy – Empathizing, sharing and ministering to emotional distress

Each one of us has one of these gifts as our *Primary Motivational Gift.*

God gave it to you and built it into you. One of these functions comes “naturally” to you (I would argue “supernaturally” because you were given this gift by God.

As you develop it, you learn to use it more effectively.

When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, it becomes supercharged. Way more effective than if you were just relying on intellect or natural skill.

How can you tell which one is your motivational gift?

Take an honest look at what you “love” to do, verses what you “have” to do (Sweet Spot or Sweat Spot?)

*Do any of these sound like you?*

1. **Prophecy** – proclaiming truth: You can’t help but speak what needs to be said in a situation. You are uncomfortable when there is a lack of truth or half-truth. You are compelled to say what you believe God wants to be said, regardless of the feedback.
2. **Ministry** – Serving, meeting practical needs: You have a unique talent for making sure things are prepared and provided for in situations. You don’t mind giving some extra effort to help create an environment where good things can take place, where God can move and touch people’s lives. You have great ideas for details and logistics and are often commended for your servant-heartedness.
3. **Teaching** – clarifying truth: You don’t mind spending the time in research to discover truth in scripture., You have a keen understanding of context and content in the Word of God and are very fulfilled when you can share it. You get great contentment when you are able to help others understand things about God through your teaching and can do it more easily and stress-free than most others.
4. **Exhorting** (or Encouraging) – building up faith: You are only content when you feel like you’ve made an impact on others that results in action. You use whatever means you have (teaching, experience, programs, etc.) to provoke others to change or move forward. You are more interested in response than revelation in your ministry. You are sort of like a spiritual personal trainer, looking for results.
5. **Giving** – able to provide resources for ministry: You are able to acquire, manage or direct resources to further the kingdom of God and the work of the gospel. You may or may not be wealthy, but you take great delight in providing for the needs of others. You are always aware of needs that exist in the church and are often able to make connections to get those needs met.
6. **Leading** – Organizing, coordinating efforts; You are able to take a lot of separate, various moving parts and turn it into a well-oiled machine. You are able to direct groups of others toward a singular goal and optimize talents and resources within that group in an organized manner. Leadership to you is not a status symbol, but a practical description. “Leaders lead, like a formation of geese.”
7. **Mercy** – Empathizing, sharing and ministering to emotional distress: You are very sensitive to the feelings of others. You are able to easily identify those who hurting and have compassion and empathy for those in distress. You are often the one who God uses to heal, counsel and guide people through troubled times.

These are the *seven Motivational Gifts of Romans 12.*

You may feel like you have none of them, some of them of ALL of them.

*I believe Jesus was the only one who had all of them.* The rest of us have one primary gift that he has given us to use as part of the body.

The truth is, as followers of Jesus, we are often called upon to act in several of these areas and through the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, he may use you powerfully in many of them. But there is *something* on this list that you have in abundance because it’s your gift.

I strongly encourage you to know what your gift is, and what it is not. Only then can you focus, and run full speed into the purposes and calling for your life with the gift God has gifted you with, not just what you thought it was or what you strived for.

If you don’t know your gift, or don’t know how or where to use it ask the Lord to reveal it to you. Ask him to give you clear vision for how He gifted you, and how you are to use it with power and purpose for His kingdom.

***My prayer is that you would His* good, pleasing and perfect will *for the all the time and every purpose in your life! <>***