

## **Romans 12**

1 Remember this is following Chapter 11 where Paul explains how the natural branches (the Jews) were mostly pruned away, blinded for a time, so that you, the wild olive, might be grafted in. This was God's plan from the beginning to reach all of mankind with his love. IN VIEW of GOD'S MERCY- considering the graciousness of God to graft you in. Paul urges us (beg, encourage you to, instruct, exhort) to climb up on the altar alive. Like the Mayan sacrifice but not to have your heart torn out and die. Instead we place it in his hands to live! The altar makes the gift holy - separated for God's use; that is pleasing to God. When we have another agenda or respond without our whole self, we are missing the response that His love calls for. This all out giving of our bodies in His service is the only reasonable response. It is a spiritual act of worship. 6:13 Giving up our physical being as His servant is Paul's thought throughout the letter. Worship should be our life not an hour or two on Sunday morning.

2 1Pt 1:14 *Do not conform* - the biggest temptation is to conform to the pattern of the world. Having lived in another culture I can see this plainly. Each culture has its actions that it considers appropriate or normal responses. Some of those things are good and even have a godly origin but many are evil. When we act from the heart we stick out as unusual and different. It is more comfortable to conform unless your heart is to let Christ in you change the world around you! How much of our worship is cultural, the pattern of our world, and how much is really a heart adoration of Christ. Style is cultural; heart worship is universal.

*Be transformed:* changed - as mentioned in chapters 7 and 8, the old nature on the cross and the life of Christ living in and through you. The transformation of 2Cor 3:18 into his likeness with ever increasing glory. *Renewing of your mind:* Colossians 3:10 Titus 3:5 Our thought life/soul life determines what we do with our bodies. Is the new nature in power or the old? Phil 4:8 gives us guidelines for a renewed thought life. I'm convinced that much of our physical health is determined by our thought life. We allow certain thoughts or we refuse to dwell on them. Martin Luther said that thoughts are like birds. You can't stop them from flying over but you can refuse to let them build a nest in your hair. Wash your mind with the word. Adjust your thought life with the word. Pray: "Lord, please light a flame of holiness in my mind and make it burn with such heat that thoughts that are not of You will be consumed before they land on the altar of contemplation." Jesus told us if we do it in our heart/mind we have committed the act. Take control of your mind. Capture every thought and make it obedient to Christ. *Then you can test and approve God's will.* If your thought life isn't under control don't be surprised if you are mistaken about God's will. Once your thought life is renewed the Holy Spirit can clearly direct you into God's will.

3 You are as great an instrument as the faith God has given you. Now, if you think you are special and have great faith, we will see it in the form of fruit that remains, obedience to the Spirit, a walk that matches the talk. That is enough to humble most of us. Think soberly is not to underestimate the gifts of God in your life but see honestly where they fit in the body and the calling of God. The old nature tends toward elevation of self over others in pride or pride in the form of false humility. The new nature compares where you are at with the goal - Christ likeness. It recognizes and

rejoices in growth but also sees the need to continue growing in specific areas. Some saints keep a daily inventory, through the help of the Holy Spirit, of where they have displeased God and where they have conformed.

4 Paul begins the body analogy that he used in 1 Corinthians 12. It is a part of the measure of faith you have been given. Some bodies would have all be mouths or hands but that would be a strange looking body. We need one another and we need to find our place in the body. All are important.

5 If you have more faith, Praise God, you are a part of the body I am in and your faith benefits me! We should be glad for our strong parts and strengthen our weak parts. We belong to Christ but we also belong to each other. Do we think that way? I have seen too many ready to throw away body parts. Tonsils and gall bladders do serve a function.

6 All gifts are from the grace of God. Our faith will determine the extent of the use of our gifts. Faith comes from hearing the word. If you want to use your gift to a greater extent, read and listen to God's word, sit silent in his presence and let Him tell you how to use that gift and where. This is the Romans list of the gifts. Vines: Prophecy pro - "forth" phemi "to speak" It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means, Matt. 26:68, it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see Gen. 20:7; Deut. 18:18; Rev. 10:11; Rev. 11:3. ... cp. Acts 13:1; ...; the purpose of their ministry was to edify, to comfort, and to encourage the believers, 1Cor. 14:3, while its effect upon unbelievers was to show that the secrets of a man's heart are known to God, to convict of sin, and to constrain to worship, 1Cor. 14:24, 25. Vines goes on to say that it has been replaced by the teacher gift after canon of Scripture was completed. Why would the Lord take away the gift He said we should most earnestly seek? If teaching is to expound on Scripture and prophecy is more of a time and situation mind of the Lord in line with Scripture, why would we do away with one? That it will pass away is certain but so will knowledge. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate it was a first century only gift and much to indicate it is a needed gift until Christ's return. The abuse of the gift or misinterpretation of it has frightened many of its use at all.

7 I think serving is the same as helps in 1 Corinthians 12, but it is used as any type of service including teaching the word. Teaching is listed with pastoring in Eph 4, and there is a warning in Paul's letters about being accountable for what we teach. False teachers were a real problem at the time for not everyone had the Gospels and letters. It is still a problem today because Christians do not read the word.

8 The gift of encouragement! This would be important for a counselor, but is appreciated wherever it is at work. Contributing to the needs of others. I think we all can have these gifts to some extent. It is the body working together to see all benefit. Leadership is listed as a gift only here. Rule in KJV also 'maintain' and 'over' must apply to elders, overseers. Interesting it is placed in the middle. All are brothers, none more important, even the overseers. Showing mercy can become a burden if we do not obtain a cheerful heart daily giving our burdens to the Lord.