

## Romans 12 Living a Life Shaped by Grace

### **Text**

<sup>1</sup>Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. <sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

<sup>3</sup>For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. <sup>4</sup>For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup>Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; <sup>7</sup>if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup>or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

<sup>9</sup> Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; <sup>11</sup>not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup>rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup>Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. <sup>19</sup>Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### **Key Points in the text**

- The letter to the Romans is all about Grace. In the beginning God's grace towards us, and then God giving us grace for others, now we turn to learning how to live a grace filled life.
- The more our minds are set on the grace God has shown us the more we are driven to start our interactions with others from a grace mindset.
- Since the church is the body and bride of Christ it is of the highest importance that the church is a clear reflection of the grace of God.

## Text Study

Verses 1-2 The Headline Appeal to be Shaped by Grace

**<sup>1</sup>Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. <sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

God is beyond our understanding and all that we see, hear, and do is to His glory, therefore we ought to give ourselves over to Him to do His work and be a living example of what the grace of God looks like.

We must remember that our life is not our own, we are slaves to righteousness and therefore we heartily present our lives as a living sacrifice to our King.

This may seem like a lot, until you remember Romans 5:1-2, <sup>1</sup>Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand.

- Past Justification, “Therefore, having been justified by faith”.
- Present Peace, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand”
- Future Glory, “and we exult in hope of the glory of God”

These three things are inseparable and therefore this is not a hard thing but a glorious thing as we have a hope for future glory.

Verses 3-8 The Appeal to Serve Together Under Grace in the Church

**<sup>3</sup>For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. <sup>4</sup>For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup>Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; <sup>7</sup>if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup>or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**

Be humble and realize that each in the body of Christ brings a function that is needed, and given by God, and if given by God of the highest value.

Jesus as our example of how to live quickly reminds us of what humility looks like, he who is first will become last, and he who is last will be first.

In verses 6-8 Paul gives examples of what humility and selflessness looks like when using various gifts of the Holy Spirit.

- If prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith
  - Speak the word humbly, without boasting, and without a desire to become liked by the world for your words or personality.
- If service, in his serving
  - Serve in order to serve, not for some acknowledgement of your service.
- He who teaches, in his teaching

- Teach so that the people will learn, not to fulfill some personal need to teach or be praised as a teacher.
- Also don't teach in a way that twists the text so that people will like or accept it or avoids hard topics.
- He who exhorts, in his exhortation
  - To exhort is to encourage the hearer to respond to your teaching in a way that moves them in a positive direction in reference to the topic or text.
  - Teaching + Exhorting = Preaching
  - Preaching should be done to move people to look more like Christ, not to make you famous.
- He who gives, with liberality
  - When you give, do so in such a way that your right hand does not know what your left is doing.
- He who leads, with diligence
  - Leading should be costly, not gainful. When leading, do it with diligence and zeal.
- He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness
  - Show mercy with joy and with fullness.

#### Verses 9-21 The Appeal to Love as People Shaped by Grace

**<sup>9</sup> Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; <sup>11</sup>not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup>rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.**

**<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup>Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. <sup>19</sup>Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

These verses are a list of how we should and should not handle or respond to a situation.

Each is another reflection of not striving to 'live my best life now', but rather to do the work of God in the world so that He is glorified and the people receive grace.

#### **Application**

- We have studied these verses, now it is up to you to examine yourself to determine how to apply them to your life.
- Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

#### **Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview**

Text: Romans 13

Focus: Submitting to Authority

Devotional: John 19:1-30

Preparation: Obedience to Civil Authorities

## Obedience to Civil Authorities

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities" (v. 1a).

In the Bible's presentation of authority and governance, we find a hierarchical structure. At the top of this hierarchy, sitting as the ultimate authority, is God Himself. But the Lord establishes other subordinate authorities under Him to govern people. Over the church, God has set elders who are responsible to preach the Word, pray for the flock of the Lord, and exercise church discipline (1 Tim. 3:1–7). Over the family, the Lord has set husbands and fathers, who are called to lead their wives and children in love and raise their sons and daughters in the fear and admonition of Him (Eph. 5:22–6:4). And over civil society, today's passage tells us, God has set the civil authorities, whose primary purpose is to use the sword, or force, to punish evildoers (Rom. 13:1–7).

Earthly authority, therefore, is delegated authority. Authorities receive their right to rule from the Lord, who alone possesses authority inherently. Because they are appointed by God, to disobey earthly authorities when they lawfully exercise their authority is to disobey the Lord Himself. Paul lays out this principle in Romans 13:1–7, particularly in verses 2 and 5–6.

In addition to demonstrating that disobedience to the legal exercise of authority on earth is disobedience to God, the Bible's hierarchical understanding of authority reveals that no earthly authority is absolute. If the Creator alone possesses authority inherently and if He alone sits at the top of the hierarchy of governance, absolute authority belongs to the Lord alone. All other authorities are accountable to the Lord, to Christ, the Son of God incarnate who has been set above all other rulers and authorities on earth (Eph. 1:15–23). Consequently, no earthly authority may lawfully forbid what God commands or command what God forbids. When earthly authorities do such things, civil disobedience is lawful and required for believers.

But in most cases, Christians are obligated to render civil obedience to the governing authorities. Civil authorities do not have to be Christian for us to be required to obey them, as is evident from Romans 13. Paul was writing to Christians who were living under a pagan government, telling them to obey the pagan emperor. Obviously, given other biblical passages that we will examine in the next few days, Paul was assuming that the civil authorities were not commanding what God forbids or forbidding what God commands. In such instances, Christians must submit.

## Coram Deo

Civil authorities do not have to be perfect or even Christian for us to obey them. We are to obey even the mandates we consider silly or onerous if doing so does not require us to break God's law. In rendering such obedience, we bear witness to the final authority of the Lord, for bowing to His authority means submitting to the civil government.