

The
Transformation
of the Gospel

Romans

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A GUIDE TO THE BOOK OF

Romans

PART FOUR

The Transformation of the Gospel



Therefore...



A GUIDE TO THE BOOK OF

Romans

PART FOUR

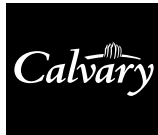
The Transformation of the Gospel

by DR. JOHN H. MUNRO

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WHY WE STUDY THE BIBLE

At Calvary Church, our mission is to be and to make authentic followers of Jesus Christ. We take seriously the responsibility to model living a life of obedience to Christ. Though none of us do it perfectly, that's our aim. At the same time, we desire to encourage others in obedience to Him as well. We believe we love God and others best when we are being and making disciples.

The primary way we fulfill our mission is studying and obeying the Scriptures. The Bible is a book about the Lord Jesus; it teaches us who He is and how we can know Him. It equips us for the good work of loving Him and serving Him. The Bible is the Word of God, living and active. God speaks directly through His Word.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

As a church family, we are pursuing an in-depth study of a book in the Bible called Romans. This is Part Four of *A Guide to the Book of Romans*, and it provides some tools to help you explore it and understand it. The guide can be used as a personal resource for you as an individual or as a resource for the entire family.

OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

As we begin this guide, you will find an overview of the book of Romans and a comprehensive outline. The first eleven chapters of Romans provide the foundation of Paul's exposition of the Gospel and God's faithfulness to Israel. And now in Romans 12–16, Paul sets forth God's plan for the transformation of our lives as Christ-followers.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

For each sermon that is preached during our study, we offer a short study devotional for you to read on your own or with your family. If possible, choose a time each week to spend 10–15 minutes with the material. You'll find the

Scripture passage to read, a brief explanation of the text, questions to ponder, and ways to apply these truths to your life. Spend time praying about it, and jot down notes of prayer and praise. Don't underestimate the impact that sharing the Word of God together can have on you, your spouse, and your kids!

SING & WORSHIP

Throughout history, many great hymns of the faith have been inspired by the foundational truths in the book of Romans. Songwriters today continue its message through inspiring lyrics and music. Each week you'll find a song suggestion with the devotions.

SERMON NOTES

Be sure to take notes each Sunday during the sermons from Romans. There is a note-taking page included every week. If you cannot be present one Sunday, listen to the sermon online at media.calvarychurch.com and take notes on your own.

MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

Finally, we encourage you to memorize Scripture. It is God's Word and should be hidden in our hearts! There are memory verse cards in the back of the guide for selected verses from these final chapters of Romans. Punch out the cards and carry them with you, or display them where you'll see them often. Commit to memorizing God's Word!

JOIN THE JOURNEY

We're excited to study the book of Romans as a church family. If you missed any of Part One, *Romans: The Heart of the Gospel* or Part Two, *Romans: The Hope of the Gospel* or Part Three, *Romans: The Defense of the Gospel*, the audio and video messages are available at media.calvarychurch.com. The digital versions of the books are published at calvarychurch.com/romans. The boxed audio CD sets may be purchased at Calvary Church in the Word Room bookstore.

May God bless you and your family from the pulpit, in your Life Group, and in your home as you use this guide to know Him and His Word.


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The background of the book cover is a photograph of a white, textured wall. On the right side, there is a green-painted wooden shutter with visible vertical planks and metal hinges. In the lower right corner, a basket of vibrant purple flowers, likely petunias, is overflowing and hanging over the wall. The text is overlaid on the right side of the cover, aligned with the shutter and flowers.

CHAPTERS 1-4

The Heart of the Gospel

CHAPTERS 5-8

The Hope of the Gospel

CHAPTERS 9-11

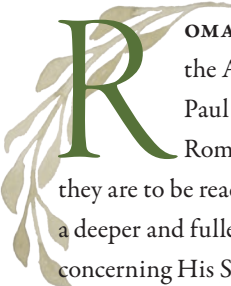
The Defense of the Gospel

CHAPTERS 12-16

The Transformation of the Gospel

The Transformation of the Gospel

By John H. Munro



ROMANS IS THE BRILLIANT EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL by the Apostle Paul. Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul is giving us “the purest Gospel” in this magnificent letter to the Romans. While the 16 chapters can be quickly read in one sitting, they are to be read, re-read, prayed over, and reflected upon so that we may have a deeper and fuller understanding of this good news which comes from God concerning His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder it has been described as one of the greatest letters ever written! If I had to choose two books from the New Testament, I think my choices would be Romans and John’s Gospel. But I am glad I don’t have to make that choice, as all 66 books of the Bible are inspired by God and “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

PROFOUND TRUTHS

Some of the first verses I memorized were from the book of Romans. I think of these core truths:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

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

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:1–2).

So in some sense, I have lived in the book of the Romans all of my life, but my understanding of the simple but profound truths of the Gospel continue to deepen. It is certainly a book I never tire of, and I trust your personal study of its pages is resulting in a fruitful harvest.

THE HEART AND HOPE OF THE GOSPEL

In chapters 1–4, Paul has presented to us the heart of the Gospel. He establishes that every single person, irrespective of their background or conduct, is a guilty sinner before a holy God. Then he explains God’s way of salvation: justification by faith.

Then in chapters 5–8, Paul deals with the hope of the Gospel. These chapters are full of rich truths regarding the effects and results of our justification. Those who are justified by faith can never be the same again. We have peace with God — freedom from the power of sin and the power of the Law. We are indwelt by the Spirit who assures us of our eternal salvation. There is nothing in the whole universe which can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul, in presenting the hope of the Gospel, is reminding us that things will never be the same again during all of life and indeed for all of eternity. This is all of the

grace of God. Praise His name that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

In chapters 9–11, Paul gives a masterful defense of the Gospel. He is writing to the Christians at Rome where there were converted Gentiles as well as converted Jews. While Paul had said that the Gospel came first “to the Jew” (1:16), some of his thoughts in Romans could be interpreted that now that we are no longer under the Law, God has turned his back on Israel as they have rejected the Messiah. Has God forgotten His ancient people? Has the Church replaced Israel? Paul is clearly passionate in his love for Israel and his desire for them to come to saving faith in the Messiah. He explains that “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (11:29), and that while Gentiles have come into the place of blessing, this in no way excludes Israel. In fact, the nation has a glorious future which will overflow in blessings to the Gentiles! These three chapters are not the easiest in the letter, but they are an outstanding vindication of the purposes of God in relation to Jew and Gentile. “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen” (11:36).

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE GOSPEL

Now in chapters 12–16, Paul explains the transformation of the Gospel in the lives of authentic followers of Jesus Christ. Yes, the Gospel does make a difference! At the beginning of chapter 12, Paul urgently calls for a consecration to God from those who have been justified by faith. Clearly, there is to be a radical difference; those saved by God’s grace are not to be conformed to the world, but rather they are to be transformed.

It is Paul’s usual pattern to lay the doctrinal foundation in his letters and then give ethical exhortations. We see this same pattern in Ephesians and Colossians:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called (Ephesians 4:1).

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

What a difference this would make in our society, if we obeyed Paul's exhortations in these closing chapters of Romans. Our world is weary of words, and so Christ-followers must not only proclaim Christ but also display Him in their lives.

This transformation impacts all of life. After laying the foundation in Romans 12:1–2, Paul deals with the transformation as it impacts our relationships with our fellow believers. Then he turns to deal with the unbelieving world, before returning to the necessity of using the freedom believers have in Christ. They are not to please themselves, but they are always to edify others, particularly those who are weaker in the faith.

Paul concludes by outlining some of his strategy for missions and his deep desire to visit the center of the Roman Empire. The epistle closes with a moving encouragement by Paul to many of his fellow believers and a rich doxology:

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen (Romans 16:25–27). 🌿

OUTLINE

The Book of Romans

THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL: CHAPTERS 1–4

Introduction (1:1–17)

- A. Greetings from Paul (1:1–7)
- B. Paul and the Romans (1:8–15)
- C. Theme of Romans (1:16–17)

The Heart of the Gospel (1:18–4:25)

- A. Condemnation: The Universal Reign of Sin (1:18–3:20)
 - 1. Condemnation of the Ungodly (1:18–32)
 - 2. Condemnation of the Moralist (2:1–16)
 - 3. Condemnation of the Jew (2:17–3:8)
 - 4. Condemnation of the Whole World (3:9–20)
- B. Justification: By Faith Alone (3:21–4:25)
 - 1. Explanation of Justification by Faith Alone (3:21–31)
 - 2. Illustration of Justification by Faith Alone (4:1–25)

THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL: CHAPTERS 5–8

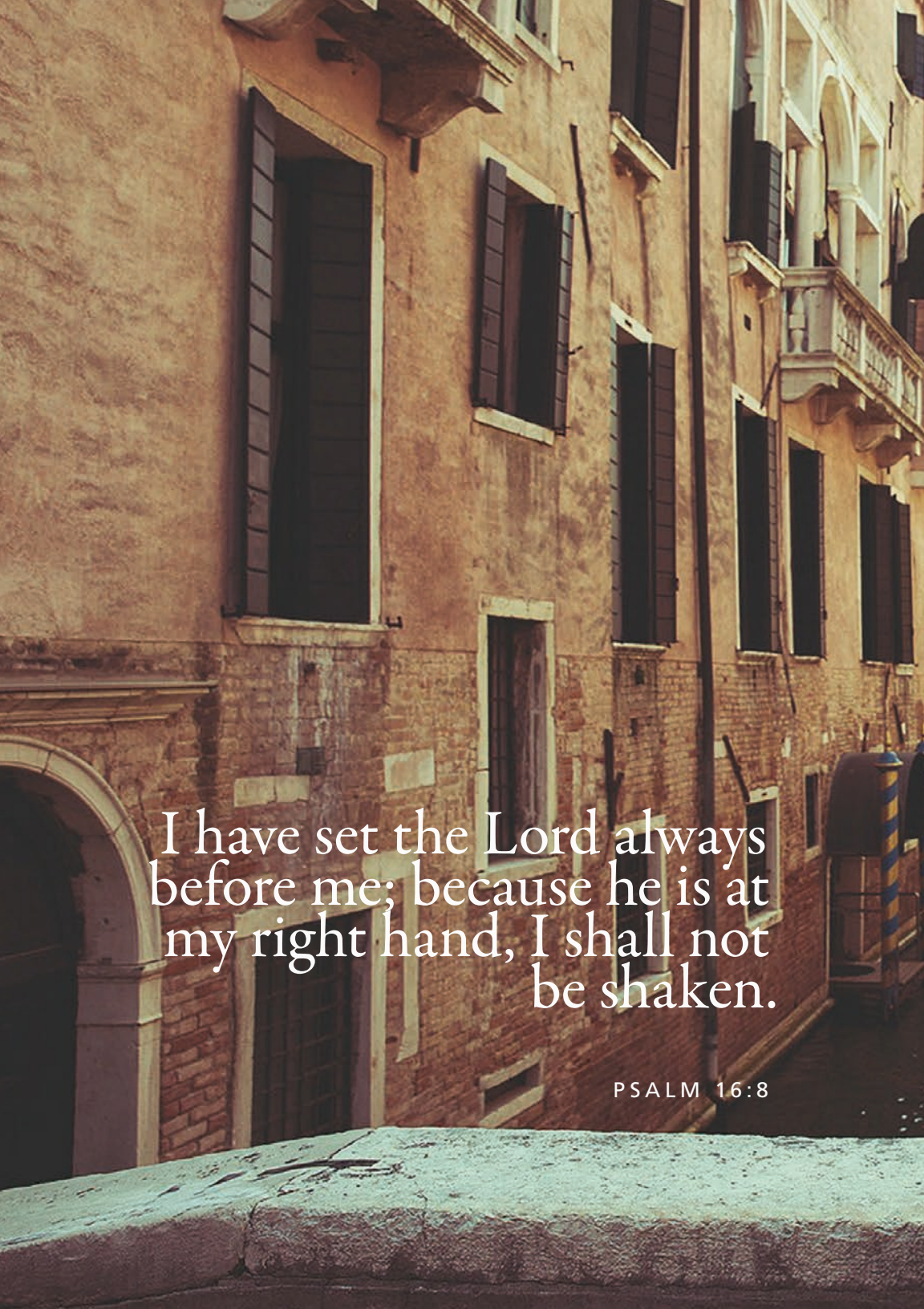
- A. Reconciliation with God (Chapter 5)
 - 1. Peace with God (5:1–11)
 - 2. Grace Greater than Sin and Death (5:12–21)
- B. Sanctification (Chapters 6–8)
 - 1. Freedom from the Slavery of Sin (6:1–14)
 - 2. Slaves of God (6:15–23)
 - 3. Freedom from the Law (7:1–6)
 - 4. Conflict with the Law and Sin (7:7–25)
 - 5. Freedom from the Condemnation of Sin and Death (8:1–11)
 - 6. Life in the Spirit Gives Assurance of Victory (8:12–29)
 - 7. The Triumph of the Hope of the Gospel (8:30–39)

THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL: CHAPTERS 9–11

- A. Israel's Present Rejection of the Messiah (9:1–29)
- B. Israel Responsible for Its Present Rejection of the Messiah (9:30–10:13)
- C. The Remedy for and the Results of Israel's Rejection (10:14–21)
- D. Israel's Present Rejection of the Messiah Is Not Complete (11:1–10)
- E. Israel's Present Rejection of the Messiah Is Not Final (11:11–24)
- F. Israel's Restoration Is Certain (11:25–32)
- G. God Is to be Praised for His Wisdom and Knowledge (11:33–36)

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE GOSPEL: CHAPTERS 12–16

- A. The Transformation of the Gospel Impacts Our Relationships with Fellow Believers (12:1–13)
 - 1. The Foundation of Personal Consecration (12:1–2)
 - 2. Humility and Serving Others (12:3–8)
 - 3. The Transformation of Love (12:9–13)
- B. The Transformation in the World (12:14–13:14)
 - 1. In Relationship to Hostile Unbelievers (12:14–21)
 - 2. In Relationship to the State (13:1–7)
 - 3. Loving Our Neighbors (13:8–10)
 - 4. Separation from the Darkness (13:11–14)
- C. The Transformation of Christ-followers in Relationship to the Weak and the Strong (Chapters 14 & 15)
 - 1. Impacting Weak Believers (14:1–12)
 - 2. Impacting Strong Believers (14:13–23)
 - 3. Accepting Others (15:1–13)
- D. Paul's Strategy and Plans (15:14–33)
 - 1. Paul's Strategy for Missions (15:14–21)
 - 2. Paul's Desire to Visit Rome (15:22–33)
- E. Conclusion (16:1–27)
 - 1. Greetings by Paul to Friends (16:1–16)
 - 2. Warnings and Doxology (16:17–27)



I have set the Lord always
before me; because he is at
my right hand, I shall not
be shaken.

PSALM 16:8



XII

Total Commitment

ROMANS 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

READ | ROMANS 12:1

THINK ABOUT

Romans 12 begins the final section of the book of Romans. Paul has masterfully explained the doctrinal basis of the Gospel of God — including the results and effects of being justified by faith. Now he is challenging his readers to make a personal response. This response is urgent and all encompassing. The word translated “appeal” or “urge” is used by a general exhorting his troops into battle.

What is Paul asking his readers (and us) to do? Why is it so urgent? Why is it so crucial?

What is Paul referring to when he says “therefore”? Why are “the mercies of God” a great motivation to make the required response? What does it mean? And why should you make this personal response?

APPLY

Paul is assuming his readers have been justified by faith. What is justification by faith? What difference is the Gospel making in your life?

Have you presented your body to Christ in total commitment? What does this mean in your every day life?

This is the response of making a holy sacrifice of worship. In the Old Testament the animals were sacrificed on the altar by the priest. Where do we make our “living sacrifice”?

ASK

Have you made this all-important response of commitment to God? In what way is this an act of “spiritual worship”?

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Do you think this is an act of dedication you make once and for all, or is it to be made repeatedly throughout your Christian life?

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Is your body being used for self-indulgence? Are your hands being used for the glory of God? What about your voice, your mind, and your will? Oswald Chambers said, “I am determined to be absolutely entirely for you and for you alone” (*My Utmost for His Highest*). Is that true of you?

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PRAY

Lord, “take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee. Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.” Help me to present my body in this act of total commitment.

EPHESIANS 4:1–3

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

PHILIPPIANS 1:20–21

It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

COLOSSIANS 3:5–10

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

SING

“Take My Life and Let It Be” — *Frances Ridley Havergal*

“TOTAL COMMITMENT”

Romans 12:1

HYMN

*"But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written,
 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"* — 1 PETER 1:15-16

Take My Life and Let It Be



1. Take my life, and let it be con-se-cra-ted, Lord, to
 2. Take my hands, and let them move at the im-pulse of Thy
 3. Take my voice and let me sing al-ways, on-ly for my
 4. Take my sil-ver and my gold; not a mite would I with-
 5. Take my will and make it Thine; it shall be no long-er
 6. Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treas-ure

Thee. Take my mo-ments and my days, let them flow in
 love. Take my feet, and let them be swift and beau-ti-
 King. Take my lips, and let them be filled with mes-sa-
 hold. Take my in-tel-lect, and use ev-'ry pow'r as
 mine. Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy
 store; take my-self, and I will be ev-er, on-ly,

cease-less praise, let them flow in cease-less praise.
 ful for Thee, swift and beau-ti-ful for Thee.
 ges from Thee, filled with mes-sa-ges from Thee.
 Thou shalt choose, ev-'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.
 roy-al throne, it shall be Thy roy-al throne.
 all for Thee, ev-er, on-ly, all for Thee.

Text: Frances Ridley Havergal, 1874 🌿 *Tune: Henry A. César Malan, 1827*

XII

Doing God's Will

ROMANS 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

READ | ROMANS 12:2

THINK ABOUT

One of the great tragedies of our society is that we have so many people who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, but in so many cases it doesn't seem to make any difference in their lives. That is the very antithesis of the transformation of the Gospel which Paul is presenting in chapters 12–16. Reflect on the changes the Gospel is making in your life.

Paul is urging those who are justified by faith to make the response of total consecration of their lives to the Lord. John Wesley said, "Give me 100 men who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I will shake the world." Do you desire to be used by God to "shake the world"?

APPLY

It is so easy to be conformed to the world. J. B. Phillips in his paraphrase writes, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold." What influences may be squeezing you into their mold? How will you prevent this "conforming" in your life?

The Holy Spirit through the Word of God is conforming us to be more and more like Jesus. Are you pursuing this spiritual transformation?

ASK

The apostle John tells us not to “love the world or the things in the world.” (1 John 2:15–16). Are your desires for things “of the world”? Do you take pride in your possessions and tend to define your success by the accumulation of things? This is a very real danger in our materialistic world.

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Paul is presenting a supernatural process whereby our minds are being renewed. This involves a continuous diet of the Word of God. How much time do you spend in the Word?

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Are you able to discern between good and evil? Do you find yourself routinely making foolish decisions rather than walking in the paths of righteousness? What decisions have you recently made which you believe are “good and acceptable and perfect”?

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PRAY

Lord, I confess that I often want to be like the surrounding society rather than pursuing this spiritual transformation. I ask for Your forgiveness. Give me an increased hunger for Your Word. I am now ready to love and serve You.

1 JOHN 2:15–17

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life — is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

PSALM 18:30–33

This God — his way is perfect;
the word of the LORD proves true;
he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?—
the God who equipped me with strength
and made my way blameless.
He made my feet like the feet of a deer
and set me secure on the heights.

SING

“Jesus, All For Jesus” — *Jennifer Atkinson, Robin Mark*

“DOING GOD’S WILL”

Romans 12:2

HYMN

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus"

— PHILIPPIANS 2:5


May the Mind of Christ, My Savior

1. May the mind of Christ, my Sav - ior,
 2. May the Word of God dwell rich - ly
 3. May the peace of God, my Fa - ther,
 4. May the love of Je - sus fill me
 5. May I run the race be - fore me,
 6. May His beau - ty rest up - on me

live in me from day to day, by His love and
 in my heart from hour to hour, so that all may
 rule my life in ev - 'ry - thing, that I may be
 as the wa - ters fill the sea. Him ex - alt - ing,
 strong and brave to face the foe, look - ing on - ly
 as I seek the lost to win, and may they for -

pow'r con - trol - ling all I do and say,
 see I tri - umph on - ly through His pow'r.
 calm to com - fort sick and sor - row - ing.
 self a - bas - ing; this is vic - to - ry.
 un - to Je - sus as I on - ward go.
 get the chan - nel, see - ing on - ly Him.

Text: Kate B. Wilkinson, 1925 🌿 *Tune: A. Cyril Barham-Gould, 1925*



For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

TITUS 2:11–14



XII

Humility, Unity, and Diversity

ROMANS 12:3–6

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...

READ | ROMANS 12:3–6

THINK ABOUT

Writing to Christians in the local churches of Rome, Paul thought it important for this diverse group Jew and Gentile believers to understand their relationship with each other because of their membership within the body of Christ. As such, each member is an important part of this community; each has received gifts graciously to be used within and for the benefit of the whole. (See 1 Corinthians 12:1–31, 14:26, and Ephesians 4:7–16.)

These believers were called to a biblical understanding of the gifts given them, so they would not become like the believers at Corinth who used their gifts to compete against instead of complementing each other. A biblical view requires the understanding of their diversity and the need for humility in the exercise of gifts — all of which should be done in a manner that promotes, encourages, and facilitates unity within the body.

APPLY

Many of us struggle with selfishness at some juncture of our lives. Our “flesh” pushes us to the destructive path of competing with other believers and vying for superiority. This quest normally leads to broken relationships and disunity. We must fight against this temptation if we want to honor God in the exercise of our spiritual gifts.

The Spirit of God has given gifts to every believer. Instead of competing with each other, we honor Christ best when we complement each other in the work of ministry.

ASK

God intentionally and strategically gives gifts to all believers. What gifts do you have? List two or three of them below. (See 1 Corinthians 12.)

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Spiritual gifts are given to the Church for two primary reasons. What are those two reasons? (See Ephesians 4:12.)

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Of all the gifts, describe one that God has used to mature you through a discipler.

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.....

Describe how you are using your gifts within your church. How can you recognize and celebrate the gifts of others that perhaps you were not given?

.....

.....

PRAY

Lord, thank You for saving and bringing us into the community of faith. As we enjoy the privileges of this community, help us to understand our responsibilities and to use the gifts given to build up Your Church.

Forgive us for abusing at times or not using the gifts given according to Your plans. Help us to be more faithful by using our gifts to serve in our local church and to disciple others.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4–7

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

EPHESIANS 4:11–16

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.




SING

“If We Are the Body” — *Casting Crowns*

“HUMILITY, UNITY, AND DIVERSITY”

Romans 12:3-6

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a dark, rustic ceramic mug filled with coffee. The person is wearing a dark, textured sweater. The mug is resting on a pink, fringed, knitted cloth. The background is a grey, textured fabric. The lighting is soft and natural, creating a warm and cozy atmosphere.

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

EPHESIANS 4:15–16

XII

Use Your Gift

ROMANS 12:6–8

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

READ | ROMANS 12:6–8

THINK ABOUT

The church as a body is one of Paul's themes in Romans 12. A body has many parts which work together to make the body function perfectly. If one part of the body is not functioning, the body grows ill. It is important that every member of the body functions as designed so that the body can carry out the work that God intended.

As believers, we are parts of this figurative body that makes the church function at its peak. It is important that we seek, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to know our giftedness and role within the church. We must, then, humbly accept the gift that God has given us and seek to use that gift to help the church as it functions to lead others to Christ.

APPLY

Paul gives us a list of gifts in this passage. That list includes the gifts of prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, contributing, leading, and mercy.

Prophecy is telling others about Christ. Service is every day sharing the love of Christ in practical ways. Teaching is best described as explaining the Word of God. Exhorting means encouraging others as they walk as Jesus walked. Contributing is sharing the gifts that God has given you. Leading is humbly and enthusiastically accepting God's call to shepherd His flock. Finally, there is mercy. We must graciously show kindness to others just as our Savior shared with us. Where has God gifted you for service?

ASK

Do you ever wish that you could choose what gift that you had? God in his infinite wisdom chooses which gift(s) you have. Do you humbly accept the gift that He has given you?

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At the core of man’s being is pride. We constantly battle with who we want to be and who God wants us to be. Humbly accepting the gift that God has given and using it for His service shows our maturity as an authentic follower of Christ. What will it take for you to give yourself fully in service to the Savior and service within the body of Christ?

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PRAY

Father, I know that my giftedness comes from You! These gifts are to be used for You and Your purposes. Forgive me for not using them. I confess my sin before You.

Make me into Your vessel, an instrument that You can use. Help me find my place in the body of Christ here at Calvary Church. Use me to carry out Your mission in displaying and proclaiming the Gospel to others.

1 PETER 4:10–11

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:24–31

But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

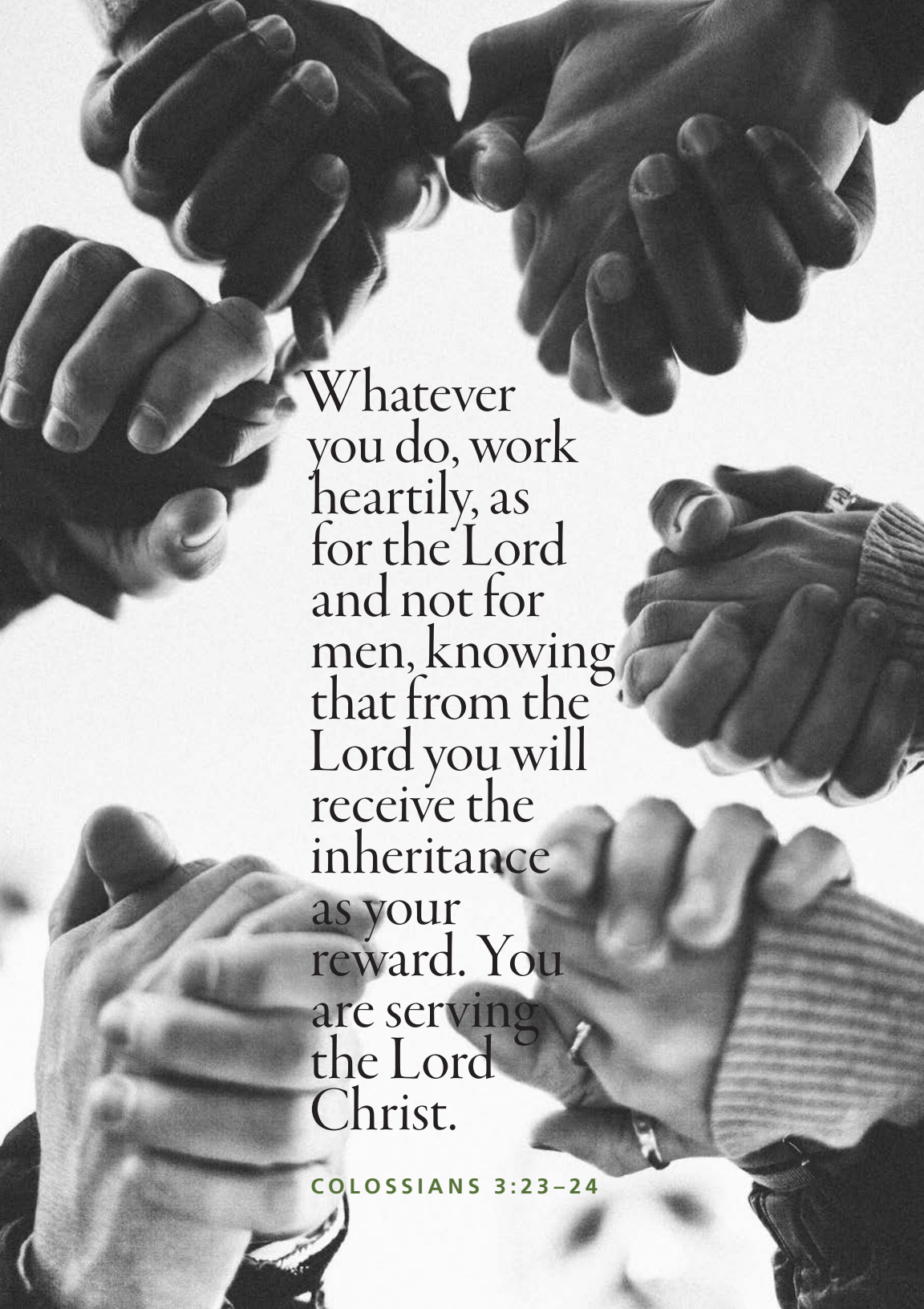


SING

“Grace Alone” — *Scott Wesley Brown*

“USE YOUR GIFT”

Romans 12:6–8



Whatever
you do, work
heartily, as
for the Lord
and not for
men, knowing
that from the
Lord you will
receive the
inheritance
as your
reward. You
are serving
the Lord
Christ.

COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

Use Your Spiritual Gifts

By Jim Pile

THE TRUTHS OF ROMANS 12 ARE THE SUM of the first eleven chapters of doctrine on justification and sanctification. These truths are not arbitrary thoughts or suggestions. Sacrificial worship and using our spiritual gifts are the natural responses for believers who realize all that God has done for them.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (Romans 12:1–8).

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

Paul's approach in Romans 12 is an exhortation to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God, to renew our minds through Scripture, and then to use our spiritual gifts for the edification of the church. As brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, we depend on the exchange that occurs between us in using our gifts. As we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, that involves using our gifts to serve one another for God's glory. In verses 6–8, Paul mentions these gifts: prophecy (preaching), serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, and showing mercy (1 Corinthians 12:28–31).

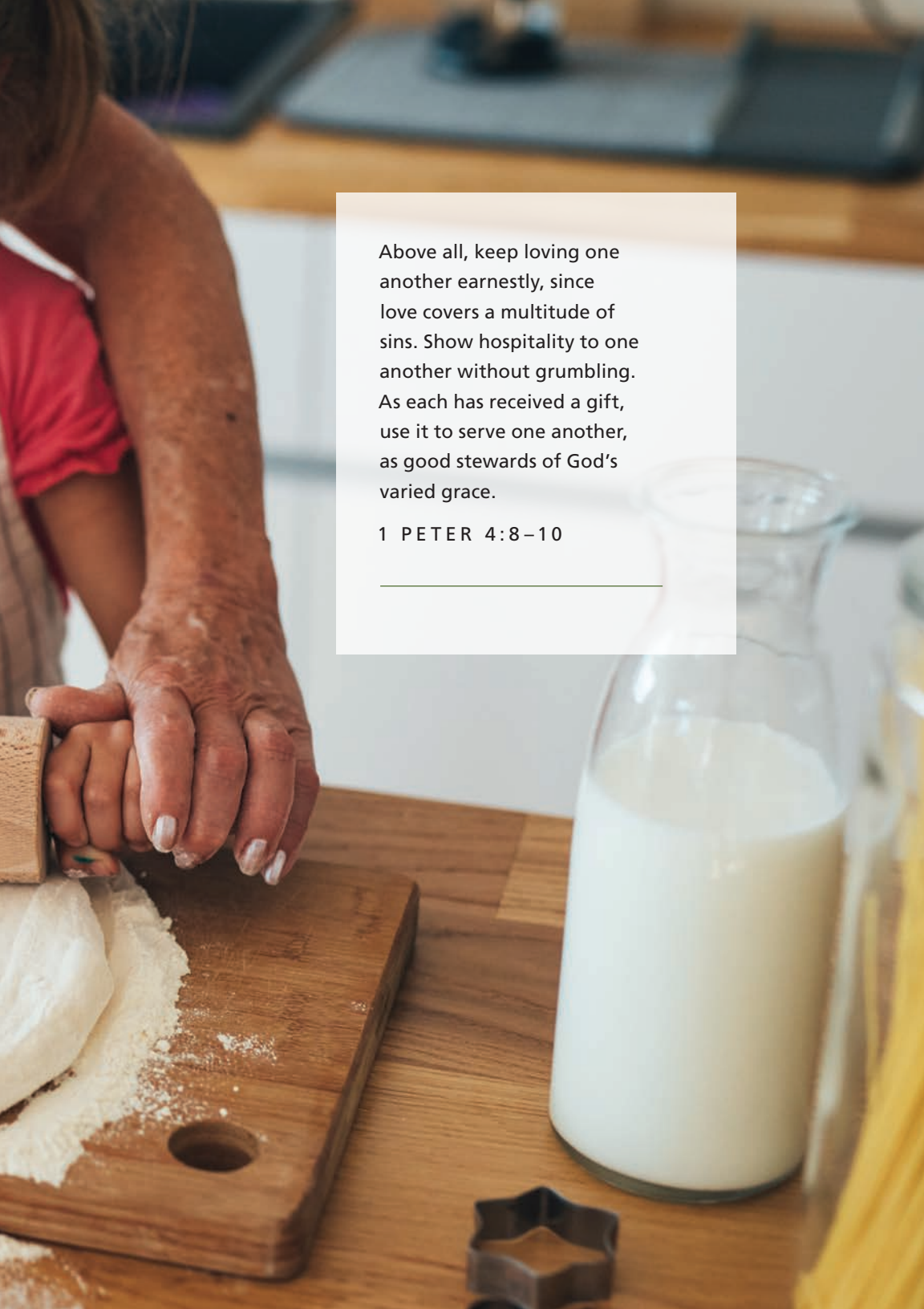
CATEGORIES OF GIFTS

Spiritual gifts fall into three categories in the New Testament: sign gifts, speaking gifts, and serving gifts. The apostle Peter gives us the designation of the last two categories (1 Peter 4:10–11). These gifts can be grouped together as ongoing edifying gifts, in contrast to the temporary sign gifts. The purpose of the temporary sign gifts was unique to the time of the apostles as the early church was being established. They authenticated the teaching of the apostles and the subsequent writing of Scripture. (See 2 Corinthians 12:12 and Hebrews 2:4). The permanent or ongoing speaking gifts include prophecy (preaching), teaching, and exhortation. The serving gifts include serving, giving, leading, and showing mercy.

Since there are a variety of spiritual gifts listed by Paul in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, we can interpret that these are not firm, all-inclusive lists. The general categories of gifts may be blended with other God-given talents to create a composite gift that is unique to each one of us — like your favorite ice cream flavors being blended together to give you the perfect combination of tastes for your palate!

You may be thinking that you're not a preacher or a teacher, but perhaps you are gifted in the areas of serving, giving, leading, or showing mercy. That's fine! Those gifts are just as important to the body of Christ as preaching and teaching. The key question is: Are we maximizing the gifts God has given us? He desires that we use our gifts to edify others for His glory! 🌿



A close-up photograph of a person's hands, likely of African descent, kneading a piece of white dough on a wooden cutting board. The person is wearing a red shirt. In the background, a glass carafe filled with white milk sits on a wooden surface. A small, dark, star-shaped object is visible in the foreground. The scene is set in a kitchen with a wooden countertop.

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

1 PETER 4:8–10

XII

Practical Christianity

ROMANS 12:9–13

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

READ | ROMANS 12:9–13

THINK ABOUT

Romans 12:9–21 is one of the most concise collections of ethical commands in all of Paul’s letters. In verses 9–13, Paul outlines practical characteristics of the believer. The apostle begins this section with the statement, “Let love be genuine.” Love is foundational to all Christian relationships. But, how is authentic love to be lived out? Paul uses a series of imperatives to reveal what genuine love looks like in the lives of all believers.

Paul notes that authentic love results in “abhorring what is evil” and “holding fast to what is good.” The believer is literally to hate what is evil and to cling to what is good. Love leads us not to be lazy, but to serve the Lord fervently (v. 11). Love causes us to cry out to God in prayer as we hope in Him through trials (v. 12). Love compels us to give sacrificially to the needs of others (v. 13). Love drives us to be hospitable (v. 13).

Ultimately for the believer, love comes from the reality that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (5:5).

APPLY

Have you listened to a love song recently? Our culture views love as an emotional feeling. Scripture says the opposite. Love is something you do! It’s an action. The characteristics of every believer come from a place of love.

All of these actions flow from genuine love for God and others. How do we properly love? We model Christ’s sacrificial love for us. Scripture declares that “we love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

ASK

What are some qualities and actions you associate with love?

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Read 1 John 4:19. What drives a believer to live out the imperatives Paul outlines in Romans 12:9–13?

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What are some intentional steps you can takes this week to pursue loving God and others?

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PRAY

Father, thank You for the great love You have poured into my life through Jesus Christ. Thank You for sending the Lord Jesus to model genuine love.

Help me to live out my faith authentically by loving You and serving those You place in my life. Help me to hate what You hate and love what You love.

1 JOHN 4:19–21

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

GALATIANS 5:13–14

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

PSALM 97:10–12

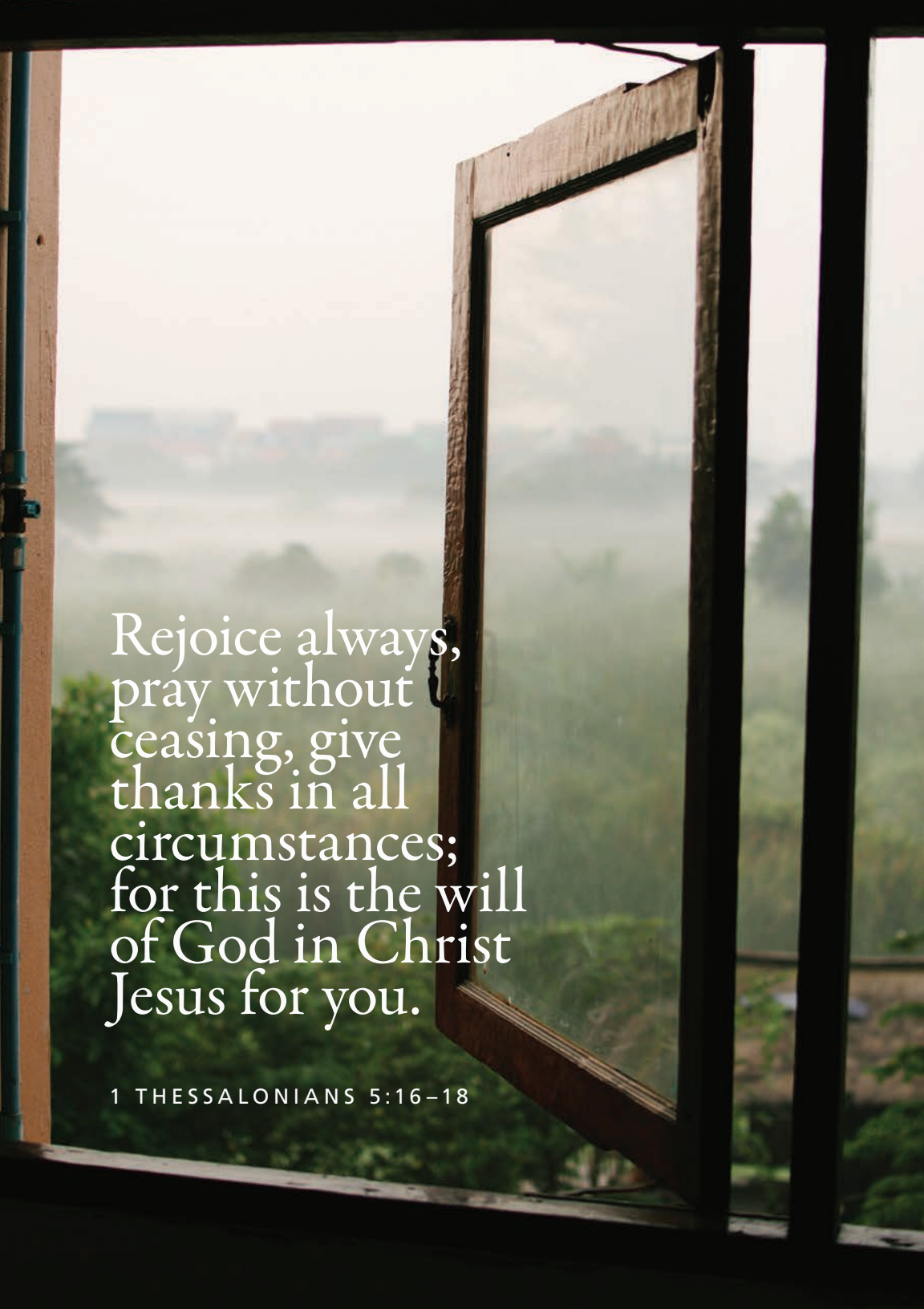
O you who love the Lord, hate evil!
 He preserves the lives of his saints;
 he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
 Light is sown for the righteous,
 and joy for the upright in heart.
 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,
 and give thanks to his holy name!

SING

“These Things Are True of You” — *Tommy Walker*

“PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY”

Romans 12:9-13



Rejoice always,
pray without
ceasing, give
thanks in all
circumstances;
for this is the will
of God in Christ
Jesus for you.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

XII

The Sin of Getting Even

ROMANS 12:14-21

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

READ | ROMANS 12:14–21

THINK ABOUT

If you are going to offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God (12:1), it is going to be painful at times; death to self hurts. Living in the world is not easy. As a follower of Christ, it is even more difficult. You should not be surprised when life is hard and when you suffer in general or for Christ in particular. “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12).

God commands you to do some very difficult things when you suffer at the hands of someone else. Bless the one who persecutes you. Instead of giving someone what they deserve, give him grace. Instead of giving evil for evil, give good for evil. Do not get even. If you choose to obey God, you are leaving room for Him to do what only He is capable of doing — giving the right consequences. He is just and will take care of all injustices.

APPLY

In the world’s economy, this may not add up or make sense. It may seem unfair. Do you have enough faith to obey God? Will you trust Him to settle all accounts?

Remember, your life is a living sacrifice — an offering to God. He has a greater plan, so obey Him in faith: “Never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God” (v. 19).

Jesus suffered at the hands of others and was willing to forgive. Since you have received His forgiveness and grace, give it to others. You know what it is like to need it and receive it.

ASK

Think of an example of when you have been mistreated recently. How did you feel? What did you do?

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In your family, you have been treated unfairly, and you have treated others unfairly. We all sin from time to time! According to this passage, what should you do when you are treated unfairly? What should you do when you have treated someone else unfairly?

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Give an example of how you could “give good” when someone makes fun of you for following Christ. Give an example of how you can “give good” when someone questions your motives.

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PRAY

Father, grow my faith. Help me trust You to do what is right when I am wrongly treated. Forgive me when I try to do Your job and take matters into my own hands.

I'm so thankful for Your goodness and forgiveness to me. I know I don't deserve it. Help me obey You and give good to others when they don't deserve it.

Please use me as a light and testimony however You choose. Help me act like Jesus and point others to Him even when it is not easy. May You be glorified through me.

1 PETER 2:19–25

For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

COLOSSIANS 1:10

Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him; bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...

SING

“Majesty (Here I Am)” — *Stuart Garrard, Martin Smith*

“THE SIN OF GETTING EVEN”

Romans 12:14-21



Do not be
overcome
by evil,
but
overcome
evil with
good.

ROMANS 12:21

XIII

Christian Citizenship

ROMANS 13:1–7

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

READ | ROMANS 13:1–7

THINK ABOUT

In 2017, *The Hill*, an American political newspaper, published an article titled “Respecting Government Is Harder When It Doesn’t Respect You.” Based on polls, author John M. DeMaggio observes a “declining confidence of government’s ability to equitably govern.” The article concludes with the question: “Are people losing respect for the law because the law and the government are losing respect for the people?”

Should our respect for authorities depend on how much the government respects us? As Christian ambassadors, how should we view the government? How did the apostle Paul view the Roman authorities?

In this passage, Paul teaches that the authorities over us are **divinely installed** (v. 1), for the purpose of **restraining what is bad** (v. 3), and **instruments of God’s wrath** (v. 4b).

APPLY

The government may not agree with our political ideologies, religious beliefs, or worldview; nevertheless, the government is established by God. Defiance and disrespect to the government are sins committed against God (v. 2). God is in complete control over all human authorities. Are you trusting Him and submitting to all authorities?

The positive command in this passage is to do good; do what is right. Will you keep a clear conscience before God by doing what is right in His eyes?

ASK

Paul teaches that all authorities are divinely installed. How does this change your view of your authorities/government? What are some of the things which hinder you from respecting and submitting to authority?

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Paul teaches that rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. However, we do see corrupt governments and authorities. Is it possible to submit to a corrupt government? How do we continue to do good? (See 1 Peter 2:18–23.)

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Paul teaches that our authorities are instruments of God's wrath. Are there any examples in the Bible where God used governments as an instrument of wrath? (See 2 Chronicles 36:15–17.)

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How does the fear of authorities, mentioned in verse four, help us to become Christian citizens? How does submitting to authorities help us to have a clear conscience? (See 1 Peter 2:13–17.)

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PRAY

Lord I confess that I have disrespected the authorities (government, parents, teachers, and church leaders) that You have set over me by disobeying. Please forgive me. Please help me see authorities as Your instruments.

Lord, please help me to trust in You and continue to do what is right in Your eyes for Your glory.

1 PETER 2:13–23

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

SING

“Trust and Obey” — *John Henry Sammis, Daniel Brink Towner*

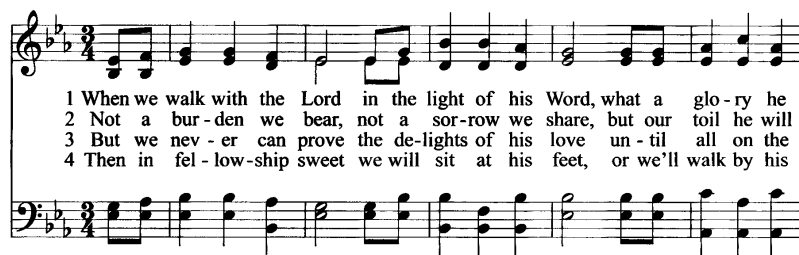
“CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP”

Romans 13:1-7

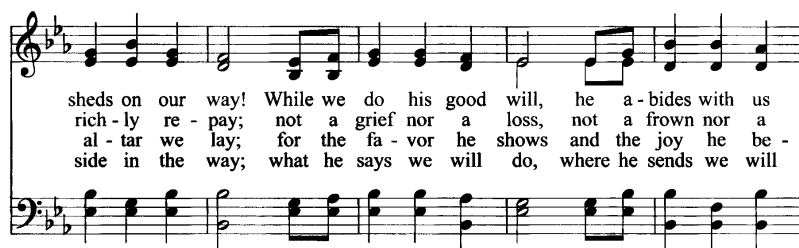
HYMN

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." — PROVERBS 3:5-6

Trust and Obey

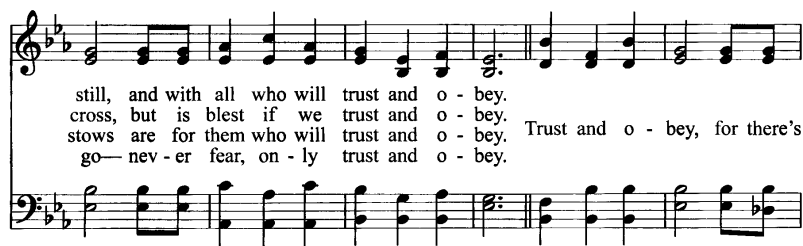


1 When we walk with the Lord in the light of his Word, what a glo-ry he
 2 Not a bur-den we bear, not a sor-row we share, but our toil he will
 3 But we nev-er can prove the de-lights of his love un-til all on the
 4 Then in fel-low-ship sweet we will sit at his feet, or we'll walk by his

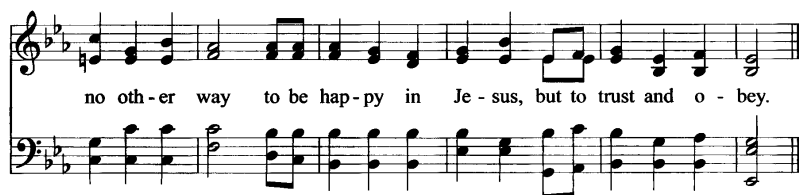


sheds on our way! While we do his good will, he a-bides with us
 rich-ly re-pay; not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a
 al-tar we lay; for the fa-vor he shows and the joy he be-
 side in the way; what he says we will do, where he sends we will

Refrain



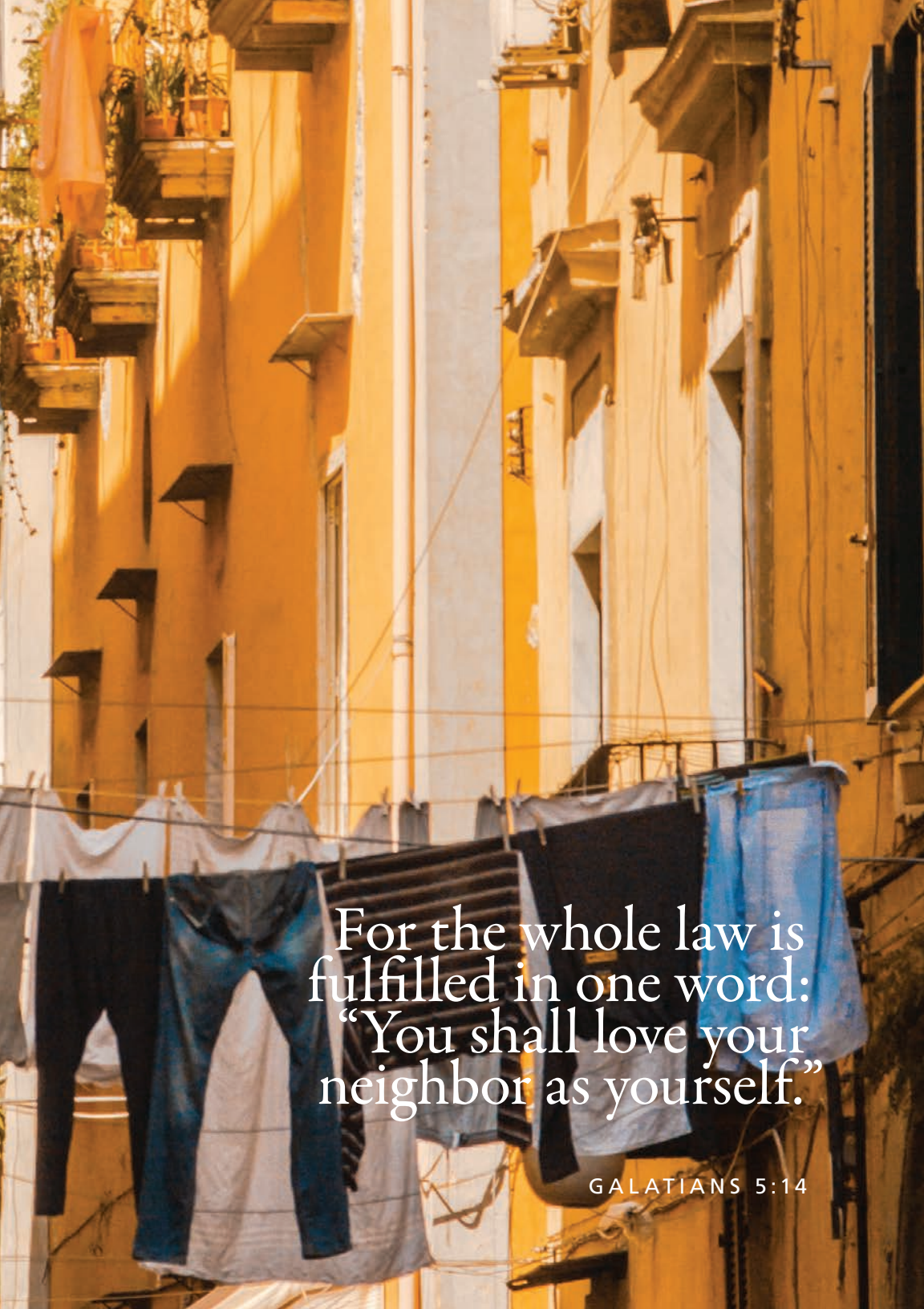
still, and with all who will trust and o-bey.
 cross, but is blest if we trust and o-bey. Trust and o-bey, for there's
 stows are for them who will trust and o-bey.
 go—nev-er fear, on-ly trust and o-bey.



no oth-er way to be hap-py in Je-sus, but to trust and o-bey.

Text: John H. Sammis, 1887 🌿 *Tune: Daniel B. Towner, 1887*





For the whole law is
fulfilled in one word:
“You shall love your
neighbor as yourself.”

GALATIANS 5:14

XIII

The Supremacy of Love

ROMANS 13:8–10

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

READ | ROMANS 13:8–10

THINK ABOUT

The word “owe” means “obligated to do something” for someone. Paul continues to exhort the Christians in Rome to pay all their financial obligations responsibly and to let the only outstanding debt be the one that can never be paid in full — the debt of love. “Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law” (v. 8). This is a love that never stops. Christians are obligated to continually love others and by doing so they fulfill all the requirements of God’s law.

APPLY

Biblical love always protects truth. It is essential in today’s world for Christians to demonstrate a love which also protects the moral character of God revealed in His law. So both love and truth must be in perfect balance if you are to be an effective witness for the Gospel. This can only be done through the power of the Spirit at work in you.

Spend time meditating on the supremacy of God’s love demonstrated at the cross, and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help so that you can love others the way God desires.

ASK

In our self-centered culture, why is it important to have a healthy balance of both love and truth?

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Would those who know you best describe you as a person that balances love and truth? Or are you more law than love — or all love and no law?

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What can you do to be a more responsible, balanced Christian?

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PRAY

Father, thank You for Your truth that reveals Your love and that these are never separate. Help me to love others the way You do. Help me to communicate, by both word and deed, the message of love and truth found in the Gospel so that You would be pleased and others might come to know You.

DEUTERONOMY 6:4–7

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

MATTHEW 22:36–40

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

GALATIANS 5:14

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”



SING

“By Our Love” — *Christy Nockels*

“THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE”

Romans 13:8-10

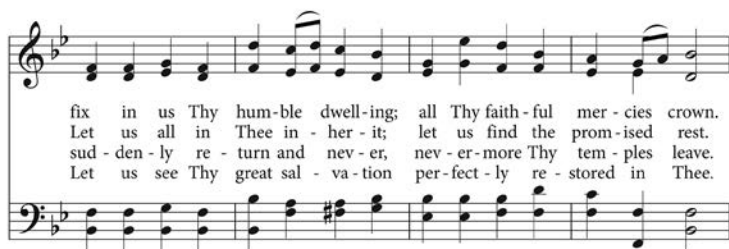
HYMN

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him." — 1 JOHN 4:9

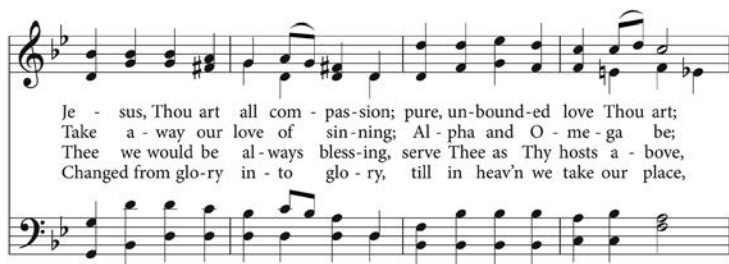
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling



1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cell-ing, joy of heav'n to earth come down,
2. Breathe, O breathe Thy lov-ing Spir - it in - to ev-'ry trou-bled breast!
3. Come, Al-might-y, to de - liv - er; let us all Thy life re - ceive;
4. Fin - ish then Thy new cre - a-tion; pure and spot-less let us be.



fix in us Thy hum-ble dwell-ing; all Thy faith-ful mer-cies crown.
Let us all in Thee in - her - it; let us find the prom-ised rest.
sud - den - ly re - turn and nev - er, nev - er - more Thy tem - ples leave.
Let us see Thy great sal - va - tion, per - fect - ly re - stored in Thee.



Je - sus, Thou art all com - pas-sion; pure, un-bound-ed love Thou art;
Take a - way our love of sin-ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be;
Thee we would be al - ways bless-ing, serve Thee as Thy hosts a - bove,
Changed from glo-ry in - to glo - ry, till in heav'n we take our place,



vis - it us with Thy sal - va - tion; en - ter ev - 'ry trem-bling heart.
end of faith as its be - gin-ning; set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
pray and praise Thee with - out ceas-ing, glo - ry in Thy per - fect love.
till we cast our crowns be - fore Thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1747 🌿 Tune: John Zundel, 1870

The night is far gone; the day is
at hand. So then let us cast off
the works of darkness and put
on the armor of light.

ROMANS 13:12





XIII

Time to Wake Up

ROMANS 13:11-14

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

READ | ROMANS 13:11–14

THINK ABOUT

Paul often uses metaphors that are related to everyday life to grab the attention of his reader. In these verses he calls us to “wake up” and be responsive and conscious about the things of God. In Ephesians 5:14, the apostle cries out: “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” He is not speaking to unbelievers who do not know Christ, but to genuine believers who are being spiritually lethargic and lazy. He urges believers to wake up, because Jesus could return at any moment.

In this passage, we are exhorted to throw off the sin that we tolerate in our lives. Sin has a way of lulling us to sleep spiritually. It makes us selfish and prideful, ignoring that our lives are not for earthly pleasures but eternal glory. This “waking up” is something that must happen through the work of Christ in one’s heart. Christians must clothe themselves with His character and abide in Him daily as we fight the lure of sin. Putting on Christ is a daily task each believer must do!

APPLY

Each day our alarm clock goes off to warn us that we need to wake up. And we have a choice — continue to sleep or get out of bed and begin our daily tasks. At times, laziness gets the best of us, and we hit the snooze button. This causes stress, panic, and frustration for the rest of the day. God has given us the Holy Spirit to prod us to wake up about how we are living our lives. Alarms will sound in our souls, reminding us that we need to take our spiritual lives seriously. This can happen through devotional times, sermons, worship music, prayer, trials, and many other ways. We must not sleep-walk through life. Be alert about what God wants to do through us and in you. Don’t fall asleep to the reality that we are in a spiritual battle each day.

ASK

If you stood before Jesus Christ today, would you have confidence of your salvation?

Scripture teaches that we are to walk with Christ. List the spiritual battles that you have faced this week. How have you seen God at work in those battles?

What impact does the holiness of God have on your life? In what areas has God been convicting you regarding holiness? Are you continuing to make provision for sin?

PRAY

God, Your pursuit of me in the midst of my failures is something I will never understand. Why do You pursue me even when I drift away from You? You truly are a good Father, and for that, I worship Your beautiful name. Thank You for forgiveness through the cross of Christ and for the Holy Spirit to awaken me daily to my need for You.

Father, I need Your help to pursue You in the midst of all the distractions. Help me realize that I need nothing other than the grace You have given me. I desire to live a holy life, but often I find it difficult. Help me to wake up and pursue You with all of my heart and soul.

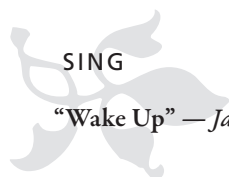
EPHESIANS 6:10–13

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

GALATIANS 5:19–26

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.



SING

“Wake Up” — *Jack Mooring, Leeland Mooring*

“TIME TO WAKE UP”

Romans 13:11-14

XIV

Liberty and Legalism

ROMANS 14:1-12

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

⁵ One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.⁶ The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.⁷ For none of us lives

to himself, and none of us dies to himself.⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;¹¹ for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

READ | ROMANS 14:1–12

THINK ABOUT

Have you ever passed judgment on another believer over a preference issue? If we are honest, I think all of us would have to admit that we have. In these verses, Paul instructed the Roman Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, to be careful not to pass judgment on one another so that they would preserve unity in the church when it comes to our liberty in Christ concerning preference issues. The threat to church unity arose when some of the mature believers accused some of the weaker believers as being legalistic regarding Old Testament rites and prohibitions. Likewise, the weak judged the mature as being irresponsible when it came to liberty in Christ regarding dietary laws and observing the Sabbath.

Paul instructed them not to pass judgment on brothers and sisters in Christ over issues that are not clearly commanded or prohibited in Scripture. Whether weak or strong in the Lord, Paul's main point to all believers is that our motive in decisions about issues of conscience must be to please the Lord. "For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (vv. 7–8). Therefore, the focus of our Christian lives is never about ourselves. Everything we do should be to glorify God. (See 1 Corinthians 10:31.)

APPLY

Take some time to think about areas in which your lifestyle may cause others to stumble because of your preferences. Contemplate if any of these preferences have been legalistic in nature.

ASK

Are there some changes in your lifestyle regarding preference issues that you need to make before the Lord?

Will these changes in your lifestyle encourage more edification and unity in the body of Christ?

Who can you disciple about these truths with regard to your freedom in Christ?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I praise You that You sent Your Son to fulfill the law on my behalf. I praise You for the freedom I experience in Christ. Help me daily to die to self and to live for You! Help me to walk in the Spirit so that I can be a godly example to others, preserving the spirit of unity in the bond of peace.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

EPHESIANS 4:1–3

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

COLOSSIANS 2:16–17

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

SING

“Live Like That” — *David Frey, Ben Glover, Ben McDonald*

“LIBERTY AND LEGALISM”

Romans 14:1-12



So, whether you eat or drink,
or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31



*Live as people
who are free,
not using your
freedom as a
cover-up for evil,
but living as
servants of God.*

1 PETER 2:16



XIV

Pleasing Others

ROMANS 14:13–15:13

Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. ¹⁴ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.

¹⁵ For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

²⁰ Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to

make another stumble by what he eats.²¹ It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.²² The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

CHAPTER 15

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written,

“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles,
and sing to your name.”

¹⁰ And again it is said,

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

¹¹ And again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and let all the peoples extol him.”

¹² And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,
even he who arises to rule the Gentiles;
in him will the Gentiles hope.”

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in
believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may
abound in hope.

READ | ROMANS 14:13–15:13

THINK ABOUT

As the apostle Paul approaches the conclusion of this letter to the church in Rome, he provides some practical admonitions on how Christians should live within the community of faith. The first was presented in Romans 14:1–12; this passage discusses the second and third of these admonitions. The second admonition focuses on brotherly love, and Paul offers ways a mature believer can use eating habits to edify younger believers rather than becoming an obstacle. The third admonition calls the spiritually strong to imitate Christ by resisting selfishness. This will facilitate the growth and edification of younger believers and avoid causing them to stumble.

Since the church in Rome consisted of Jews and Gentiles, personal and cultural eating habits along with the application of spiritual gifts became issues that caused younger believers to stumble. However, Paul calls all believers within the community of faith to use their eating habits and gifts to please and serve others.

APPLY

While the thought of abandoning self, desires, and personal ambitions does not come naturally, self-sacrifice is an important discipline for all believers and particularly for those more spiritually mature. Yet, because of our “flesh,” we do not naturally place restrictions on ourselves for the benefit of others.

Christ called us to a life of sacrifice and service and has exemplified this by His willingness to serve the needs of others over His own (15:2–3). Paul provides a good example by imposing restrictions on himself for those less spiritually mature.

ASK

Paul provides examples of how he and Jesus used their lives to please others and facilitate their spiritual development. How do you live your life to please and serve others?

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Christ paid the ultimate sacrifice so the spiritually dead may have access to the Father through a relationship with Him (Hebrews 12:2). Do you have a passion to see people’s lives changed? How are you spending your life for the spiritual growth of others around you?

.....

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Consider two or three personal preferences or habits of yours that could cause those less spiritually mature to stumble.

.....

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If Christ expects us to use our freedoms to serve and please others, does this mean that we are not to enjoy our freedoms?

.....

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PRAY

Father, thank You for Your willingness to sacrifice Your Son, Jesus Christ, and the practical demonstration of love through Jesus’ death for our sin. His suffering brings us life, light, and liberty.

Thank You for the spiritually mature persons You have placed in our lives to aid our spiritual growth over the years. Help us understand Your desire to use each believer for the spiritual development of others.

HEBREWS 10:23–25

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

MATTHEW 5:41–48

And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.



SING

“How Beautiful” — *Twila Paris*

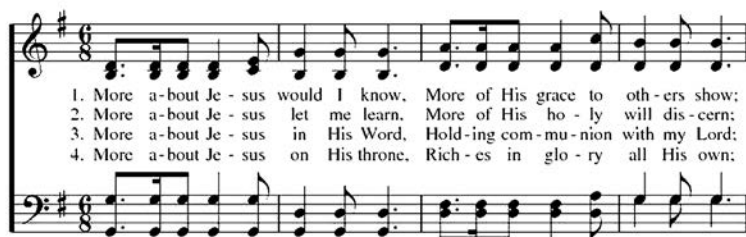
“PLEASING OTHERS”

Romans 14:13-15:13

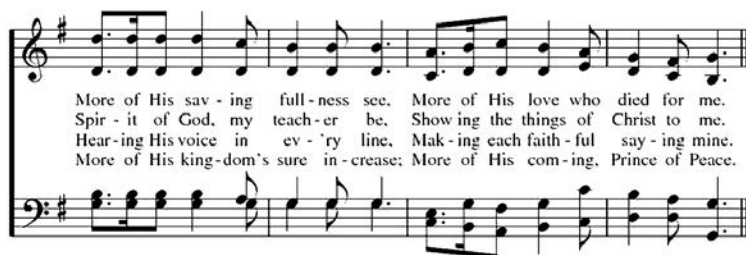
HYMN

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." — 2 PETER 3:18

More About Jesus



1. More a-bout Je - sus would I know, More of His grace to oth - ers show;
2. More a-bout Je - sus let me learn, More of His ho - ly will dis - cern;
3. More a-bout Je - sus in His Word, Hold - ing com - mu - nion with my Lord;
4. More a-bout Je - sus on His throne, Rich - es in glo - ry all His own;



More of His sav - ing full - ness see, More of His love who died for me.
Spir - it of God, my teach - er be, Show - ing the things of Christ to me.
Hear - ing His voice in ev - 'ry line, Mak - ing each faith - ful say - ing mine.
More of His king - dom's sure in - crease; More of His com - ing, Prince of Peace.



Chorus
More, more a-bout Je - sus, More, more a-bout Je - sus;



More of His sav - ing full - ness see, More of His love who died for me.

Text: Eliza E. Hewitt, 1887 🌿 *Tune: John R. Sweney, 1887*



“These men who have
turned the world upside
down have come here
also...”

ACTS 17:6

CHALLENGE


“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” — MATTHEW 28:19–20

Missions at Calvary

By Jim Cashwell

MISSIONS AT CALVARY CHURCH INVOLVES those ministries with the primary purpose of presenting Jesus Christ to our lost and dying world in fulfillment of the Great Commission. Our strategy is to present the Gospel, both domestically and internationally, by effectively mobilizing our individual members and the resources under our influence to reach the world for Christ. We do this through praying for missions, missionary support, Global Outreach Trips (GO Trips), missions education, missions projects, local outreach programs, personal evangelism, recreation through CHAMP Sports Outreach, our International Ministry, ministry in jails and prisons, and more.

Jesus’ command in the Great Commission is that we are to all to “go and make disciples.” To be an authentic follower of Jesus Christ means that the believer becomes actively engaged in missions service. Calvary Church, our missions policy, and the Missions Council serve together to work toward fulfilling the Great Commission and enabling every Calvary member to be actively engaged in missions support and action.

Where could God be calling you to answer His call in the Great Commission? 



XV

Strategy for Missions

ROMANS 15:14–21

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵ But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything

except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience — by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God — so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; ²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, ²¹ but as it is written,

“Those who have never been told of him will see,
and those who have never heard will understand.”

READ | ROMANS 15:14–21

THINK ABOUT

Did you know that there are over 7.6 billion people in the world? Of that 7.6 billion, only 10% claim Jesus as Savior and another 22% are listed as nominal followers of Christ. That means that there is over 68% or almost 5.2 billion people in the world who do not know Jesus as their Savior. There are 2.2 billion who have never heard of Jesus Christ!

Paul said, “And thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named...” (15:20). Our missions mandate at Calvary Church is to reach the least-reached people in the world who have never heard of Jesus. We do that by sending missionaries to these unreached people groups, providing Bible translation, starting churches around the world, and sending GO Trips wherever the Gospel has never been heard.

In God’s grace, He placed you and me in a family and in a country where we heard the Gospel. That is not so for most people in the world. They need someone to go to them. Jesus, in the Great Commission, commanded the disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19). This Great Commission is our call today. Come join us in missions!

APPLY

In the Great Commission, notice that Jesus said, “Go”! Where does He say “stay”? Jesus’ purpose was “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). That means we are to go!

When God calls, He usually asks us to leave our comfort zone. He asks us to trust Him, take a step of faith, and follow Him in obedience. When we follow, our intimacy with God grows. Want to grow closer to the Father? Be obedient to His call to go and make disciples.

ASK

Our missions purpose continues in Romans 15:21 when Paul says, “Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.” It will be almost impossible for those who have never been told and who have never heard to understand unless we go! What is keeping you from answering God’s call to missions service?

In America, we have access to many different translations of the Scriptures. Did you know that over 1,500 languages do not have access to the Bible? What would it be like not to be able to read and understand God’s Word in your own language? There are 110 million people in that category. Perhaps God is calling you into Bible translation work. What would it take for you to answer God’s call into missions?

PRAY

Thank You, Father, for those who came to share Jesus with me. I realize that if someone had not taken the time to tell me of Your great love expressed in Your Son, Jesus, I may never have come to know the joy of a relationship with Him. Your grace is amazing!

Now Father, give me the strength to answer Your call to go and make disciples. I realize there is a lost and dying world waiting on me.

MATTHEW 28:18–20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

LUKE 19:1–10

He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

SING

“Facing a Task Unfinished” — *Ed Cash, Fionan DeBarra, Keith Getty*

“STRATEGY FOR MISSIONS”

Romans 15:14-21

HYMN

"Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

sing the glory of his name;

give to him glorious praise!

Come and hear, all you who fear God,

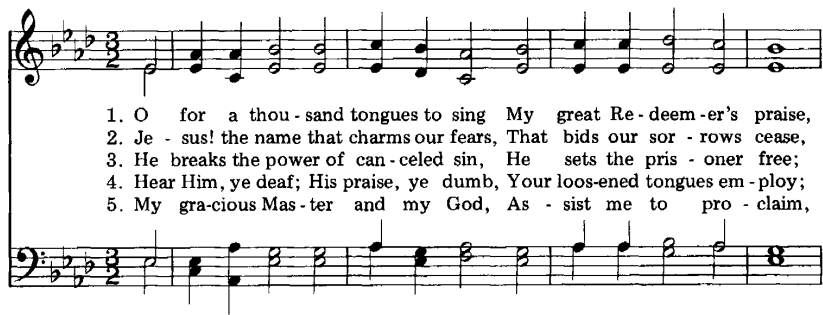
and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

I cried to him with my mouth,

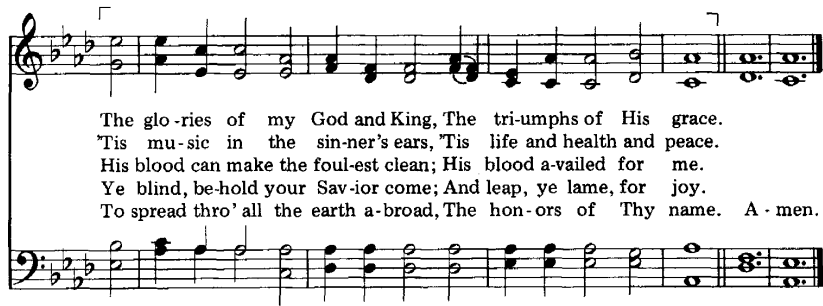
and high praise was on my tongue."

— PSALM 66:1-2, 16-17

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

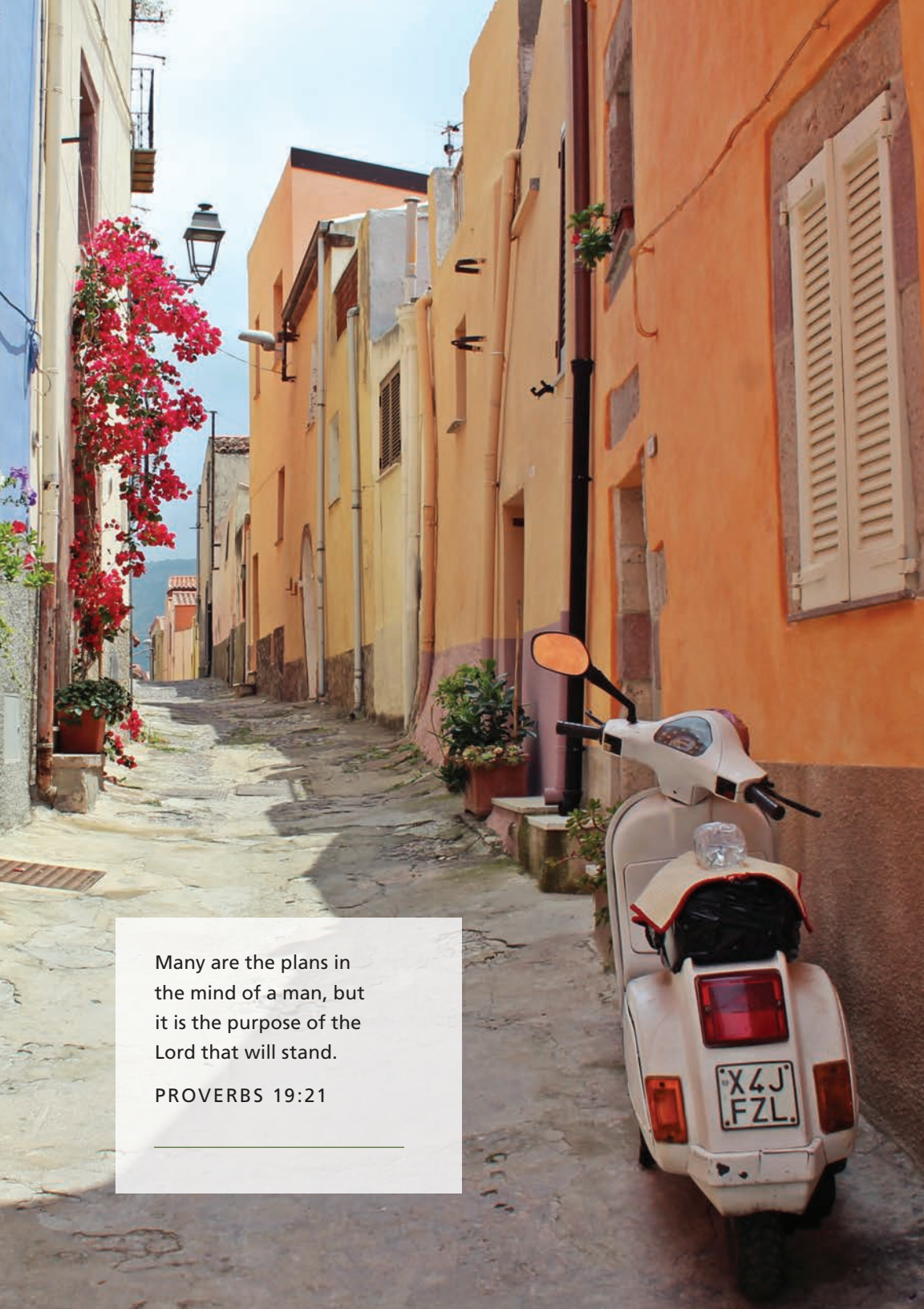


1. O for a thou - sand tongues to sing My great Re - deem - er's praise,
2. Je - sus! the name that charms our fears, That bids our sor - rows cease,
3. He breaks the power of can - celed sin, He sets the pris - on-er free;
4. Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb, Your loos-ened tongues em - ploy;
5. My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, As - sist me to pro - claim,



The glo - ries of my God and King, The tri - umphs of His grace.
'Tis mu - sic in the sin - ner's ears, 'Tis life and health and peace.
His blood can make the foul - est clean; His blood a - vailed for me.
Ye blind, be - hold your Sav - ior come; And leap, ye lame, for joy.
To spread thro' all the earth a - broad, The hon - ors of Thy name. A - men.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1739 🌿 Tune: Carl G. Glazer, 1828; arr. by Lowell Mason, 1839



Many are the plans in
the mind of a man, but
it is the purpose of the
Lord that will stand.

PROVERBS 19:21

XV

Planning Your Future

ROMANS 15:22–33

This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.²³ But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you,²⁴ I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.²⁵ At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints.²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.²⁷ For they were

pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.²⁸ When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.

²⁹ I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,³¹ that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,³² so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.³³ May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

READ | ROMANS 15:22–33

THINK ABOUT

This isn't the first time we find the apostle Paul *hindered* from reaching his intended destination. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 we read that Satan *hindered* Paul from visiting the church in Thessalonica. In Acts 16:6–7, Paul is *forbidden* by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel in Asia. Here in Romans 15, Paul was *hindered* from traveling to Rome until he had fulfilled his ministry from Jerusalem to Illyricum. Now that he had finished his course in these regions, Paul includes one last stop in Jerusalem before he is free to embark to Rome.

Paul would indeed arrive in Rome, but not the way he expected. Paul didn't arrive as a missionary on his way to Spain. Rather, he went to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial before Caesar. Yet, as a prisoner, Paul would boldly proclaim the Gospel *without hindrance* (Acts 28:30–31). Such is the sovereign plan of God!

APPLY

Paul is a great example of motivation, perseverance, and endurance. Not only did he strive to proclaim the Gospel where no one had ever labored, but he also saw each task to completion before moving to the next. However, even the plans of a gifted apostle are subject to change. These tough and unforeseen circumstances presented Paul with new opportunities to proclaim the Gospel.

Praise God that His will and purpose will always prevail. Like Paul, make the best of your circumstances for the Gospel. When sudden changes in your plans take place, trust that God is in control!

ASK

Although Paul was determined to travel to Spain by way of Rome, notice that he went out of his way to care for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Does your schedule allow you to care “for the least of these” in your Jerusalem?

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Paul asks the church in Rome to pray to God on his behalf (v. 30). Do you devote time to pray for missionaries, church planters, preachers, and others proclaiming the Gospel?

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In Jesus, all of the Old Testament prophecies, types, and shadows find their complete fulfillment. What Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming of the Messiah are particularly meaningful for you?

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PRAY

Lord, I trust that You are sovereign. I believe that You are working all things for our good and Your glory. Help me to align my plans and desires with Your will. Continue to sanctify me in truth.

Lord, I pray for wisdom, direction, and protection for missionaries who labor throughout the world for the sake of the Gospel. May each one strive to hear our Lord say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

PROVERBS 19:21

Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

JAMES 4:13–15

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

ACTS 28:30–31

He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

SING

“Across the Lands” — *Keith Getty, Stuart Townend*



“PLANNING YOUR FUTURE”

Romans 15:22-33

HYMN

"So teach us to number our days

that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Return, O Lord! How long?

Have pity on your servants!

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,

and for as many years as we have seen evil.


Let your work be shown to your servants,

and your glorious power to their children.

*Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work
of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!"*

— PSALM 90: 12–17


O God, Our Help in Ages Past



1. O God, our Help in ag - es past, our Hope for years to come,
2. Un - der the shad - ow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;
3. Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
4. A thou - sand ag - es in Thy sight are like an ev - 'ning gone,
5. Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream bears all its sons a - way;
6. O God, our Help in a - ges past, our Hope for years to come,

our Shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal Home.
suf - fi - cient is Thine arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
from ev - er - last - ing Thou art God, to end - less years the same.
short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.
they fly for - got - ten, as a dream dies at the o - p'ning day.
be Thou our Guide while life shall last, and our e - ter - nal Home!

Text: Isaac Watts based on Psalm 90, 1719 🌿 Tune: William Croft, 1708

A man with dark, curly hair and a beard is shown in profile, looking out a window. He is wearing a dark, thick scarf and a brown jacket. He is holding a black smartphone in his right hand. The background outside the window is bright and slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall mood is contemplative.

The grace of our
Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:18

XVI

Each One Matters

ROMANS 16:1–16

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae,² that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

³ Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,⁴ who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. ⁵ Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.⁶

Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys.¹⁰ Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.¹¹ Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus.¹² Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.¹⁵ Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

READ | ROMANS 16:1–16

THINK ABOUT

When you read through this chapter, you may have trouble pronouncing all the names. But Paul knew each one of them! As a follower of Christ, he set a great example of knowing, loving, and caring for others. He was grateful for each person and their service to Christ and His church.

Each brother and sister in Christ has purpose. God created them. Jesus died for them. And they have been given the Holy Spirit to do His work. Let's take Phoebe as an example. She served the church at Cenchreae well. She supported the church and Paul financially, and now it is likely that she is the one who carried the letter they were reading.

The rest of the names are people who had been serving in the Roman church. Paul had been encouraged by their ministries, including a husband and wife team named Prisca and Aquila. It must have meant much that Paul acknowledged them!

APPLY

You matter as well! When you were adopted into God's family, you became His son or daughter. You were given talents and gifts to use for His glory and His kingdom.

Don't take for granted that He made you and has a purpose for putting you on earth (Psalm 139:13–16). God also knows all the details of your life. He knows your name and your needs — even the very hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30).

Not only does He care about you, He cares about the others around you — your friends, your family, and even strangers that you will meet.

ASK

Have you made the decision to become part of God’s family? If so, when? If not, what is holding you back?

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If Paul wrote a letter to the church at Calvary, what would he say about you and your service to Christ and His church?

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If you were giving someone counsel, how would you tell them to find their place of service in the church?

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PRAY

Father, I know You created me to enjoy You, know You, and serve You. You are worthy of a life lived in surrender to You. I offer myself as a living sacrifice to You.

Help me to love the church like You do. Give me wisdom to know how to serve and where to serve. Bless our leaders, and help our church to be and make authentic followers of Christ.

PSALM 139:13–16

For you formed my inward parts;
 you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
 Wonderful are your works;
 my soul knows it very well.
 My frame was not hidden from you,
 when I was being made in secret,
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
 in your book were written, every one of them,
 the days that were formed for me,
 when as yet there was none of them.

MATTHEW 10:29–31

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.



SING

“Do Everything” — *Steven Curtis Chapman*

“EACH ONE MATTERS”

Romans 16:1-16

XVI

Glory to God

ROMANS 16:17–27

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. ¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

²² I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

²³ Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

²⁵ Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

READ | ROMANS 16:17–27

THINK ABOUT

Paul concludes his magnificent letter to the Romans with some final admonitions and greetings. What can we apply to our lives from his concluding remarks?

In verses 17–18, he urges believers to watch out for those “who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary” to the doctrines of Scripture. We must always be on guard for teachings and practices that undermine the truth of God’s Word!

In verses 19–20, he rejoices over the obedience of the Roman believers while at the same time urging them to continue “to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.”

In verses 21–27, we learn that we should extend kind greetings to each other in the Lord and live out the Gospel each day for the glory of God!

APPLY

Meditate carefully upon Paul’s closing admonitions found in these verses. Be a student of the Word, so that you are able lovingly to refute false doctrines of those who seek to cause divisions and create obstacles in the church. Consider practical ways “to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil” (v. 19).

ASK

Are there some areas of my Christian life where I need to be wiser?

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What changes would the Lord want me to make in those areas?

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Whom can I disciple with the wonderful truths I’ve learned from the book of Romans?

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PRAY

Heavenly Father, I praise You that You have revealed “the mystery that was kept secret for long ages” through our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You for the promise that the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” is always with us! To You be the glory forever and ever. Amen!

EPHESIANS 3:1–13

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.



SING

“All the Praise” — *Michael Neal, Travis Ryan*

“GLORY TO GOD”

Romans 16:17-27

HYMN

"I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" — PSALM 34:4–8

Fairest Lord Jesus



1. Fair - est Lord Je - sus, Ru - ler of all na - ture,
 2. Fair are the mead - ows, fair - er still the wood - lands,
 3. Fair is the sun - shine, fair - er still the moon - light,
 4. Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior! Lord of the na - tions!

O Thou of God and man the Son, Thee will I cher - ish,
 robed in the bloom - ing garb of spring: Je - sus is fair - er,
 and all the twink - ling star - ry host: Je - sus shines bright - er,
 Son of God and Son of Man! Glo - ry and hon - or,

Thee will I hon - or, Thou, my soul's glo - ry, joy, and crown!
 Je - sus is pur - er, who makes the woe - ful heart to sing.
 Je - sus shines pur - er, than all the an - gels heav'n can boast.
 praise, ad - o - ra - tion, now and for - ev - er - more be Thine!

Text: Anonymous German Hymn, 1677; Stanza 4, Joseph A. Seiss, 1873 🌿

Tune: Schlesische Volkslieder, 1842, arr. Richard S. Willis, 1850



*Now to him who is able to
strengthen you according to
my gospel and the preaching
of Jesus Christ, according
to the revelation of the
mystery that was kept secret
for long ages but has now
been disclosed and through
the prophetic writings has
been made known to all
nations, according to the
command of the eternal God,
to bring about the obedience
of faith – to the only wise
God be glory forevermore
through Jesus Christ!
Amen.*

ROMANS 16:25-27

A Personal Reflection on Romans

By John H. Munro

I FIRST LEARNED VERSES FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS when I was a wee boy. Little did I know that one day I would be preaching through Romans in North Carolina! The first verse I learned was chapter 3, verse 23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The next was verse 23 of chapter 6, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is the eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” These were two good verses to learn! They focus on two of Paul’s great themes in his exposition of the Gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord — sin and grace!

SINNERS NEED A SAVIOR

So as long as I can remember, I was taught that I was a sinner! Certainly, my behavior as a very active boy demonstrated that reality. I was raised in Scotland before the days of self-esteem and smiley faces, so my parents and teachers had no hesitation in pointing out my sinful actions!

In the book of Romans, Paul is writing to Jews and Gentiles in Rome. The Jews had the Mosaic Law, but the Gentiles believed in the gods of the Roman and Greek Pantheon. Paul brilliantly meets all arguments head-on to establish that every person has sinned. In our culture, where people say they don’t want to hear anything negative, Paul’s first three chapters may make depressing reading. But it is essential we understand who we are in the presence of a holy God. We may be

well educated, socially adjusted, religious, and accomplished in many ways, but the verdict on us is the same as on the first century readers in Rome — GUILTY before God and accountable to Him. There are many churches which minimize preaching on sin, or they may even ignore or deny its reality. But whatever message they are promoting and however popular it may be, it is not the Gospel Paul presents in Romans!

BY GRACE ALONE

Romans 6:23 emphasizes Paul's majestic theme of salvation by grace alone. We all deserve death because we have all sinned. But Paul painstakingly establishes that being righteous before God is not something to be worked for and neither is it through observing the Mosaic Law. Rather, salvation is to be received as a free gift of the grace of God. The magnificence and implications of the grace of God have overwhelmed me repeatedly during my study of Romans. This abounding grace is greater than our sins! This abounding grace is offered to us in Jesus Christ! This abounding grace means that we are no longer under the law! No wonder so much of our singing focuses on the infinite grace of God revealed in His Son. The apostle John writes: "For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (John 1:16).

NOT ASHAMED

Another verse from Romans which continues to impact me is one which I learned as a teenager. It is Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Paul deals with the outworking of salvation in the life of the believer. While we are justified by faith alone, the faith which justifies us is not alone. God not only saves us, but He transforms us. So why be ashamed of the Gospel?

Paul unfolds the effects and impact of justification in chapters 5–8. He explains that we who have been justified by faith have been forever changed. It is tragic when people say that they placed their faith in Jesus Christ many years ago, but

it seems to make no difference in their lives. Have they ever truly experienced the power of God for salvation?

When I placed my faith in Jesus Christ as a boy of 12 at a Christian camp, we learned this simple chorus by Stanton W. Gavitt:

*Things are different now;
Something happened to me when I gave my heart to Jesus.
Things are different now;
I was changed, it must be, when I gave my heart to Him.
Things I loved before have passed away,
Things I love far more have come to stay.
Things are different now; something happened to me
When I gave my heart to Jesus.*

I praise God I learned these truths early in my Christian life, although I certainly didn't understand the meaning of justification, sanctification, and glorification! But by God's grace, I sought never to be ashamed of the Gospel. In my last year at high school, I wore a little pin on my school blazer which read "Jesus Saves." I knew that those who are saved are to tell others about Jesus.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

To live a life not being ashamed of the Gospel requires the power of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8, Paul explains that authentic followers of Jesus are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that we escape the sufferings, trials, and disappointments of life, but it does mean that we are guaranteed that God is for us and with us. Also, there is nothing in the whole universe which can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (8:39). Those who are justified will certainly be glorified (8:30).

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO ISRAEL

As Paul wrote of these grand themes, there were some who considered he was denigrating the nation of Israel and the Jewish faith. So Paul gives a masterful defense of the Gospel in chapters 9–11. Although Israel as a nation has rejected

the Messiah, and although they are presently in unbelief, Paul looks forward to that great day when all Israel will be saved (11:26). “The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (11:29). But the way of salvation now is the same for Jew and Gentile: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (10:13). God is always faithful to His Word.

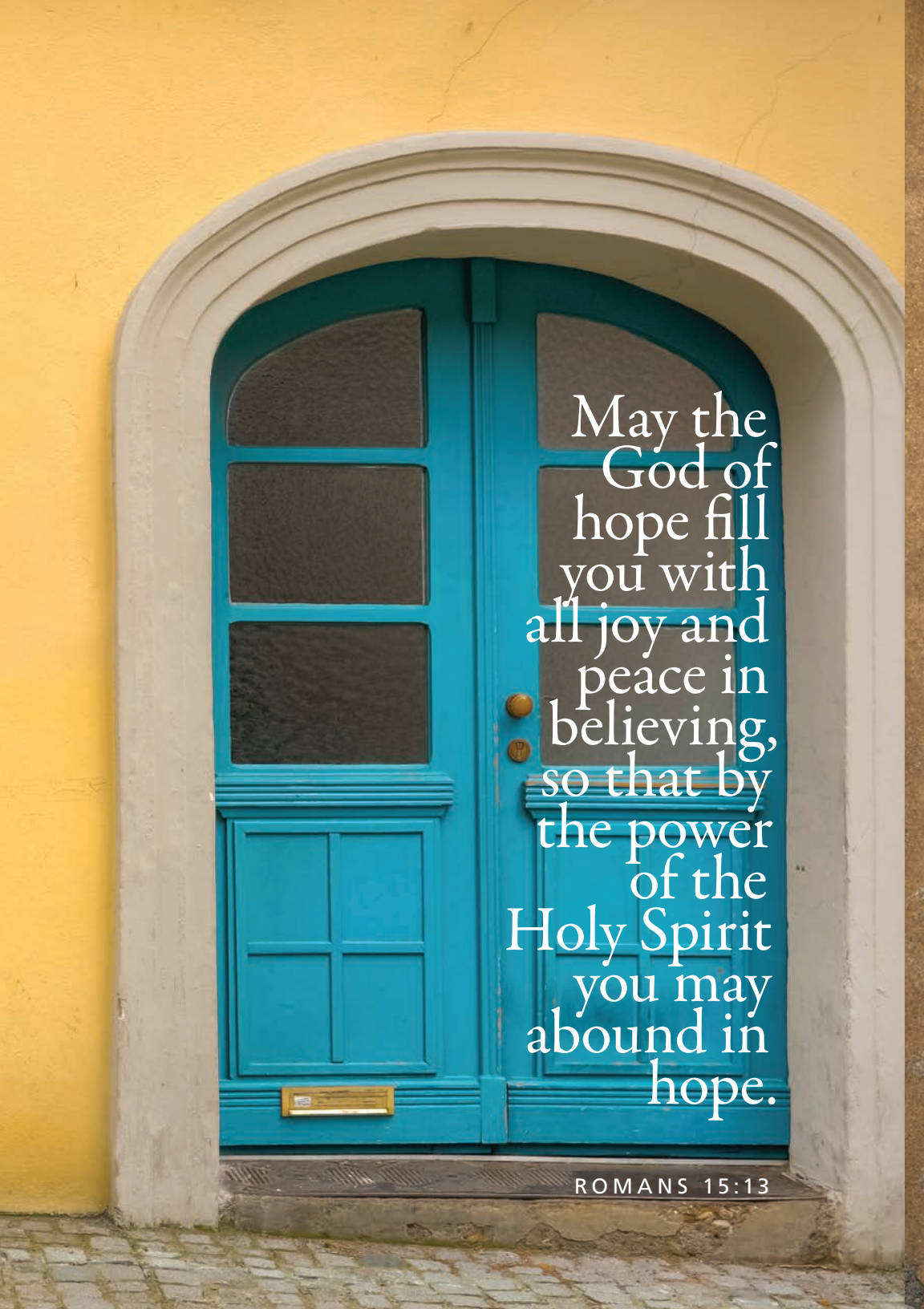
BEING A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

This study guide has focused on chapters 12–16, where Paul helps us to think through the implications of what it means to be a follower of Christ in a pagan society. These chapters are not as difficult to understand as some of the earlier ones, but the challenge is to obey their teaching! Paul begins with a consecration of our bodies as an act of worship before the Lord (12:1–2). Then we realize that our faith in Jesus Christ impacts every relationship we have, both within and beyond the Christian family. There is certainly opposition, but the power of the love of God demonstrated through His people is a powerful apologetic in a world of hostility and evil.

I am praying that our study of this great book of Romans has personally impacted you. First of all, I urge you to place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Dedicate your life to Christ and the Gospel. Is your faith making any difference, or is it just a mere profession? Keep reading and re-reading Romans, which arguably is the most influential letter ever written.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16–17).

To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen (Romans 16:27). ❀

A vibrant blue double door with arched windows is set within a white archway. The door has a classic design with a small window at the top and a larger one below it. The wall is a warm yellow, and the ground is paved with cobblestones. The text is overlaid on the right side of the door.

May the
God of
hope fill
you with
all joy and
peace in
believing,
so that by
the power
of the
Holy Spirit
you may
abound in
hope.

ROMANS 15:13

LET'S MEMORIZE GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

Punch out these Scripture cards and carry them with you, or place them where you'll see them often. Review the verses daily and commit them to memory!

I appeal to you
therefore, brothers,
by the mercies of
God, to present your
bodies as a living
sacrifice, holy and
acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual
worship.

ROMANS 12:1

Do not be conformed
to this world,
but be transformed by the
renewal of your mind, that by
testing you
may discern what is
the will of God,
what is good and acceptable
and perfect.

ROMANS 12:2



Beloved, never avenge
yourselves, but leave it to
the wrath of God, for it
is written, "Vengeance is
mine, I will repay,
says the Lord."

ROMANS 12:19

Let every person
be subject to the
governing authorities.
For there is no
authority except from
God, and those that
exist have been
instituted by God.

ROMANS 13:1

Owe no one anything,
except to love each
other, for the one
who loves another
has fulfilled the law.

ROMANS 13:8



But put on the Lord
Jesus Christ, and make
no provision for the flesh,
to gratify its desires.

ROMANS 13:14

For whatever was
written in former
days was written for
our instruction, that
through endurance
and through the
encouragement of the
Scriptures we might have
hope.

ROMANS 15:4

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy
and peace in believing,
so that by the power
of the Holy Spirit you
may abound in hope.

ROMANS 15:13



FOR THE WORD OF GOD AND FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

REVELATION 1:9

