

Union Bethel AME Church Bible Study

Dial-in Number: (425) 436-6260 Access Code: 141997#

Zoom Meeting ID 863 1188 9288, Passcode 782781

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Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 6:30 – 7:30 PM

Romans 12:1-21



Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Unlike some of the prosperity theology we hear today, Paul clearly asks the Christians in Rome to sacrifice. This was not a sacrifice of death but to sacrifice daily our own plans to be in a position for God to use us. That can only happen if we are set apart from the desires of this world. Instead of conforming to worldly expectations and opinions, Paul writes that the Christians in Rome should experience a transformation by renewing the mind. To transform is make a dramatic change in form, appearance, or character. In this case Paul suggests our character should conform to God's expectations and not the world's expectations. To renew is to refresh or begin again. It also means reestablishing a relationship. In this case, renewing our minds is strengthening our relationship with God.

What activities can help us transform through renewing our minds?

Romans 12:3-8

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. **4** For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. **6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; **7** or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; **8** he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Spiritual gifts that God gives to us sets us apart only to do work that glorifies God. These gifts do not elevate us above anyone else. God does not rank spiritual gifts. All spiritual gifts are used to uplift God's people and present the truth of the Gospel. When Paul said not to think *more* highly of ourselves, we are not to put anyone, including ourselves, on a pedestal.

How do we have a strong sense of self and purpose without thinking too highly of ourselves?

Romans 12:9-13

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. **10** Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; **11** not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; **12** rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; **13** distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Paul paints an ideal situation that is possible when we are not arrogant and puffed up. People live with each other as family members meet each other's needs without any judgment. To create this community requires not just love but also requires actively turning from evil.

What are the key points that Paul raised in these verses?

Romans 12:14-16

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

Paul continued providing guidance on how to live in a community. This was not just for living with fellow Christians but for living with everyone. Paul directed the Christians in the Roman church to bless those who persecuted them. Paul also wanted Christians to bear each other's burdens and celebrate each other's victories.

How can we be of the same mind in joy and in sorrow?

Romans 12:17-21

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

God will avenge as God decides. Paul required the people in the church in Rome not to fight those who hurt them. Paul says to give place for wrath (vs. 19) which means to allow space for God to move on our behalf.

Instead, Paul asked that they sacrifice for those who are evil. In this way some will be won over to Christ Jesus. Love will conquer hate.

What tools can we use to avoid seeking vengeance or wishing evil for those who hurt us?
