



Welcome - (~2 min)

Opening prayer – (~1 min)

Opening Comments – (~3 min)

- Paul now moves to his next subject which is the practical application of what he has shared thus far.
- You might divide his letter into two major parts; the first part, is for his readers to have the correct belief, the correct understanding of what God has done, and the correct understanding of who He is.
- The second part is directed to believers regarding the correct behavior they are to live.
- For believers these two parts are inseparable. It has been likened to two sides of the same gold coin.
- Paul has explained our need for a right relationship with God and His provision to bring us into that relationship.
- Paul has discussed the difficulties of us staying in that right relationship because of our old natures.
- He has given encouragement by sharing the truths of his experiences and the fact that we have the Holy Spirit to help us.
- He has defended God's sovereign purposes and His freely offered righteousness.
- Now he begins to explain methods for putting our Christian life into practical practice.
- These last chapters of Romans speak to our need to express outwardly, by faithful Christian living, the inward righteousness you have received as a believer from God.
- An early Christian affirmation put it this way, "I believe in order that I might obey. I obey in order that I might believe."
- You could say these closing chapters are practical application of what Paul has explained thus far: justification, sanctification, grace, mercy, salvation, sharing the gospel, and the list goes on.
- As we have discussed before, the word "*Therefore*" refers back to what Paul has said.
- This seems to be his way of keeping everything in context for his readers.
- In this "*Therefore*" Paul is saying remember the truths about God's grace and mercy in saving sinners through the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.
- Remember God has a unique purpose and plan for every believer that has them on a path of godly living for Him.
- Remember God is the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Lord of lords and King of kings who controls history and how He even used the Jews' unbelief to bring in the Gentiles --- us!
- Because of all this, Paul wants believers to know they should live differently than they did before being saved and differently than those of the world around them.
- This promises to be a wonderful next few weeks as we learn how to express our inward changes outwardly to those in our sphere of influence (family, friends, church, community, world).

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~52 min)

Week's Aim: *The Gospel's Power to Heal the World: The Transformed Life*

Topic for Day 1: Overview of Romans 12:1-21

1. Up to this point, Paul has been dealing with *right belief*. To what is Paul shifting his focus now?

- He is now shifting to applications, how Christians should live and treat other people.

- “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship”
- “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought...”
- “each member belongs to the others”
- Love, sincerity, devotion, honor, zeal, fervor, joyful, prayer, bless, live at peace, overcome evil with good are all words expressing and supporting the direction Paul is now taking us....
- His attention is moving towards application for how our personal life, our life and relationships within the church family, and our relationships outside the church family, in community and/or the world!
- As our title states: **The Gospel's Power to Heal the World: The Transformed Life**

2. (+2 min) **What phrase(s) or word(s) do you see repeated in this chapter?**

- “Do not” (at least 7x); evil (4x); good (3x); grace (2x); mercy (2x); love (2x)
- This type of question encourages people to read and reread the verses and as they do the word searches, they becoming more and more familiar with the passage.

3. (+2 min) **List three areas of the Christian's life which Paul addresses and give verses which support each area.**

- Our personal life – **12:1-2**; Our relationship with other believers – **12:3-13**; Our relationship with others outside the church family – **12:14-21**.

(+1 min) **Application 1: What will you apply to your life this week from the sermon? How will you ensure you do it?**

Topic for Day 2: The first steps of a transformed life. - 12:1-2

1. (+2 min) **We know when Paul uses the word “*therefore*,” it is an all inclusive statement reminding his reader of all that has been said. Referring to chapters 1-11, identify some of the major points Paul has discussed so far.**

- Some things that might be mentioned are:
- Chapter 1 – God’s wrath and people’s depravity and perversion.
- Chapter 2 – God’s righteous judgment.
- Chapter 3 – God’s faithfulness and that no person is righteous.
- Chapters 4 and 5 – Faith and how important faith is in relations to our salvation and service.
- Chapter 6 – Believers are dead to sin and alive in Christ.
- Chapter 7 – The struggles believers have in everyday life trying to live right before God.
- Chapter 8 – We have life through the Holy Spirit, a future glory, and we are more than conquerors.
- Chapter 9 – God is sovereign and He enacts His sovereign choice as He sees fit.
- Chapters 10 and 11 – The future for Jews and Gentiles knowing that God always has a remnant.
- Note that Paul isn’t give commands, but he uses the word *brothers* making what he says inclusive.
- He includes himself here as well as those in Rome.
- “*in view of God’s mercy*” – in Greek text this word *mercy* is plural, not singular – that is Hebraism.
- It denotes an abundance of *mercy* – God is rich in *mercy*, He has plenty of it!
- We often see *goodness*, *grace*, and *mercy* used together but they are different.
- *Goodness* is a general term and involves all that emanates from God: His decrees, creation, laws, etc..
- *Grace* denotes favor toward the undeserving: two types, general *grace* is shown to all peoples such as sunshine, rain, air, the creation.

- *Saving grace* is what God shows to those He is saving. It is His action without any obligation to do so!
- *Mercy* is an aspect of grace, but the unique quality of *mercy* is that it is given to the pitiful through the compassion and tenderness of God.
- So Paul has given the reason for doing what he writes next, *in view of God's mercy!*
- (Paraphrasing) In appreciation for His *mercy* shown us, in gratitude of His *mercy*; in respect and admiration of His *mercy* we are **to offer your (our) bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God!**

2. (+3 min) **What does Paul say believers are doing when they offer themselves completely in service to the Lord? How does that affect your motives and focus for serving in our church?**

- 12:1b – *“this is your spiritual act of worship”*
- Paul says *“offer your bodies as living sacrifices...”* there is some question as to what that means:
- Some say Paul is only referring to our minds and/or our wills but most agree “body” means body!
- Paul has presented this idea back in Chapter 6 his emphasis was on our sinfulness with our bodies.
- We know that sin can grip us through our bodies and Paul is saying offer them as instruments for God's use.
- It is easy to say, “I've given myself to God” but its much harder to demonstrate it through our hands, feet, and our bodies.
- We are to offer out hands to work for, and to give aid to, others as God would have us do.
- We are to offer our feet to go where He would have us go.
- We are to offer our eyes for His service – eyes take in images for our minds so we need to be careful what we watch!
- **Only believers can give themselves to God as He requires, unbelievers can't do this!**
- Paul gives us the reason unbelievers can't do this, he says offer your body as a *living sacrifice* and adds *holy and pleasing to God!*
- Only believers can give back to God that new spiritual life He has given them first!
- All sacrifices in the Bible for God had to be *holy*, that means without blemish and just for God.
- Only believers are seen in this position by God because believers are seen with Jesus' righteousness!
- A plus in all this is that serving the Lord Paul says is an act of worship!
- **Your bodily sacrifice to God is an act of worship!**
- We need to understand that worship is much more than just coming to church, singing hymns, and listening to our pastors.
- Paul is saying every minute you are serving our Lord, you are performing an act of worship!
- So Paul includes himself and exhorts believers to sacrifice, be holy, and pleasing to God – **its worship!**

3. (+4 min) **How are we to be transformed? How does one "renew" his/her mind and what motive does Paul give for us to do this?**

- 1) We are to be transformed by renewing our minds (2)
- 2) It seems Paul is talking about renewing our minds for pleasing God.
- Diligent Bible study is one way to help us renew our minds for pleasing God.
- When the Holy Spirit blesses our study, we will begin taking on something of that glorious luster of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- As our minds are renewed and that renewal is acted upon, we will become increasingly like Him!
- Paul says we are to be *transformed* from a worldly pattern of life into a Christ like pattern of life!
- And people will see this change in our behavior patterns too.

- The word *transform* in Greek is *metamophoo* – the word *metamorphosis* is derived from this word.
- A common example of *metamorphosis* is a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.
- A parallel would be: we were dead in our sin = caterpillar/worm *transformed*
- Then we received *new life in Christ* and were *transformed* like the butterfly, a new creature!

4. (+2 min) **What is God's will for the believer in these verses? John 14:15; Acts 18:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and 5:17-19; and 1 Peter 2:15; and 3:17.**

John 14:15 – *“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”*

- We will be obedient to His commands. When we do this, we will be in God's will.

Acts 18:21 – *“But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God's will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus “*

- Again this verse demonstrates the obedience and doing as God desires rather than people.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 – *“It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality“*

- We please God when as we are being sanctified and in that process we avoid sexual immorality.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-19 – *“pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not put out the Spirit's fire; “*

- We please God and are in His will when we pray and give thanks.
- The keywords here **in all circumstances** – always praying and giving thanks.

1 Peter 2:15 – *“For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men“*

- Doing good is pleasing to God and in His will.
- Seems an appropriate place to say it.... “actions speak louder than words, even to the foolish person!”

1 Peter 3:17 – *“It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil“*

- This is an interesting verse. Note the words “if it is God's will”
- We do many things “for the good” of something or for something but the first question we need to ask ourselves and God is “Is this in your will Father?”
- And it is not a bad idea to ask for some form of confirmation if you are in doubt.
- This is simply asking that He confirm your thoughts in some form so you know which direction to go on something.
- The confirmation may be internal where you just know, it may be external by something that happens or people He places in your path.
- If you ask for confirmation, be sure to watch for it, and then when it comes, act on it.

(+4 min) **Application 2: How will you present yourself as a living sacrifice to God today? How will you work on renewing your mind?**

Topic for Day 3: The transformed life leads to humility and cheerfully using the gift(s) given. - 12:3-8

1.(+2 min) **Paul says, "to think of yourself with sober judgment." What does that mean to you?**

- It means to think realistically about oneself, to evaluate ones true strengths and weaknesses.
- To be honest with oneself, drop the facades and pride
- To evaluate oneself in accordance with your position with God, e.g., I am His child but it is by His grace
- Warren Weirsbe says, “It is not wrong for a Christian to recognize gifts in his/her own life or the lives of others. What *is* wrong is the tendency to have a false evaluation of ourselves. Nothing causes more damage in a local church than a believer who overrates himself or herself, and tries to perform a ministry that he/she cannot do. (Sometimes the opposite is true, and people undervalue themselves).”¹

- We need to do regular self evaluations - *"do not think of yourself more highly than you ought."*
- So Paul has given us the things we are to do *personally* in verses 1-3, sacrifice our bodies, live holy and pleasing lives to God, service is spiritual worship, be transformed by renewing our minds, be humble, be sober in our judgment of ourselves, and do not think too highly of ourselves.
- Now he moves from personal to relationship within the family of believers.

2. (+2 min) **He also says, "*the measure of faith God has given you.*" What do you think that means and how is it helpful for a believer to understand this, especially when working with other Christians?**

- This phrase involves what each one of us is uniquely – that is, as different from other people – and it leads to the discussion of spiritual gifts that follows in this chapter.
- We can measure our own personal *faith* in at least these three ways:
 - 1) We can measure our faith in accordance with our confidence and trust we place in God;
 - 2) We can measure our faith in accordance with the knowledge that we have of God;
 - 3) We can measure our faith in accordance with our individual spiritual gifts and talents He has given us.
- Paul seems to be indicating that our faith is our measuring stick.
- See how this ties back to **12:1-2** – you see, as we *sacrifice our bodies*, as we are *transformed* from the world, as we *renew our minds*, our *faith*, which is God's gift will increase.
- Our faith will increase also through practical application and the *testing and approving God's will, His good, pleasing, and perfect will.*
- As we apply what Paul is teaching, and this was the same for his readers in his day
- Our self-assessments will come into line as a result of our *faith* being strengthened and they will become more accurate.
- As this happens, two other things will happen as a result: 1) our humility will increase; 2) our arrogance will decrease as we become less prideful and self-centered.
- So we see how thoughtful Paul was by the way he ties things together in so many ways. He has tied these first three verses all the way back to chapter 1.
- As you study, ask yourself these questions: 1) What is Paul saying? 2) Why is he saying it? 3) What is the context in which he is saying it? 4) How does it apply to me today? 5) What are the benefits of implementing it in my daily Christian walk?
- That friends is Bible study!

3. (+4 min) **Paul says that all believers belong to one another. What thoughts does that bring to mind for you in regards to our church family?**

- Paul knew his readers needed a correct self-assessment if they were to have a right relationship with the Church.
- Paul speaks of the true Church in this passage when he says *we in Christ form one body*
- The Church formally began at Pentecost in Acts 2 – when the Holy Spirit indwelt all believers
- The Church had been in God's mind from eternity past! Remember the *Therefore!*
- This is the *universal church* which is spelled with a "C"
- When we talk about different churches, we mean buildings, congregations, denominations, etc..
- But Paul is teaching the *body of Christ* is *one body* made up of all saved souls!
- **Ephesians 4:4-6** says, "*There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all "*

- He is instructing us to recognize our relationship with other Christian believers is *common ground*.

4. (+2 min) **Paul identifies some of the Spiritual gifts that are given to believers by God's grace. List the gifts and how we are to use them as Paul describes in these verses 12:6-8.**

- Listen to multiple people as to how they interpret these verses.

Gift	How to use:
Prophecy	Let him use it in proportion to His faith
Serving	Let him serve
Teaching	Let him teach
Encouraging	Let him encourage
Contributing	Let him give <i>generously</i>
Leadership	Let him govern <i>diligently</i>
Mercy	Let him do it <i>cheerfully</i>

- First, notice that Paul affirms that *all believers* have a spiritual gift.
- Paul himself identified one of his spiritual gifts in **12:3**, the gift of *apostleship*.
- It is very important to notice the words he uses in **12:6** – “*We have different gifts*”
- He doesn't say, “*some have*” or “*most have*” but “*we have*”
- Also his words “*according to the grace given us!*” He includes himself.
- A question may be, “What is a *spiritual gift*?”
- A brief definition of *spiritual gift*:
 - 1) A special gift given by the Holy Spirit (He gives them) to believers;
 - 2) God in His grace has given all members of His body different gifts, every believer has at least one.
 - 3) Their purpose is to edify the Church and to make the body function well, resulting in its maturing.
- They are not for edifying the one who has the gift!
- No gift makes a believer more holy, spiritual, or righteous than other believers!
- When gifts are used properly, the body increasingly reflects the character of the head which is Jesus Christ.
- Spiritual gifts are not like our natural talents, skills that you were born with, have developed or learned.
- They are *super and divine abilities enabling you to do things that you know you could not do*.
- **By God's grace each believer is given a *spiritual gift* for application in Christ's body.**

(+2 min) **Application 3: What is a situation in which you need to demonstrate humility today? How might you use your spiritual gift(s) today?**

Topic for Day 4: Transformed lives are loving, devoted, zealous, and enjoy being with believers. - 12:9-13

1. (+2 min) **How does our cultural view of love compare to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7?**

- You might want to caution people to avoid mentioning specific people or groups of people, churches, denominations, government. Doing that can take the group off target.
- **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** – “*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not*

delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

- You can use the verses above to compare how people's views are today. Often people's love is self-centered, young people think "having sex" is love, often it is selfish, some say a loving marriage is 50/50, some couples actually keep running tabs on things they do for their spouse.
- Paul makes two points regarding love: 1st is that love is to be sincere; 2nd is that love must be indiscriminate.
- Sincere love is love without hypocrisy and indiscriminate love doesn't keep counts.
- In Greek there are four words for love versus our one word. They are:
 - 1) *Storgē* – refers to love for your family.
 - 2) *Philia* – this is love between friends.
 - 3) *Eros* – this is erotic/sexual love.
 - 4) *Agapē* - this is Godly love. Godly love is pure, holy, unvarying, genuine, and sincere.
- *Agapē* is the word Paul uses in **12:9**.
- He defined its characteristic in the **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** passage.
- That is the kind of love Paul is saying we must exhibit to others.

2. (+3 min) **What are the commands Paul gives in verses 9-13?**

- **1)** Love sincerely; **2)** hate evil and cling to good; **3)** be devoted to others in *brotherly* love; **4)** honor others before self; **5)** be zealous and fervent for the Lord; **6)** be joyful in hope; **7)** patient in affliction; **8)** faithful in prayer; **9)** share with church family; **10)** practice hospitality.
- Paul lists ten practical ways in which we are to live with those around us.
- Some may have a problem with the word "*hate*"
- Sometimes we are confused about hating, we think all hate is sinful, but that's not true.
- God hates sin and evil!
- **Proverbs 6:16-19** God identifies 7 things God hates: *haughty eyes, lying tongues, hands that shed innocent blood, a divisive heart which schemes wickedly, feet that run to evil, false witnesses, and the man who stirs up dissension in the church."*
- **Amos 5:21** God says, "*I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies."*
- The reason God said this was that their hearts weren't in the feasts nor assemblies. It was a mockery!
- So coming back to the 10 responsibilities Paul listed, we need to understand that to live like this, our focus turns from us to others.
- We also need to understand that we cannot do this by our own will power.
- We might be able for a short time to hold to these practices, but eventually we will fail.
- However, if our hope is in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit then we will be enabled to practice these things. Does that mean we won't falter? Of course not, we are still people!
- But as believers, we have the power to do this living within us.

3. (+3 min) **Which of these commands is most difficult for you to obey? How might you change that?**

- This is purely a discussion question for encouragement of one another.

(+1 min) **Application 4: Select at least one of the commands Paul identified and describe ways you will obey it today. Anticipate what might stand in your way and how you will overcome the obstacle:**
(again, encourage one another by having people share)

Topic for Day 5: Transformed lives emit Christ likeness to others. - 12:14-21

1. (+2 min) **How are we to “bless” those who persecute us? See Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27-28.**

Matthew 5:44 – *“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you “*

Luke 6:27-28 – *““But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.”*

- Jesus gives us a clue in Matthew 5:44 – a way we are to show love to them is to pray for them.
- Again Jesus gives commands for loving our enemies in Luke 6:27-28:
 - 1) We are to do good to those who hate us.
 - 2) We are to bless them (e.g., Romans 12:20 – feed them, give them drink)
 - 3) Do not return evil for evil – turn the other cheek if stricken (however, some of you might remember Reverend Hines at our church used to say “If you turn the other cheek and they strike it too, then enough is enough and deal with it!” He’d say Scripture doesn’t say what to do if they hit you again!).
 - 4) If they steal from you, don’t stop him.
- These are very difficult things to do to those who persecute us! How are we to do these things?
- We need to do two things: 1) trust in the Holy Spirit’s leading; 2) trust in our God for justice as is mentioned in **12:19**.

2. (+2 min) **Paul says in verse 18, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” What do these verses tell you about peace, Mark 9:50; John 14:27; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 2:14-18?**

Mark 9:50 – *““Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”*”

- This is referring to the body of believers.

John 14:27 – *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

- This is Jesus talking and He is promising His peace being given to believers.
- His peace should help us avoid our hearts being troubled or fearful.

Galatians 5:22-23 – *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. “*

- This is the list of the fruit of the Spirit – peace is to be a part of our daily lives.
- Believers having peace should be evident to those around them.

Ephesians 2:14-18 – *“For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit “*

- The Lord Jesus Christ is to be our peace at all times.
- We are to live “*in*” peace which means we are within the outer limits of peace all the time and Jesus Christ is that peace.
- We are to live “*in*” Him and we will be at peace.

- Paul places a caution in **12:17b** and that is *be careful to do what is right in everybody's eyes.*"
- We are not to live by what others say and/or think but to live by God's words.
- **Living undisciplined lives allows the world to see the gospel as being powerless and promises immaterial.**
- It is important to remember that we are continually a witness for Christ all the time we are in the world.

3. (+3 min) **How are people overcome with evil in our society today? Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22.**

What does it say we should do regarding our enemies?

- This is a question you might want to caution people against turning it into a "bashing" response.
- Proverbs says we are to feed and offer drink to our enemies.
- It is difficult to do that but look at what the effects will be: *"you will heap burning coals on his head"*
- We may not see this effect right away but it will be as effective as the Lord wants it to be.
- Our responsibility is to be obedient and *"leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay" says the Lord."*
- These last few verses are the most difficult to understand and apply to our lives today as they were in Paul's day for the believers in Rome and elsewhere.
- If we look at the context of all Paul has said, as we think about these verses to love our enemies it will be a bit clearer.
- It all goes back to **12:1-2** – doing all these things is dependent on our accepting *"in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing, and perfect will."*
- That's it in a nutshell – we cannot live the patterns Paul has laid out for us unless we truly *offer our bodies as living sacrifices* and that coupled with the Holy Spirit, we will truly be blessed.

(+2 min) **Application 5: What will you do today to overcome evil with good in your sphere of influence today?**

(ask for some ways people thought about overcoming evil – if they haven't and you have time, they can respond in real time.)

(+2 min)

Closing Comments – (~1 min)

- In closing, Paul has laid out quite a difficult set of application for believers to follow and we can't do it without the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus says in **Luke 9:23**, *"Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*
- That is what Paul is alluding to when he said *"offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God."*
- A recommendation is to add **12:1-2** to your memory verses – **1:16-17**.

Closing Prayers – (~1 min)

¹ Warren Wiersbe, "The Bible Exposition Commentary New Testament Volume 1," Cook Publishing, 2001, p.555