



Relentless Grace: How the Gospel Changes Everything

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Session 14 – Transformed Living | Romans Chapter 12

Chapter 12 is a turning point in this letter—and Paul clearly wanted it to be a turning point in the life of every believer who reads it. Every topic he has touched on in Romans brings us to this place. It is safe to say that Paul was passionate about two things: Preaching the gospel to those who are lost; and teaching believers to live out the gospel in everyday life.

Icebreaker

When you think of *change* what comes to mind? Check what best describes your initial reaction.

- It's too much trouble. It's not likely to last. It's a little bit scary.
 It keeps life interesting. There's always room for improvement. Let's do this!

Goals for this Session:

- Discover the secret of a satisfied life.
- Consider ways to live out the gospel in community with others.
- Pray for opportunities to cultivate spiritual gifts and strong relationships.

Transformed for Life

Romans 12:1–2

Entire sermons have been preached on these verses. If we don't respond to Paul's plea here, any effort to obey the instructions in the rest of this chapter will be superficial.

1. *By the mercies of God.* What reasons can you think of for becoming a living sacrifice? Use Romans 11:33–36 for help with your answer.

- a. Explain in practical terms what Paul means when he describes our sacrifice as:

→¹ living

→¹ holy

“The real secret of an unsatisfied life is most often traced back to an unsundered will.”

J. Hudson Taylor

- b. What are some things that indicate conformity to the world?

#wordstoknow

Greek words/terms at a glance.

prove (dokimazo) determine value by observing behavior in intense heat or pressure.

conformed (syschematizo) to be shaped, like clay pressed into a mold; (a passive verb).

transformed (metamorpho) To be changed: in character, in substance, in nature.

perfect (teleios) complete; ultimate; lacking nothing.

- c. If you can identify what hinders you from presenting yourself as a living sacrifice, what would it be?

Memory Verse

As you memorize this verse, let it sink in and make it part of your prayers. Ask the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and increase your understanding.

“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.”

Romans 12:2 NKJV

Think About It . . .

Which part of this verse resonates most with you today? How and in what way?

Living in Community

Romans 12:3–21

The transforming power of God’s love changes how we think and live in community with others. We learn that every gift is not for every believer—but these commands are for us all.

1. **Here to serve** (verses 3–8). Paul cautions against thinking too highly of ourselves. That’s a mandate in every aspect of life, but Paul has the church specifically in mind.

- a. Who decides what gifts we are given—and for what purpose?

1 Corinthians 12:7, 11 | Ephesians 4:15–16 | 1 Peter 4:10

Paul describes some, but not all, spiritual gifts. Those mentioned here (some are highly visible, others are more behind the scenes) illustrate Paul’s point not to inflate or overestimate what we bring to the table as compared to someone else. More gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and Ephesians 4:11-12.

- b. A “measure of faith” is simply another term for a spiritual gift. When we regard the gifts as a measure of acceptance, or value, or visibility, trouble creeps in. Every spiritual gift is customized, but comes with the same specifications for use. Please explain.

Mark 10:42–45

Philippians 2:3–7

2. **Here to love** (verses 9–21). “Don’t think too highly” applies to more than self-promotion or chasing the spotlight. If we don’t see the need to be in community with other believers, we overestimate our own strength and abilities. We need each other!

Paul talks about breaking through the surface of casual acquaintance to put down roots of genuine love (verse 9).

- a. *Love in action* (verses 10–16). Reading this, what stands out? From personal experience, give an example of being on the *receiving* end of something mentioned here. Give an example of being on the *giving* end of something mentioned here.

- b. *Love under pressure* (verses 17–21). Life is messy, unfair, and imperfect. How would you compare Paul’s instructions here* to the advice we’d likely get from the world?

* Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22. Two possible meanings: 1) When a person’s fire went out, he needed to borrow live coals to restart his fire. Giving a person coals in a pan to carry home on their head was a neighborly, kind act; it made friends, not enemies. 2) An Egyptian ritual: If a person was guilty of wrongdoing, he would carry a pan of burning coals on his head to signal repentance.

3. *How the gospel changes everything.* People who live by the mercies of God never outgrow the gospel. It's not just how we become Christians, it compels us to live out our faith in every part of life. When God transforms us by changing the way we think, the power of the gospel is good news all over again.

a. **The gospel is incentive to lifelong change.** A *living* sacrifice means walking out our "yes, Lord" in daily surrender. The spiritual adage to *evangelize or fossilize* is as true for individual believers as it is for the church. When you think of the cross, does it still move you to believe and obey? Why or why not?

"If you look up into His face and say, 'Yes, Lord, whatever it costs,' at that moment He will flood your life with His presence and power."

Alan Redpath

In practical terms, what does it look like to present yourself to God as a living sacrifice?

James 1:22–24

2 Peter 1:5–8

b. **The gospel is incentive to live in community.** As Paul said, we are many parts of one body and we belong to each other. That's why the Bible urges us to look for ways to come together and motivate one another to love and good deeds (see Hebrews 10:24–25).

What does that currently look like for you? Some aspects of living in community are listed below. How does active involvement in these areas help you to grow? How have you been able to encourage someone else's growth?

→¹ Sunday Worship / Bible Teaching

→¹ Midweek Service and/or Small Group

→¹ Serving / Using your spiritual gifts

→¹ Discipling / Mentoring

→¹ Prayer / Support

→¹ Hospitality / Fellowship/ Friendships

→¹ Gospel Sharing / Community Outreach

→¹ Other



Gospel at a Glance: A Life of Service | “God has enlisted us in His navy and placed us on His ship. The boat has one purpose—to carry us safely to the other shore. This is no cruise ship; it’s a battleship. We aren’t called to a life of leisure; we are called to a life of service. Each of us has a different task. Some, concerned with those who are drowning, are snatching people from the water. Others are occupied with the enemy, so they man the cannons of prayer and worship. Still others devote themselves to the crew, feeding and training the crew members.

Though different, we are the same. Each can tell of a personal encounter with the captain, for each has received a personal call . . . we each followed Him across the gangplank of His grace onto the same boat. There is one captain and one destination. Though the battle is fierce, the boat is safe, for our captain is God.” – Max Lucado¹

“In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:5 niv).

¹ Max Lucado, *In the Grip of Grace*, (J.Countryman, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee), p. 303

Adoration **C**onfession **T**hankfulness **S**upplication

“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” Ephesians 6:18 NIV

In each session, we will pray—for ourselves, for others, for our church, and for our nation. As a focus for prayer, use the memory verse, another scripture, or what the Lord has impressed on you from the chapter. No need to be profound or elaborate, just authentic.

Write a simple prayer, including each element here.

A _____

C _____

T _____

S _____

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