

INTRODUCTION - ROMANS 12:1-21

In this chapter, Paul offers practical ways for Christians to demonstrate their faith. Such demonstrations begin within the believer and are to be displayed whenever the believer encounters and engages with other people. In other words the inward work of grace produces outward acts of grace. This is especially so as believers work together to advance the Gospel.

Keep up: complete N.T. Wright, *Romans: 18 Studies for Individuals and Groups*, p. 71-74.

It takes discipline for the expression of your life to exemplify Christ

Romans 12:1-8 → Self-sacrifice and the ministries of grace.

- Because of the “mercies of God” in chapters 1-11, believers should respond by **offering themselves up** (or, sacrifice themselves) to Christ by **refusing to conform** to the ways of the world and **being transformed** through renewing their minds (1-2). Christ’s sacrifice (discussed throughout chs. 1-11) brought about reconciliation; the believer’s sacrifice (chs. 12 and following) demonstrates appreciation and celebration.
- God gives everyone a measure of faith and our thoughts and actions should be filtered through the lens of this grace. This formula should keep our egos in check:

God gave it + we didn’t earn it = level-headed because of who we are (not too high or too low). what we have. and who gave it to us

- Verses 1-3 are vital because believers are to work together because of and in spite of the differences that make us who are--the church of the Lord Jesus Christ (v.4-8).

Romans 12:9-13 → Express your love through actions.

- Paul characterizes and appeals for love that is: **genuine** (lit., “not hypocritical” v.9); **mutual devotion** (v.10); **mutual honor** (lit., “show the way for another,” showing deference, v.10); **zealous** (“earnest, diligent, enthusiastic” v. 11); **spirit-filled** (lit., “burning, hot, boiling” v.11); and **devoted service to the Lord**.
- Paul exhorts believers to **have long-term faith** (v.12) and **take care of short-term needs** (v.13). Care for your faith and care for others are part of Christian living.

What difference could this kind of love make for believers in Rome? For believers today?

Romans 12:14-21 → Guard your interpersonal interactions.

- We should interact with people (v.14-18) and trust God when interpersonal interactions are harmful (v.19-21). Whether harmed or not, believers should act and think in ways that promote righteousness. If unity is not possible, trust God while overcoming (lit., “conquering” which gives us the word Nike) using the good that has been proposed.

When things go “wrong” in our interactions with people, believers are advised to: “let God handle it.” How can this help us guard our interpersonal interactions? (*Hint: see 12:21.*)
