

Living the Christian Life

Key Verse: *“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”*
—**Romans 12:9,10**

Selected Scripture:
Romans 12:1,2,9-21

IN ROMANS, CHAPTER twelve, Apostle Paul gives us, in just twenty-one verses, a life's worth of admonition and guidance worthy of our attention. In verse one, he identifies the great privilege it is for one to give their heart unto God. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) He says that for one to present themselves to God is only a ‘reasonable service,’ reasonable when compared to the great love and mercy extended to us by God in the giving of his only begotten Son as our Redeemer. It is only ‘by the mercies of God,’ given to us through the merit of his faithful Son’s redemptive sacrifice, that we have anything worthy to present to God, ‘holy, acceptable,’ as he describes.

In the next verse, Paul embarks upon a discussion of how we are to live our life, having fulfilled the requirements of presenting ourselves to God in sacrifice. (vs. 1) “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed

by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (vs. 2) We are not to be ‘conformed’ to the general thinking of this present evil world, with its pride, selfishness, and underlying greed that stimulates and molds its general spirit. We are to be ‘transformed’ by a renewing of our mental faculties, along godlike precepts, in order that we can ‘prove,’ and then do, the ‘good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.’

In verses nine through twenty-one, and including the Key Verses, Paul does not leave us in doubt as to what constitutes the proper renewed mind, and the type of characteristics it should show forth. He provides us with a myriad of short, concise, admonitions that, if taken together and applied properly, will make everyone who thus follows them successful in their endeavor to be a faithful overcomer. “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”—Rom. 12:9-21, *New International Version* ■