

# Admonition and Guidance from Paul

*“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*

**Apostle Paul, in his writings,** provides a life’s worth of admonition and guidance desirable for our attention. In our present lesson, we will look at just two of many examples from his Epistle to the Romans—one from chapter 12 and another from chapter 14. At the very beginning of chapter 12, the apostle identifies the great privilege

it is for Christians 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

The apostle says here 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. Indeed, 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 Paul describes.

In the very next verse of this chapter, Paul embarks upon a discussion of how we are to live our life, having fulfilled the requirements of presenting ourselves to God in sacrifice. He says, “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.” (Rom. 12:2) We are not to be conformed to the general thinking of this present evil world, with its pride, selfishness, and underlying greed, which stimulates and molds its general spirit. Rather, we are to be “transformed” by a renewing of our mental faculties along God-like precepts, in order that we can “prove,” and then do, the “good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

## **A Renewed Mind**

In verses nine through twenty-one of Romans chapter 12, 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 Christians who follow them successful in their endeavors to be faithful overcomers.

The apostle writes: “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*

## **Warnings from Paul**

Turning our attention now to Romans chapter 14, Apostle Paul recalled that there were some disputes among the Lord's people about such things as what they should eat, what days should be considered holy, and the ensuing judgments which were being rendered one to another as a result of such disputes and disagreements. He warns the brethren that such arguments and the improper judgments that came from them were out of harmony with the Christian liberty in which they all now should be sharing.

Concerning the matter of eating, Paul said, "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." (Rom. 14:2,3) Regarding the recognition of holy days, Paul further writes, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."—vss. 5,6

In the foregoing verses, the apostle states that it is not what Christians eat or do not eat that determines faithfulness to their covenant; neither is the fact that some might think one day to be holier than another day of vital importance. How a person reasons on these things concerning "himself" implies, according to Paul, that one in such a condition is in fact spending too much time thinking about himself and his own will, rather than God and his will. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."—vss. 7,8

The lesson is quite clear. We do not belong to ourselves, and so our preferences along the lines of relatively unimportant questions such as what to eat and what days to observe in a special way are best kept to ourselves. Certainly, these matters should never be used as a test of faith, of fellowship among brethren, or even of criticism of one another.

Apostle Paul furthermore says that judgment of our brethren concerning matters as previously mentioned should be put far away from our thinking. “Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ... Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” (vss. 10,13) Far more serious than any indiscretion as to what we eat, drink, or what days we may particularly celebrate, would be that we say or do anything to stumble another brother or sister in Christ by insisting on our preferences in such matters.

### **Proper Attitude**

In the next chapter of Romans, Paul points out the proper attitude that we should have toward our brethren and the loving, unified relationship we should enjoy one with another through Christ. “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Rom. 15:5,6

The apostle says we should be “likeminded,” desiring the mind, or disposition, of Christ in ourselves, just as our brethren are striving for this same mind also. Having this mind we then can truly do as Paul says, “with one mind and one mouth [together] glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” ■