

“Therefore . . . Theology Should Change Us”

Romans 12:1-8

*“Therefore, I urge you brothers in view of God’s mercy,
To offer your bodies . . . be transformed . . . do not think highly of yourself . . .” (12:1-3)*

Paul makes a shift from teaching (ch’s 1-11) to exhorting (ch’s 12-16). But the exhorting is based on the teaching. The challenge to make godly changes in our lives is dependent on the truth of God’s Word. Paul is not simply saying ‘make behavioural changes’. Rather he is saying, ‘If this is all true about God [i.e. His mercies] then this should be our reasonable response to live closer to God.’ Change for change sake does not last. There has to be a good reason why we should change. That’s why Paul stresses here in this transition section that true change in our behaviour starts with a change in our thinking.

“An Urgent Appeal to Love God” (12:1-2)

As Paul concluded ch. 11 with a wonderful doxology about the wisdom and knowledge of God in how He saves both Jew and Gentile, how did he end that?

11:36 “For _____ Him and _____ Him and _____ Him are _____ things.
To Him be the _____ forever and ever, amen!”

Everything is rooted in God, everything is from God and everything is ultimately going to glorify God. Therefore, Paul says in v. 1, it should change us. How?

12:1 “Therefore, I urge you brothers in view of God’s mercies, to _____ your _____ as _____ sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your _____ act of worship.”

Sacrifices were nothing new. Every religion in Paul’s day offered sacrifices to their god. What were some of the problems with this kind of systematic worship?

God expresses His dislike for sacrifices (worship) [Is. 1:10-15] when the people are guilty of what?
Is. 1:15 . . . your hands are full of _____.”

1:16 “Wash your hands and make yourselves clean. Take your _____ deeds out of My sight.
stop doing _____

1:17 “Learn to do _____! Seek _____, encourage the _____.
defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.”

Hosea 6:6 “For I desire _____ not sacrifice and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.”

Read **Malachi 1:10-14**. *These people were bringing sacrifices but why didn’t God approve of them?*

***Why do you think God requested a male animal sacrifice rather than a female animal for the burnt offering (the main worship offering)?**

Back in Romans what is Paul asking us to do?

12:1 “Present your _____ as a _____ sacrifice.”

How is this different?

1 Cor. 10:31

Col. 3:17

Paul says this is our “spiritual” act of worship. Most Bibles have a footnote for “spiritual” as possibly being translated “reasonable”. Note how Paul uses this word in other verses in Romans.

2:3 “So when you a mere man pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you _____ you will escape God’s judgment?”

4:3 “Now Abraham believed God and it was _____ to him as righteousness” [4:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22-24]

6:11 “In the same way _____ yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
[see also 8:18, 36; 14:14]

To worship God with our entire being is obviously ‘spiritual’ but why is it “reasonable” according to this verse?

Paul wants to emphasize our need to love God with our minds because only if we are convinced in our minds God’s Word is true will we change. How does v.2 pick up on this?

12:2 “Do not _____ to the pattern of this world but be _____ by the renewing of your _____. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Meditating and studying truth enables one to be able to discern that which is good (according to God’s will) and that which is detrimental (like the world). Is this ‘new’ teaching?

Ps. 119:1-16

Prov. 2:1-8

“An Urgent Appeal to Love Others” (12:3-8)

Paul seems to be reminding believers of the ‘greatest commandment’ which is to love God (12:1-2) and love others (12:3-8) because it is this practical outworking of truth which he goes to next. Notice the focus is still on the mind.

12:3 “For by the _____ given me I say to every one of you:
Do not _____ of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather _____ of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of _____
God has given you.”

The Christian’s renewing of his/her mind results in a clearer understanding of oneself and everyone. Notice again the dependency on God.

12:1 “I urge you brothers in view of God’s _____ . . .”

12:3 “For by the _____ given to me . . .”
“ . . . with the measure of _____ God has given you.”

How is everyone equal by the measurement of faith given us?

Eph. 2:8 “For it is by _____ you are saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the _____ of God”

In vv.4-8 how are all believers the same and yet different?

12:4 “Each of us has _____ body with _____ members and these members do not all have the same _____”

12:5 “So in Christ we who are many form _____ body and each member _____ to all the others.”

12:6 “We have _____ gifts according to the _____ given us.”

Paul moves from the need for solid Christian thinking based on Biblical truth (12:1-2) to the need to change the way we live (12:3-8). But notice right away he goes to where we live – in community. So what should all this ‘thinking’ and ‘renewing our mind’ take into account? (vv.6-8)

[The Bible verses quoted are from the NIV 1984 edition © International Bible Society]

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