

Does Your Life Please God?
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Romans 12

How do we live a life that is PLEASING TO GOD and ATTRACTIVE to others?
That's what Romans chapter 12 is all about. As my friend Chip Ingram puts it:
"Christians living like Christians."

Let's start with some discussion: Think of a Christian you've known who really lived LIKE A CHRISTIAN. I mean people watched their life and said "I want what THEY HAVE!" (Got that person in your mind?) What was different about them?
(DISCUSSION)

Potential follow ups:

What was their commitment to Christ like?

- What was their attitude like?
- Did they serve using their gifts?
- How LOVING were they?
- How GENEROUS were they?
- Peacemakers or TROUBLE MAKERS?
- How did they relate to others in times of JOY and times of SORROW?
- How did they respond when someone WRONGED them?

Statement: Jesus didn't die halfway and He isn't looking for PART-TIME followers.

The kind of Christians we've been talking about can be described by an important term:
FULLY SURRENDERED FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.

Romans 12:1-2

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- Verse 1 Paul says what he often says: THEREFORE...in other words, IN LIGHT OF WHAT I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU...here is what I URGE you to do
- "to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God"
- Verse 1: WHY does he say we should do this? In view of....God's mercy.
- Put that in your own words, "I should offer my body as a living sacrifice because..."
- i.e. - "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Romans 5:8
- Let's talk about LIVING SACRIFICE
- First, to these people, to say LIVING SACRIFICE was an OXYMORON.

- What's an OXYMORON? Remember the old George Carlin routine: "Jumbo shrimp" or "military intelligence" they seem like CONTRADICTIONS in terms.
- Why would LIVING SACRIFICE have seemed like an OXYMORON to the church at Rome? Sacrifices had to DIE.
- But that was for the FORGIVENESS of SIN.
- We don't need a SACRIFICE for the FORGIVENESS of SIN...why? Jesus paid it ALL
- So what does Paul mean by "offer your bodies as a LIVING SACRIFICE"?
- We should LIVE in a way that worthy of what CHRIST DIED FOR!
- But, the word is still SACRIFICE. What happened to a SACRIFICE? It was destroyed.
- The old joke about "ham and eggs" -- chicken = contribution; pig = a commitment

Jesus didn't die halfway and He isn't looking for PART-TIME followers.

- Also verse 1: "holy and pleasing to God" - Holy: Without spot or blemish according to the old testament. PLEASING: A SWEET SMELLING aroma/fragrance.
- Why would we do this? WHY NOT? "in view of God's mercy"...what Christ did for us, "this is your true and proper worship."
- Alright Paul...HOW do I do this? WHAT does it look like? Glad you asked, verse 2:
- "Do not conform...but be TRANSFORMED...by the RENEWING of your mind."
- If you have to RENEW something...what does that tell you about it? It runs out!
- Zig Ziglar on of POSITIVE THINKING...people say it doesn't last...neither does bathing!
- Our minds must be RENEWED with God's WORD...they have a leak! The world SUCKS the goodness right out of our minds and EVERY DAY they need RENEWAL in God's WORD.
- Just as our bodies need food to RENEW and REPLENISH so do our MINDS.
- It's like thinking you can drive your car on empty!
- "Well, I've tried getting gas but I don't really understand those pumps."
- "I go get gas every three or four weeks...I'm just too busy to go to the station."
- How about this one: "Those people at the gas station are hypocrites."
- You wouldn't drive your car on empty why would you try to live the Christian life on empty? Our minds need RENEWAL.
- And over time, what does Paul say happens as we RENEW OUR MINDS?
TRANSFORMED
- The word is MORPH. Change. BECOME SOMETHING TOTALLY NEW. We went in a caterpillar and we come out a beautiful butterfly.
- Paul started chapter 12 with this INSTRUCTION because he knew what he was about to tell us...and he knew there's no way we can live like Christians without being TRANSFORMED.
- "Okay Paul, if I GIVE MYSELF as a LIVING SACRIFICE and RENEW MY MIND...how do I live?" "Hang on a minute...first a word about ATTITUDE."
- Verse 3

Romans 12:3-8

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

- What do you think verse 3 means? Be humble.
- Wonder why he stuck "be humble" in here? Look at verse 4-8

4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

- Summarize those verses for us. God has given every believer at least ONE gift...use them CHEERFULLY and IN HUMILITY.

Christians living like Christians SERVE by using our GIFTS, Cheerfully and humbly.

- "How do we treat other people Paul?" "Glad you asked." Verses 9-16

Romans 12:9-16

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.[a] Do not be conceited.

- The good news about these verses is, if I have to explain them to you...you should go to the back of the class! They are SIMPLE and STRAIGHTFORWARD.
- Don't FAKE LOVE...SINCERELY LOVE people. But, Paul have you met some of these people?!? That's why you have to be TRANSFORMED by RENEWING.
- Hate EVIL and cling to GOOD.
- Honor others above yourself.
- Be ENTHUSIASTIC about SERVING CHRIST! Don't you hate a long-faced Christian?
- Christians should be WINNIE THE POOH NOT EYORE!
- You need to underline verse 12! We need this!
- Be JOYFUL because WE HAVE THIS HOPE! How can those Christians be so JOYFUL? WE HAVE HOPE!
- Be PATIENT when times are TOUGH. How can those Christians be so calm?
- Be FAITHFUL in PRAYER. That's how you can BE the first two.
- Be GENEROUS TO THOSE IN NEED and SHOW HOSPITALITY. (Scott Holder)

- Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them. HARD STUFF!

Chip Ingram said:

"You are never more like Jesus than when you treat people in a way they do not deserve."

Jesus' last words on the cross: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

- Rejoice with those who rejoice: A new baby; a wedding; a promotion.
- Mourn with those who mourn: A death; a divorce; a loss of job.
- Bottom line: BE THERE FOR PEOPLE and ESPECIALLY UNBELIEVERS!
- Live in harmony; and DON'T BE A SNOB. To Jesus there are no CLASSES of people.
- Now Paul really sets the bar HIGH.

Romans 12:17-21

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"[a] says the Lord. 20 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."[b]

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- Live at peace and leave revenge to God. Overcome evil with good.
- One CAVEAT though. Paul says "as far as it depends on you" and "if it is possible"
- Chip Ingram reminds us: This doesn't mean be a CHRISTIAN DOORMAT
- If your boss is sexually harassing you, start by speaking the "truth in love" ("cut it out!") but if it continues...there are laws and you have a right to be protected by them.
- Bottom line: LET GO OF THE SMALL STUFF...LET GOD HANDLE IT.

So, What's the TAKEAWAY?

- Jesus didn't die HALFWAY and He isn't looking for PART-TIME followers
- He's looking for FULLY SURRENDERED FOLLOWERS who have given our bodies
- Followers who use our gifts with HUMILITY
- Followers who are known for LOVE FOR OTHERS
- Followers who live at peace; leave revenge to God; and overcome evil with good.

My challenge to us all this week: Try to review this chapter each day this week to get these qualities firmly in your mind. RENEW YOUR MIND with it.