

# ROMANS

Week 11: Romans 12:1-21



## **MAY 25: A LIVING SACRIFICE**

(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)

Romans 12 begins with the word, *therefore*. This is the author's way of saying, "Here comes a summary of everything I've written up until now."

The NIV translation of Romans 12:1 reads, *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.* The ESV Study Bible notes that "we give ourselves entirely to God because of His saving grace (God's mercy), as shown from Romans 3:21-11:36." This mercy from God may be best understood as *undeserved kindness*, a prominent theme throughout the book of Romans.

As you begin this week, take the opportunity to reflect on the truth that God sacrificed *everything* for you. You may occasionally feel unworthy, unloveable, or not enough. But God says, "I gave my life for you because you *are* worth it to Me. You are my beloved child!" As this truth takes root deep within you, you will not only accept the invitation to be a living sacrifice, you'll be transformed into somebody who *wants* to be a living sacrifice.

## **MAY 26: CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK**

(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)

In Jesus' very first sermon, He begins by saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand (Matthew 3:2)*. The Greek word translated as *repent* in your English Bible is *metanoia*. In Greek, the word is best understood as a changing of the mind. In other words, Jesus taught that in order to really get to know God and to experience life transformation, you need to change the way you think.

This truth is repeated in Romans 12:2, which reads, *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

This verse can be applied in countless ways. But one of the best ways to think through it is by answering these questions:

- What am I *most* seeking in life right now? (Peace, contentment, love, acceptance, control, other...?)
- Where am I *most* looking for it? (In which behaviors and customs of this world am I looking for it?)
- What steps must I take to change the way I think about this?

## **READING & JOURNALING:**

### **ROMANS 12:1-2**

How would you explain to others what it means to be a living sacrifice? Using your study bible, are there other passages you can point to as to what it means to be a living sacrifice?

### **PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, I confess that when I think about being a *living sacrifice* I sometimes have the thought that it would be easier not to do so. Help me to better understand that You have given me *life* and are inviting me to live it to the full. You're not asking me to sacrifice myself so that I die, you're inviting me to sacrifice of myself because You have already made me fully alive. May this truth help me to live fully and freely. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers).

**Read: Mathew 24:32-51 (Week 36, Day 1)**

## **READING & JOURNALING:**

### **ROMANS 12:1-2**

Read Romans 12:1-2 with the aid of a good study bible, then walk through this exercise:

- What am I *most* seeking in life right now? (Peace, contentment, love, acceptance, other...?)
- Where am I *most* looking for it? (In which behaviors and customs of this world am I looking for it? From what other people say or think about me? From what I buy or have? Elsewhere?)
- What steps must I take to change the way I think about this?

### **PRAYER:**

Today, write out your own prayer to God, inviting Him to help you change the way you think and to discover what you're seeking in Him.

(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: John 17 (Week 36, Day 2)**

## **MAY 27: MUTUAL SERVICE**

**(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)**

What is one gift or talent you don't currently have but would like to? For some, it may be the ability to sing or play a musical instrument. For others, it may be the ability to teach. Others still may desire to have more so they could give more.

In Romans 12:3-8, Paul notes that it's important to properly evaluate ourselves so that we may best serve one another. Some may think they don't have anything to offer, but this isn't true, we all have something to contribute. Others may want to contribute more than they're able, but their real desire may be to do so for success or achievement.

What's the solution? Paul says the solution is to properly evaluate ourselves, recognizing that we all have something to contribute, but not to be overly proud about what we contribute, nor to be overly negative in thinking that it isn't enough. Instead, we should see one another as parts of the same *body*. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:25-26, *This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.*

## **MAY 28: REALLY LOVE THEM**

**(Begin with 1-2 minutes of silence)**

In Romans 12:9 we read, *Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them.* This verse ought to make each of us pause and reflect, prayerfully considering how we may be *pretending* to love others instead of *really* loving them.

The NLT Life Application Study Bible notes, "Most of us have learned how to be courteous to others—how to speak kindly, avoid hurting their feelings, and appear to take an interest in them. We may even be skilled in pretending to show compassion when we hear of others' needs, or to become indignant when we learn of injustice. But God calls us to real and genuine love that goes far beyond being hypocritical and polite. Genuine love requires concentration and effort. It means helping others become better people. It demands our time, money, and personal involvement. No individual has the capacity to express love to a whole community, but the body of Christ in your town does. Look for people who need your love, and look for ways you and your fellow believers can love your community for Christ."

## **MAY 29: JOURNALING**

In what ways are you growing in changing the way you think? How is this impacting your life, and the lives of those you interact with on a regular basis?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: John 19 (Week 36, Day 5)**

## **READING & JOURNALING:**

**ROMANS 12:3-8, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26**

What do you believe you are most able to contribute to the body of Christ? In what ways does your contribution help bring harmony to the church?

### **PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, today I'm grateful for the reminder that I have something to contribute to the church body, but that I ought not be proud of my contribution. Continue to help me grow in humility so that I can mutually serve others, and help me to receive the service others gladly offer me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)**

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Matthew 26:35 - 27:31 (Week 36, Day 3)**

## **READING & JOURNALING:**

**ROMANS 12:9-21**

Is there anybody in your life you may be *pretending* to love instead of *really* loving them?

Think (and pray) about one way you can *really* love them today, and then do it.

### **PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, I confess I don't like to think about the likelihood that I *pretend* to love others instead of *really* loving them. Help me to not only be polite, but to use real concentration, prayer, effort, time, and money to really love others in the way You have loved me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**(End with 1-2 minutes of silence)**

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Matthew 27:32-66 & Luke 23:26-56 (Week 36, Day 4)**

