

ROMANS STUDY

Living the Unity of the Gospel – Romans 12:1-13

Romans 12:1-2 *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.*

Given all that God has done to reveal His divine will to unify humanity in Christ, Paul begins spinning out the practical implications of getting along with each other.

Ephesians 3:4-6 *In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*

The point is that our response is to offer our bodies and minds for a new kind of humble lifestyle of unity. (Think of the Tower of Babel and Acts 2)

1. Just Do It!! Use your gift.

Romans 12:3-7 *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. 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 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, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

Paul makes it clear that it is usually pride mixed with individualism that keeps us from serving others with our gifts. We are more like a body part and not the Lone Ranger.

Paul is not attempting to give a full catalog of spiritual gifts or to define those gifts. Rather, he is saying "Do it, get going...!" Our approach should be "Ready, fire, aim."

2. Practical Advice for Surviving Church Life.

Romans 12:9-13 *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.*

The simple definition of Christian love is: "To will the good of another."

In order to survive church life each of us must take responsibility for our own "spiritual fervor."

Acts of Christian love that minister to the needs of others (other than during emergencies) have an order of priority and preference.

1. One's parents (Eph 6:2-3, 1Tim 5:4)
2. One's family (**1Tim 5:8** *Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*)
3. Believers in your church (Gal 6:10 ... *do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith...*)

4. Fellow countrymen (Deut 15:7-11)
5. Strangers and sojourners (Deut 10:19)

Gal 6:9-10 *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

One of the guiding principles for doing good is “as we have opportunity.”

On the one hand, we want to avoid miserly self-centeredness, yet, on the other hand, we do not want to be drawn into co-dependency. This takes knowledge of Scripture mixed with prudence (the practical application of godly wisdom).

Proverbs 1:2-3 *for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; ³ for receiving instruction in **prudent** behavior, doing what is right and just and fair;*