



# Our Transformed Life

Living the Vision of Romans 12

## Grace is Sobering

Romans 12:3 // January 24, 2021

### Overview:

As we move on in Romans 12 we see that Paul is going to start showing us exactly what it looks like to think of things with a transformed and renewed mind. He begins showing us how we are to think about *ourselves* in Romans 12:3.

He starts by reminding us that what he is about say is because of ***the grace given to him***. Paul has a deep respect for the grace he has received and everything he does is because of the grace of God. He also knows that, because of grace, he has deep value for the relationships with his readers.

Then, Paul tells them that ***they shouldn't think of themselves more highly than they ought***. While this sounds like a good principle to talk about in church, the reality of Paul's statement is culture shaking. We are a self-obsessed and self-absorbed culture. Self-esteem is seen as a high value. But we're told that we're actually to NOT think highly of ourselves. What's the remedy?

Paul shows us that we should have ***sober judgment***. To have sober judgment means to be complete in touch with reality about who we are. It means that not only are we not to think too highly of ourselves, we also shouldn't think too low of ourselves either. How is this possible?

The way that we're able to have sober judgment is by the ***measure of faith God has assigned***. This is a confusing statement in English. In Greek, it means the "standard of faith". In other words, there is a standard of faith that we all should hold ourselves up against, and that standard is Christ. When we realize that the standard is Christ, we understand that it is impossible to think too highly of ourselves and, at the same time, too lowly of ourselves. We are sinners, but we are saved sinners.

Regardless of whether you think too highly or too lowly of yourself, the invitation from Jesus is the same: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). We have to deny ourselves – our wants and desires – and follow Christ. Our old self must be crucified in order to truly understand that grace is sobering.

## Discussion Guide

1. Read Romans 12:3. Paul begins this passage by talking about the grace given to him. Discuss the significance of the word *given* as it pertains to grace. Why is it important to recognize that grace is given to us?
2. Paul reminds us that we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. What are some ways or areas of your life that you tend to think highly of yourself? Why do you think it happens in those ways or in those areas?
3. The self-esteem culture of America helps drive us towards thinking highly of ourselves. In what ways can high self-esteem be helpful in our relationship with Jesus? In what ways can it be damaging in our relationship with Jesus?
4. A good way to think about sober judgment is to be completely in touch with reality. When you start to become too high-minded about yourself, what kind of a reality check helps bring you back down to earth? Has God ever used one of these to help you think more soberly about yourself? Share the story.
5. Being sober-minded also means not thinking too lowly of yourself. What are some areas of your life where you tend to think lowly of yourself? How can these be damaging to your relationship with Jesus?
6. In the teaching, we learned that “measure of faith” can be translated “standard of faith”. The standard of faith that we all measure ourselves with is Jesus.
  - a. What does it mean for us to look at Jesus as the standard of our faith?
  - b. How does this help us use sober judgment when it comes to our own lives (either thinking too high or too low of ourselves)?
7. Below is Eugene Peterson’s translation of this passage in *The Message*. Is this translation helpful to you? Why or Why not?

*I’m speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it’s important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.*
8. Look at Tim Keller’s definition of the Gospel below. As you pair Romans 12:3 with this definition, how does this impact the way you think about yourself and those around you?

“The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”