

# Romans – An In-Depth Study

## [Chapters 9-16]

### [Part 5]

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, **in view of God’s mercy**, to offer your bodies as **living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

When sacrificing an animal according to the laws given to Israel under the Old Covenant, the priest would kill the animal, cut it into pieces and lay it on the altar.

This was part of the religious ritual of worshipping the Creator God.

But God made it very clear, through the prophets, that obedience from the heart was far more important to Him.

**1 Samuel 15:22** [NIV] *“But Samuel replied: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? **To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.**”*

Sacrifice can become only an outward show for others to see how righteous we are.

**Psalms 40:6** [Jerusalem Bible] *“You wanted no sacrifice or cereal offering, but **you gave me an open ear**, you did not ask for burnt offerings or sacrifice for sin then I said, **here I am, I am coming.**”*

King David realised that what God was desiring in him was an ear that was listening to what God was saying, and a life that was willing to follow God.

**Amos 5:21-24** [NIV] *“**I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.** Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. **But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!**”*

What God was seeking in Israel was justice and righteousness.

The Greek word in this first verse of chapter twelve of Romans that is translated “*bodies*” is “*soma*” which refers to the whole of our physical life, body, mind and human spirit, [**Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27**].

**God is asking us to put all our energy and resources at His disposal and trusting Him to guide us.**

Note we do this out of gratitude for what He has done for us.

God frees us from the death penalty we deserve, because of our sins, by our accepting in faith the death of Jesus Christ instead of ours.

This living, **not** dead animal sacrifice, is how we are to worship God under the New Covenant that Jesus Christ introduced and ratified. [**Matthew 26:26-28**]

**Romans 12:2** [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer 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.”*

The new relationship God is seeking to have with each of us has to start with a complete change of mind.

We must **not** allow this society in which we live to dictate how we live our lives.

This is far more than rejecting the world's customs, which are usually selfish and often corrupting.

We can avoid the world's customs but still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn and arrogant.

Only when we allow the indwelling Holy Spirit to renew, re-educate and re-direct our minds, are we really transformed.

**1 John 2:15-17** [NIV] *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever.”*

Worldliness is **not** limited to external behaviour.

Worldliness is also internal, for it begins with what is going on in our mind and heart.

This internal worldliness is characterised by three attitudes of mind.

**Our cravings** – the preoccupation we have with gratifying our physical desires.

**Lust of our eyes** – a desire to accumulate things, bowing down and worshipping the god of materialism. Responding to the powerful advertising to buy, buy, buy. Prompting us to believe “we deserve it.”

**Boasting** – of what we have and what we do. An obsession with one's status or importance.

**The mind behind this is Satan.**

**Genesis 3:6** [NIV] *“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”*

Satan tempted Eve in these three verses.

**Matthew 4:1-11** [NIV] *“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”*

Satan used the same areas of attack when tempting Jesus Christ.

Satan misquoted scripture but Jesus repelled the temptation by correctly quoting scripture.

**Ephesians 4:22-32** [NIV] *“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your*

*minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**"*

All of this list is referring to an attitude of mind that we need to change to live our new lives of "living sacrifice" in our worshipping our Creator God.

Note all are linked to our **not** grieving the Holy Spirit as He seeks to mould us into a being that is acceptable to a Holy and Righteous God.

**Ephesians 5:8-18** [NIV] *"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit.**"*

Paul is liking this transformation of our lives, as walking out of darkness into a revealing light, that is accomplished by the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

**Romans 12:3** [NIV] *"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 measure of faith God has given you.**"*

Evaluating ourselves by the worldly standards of success and achievement can cause us to think too much about our worth in the eyes of others and therefore miss what makes us of true value to our Creator God.

This passage of scripture also urges us to accept ourselves, and use the gifts that God has given us.

We are **not** to envy the gifts that God has given to others.

This passage of scripture also reminds us that whatever gift we do have it has come from God.

The Greek word for gifts is "*charisma*" meaning an endowment given by the Holy Spirit.

"*Measure of faith*" – faith in this passage of scripture is viewed as the door through which grace and gifts flow into our lives.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7** [NIV] *"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. **Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.**"*

Whatever our gift we are expected by God to use it for the benefit of others, **not** for our personal prestige.

It is our bounden duty to make this contribution of our gift for the common good.

**Romans 12:4-5** [NIV] *“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and **each member belongs to all the others.**”*

Paul is using the concept of the human body to teach us how Christians should live and work together.

Just as the parts of our body function under the direction of the mind and human spirit, so Christians are to work together under the command and authority of Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 4:14-16** [NIV] *“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, **we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**”*

The Christian church and each individual Christian, will **only** function effectively if Jesus Christ is accepted as our head that directs all that is done.

We have to ask the question – as part of Christ’s body, do we reflect part of Christ’s character as we carry out our special role in His work?

**Romans 12:6-8** [NIV] *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is **prophesying**, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is **servicing**, let him serve; if it is **teaching**, let him teach; if it is **encouraging**, let him encourage; if it is **contributing** to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is **leadership**, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”*

Listed here are some of the gifts that God gives to Christians; we need to examine these individually.

**Prophesying** – it is only rarely in the New Testament that prophesying has anything to do with foretelling the future.

The Greek word translated “*prophesying*” is “*prōphētēuō*” meaning to speak under inspiration, of the Holy Spirit, when used in a Christian context.

A prophet is a person who can announce the Christian message with the authority of one who knows.

To announce Christ and His message we must first know Jesus Christ Himself through an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, Who is the “*Spirit of Christ*”, the third person of the One Eternal God.

[To help you understand this Oneness of a Triune God, please download the article ‘*Can We Understand the Trinity of God*’ listed under ‘*Trinity*’.]

**Servicing** – the Greek word used is “*diakōnia*” referring to one who waits, that is a bond slave of a master.

Not every person can prophecy in public but there is no person who cannot every day show the love of Jesus Christ in deeds of service to his fellow human beings.

**Teaching** – the message of Jesus Christ needs not only to be proclaimed but also explained.

**One of the greatest failures of the church today is that people are constantly urged and invited to become Christians, without ever being told what Christianity is and what it demands of us.**

**Encouraging** – this is the art of motivating other people to make changes in their lives. To become more like our Saviour Jesus Christ. The Greek word used in **John 14:16** [NIV] for the Holy Spirit’s work is “*paraklētos*” meaning one who walks alongside, as an intercessor or advocate. For us to

allow the Holy Spirit to work through us in this way will bring great encouragement to other Christians. To be there for them at all times.

**Contributing** – this should be done in a certain way. The Greek word translated “*generously*” is “*haplōtēs*” meaning without dissimulation or self-seeking, just simple kindness.

There is a way of giving which is **not** just simple kindness, when along with the gift the giver offers a moral lecture of criticism, which is really only pandering to the vanity and self-satisfaction of the giver.

**Leadership** – the Greek word used is “*prōistēmi*” meaning to stand before – or being called to take a leading place.

If we are called to this position of service we are to apply zeal, mercy or gracious kindness, with joy of the task and in the fulfilling of the task.

**Today there are fewer and fewer people who are filled with a sense of service and responsibility, that is essential in leadership well executed.**

Nor are many willing to give up their leisure and pleasures to undertake real leadership.

**Romans 12:9** [NIV] “*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*”

Most Christians have learned how to pretend to love other people.

How to speak kindly, avoid hurting their feelings and appear to take an interest in them.

We may even be skilled in pretending to feel moved with compassion when we hear of an other’s needs or to become indignant when we learn of injustice.

**But God calls us to real and sincere love that goes far beyond pretence and politeness.**

Sincere love requires concentration and effort, it means helping others to become better people.

It demands our time, money and personal involvement.

In expressing this sincere love we must be shocked by evil, for this is the only security we have against sinning.

We also have to cling to what is good.

The Greek word translated “*cling*” is “*kōllaō*” which means to glue oneself to it, far stronger than just keeping company with good.

No person is “*good*” if they are simply good because they fear the consequences of being bad.

We have to love what is good with a passion, it being foremost in our mind and in our actions.

**Philippians 4:8** [NIV] “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.*”

Seeking godliness in our lives has to be our foremost thought and goal.

**Romans 12:10** [NIV] “*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.*”

The Greek word used for “*brotherly love*” is “*philadelphia*” meaning love of our brethren.

Loving other Christians because we are all one family.

The Christian church is **not** a collection of acquaintances, it is **not** even a gathering of friends, it is a family of God's created children.

**Revelation 3:7-8** [NIV] *"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no-one can shut, and what he shuts no-one can open. I know your deeds. **See, I have placed before you an open door that no-one can shut.** I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name."*

To a church that is filled with brotherly love, God will open a door of opportunity to reach people with the gospel message of what God has done for all humanity through Jesus Christ.

*"Honour one another above yourselves."*

This family love will be strengthened if we apply the second half of **Romans 12:10**.

Always consider others as better than ourselves.

**Philippians 2:1-4** [NIV] *"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."*

More than half of the troubles that arise in a church are bred out of concerns of rights and privileges, along with places and prestige.

This in spite of the mark of a true Christian person has always been humility.

A true Christian knows that they have **no** rights, **only** duties and responsibilities of a bond slave of Jesus Christ, [**Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19**].

**Romans 12:11** [NIV] *"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord."*

There is a certain intensity in the life of a true Christian, there is **no** room for lethargy.

A Christian **cannot** take life in an easy-going way, for life is a continual choice between eternal life or eternal death.

The world that a Christian lives in is a battleground between good and evil.

Always remember physical life is a short training ground for eternity.

The one person or church that the risen Jesus Christ found repugnant was a person who was neither hot or cold.

**Revelation 3:14-16** [NIV] *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. **I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.**"*

There is **no** such thing as a lukewarm Christian.

**Revelation 3:17** [NIV] *"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."*

Lukewarm “*Christians*” are deluded people **not** realising how Jesus Christ their Saviour, but also their Judge, views them.

**Revelation 3:18-19** [NIV] *“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. **So be earnest, and repent.**”*

**A lukewarm attitude is in God’s eyes a sin that has to be repented of.**

**Revelation 3:20** [NIV] *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”*

Is Jesus Christ knocking on the door of your heart wanting to empower your life to become one that is “*on fire*” for living a Christian life?

One who grasps every opportunity to bring honour and glory to our Saviour and Creator God by being a vehicle He can use to bring others to know Him, worship Him and eventually love Him?

Grasp every opportunity to –

Learn something new about living a Christian life.

To cut out of our lives something that is wrong.

To speak a word of encouragement.

To speak a word of warning to those about to sin.

To help or comfort another person.

Remember there are three things that will never come back to us –

An arrow that is put to flight.

A spoken word.

A lost opportunity.