

Romans – An In-Depth Study

[Chapters 9-16]

[Part 6]

Romans 12:12 [NIV] *“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”*

The letter to the Christians in the church in Rome is full of practical advice for day-to-day Christian living.

Here we have three things we should be cultivating in our Christian life.

Joyful in hope

The Christian must be essentially an optimist.

There can never be such a thing as a hopeless Christian.

1 Peter 3:15 [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”*

To be able to do this we need to be well versed in what our hope really is.

1 Peter 1:3-4 [NIV] *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you,”*

Every Christian’s hope is grounded in –

God’s Mercy – that is total forgiveness of all past sins.

Romans 5:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”*

New birth – through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit creating in us a new being that is acceptable to a Holy Creator God.

John 3:5-7 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”*

A resurrection from the dead –

Romans 6:3-5 [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.”*

1 Corinthians 15:12-23 [NIV] *“But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead,*

then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.”

Patient in affliction

Christians meet tribulation with triumphant fortitude.

Hebrews 12:5-11 [NIV] *“And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: **“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”** Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. **No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”***

When God allows trials to come on us He uses them to discipline us, but also to show us the great love He has for us as His potential created children.

James 1:12-19 [NIV] *“**Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.** When tempted, no-one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,”*

God doesn’t have to tempt us to sin, we do this ourselves all too easily.

But God uses such trials that our sinning nature brings on us, as a form of discipline, to mould us into a new being that will be acceptable to him.

Trials help us to understand our total dependency on our Creator God for any spiritual growth and victory over all trials.

John 15:5 [NIV] *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”*

Apart from Jesus Christ we can accomplish nothing.

Philippians 4:11-13 [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, **for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or*

hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

Reliance on the power of Jesus Christ in us, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, can bring us peace of mind in contentment and victory over any trial or problem.

Faithful in prayer

If we live life alone, without the fellowship with our Creator God, that prayer and study of His Word, the Christian Bible brings; we should **not** be surprised if our lives “*fall apart.*”

A Christian must meet persecution with a prayer for those who are persecuting them.

Acts 7:60 [NIV] *“Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “**Lord, do not hold this sin against them.**” When he had said this, he fell asleep.”*

Stephen died praying for God to forgive those who were stoning him to death.

Among those who murdered Stephen was a man called Saul, who afterwards became Paul, the man whom God used to be an apostle to the Gentiles and who acknowledged himself to be a slave of Jesus Christ.

There is no greater force to move people into Christianity than this serene forgiveness that martyrs have shown down through the history of Christianity.

Romans 12:13 [NIV] *“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practise hospitality.”*

This sharing can take many forms, according to the other person’s need.

Physical help with food, clothing and finance, but also letting them know you have an “*open door*” for them at your home.

Romans 12:14, 20-21 [NIV] *“**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.**” ... “*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.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*”*

When we are persecuted by others, if we show this form of hospitality, it can melt the hardest hatred. [This is what is meant by the term “*heap burning coals on his head*”]

Romans 12:15 [NIV] *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”*

This is also a form of “*hospitality*” for we are sharing our emotions with this other person in need, or in joy.

Romans 12:16 [NIV] *“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”*

This harmony is created by applying what is stated in this verse.

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.”*

Such an attitude of mind will bring harmony to any group of people.

Proverbs 3:7-8 [NIV] *“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.”*

Such an attitude of mind promotes a healthy physical body as well as a healthy spiritual body, in every Christian fellowship.

Proverbs 26:12 [NIV] *“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”*

A person who is wise in their own eyes is classified by God as less than a fool who does **not** know wisdom

Romans 12:17 [NIV] *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.”*

Christian conduct must not only be good, but it must be seen to be good in the eyes of non-believers.

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

Our example cannot be hidden from all the non-believers in this Satan-controlled society.

Romans 12:18 [NIV] *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

The first step towards harmony and peace, has to be the Christian’s step.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 [NIV] *“Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.”*

Notice the word “try”, such an attitude of mind will take effort on our part.

Romans 14:19 [NIV] *“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”*

Every effort on **our** part must be made to promote unity and harmony.

Romans 12:19 [NIV] *“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.”*

Only God can read the mind of a person and know all the circumstances that prompts the person’s actions.

We are **not** in a position to judge, let alone take revenge, which is a judgement by us without knowledge.

Psalms 139:1-4 [NIV] *“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.”*

It is impossible for us to have such an understanding of ourselves, let alone another person.

Hebrews 10:28-30 [NIV] *“Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.”*

If we assume we are able to judge and take revenge on the actions of others, we are insulting Jesus Christ who is the judge of all humanity as well as our Saviour.

Hebrews 10:31 [NIV] *“It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

To seek to usurp the position God the Father has given to Jesus Christ, should fill us with dread.

Leviticus 19:18 [NIV] *“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD.”*

Not only are we **not** to seek revenge but **not** even retain a grudge against another person.

For such an attitude is **not** showing the love we should have towards all other people.

To stoop to vengeance is to be ourselves conquered by evil.

If hatred is met with more hatred, then hatred is increased in all those involved.

If hatred is met with love then an antidote to the poison that hatred is found.

The only way to destroy a human enemy is to make them our friend.