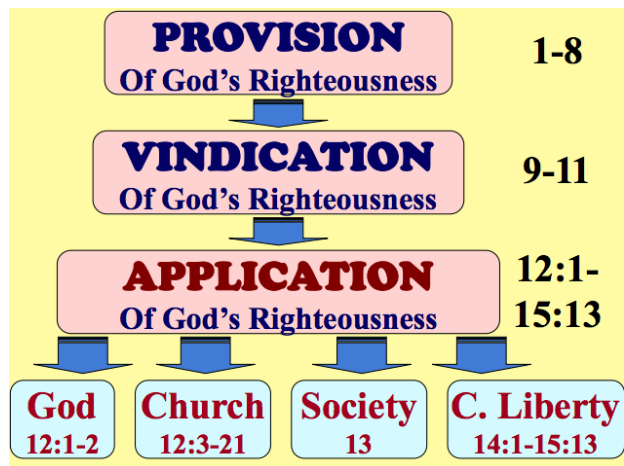


[Romans 12-16 Overview—Application of God’s Righteousness 165]



We are going to do an overview of this last section of the book of Romans—so you don’t miss the forest for the trees—because sometimes when we get into detail we can lose sight of some of the bigger concepts. I will highlight some of the major sentences, the hearts of the paragraphs.

These are the chapters that I call The Application of the book. It is written to believers in Rome. The book is the most theological of the Bible. At the beginning the subject matter is for *unbelievers*, but it is for *believers* so that we can share the Gospel and the lostness of mankind, so it not directed *directly* to the unbeliever even though that’s the main emphasis of those portions. Just keep in mind that it is written to believers.

After an introduction, it presents the *provision* of God’s Righteousness. The key word of the whole book is the Righteousness of God. We defined the concept as a right standing before God and involves many other aspects besides salvation or justification (which is the main word Paul uses in chapters 1-8). This includes two major aspects: the negative: forgiveness of sin; the positive: provision or declaration of righteousness which includes eternal life and all the aspects with it.

Man in himself has no standing and faces eternal judgment, but righteousness is provided on the basis of what Jesus has done.

Justification is by trusting in what Christ has done. Then he explains and gives at least the principles of how it works itself out in chapters 6-8. We call that sanctification, the *provision* of God’s righteousness.

Then chapters 9-11 are a little different. In the OT one had to become a Jew in order to be accepted by God, so Paul deals with the questions of Jews about how gentiles are accepted through Christ and *vindicates* God’s treatment of the Jews who had rejected Christ. So God is perfectly righteous in setting aside the Jews during the church age.

But there is a future for Israel. God is righteous in preserving Israel and ultimately will bring them into a saving relationship with all of the aspects of salvation that will include a physical deliverance during the period of The Tribulation. Some of these conclusions are formed from other passages as well.

Now that provision that is available for both Jew and gentile in this age—and Jews will experience it in the future as nation, not just individuals—how does that work out in everyday living? We can call that *application*. So now Paul is shifting from the provision of righteousness to how it works itself out. What does it look like in everyday life? He gives some specific areas that we will look at.

From a grammatical perspective, what is the most obvious difference between chapters 1-11 and 12-15.13? This rather hints at a new division from the previous chapters. Chapters 1-11 are primarily indicative sentences, statements of fact or propositions or theology or presentation of ideas. These are in the *indicative* mood, statements of fact. Actually there are only four sentences in these 11 chapters that have the imperative mood; in other words, commands, things to do. And they are all clustered together in chapter 6 because it gives us principles of how to live out *la doctrina*.

Except for those four imperatives in chapter 6, in chapter 12 we have the *imperative* sentences: commands, things to do, things to act on and live out. This is an evident change from the indicative to the imperative mood. And it is not unusual with Paul. He structured the books of Colossians and Ephesians in the same way. He has what we would describe as the doctrinal or teaching section, Ephesians 1-3, eg, and then in chapter 4, in the light of what God has done, how we should respond.

So chapter 12 through the middle of 15 are like this; and in the passage there are four areas that summarize how righteousness works itself out in our relationships. In the first 2 verses he tells us to put ourselves on an altar and let *God* use us. The next broad area is the *church*, ie, how does righteousness work itself out in relationship to brothers and sisters in Christ, 12.3-21. A third major subsection: what does this righteousness look like in relation to *society*? He deals more specifically with government, chapter 13. Then, a special area relating

to our brothers and sisters in Christ which we might label *Christian liberty*, 14-15.13.

He deals with these areas, applying the concept of God's righteousness, giving us little descriptions, little commands relating to how this righteousness should work itself out in everyday practical living. This the big picture. Then in 15.14 we have a long *conclusion* that concludes the entire book of Romans.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God's Righteousness	1.18-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2

This is the outline that we have just reviewed, which brings us to Part IV, the Application of God's Righteousness—and you can see how the idea of God's righteousness permeates the entire book. Again, we are only going to summarize. First the application in our relationship to God, only 2 verses in this part, but it summarizes the entire Christian walk and reviews for us primarily chapters 6-8, and more specifically chapter 6 that we have already looked at.

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Verse 1 is a complete sentence. 'Therefore', of course, relates to everything he talked about before: in light of all the doctrine, of justification that comes by faith and faith alone, of sanctification—that we live by faith and faith alone as well—in light of how God is going to deal with Israel and how He has in the past. 'Therefore', based on that grace, that goodness of God, that sovereign work of God, 'I urge you' or in some translations 'beseech you' or even 'beg you', giving us the idea that this is what God would desire and it is on the basis of 'the mercies of God'.

Then we have the first imperative, 'present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice', almost summarizing the entire Christian walk. It's a moment by moment, day by day presentation, like a living sacrifice...he is using sacrificial language that would make the Jewish believing audience immediately think of the entire sacrificial system. Instead of an animal that has been slain and is dead, it is a living and holy sacrifice. And it is acceptable to God, ie, in fellowship, in personal relationship, in connection with God Himself, it is acceptable. This is our moment by moment, day by day spiritual service of worship, not a

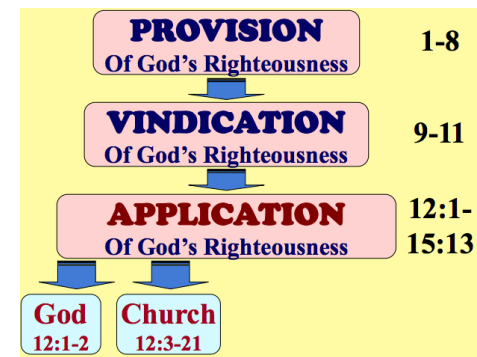
one-time Sunday morning experience, but an on-going day by day experience.

12.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

There are two aspects to it: we set aside our thinking, the world view, the attitudes, the way that we approach life, constantly battling the worldly perspective because of its influence. 'Do not be conformed to this world'.

Then there is the positive: 'but be transformed'. That's the entire Christian walk, a transforming, day by day, moment by moment transformation. And it begins with the renewing of your mind. We saw that already in chapter 6, adopting a Biblical world view. It doesn't happen overnight and will not be completed in this life. Then he give some details, proving what the will of God is.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God's Righteousness	1.18-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts	12.3-8



In the relationship to the *church*, it begins with the exercise of spiritual gifts which is one of the two parts: we relate to one another in the way we minister to one other. Verse three,

12.3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

We always battle self-centeredness, he begins with this problem to avoid...Instead, the proper area to focus on is in terms of brothers and sisters in the body of Christ:

12.4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Essentially, our relationship to one another can be summarized in that we have a close relationship to one another—we are members of one another. There is *one* body; this includes all true believers, not just the particular denomination or local body that you are a part of. Here in this group we represent several different congregations, but because we all have Christ in common, we all have justification by faith in common we are members of one another and we relate to one another in relationship to spiritual gifts. That is what he is going to outline in the following passages.

6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,

Each of us is to exercise them according to grace. So spiritual gifts are given on the basis of grace just like everything else that we have already studied.

All of us have spiritual gifts, so all of us are involved in the body of Christ, or, the encouragement here is *to be involved* with one another. There are not just some that are leaders or do ministry; the concept is that *all* of us should have a ministry to one another in one way or another, depending on what that spiritual gift may be. We will discuss spiritual gifts when we detail verses 3-8.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts	12.3-8
2. Exercise of Love	12.9-21

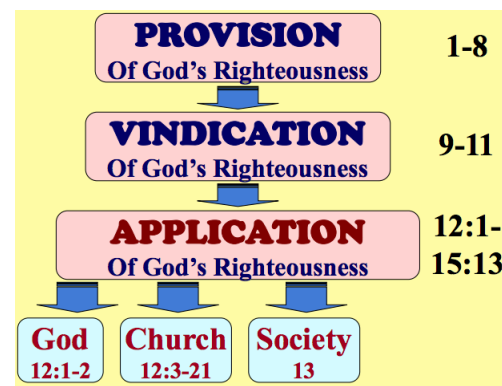
Then, in verses 9-21, the exercise of love. It is broad, so there should be a certain amount of love exercised and that should be *evident*.

Remember, Jesus says, *By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*. This is the heart of the whole portion of 9-21, starting with:

12.9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Notice all the commands, verbs in the imperative mood. Love without hypocrisy, not self-centeredly, in a Biblical way...abhorring evil. General statements in relationship to one another. There are lots of 'one another's' in this passage.

There are two words for 'love': ἀγάπη (ah-gáh-pay), v 9; and then φιλαδελφία (fee-lah-del-fée-ah), v 10...then 'one another in honor'.



After the portion on the church, he moves us to *society*, verse 13. This is a broader term rather than just dealing with government. The first 7 verses are about subjection to *authority*, all very needed for how we work out righteousness amongst us.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
C. Application to Society	13
1. Subjection to Authority	13.1-7

13.1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are

established by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

This is the leading thought of the first 7 verses. Notice again, it is in the imperative: be in subjection to the governing authorities. All authority is under the sovereign control and will of God, so when we resist government, actually we are resisting the authority that God has put us under.

He doesn't deal with families per se but I think in general God has set up families so that there is a structure of authority and He has placed men in a position of authority in the family and those under that authority are not to go beyond that; otherwise they are in danger of God's discipline because God is the one that has set up families as well as government. But in this context I think the focus is primarily government and the authorities.

In fact, in the passage he describes governing *authorities* with the same word that he will attach to those that lead in the body of Christ, those that lead within the church. They are called 'ministers' in that more specific role and he uses the same word to describe ministers later: they are ministers of God. They may be atheists, unbelievers, or they may be believers, but God is sovereign over them and they may exercise authority only within certain boundaries. Of course they can do things that are evil and contrary to what God says, but overall we are to be in subjection to governing authorities. I think there are some exceptions; we will discuss some in the book of Acts.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision o God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
C. Application to Society	13
1. Subjection to Authority	13.1-7
2. Love of the Citizens	13.8-10

There is another subsection in chapter 13, verses 8-10, and again, the focus is a broader love in terms of citizens or fellow members of a community that is broader than simply the church itself. Or, it can be people within the nation, so in 8-10 it is love of the citizens which I summarize:

13.8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

Jesus define neighbor: it could be anyone, Jew, gentile, unknown to us, someone in the culture. Notice again the imperatives. Love here is a fulfillment of the Law of which Jewish audience would immediately take notice.

13.10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Notice the same emphasis, repeating the idea of fulfilling the Law.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision o God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
C. Application to Society	13
1. Subjection to Authority	13.1-7
2. Love of the Citizens	13.8-10
3. Motivation for Alert Living	13.11-14

The next paragraph, 13.11-14, is kind of a motivation for alert living. We always stress *context*, passages in context, but I think it is common for us to read these verses without looking at the immediate context which is within *society*, so it is somewhat broad. And within that there are lots of dangers we are alerted to.

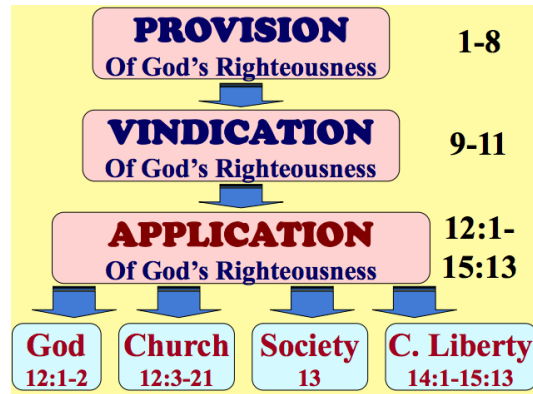
13.11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

We live in a dark age, but we need to keep our perspective, knowing the time, ie, being aware of what is going on in our culture—we know that it is an evil age and evil things are happening but we need to keep our perspective; it may only be temporary, it is going to pass. Notice the little phrase 'salvation is nearer'.

When people see that word 'salvation' or the verb, they immediately think of the moment they trusted in Jesus Christ, but this is an example where it is not talking about the justification aspect of salvation, but rather a rescue out of this evil age, probably the rapture. That's the event we look forward to when ultimate salvation comes—the future aspect of salvation. We are nearer to it every day. The 'day' refers to the time when everything will be seen; we need to put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. This kind of expands verses 1 &

2 of chapter 12. We don't want to be part of the culture and do what that does, but we want to be *lights*, which we do by doing what the Lord desires of us. That's society, chapter 13.

Then he continues with our *liberty*, the freedom that we have in Christ. We are *free* in Christ, but we need to exercise that freedom in light of those living around us and we may need to limit our freedom, depending on relationships we may have, or situations we might find ourselves in. So he deals with this area of Christian liberty from chapter 14 to 15.13. This completes the portion on Application.



I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision o God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
C. Application to Society	13
D. Application to Christian Liberties	14.1-15.13
1. Principle of Freedom	14.1-12

So, we have the principle of Christian Freedom, the first 10 verses. We divide this up...

14.1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. 2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.

Accept one another; I think this is among brothers, but the focus is accepting another who is weak, like a newer brother who is still working

through this concept of freedom. We can do things that harm them, that cause them to stumble. He gives some examples from the culture that we will look and we will draw applications from them.

There was an issue with Jewish believers who had not yet understood their situation of being free from the Law, so they still observed some of the Jewish aspects of the Law and they felt there were certain things they couldn't y certain ones they could eat. We will find examples in *our* culture in which we could in fact limit our freedom for the benefit of others. So he lays out the principle of freedom and then freedom is regulated by love, 13-23.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision o God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
C. Application to Society	13
D. Application to Christian Liberties	14.1-15.13
1. Principle of Freedom	14.1-12
2. Freedom Regulated by Love	14.13-23

14.15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

Again, notice the imperatives and how we apply righteousness in relation to a brother who can be offended. You have to watch what you do; you can hurt fellow brothers. We have to be sensitive to one another, walking in such a way so that we walk in love.

Another major theme, in 14.19...

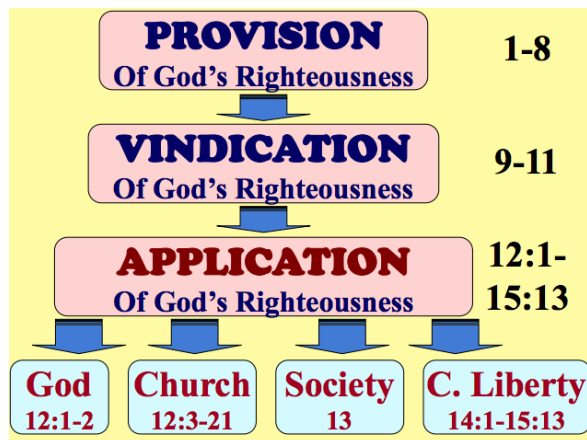
14.19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

...So we try to *resolve* conflicts, not create them by the way we live, including two things: we pursue peace and we are always interested in the building up one another—edifying, ministering to, encouraging, strengthening, all the aspects that it entails.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision o God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13

- A. Application to God 12.1-2
- B. Application to Church 12.3-21
- C. Application to Society 13
- D. Application to Christian Liberties 14.1-15.13
 - 1. Principle of Freedom 14.1-12
 - 2. Freedom Regulated by Love 14.13-23
 - 3. Christ's Example 15.1-13

- II. Provision o God's Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
- III. Vindication of God's Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
- V. Conclusion 15.14-16.27
 - A. Purpose 15.14-21



Christ's example is in 15.3:

15.3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

Christ is the ultimate example in verses 15.1-13 and again in verse 7:

15.7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

So we accept one another; we are tolerant of one another. We are at different place in maturity. We accept people where they are at and try to accept them the best we can, just as Christ accepted us to the glory of God.

So those are the major portions of the application part of the book of Romans. The rest is a conclusion. We have Paul's purpose for writing, 15-16:

- I. Introduction 1.1-17

15. 15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

He tells us why he wrote this book. Notice that one of the major purposes of the book is to remind believers of what they have been taught, what they already know. He reminds them of his primary ministry to the gentiles (he is writing to Jew and gentile).

- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision o God's Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
- III. Vindication of God's Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
- V. Conclusion 15.14-16.27
 - A. Purpose 15.14-21
 - B. Plans 15.22-33

15.22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

And he lays out some of his plans where he returns to some things mentioned in the introduction: he had often been prevented from going to them, which means he had planned to visit them.

15.28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

He was planning to go through Rome and visit them on his way to Spain. Those are his plans...

- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision o God's Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
- III. Vindication of God's Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
- V. Conclusion 15.14-16.27
 - A. Purpose 15.14-21
 - B. Plans 15.22-33
 - C. Personal Greetings 16.1-24

...and then we have several personal greetings, 16.1-24, and a series of greetings.

16.1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

It is believed that Paul is writing this letter at Cenchrea, so he has contact with Phoebe. When we, on our tour at Corinth, we stopped off at Cenchrea and saw the remains of this 1st Century port.

16.3 Greet Prisca and Aquila,...

Then there is a series of greetings...Prisca is Priscilla, and Aquila...

16.5 also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, ...

They have a house church.

16.6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. 7 Greet ...

On and on with greetings. And then there is a concluding doxology, 25-27

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision o God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
V. Conclusion	15.14-16.27
A. Purpose	15.14-21
B. Plans	15.22-33
C. Personal Greetings	15.1-24
D. Praise Doxology	16.25-27

16.27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

That is the last verse and last word in the book of Romans. So we have 'finished teaching' the entire book of Romans! But now we need to go back and look at the trees in the forest. We are declared righteous in Christ but must live it out in life!!!

We are going to study individual words in these verses that are so familiar to us. The book is written to believers in Rome who faced difficult times in the persecution of Emperor Nero when Paul was martyred. The first part of the book is doctrinal. And then, in chapters 12-16 is the Application which I divide into four parts: what it means in the Christian walk with relation to God, the Church, Society and the special case of Christian Liberty and what that liberty means within our relation to others.

We have studied the Provision of God's Righteousness through Jesus Christ. Paul Vindicates God's Righteousness in His setting aside the Jews and admitting the gentiles into a relationship with God. But also he presented God's plan for restoring the nation of Israel at the end of the age.

So this brings us to the Application part of the book where Paul tells us—all believers—how to live the Christian life. We begin with the first part which has to do with our relationship to God. In outline form it is:

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision o God's Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God's Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God's Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
1. Presenting of Oneself to God	12.1
a. Pleading of Believers	

When you memorize passages sometimes you wonder how they relate, how they fit into everything else. Chapter 12 is the beginning of a new division and emphasis in terms of the overall flow of the book.

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

In one sentence, the concept of the Christian life is centered in presenting oneself to God, ie, making oneself available, giving ourselves over to Him, committing to Him—there are many ways to describe it—and this is not for salvation but assumes the reader is a believer. Everything starts with God, so the application starts with that relationship.

He is going to *plead* with believers....

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

‘Therefore’ always requires explanation: what is its relationship to the preceding; obviously it is tying it to whatever was said before. Scholars take different views but I think it related to everything Paul has spoken of already. And he continues with ‘I urge you, brethren,’ stressing that he is addressing believers.

I think that because of what is contained in chapters 1-11, now the Christian needs to reflect the reality of 1 through 11 in everyday living. That includes chapter 1 through the middle of chapter 15. There are a lot of ways to summarize this; for example, 1-11 stress what some would describe as ‘theology’. And then we see that the grammar itself changes from the indicative mood, ie, statements of fact, reality, the *truths* that are the foundation of how we live. So 1-11, including 9-11 which is for the Jews as well, this all is theological and the indicative mood is the emphasis.

Then, from 12 to the end: how do these principles apply, or how does this theology work itself out in everyday living—which we could call Application? Grammatically there is a shift to predominately imperative mood in the Greek text. This is the mood of commands or exhortations, seen clearly as a change in the Greek text. In the light of what God has revealed, not only concerning our nature but what He has done, how we respond to that can be called application.

So chapters 1 through 11 contain what God has done and the reality of who *we are*; who we are after trusting in Him is the reality of God working within us. Then, we can view chapters 12-15 as how we should respond, what our responsibility is in the reality of what God has revealed to us. For an alliteration: Doctrine requires certain Duty, and Principles that we need to know que lead to Practice.

1-11 —> ‘Therefore’ 12-15

- > Theology (indicative) —> Application (imperative)
- > Reality 11—> Responsibility
- > Doctrine —> Duty
- > Principles —> Practice
- > Divine Revelation —> Human Responsibility
- > Foundation —> Living
- > What the Christian life looks like lived out in everyday situations

How do these principles work themselves out? You might say Divine Revelation, God’s perspective on reality—what He wants us to

understand—reflects the Human Responsibility. So we can see chapters 1-11 as Foundational. Some stress that there is theology and ‘practice’, but the bottom line is that theology *is* practical. It is teaching, yes, but it is *reality* and *practical*. Sometimes we make it academic, and maybe I am guilty of that as well, but theology should not be academic and should not just be what some describe as ‘theoretical’. But it is very *practical* and the practicality of it is that it is very foundational, with the foundational truths that we can believe and then act upon as a reality.

We are always living in what we *think* is reality, and oftentimes we don’t have a Biblical foundation, perspective or view, but Romans 1 through 11 gives us the Biblical foundation that we may draw upon and even, in this passage, renew our thinking, so that now our life is built on that foundation. And we will see what the Christian life *looks like* lived out in everyday situations. So, we might say, from our understanding of reality—of what God has revealed in terms of principles, doctrine, theology, etc, of chapters 1-11, now needs to be reflected in how we live. So we are going to emphasize the human responsibility, the living out of the principles that we have been studying since we started the book.

Now, when you memorize or repeat the verse, you can stop and meditate on all that is included in the ‘Therefore’.

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

And based on all the revelation and principles, Paul now, personalizing, states ‘I urge you’, identifying them as believers. The *unbeliever* cannot live out these things because he does not have the reality that Paul described in chapters 1 through 11. So he is *urging* the believers. I am going to start a slide to help us deepen our understanding, to better appreciate and to be more motivated to actually carry out what Paul is saying, in this case, *urging*.

Now, as an apostle, Paul could have commanded or insisted, or put us ‘under the law’, eg, but because of grace and because of the reality of the things he has already communicated, he simply *urges* us and *reminds* us of what should motivate us—not the commandment of an apostle, not the legalism, but the nature and character of God and particularly His mercy.

Key Terms

1. Urge - παρακαλέω pah-rah-kah-léh-o urge (23x), comfort (18x), implore (18x), exhort (15x) encourage (13x)

‘Urge’ is a familiar word; this is the translation of the New American Standard. The noun form of this verb is Paraclete which refers to the Holy Spirit. So the word is used to describe a function or attribute or a work of the HS. In this context He is described as the comforter or the one that comes alongside. So the word ‘I urge’ has this idea of coming alongside or encouraging us—one another, and Paul himself. Paul says, in this spiritual warfare I am joining in with you, alongside of you, in the walk in the world. You could paraphrase it, ‘I’m using you. Join me.’ It is a kind of emotional word, a comforting word, a word that conveys relationship.

More often than not it is translated ‘urge’, 23x; and also it is translated ‘comfort’, ‘implore’...so it is not a wish or a command, rather something in between. Later on we will see that the word is used in a context of spiritual gifts—and the essence of that gift is the ability to comfort, encourage, motivate, urge.

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

So Paul is moving us along rather than commanding us. It is by the mercies of God, through what God has done—not based on duty or our efforts, but based on what God has done. We will re-read the last couple of verses before the closing of chapter 11 which are 11.31-32:

11.31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. 32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

Both Jew and gentile have shown a history of disobedience and now the Jews are out of fellowship with God, but He will show them mercy in the future. And because of all our depravity, our sinfulness and our disobedience God is free to exercise His mercy to the nation of Israel in the future. So what he is saying is based on that but I think goes further because of the context: it can include a whole list of negatives.

We have been rescued from *wrath*, we don’t face the wrath, way back in the beginning of the doctrinal portion of the book. Then in 2.5, the *judgment* of God: because of stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up *wrath* in the day of wrath... That’s where we were before the mercies of God touched us. So we were facing tribulation, 2.9...

Mercies of God (in Romans)

- > Wrath (1.18) *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*
 - > Beloved (1.7) *to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- > Judgment (2.5) *But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,*
 - > Saints (1.7) *to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- > Tribulation (2.9) *There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,*
 - > Grace (1.7) *to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

There will be tribulation and distress...but we have been rescued because of the mercies of God.
- > Distress (2.9)
 - > Peace (1.7)
- > Perish (2.12) *For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;*

We were in danger of perishing...

 - > Justified (3.24) *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*
- > Condemnation (3.8) *And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.*
 - > Forgiveness (4.7) *“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.*
- > Under sin (3.9) *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;*
 - > Sanctification (6.19) *I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.*
- > Destruction (3.16) *DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,*
 - > Holy Spirit (8.11) *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from*

the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

- > Misery (3.16) *DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,*
> Glory 8.30 *and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

We have been rescued from condemnation, sin, destruction, misery—from all of that.

But there is also the positive side of it. We are now called *beloved* based on the mercies of God. We are called *saints* in the same verse; we have received *grace* and *peace*. Then after justification by faith we have *peace with God*, 3.24. We have received *forgiveness*; that's part of *justification*, 4.7. We have received *sanctification*, 6.19. These are all based on the mercies of God and I think he is bringing together a lot of what he has spoken of in chapters 1 through 11.

The list goes on: we have been given the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, 8.11. And even our future is insured by the aorist tense of being *glorified*, even though we have not experienced it—it is as though it has already taken place, 8.30. We could triple what we have in this list because of what God has done through His mercy for us. We are His *children*, even *sons*. *Ambassadors of reconciliation. Eternal life, security, freedom, gifts, resurrection, Jesus praying for us, hope...even tribulations are for good.*

So the motivation is based on what God has done, the *natural* response is our presenting ourselves, our bodies, a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God. It is on the basis of the grace and mercy that God has bestowed upon us.

- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision of God's Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
- III. Vindication of God's Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
 - A. Application to God 12.1-2
 - 1. Presenting of Oneself to God 12.1
 - a. Pleading of Believers
 - b. Presenting of Self

We will look at the background of the concept of 'presenting'. Remember there is a Jewish contingent in the audience of believers at the church of Rome, and not only the Jews, but the gentiles would be familiar with the Jewish practice and the whole sacrificial system, particularly the believers because they would be familiar with the Old Testament. So I think the imagery that Paul is drawing from, and we

will see this working through the passage, is the whole sacrificial system of the OT.

The word 'to present' is what was done in the OT: they would bring an animal to the priest who would present it on an altar and it would be a holy sacrifice, one that was *set apart*. So the idea of presenting a sacrifice, pleasing God, even the word *service* is in the sacrificial context in the temple. When you repeat this verse in your memory you might keep this picture of the OT sacrifice on the altar in front of the temple. So this would come to the mind of the Jews and the gentiles when they heard it. They would be reminded of the sacrificing of an animal, as gruesome and as ugly as we would think of it in our culture, bloody, noisy, smelly, the death of an animal set aside, offered on an altar and consumed—offered up to God.

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

So we look at this word 'to present'. The animal was put at the disposal of the priest to be disposed of and offered up to God. But in this context, referring to the believer, we put our bodies also on 'an altar'. But you can't put your body there without putting your whole person, and we will read of the renewing of our *minds* and also references to our *will*. So you can't separate your body from the rest of who we are. You are putting your entire self there to be made available to God.

Key Terms

- 1. Urge - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
- 2. Present - παράστημι (pah-reés-tay-mee)
to put at someone's disposal

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

At the heart of the presentation is the *sacrifice*. This seems to be the focus in the Greek text; there are some words that kind of modify the idea of the sacrifice. Obviously this is sacrificial language, so the typical word that is used for sacrifice will be modified by living and holy and acceptable to God. This presentation is a *sacrifice*, the best of the flock, the most important aspect of what you *own* in the OT context, and in the NT it is not an animal but our very being itself.

Key Terms

1. Urge - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
2. Present - παρίστημι (pah-reés-tay-mee)
3. Sacrifice - θυσία (thoo-seé-ah)
OT language, typical word: offered to God on an altar

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

And it's a *living* sacrifice, not a slain animal, but *living*. And the idea is that it is an *on-going* sacrifice; it is not a once for all presentation. Although we die to self, we continue to live in newness of life of which every aspect is presented as a living sacrifice. 'Living' includes everything: our homes, our possessions, our relationships, our careers, our aspirations, our motivations, everything is presented. This is the heart of what it looks like to be a believer: an on-going, present tense idea of being committed to living for God. It's based on the shed blood of Christ. Other areas that we present include our every thought, our opinions, standards, motives, values, practices, pride. Moment by moment. He is summarizing what he said about principles.

6.4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

The *newness of life* is the moment by moment presenting ourselves alive. Now we are presenting ourselves in *newness*, as he refers to *resurrection*. And there other things in the passage that elaborate that as well, in chapter 6.

Key Terms

1. Urge - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
2. Present - παρίστημι (pah-reés-tay-mee)
3. Sacrifice - θυσία (thoo-seé-ah)
4. Living - newness of life (6.4)
5. Holy - separated

Now the word 'holy': in a lot of ways we have kind of distorted what the word means. The essence of holiness in the OT means 'set-apartness'. Set apart for a purpose. We are setting ourselves apart—in this case as a sacrifice. It wasn't that the animal had 'inherent holiness' or 'purity' (though without blemish). It was set apart; I am no longer clinging to this animal that I was going to utilize in my life, but I am setting it apart to God and giving it over to Him. There are hundreds of

examples in the OT of setting apart inanimate things, things that are not different from others, but set apart for a particular purpose and use. Now we are in the process of being conformed more and more to that moral aspect but here the setting apart is the main idea.

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

This is what makes it acceptable, not only the presentation but everything that goes with it: the mental attitudes, pride, living and holy aspect—the long list that we made. This naturally leads to what is pleasing to God. At the end of the OT period Malachi was reprimanding them because they were bringing sacrifices that were not acceptable. They wouldn't bring those sacrifices to the governor, yet they were bring *non*-unblemished ones to God.

Key Terms

1. Urge - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
2. Present - παρίστημι (pah-reés-tay-mee)
3. Sacrifice - θυσία (thoo-seé-ah)
4. Living - newness of life (6.4)
5. Holy - separated
6. Acceptable - pleasing to God
God is the ultimate owner of everything, but we are giving it back to Him.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| I. Introduction | 1.1-17 |
| II. Provision of God's Righteousness | 1.1 8-8.39 |
| III. Vindication of God's Righteousness | 9-11 |
| IV. Application of God's Righteousness | 12.1-15.13 |
| A. Application to God | 12.1-2 |
| 1. Presenting of Oneself to God | 12.1 |
| a. Pleading of Believers | |
| b. Presenting of Self | |
| c. Personal Worship | |

Presenting oneself to God is actually Personal Worship:

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

There is a 'spiritual' aspect to it, but the word 'spiritual' is the Greek word λογικός (lo-gui-kós), like our word 'logic' or 'logos', the

thoughts or words. It is something relating to reasoning or rationality or logic or being reasonable. It includes all those elements, not visible but spiritual. It is more than just ‘non-material’; it has thought, logic, reasonableness behind it. It’s the right way of responding, is actually worship. He died for us; we should die for Him, a normal, wise thing to do.

Key Terms

1. Urge - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
2. Present - παρίστημι (pah-reés-tay-mee)
3. Sacrifice - θυσία (thoo-seé-ah)
4. Living - newness of life (6.4)
5. Holy - separated
6. Acceptable - pleasing to God
7. ‘Spiritual’ - λογικός (lo-gui-kós) rational, logical, reasonable

In Greek there is only one word, but the New American Standard is trying to capture both ideas of service and worship and both are contained in that one word.

12.1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

‘Latreía’ is the service of a priest in a worship context, in a ministry that a priest or Levites would perform in ancient times in the Tabernacle and then later in the Temple. So it could be translated ‘service’ or ‘worship’, or ‘service of worship’.

Key Terms

1. Urge - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
2. Present - παρίστημι (pah-reés-tay-mee)
3. Sacrifice - θυσία (thoo-seé-ah)
4. Living - newness of life (6.4)
5. Holy - separated
6. Acceptable - pleasing to God
7. ‘Spiritual’ - λογικός (lo-gui-kós)
rational, logical, reasonable, spiritual
8. Service - λατρεία (lah-tray-éé-ah)
service/worship of priests and Levites

λατρεία (lah-tray-éé-ah) includes the sacrifice of the animal and everything associated with it was this idea of ‘service’. We are priests unto God, each of us individually. In Israel only certain ones, only the

descendants of Aaron, only the Levites, only the ones that were related to that tribe were priests, so only *they* offered the sacrifice.

But, in the New Testament, everyone is on an equal basis in Christ, and we are priests unto God. The book of Revelation describes us as a *kingdom of priests*. And we can offer spiritual sacrifices, the one that leads to others is presenting our bodies or our entire selves, and that is an act of worship. So we can worship God moment by moment; we don’t have to be in a special place—in fact what does Jesus say? There will be a time when people won’t be in the temple, but they will offer worship in spirit and in truth. What he is introducing is the concept of not having to be in a special place; you don’t have to do certain things, you can worship moment by moment everywhere. This submission or yielding is the essence of what is in this verse, the essence of how we respond or what it looks like to be a Christian.

Living - God

1. Submit to God moment by moment
 - I. Introduction 1.1-17
 - II. Provision of God’s Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
 - III. Vindication of God’s Righteousness 9-11
 - IV. Application of God’s Righteousness 12.1-15.13
 - A. Application to God 12.1-2
 1. Presenting of Oneself to God 12.1
 2. Process of Presenting 12.2
 - a. Pressures of Age Resisted

We have talked about the *process* of presenting oneself to God. Now he is going to give more detail of how it actually works out. And there is a positive and a negative aspect.

12.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect

He starts with the negative aspect—not being conformed to ‘the pressures of the age’. In the Greek text ‘do be conformed’ is one word, and it is negated with the word for ‘not’.

We will look at the word ‘world’ which is actually the word for ‘age’. It has the idea of ‘wordliness’, the mindset of the time. It is the idea of fitting into the *mold* of the world.

12.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The positive is: ‘be transformed’. Both are in the present tense imperative, so they are on-going processes, the moment by moment idea. Submitting to God is the big idea of everything we have talked about in this lesson.

[Romans 12.2 Transformation 167]

Key Terms

9. Conform - συσχηματίζω (soos-khay-mah-téed-zo) - be formed to, be conformed to, planning or ‘scheming’
10. World - αἰών (ah-ee-ón) - age, worldliness, temptations
 - The Dangers of Worldliness** the opposite of presenting yourself
 - > Fashion - looking at outward appearance
 - > Focus on money - it’s not the amount, it’s the attitude. God does not condemn the rich. All our finances should be dedicated to God.
 - > Priority of career - especially men tend to be too dedicated to their career. It is the attitude. How do I view my career: Is it to advance and be a ministry or to advance myself to rise in the company?
 - > Power and position - not wrong, depending on how you use it: presenting it to Him or for your power or position? Numbers 16, Korah’s rebellion is an example.
 - > Impressive home - hospitality, not to show off
 - > Latest gadgets, cars - have pleasures but not used by flesh for self gratification
 - > Investments - accumulation for what God wants
 - > Pleasure and indulgences - God wants us to have pleasures and to indulge in those things that glorify Him, but again the flesh wants to use them for self-gratification.

Young people today, and even Christians are adopting worldly ideas, like ‘shacking up’; that is worldliness and we have to avoid such traps. You can encourage other believers along the lines of presenting their bodies to God as living and holy sacrifices. These are the idols that prevent us from living for Him. We can present all these things to God: our career, our money our position, homes, possessions, even our pleasures. 1Cor 10.31 *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* This sets us apart from the world:

Living - God

1. Submit to God moment by moment
2. Setting apart from the world

- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision of God’s Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
- III. Vindication of God’s Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God’s Righteousness 12.1-15.13
 - A. Application to God 12.1-2
 1. Presenting of Oneself to God 12.1
 2. Process of Presenting 12.2
 - a. Pressures of Age Resisted
 - b. Persistent Transformation

As we deal with the outward pressures of the age, the world around us, there is the Persistent Transformation that takes place within us. Both the word ‘conform’ and ‘transform’ are in the present tense, indicating that it is a moment by moment resisting the world and a moment by moment being transformed.

12.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

In general the word ‘transform’ is a total change from inside out. It is also a process that doesn’t happen instantaneously, not a one-time change that makes us suddenly totally different, but it is a life-long process.

Living - God

1. Submit to God moment by moment
2. Setting apart from the world
3. Being Transformed into the Image of Christ

Key Terms

9. Conform - συσχηματίζω (soos-khay-mah-téed-zo) - be formed to, be conformed to, planning or ‘scheming’
10. World - αἰών (ah-ee-ón) - age, worldliness, temptations
11. Transform - μεταμορφόομαι (meh-tah-mor-fó-o-mah-ee) - total change from inside out. This is where we get the word ‘metamorphosis’. It occurs only in two places as far as the word itself, but the concept, using related and other words, is in other passages as well. 2Corinthians 3.18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

There are other verses that refer to being more Christ-like.

1John 3.2 *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that*

when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

We are in the process of getting there, but we will not ‘get there’ until He returns. That’s glorification which Paul talked about in chapter 8. And when we see Him we will be totally transformed and like Him. In the meantime it is a process of internal change and as we focus, renewing our minds

Galatians 2.20 *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

We are familiar with the changes from the seed to a worm to a cocoon to a monarch butterfly. That is a metamorphosis—the noun form of the Greek verb. We look different after the infant stage when an adult age, for example. And we will be ‘different’, glorified, when we see Him .

12.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The renewing of your mind has to go back to starting with your *thinking*. You have to revise your thinking. If it is ‘off’, then what comes out is going to be ‘off’. That is where understanding what God has revealed is so important, understanding God truth, God’s word is what renews your mind. Here are some passages:

9. Conform - συσχηματίζω (soos-khay-mah-teéd-zo) - be formed to, be conformed to, planning or ‘scheming’
10. World - αἰών (ah-ee-ón) - age, worldliness, temptations
11. Transform - μεταμορφόομαι (meh-tah-mor-fó-o-mah-ee)- total change from inside out
12. **Renew**- ἀνακαινώσις (ah-nah-kah-ee-nó-sees) - inward renovation

Ephesians 4.17 *So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,*

That’s that old life-style.

22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Again, the negative: the ‘putting off’ of the unbelieving aspects that conform to the world, and the positive: ‘putting on a the new self, like putting on a garment. This translation uses the word ‘renew’, renewing you mind is an inward renovation that starts in our thinking and in our mind.

Colossians 3.5-10 *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.*

8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--

This passage is parallel to the previous.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| I. Introduction | 1.1-17 |
| II. Provision o God’s Righteousness | 1.1 8-8.39 |
| III. Vindication of God’s Righteousness | 9-11 |
| IV. Application of God’s Righteousness | 12.1-15.13 |
| A. Application to God | 12.1-2 |
| 1. Presenting of Oneself to God | 12.1 |
| 2. Process of Presenting | 12.2 |
| a. Pressures of Age Resisted | |
| b. Persistent Transformation | |
| c. Proof of God’s Will | |

The Proof of God’s Will is a result statement: ‘so that...’

12.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

If this happens in your life, you will be authenticating what God wants, what the will of God is: that which is good and acceptable and even perfect. That is a description of God’s will, but it will be made evident, proven out, observable when people see that process of transformation. And it involves submitting to God moment by moment.

- 9. Conform - συσχηματίζω (soos-khay-mah-teéd-zo) - be formed to, be conformed to, planning or ‘scheming’
- 10. World - αἰών (ah-ee-ón) - age, worldliness, temptations
- 11. Transform - μεταμορφόομαι (meh-tah-mor-fó-o-mah-ee)- total change from inside out
- 12. **Renew**- ἀνακαινώσις (ah-nah-kah-ee-nó-sees) - inward renovation
- 13. **Proof** - δοκιμάζω (do-kee-máhd-zo) learn by experience

12.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

‘For..’ in verses 3-8, connects with verses 1-2, and it is about the church. Romans 12 is an application of the righteousness of God to individuals and the church. How does God’s righteousness *look*? And, if we do not do what verses 1-2 tell us, then there is nothing we can do to carry out the rest of the book. How can the will of God be *seen*, and how can it be *proven* what the will of God is in our relationship to fellow believers, the universal body of Christ and, more locally, how can it be seen in our relationship with one another within our local church? I believe that is what Paul is moving into in verses 3-21. We can’t miss that important connection. From other passages also, the principle is that you have to have your relationship to God *right* before any other relationship is right as well.

And here is another interesting passage of what God values and what He considers important in terms of our relationship to the church. Notice it does not talk about attendance, being involved in the right doctrinal church, nor anything to do with the right pastor. It doesn’t say anything about whether that church has the right programs; in fact it focuses on *us* as individuals and our *part* in the body of Christ.

If you have ever wondered why the church is weak today, I think you will find the answer in this passage, along with several others. If you have ever wondered how the 1st Century church, as the book of Acts indicates, was able to turn the Roman Empire upside down, this passage will explain how that happened. What was communicated was, if you were a believer, you have a spiritual gift, and as God is transforming you, part of the transformation process is that you are involved with other believers exercising that spiritual gift. I think in the 1st Century in general, except for those too immature or were not in tune with what God was doing, a large percentage of them were exercising their spiritual gifts and they made a church that was extremely dynamic, powerful and influential in the Roman Empire. That is the explanation of how they turned the Roman Empire upside down.

If you look at churches today, they are dominated by one or two people and the attitude is, ‘Well, I give my money, so I expect you to do the ministry’. That is not a New Testament concept. Ephesian 4 gives us some detail on how all this works itself out. And I think Paul here, 12.3-8, gives additional insight into the functioning of the body of Christ and particularly of those that are related to Him.

But it starts with a proper attitude concerning ourselves so there is encouragement for humility, 3-5.

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God’s Righteousness	1.1 8-8.39
III. Vindication of God’s Righteousness	9-11
IV. Application of God’s Righteousness	12.1-15.13
A. Application to God	12.1-2
B. Application to Church	12.3-21
1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts	12.3-8
a. Encouragement for Humility	12.3-5
1) Evaluation for Humility	12.3

We need to do some evaluating of our attitudes concerning ourselves and where we fit within the broader body of Christ, and that’s the essence of verse 3.

12.3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

First, **the humility of Paul**: ‘For through the grace given to me’. From Paul’s perspective, he does not command them ‘from my elevated position’. There are lot of passages, like the beginning of this book, Romans, where Paul is identified as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the highest authority in the Church; here he doesn’t mention his apostleship, only alludes to it and recognizes that he is undeserving of it, that it is nothing in *him*—he didn’t earn it or merit it. But it is through the *grace* that apostleship was give him, unmerited, God’s choice and goodness in granting the authority and the position that God has given him. But here he doesn’t even identify it, because he did note it in verse one of the book. He models humility.

12.3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

The humility needed by all: ... ‘I say to everyone among you’. We have the ‘For’ γάρ (gar) at the beginning that usually alude to

something preceding, the essence of our commitment to our Lord, the laying down of our lives and living it for Him as a sacrifice that lives and is set apart to Him. This is what it looks like in relationship to the body of Christ. This is what should follow: For through grace, I say to everyone among you...

I am going to emphasize this idea of *everyone* as we get further into it. But already we have the idea of the members of the body of Christ and the total inclusion of everyone as opposed to separating ‘elites’ or ‘leadership’. The focus is *our* part, everybody’s part, and that would include—in fact, he does include—leadership, verses 6-8, when he identifies particular gifts. The thrust here is that everyone *has* a gift.

Here he is addressing *everyone*; so humility is needed by all.

12.3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly [ὑπερφρονέω (hyu-per-fro-néh-o)] of himself than he ought to think [φρονέω (fro-néh-o)]; but to think so as to have sound judgment [σωφρονέω (so-for-néh-o)], as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

A lack of humility contrasted with **the humility of ‘sound judgment’**. We have to *think* so as to have sound judgment. ‘Not to think more highly’. In the Greek text it is very obvious: he is using three verbs, the main one four times. To think, φρονέω (fro-néh-o), also appearing in ὑπερφρονέω (hyu-per-fro-néh-o) and σωφρονέω (so-for-néh-o) explained as ‘sound judgment’. It is a word group, used 4 times in this context to make a particular point. It is the idea of *thinking*, of evaluating ideas or thoughts, in this context, of ourselves. How do you view yourselves? What is your perspective on who you are? He gives a balance here. In order to relate to the rest of the body, we have to have a proper perspective on not only *who* we are, but how we *relate*. And the attitude that we have is *humility*; as we relate to one another we relate *humbly*.

Key Terms

1. Think highly - ὑπερφρονέω (hyu-per-fro-néh-o)
to hold too high self-opinion

12.3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly [ὑπερφρονέω hyu-per-fro-néh-o] of himself than he ought to think [φρονέω fro-néh-o]; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

The addition of the preposition, like ὑπερ *hyper*, sometimes changes the meaning and sometimes intensifies the meaning and in this case it seems to do both: ‘to hold to a high self-opinion’, ie, the very

opposite of humility. It can even be an arrogant attitude, ie, ‘I am better than everyone else’, and keep in mind that in this context he is talking about spiritual gifts.

And, if you remember, one of the main problems at Corinth that Paul addresses is the issue relating to the exercise of spiritual gifts. And the Corinthians were totally out of perspective in their utilization of spiritual gifts. They were elevating some and there were some that probably had a very high opinion of themselves because they had more visual or outward spiritual gifts, and there were others that were probably feeling more inferior because they had what appeared to be lesser gifts. There was a lot of division and problems in the exercise of the gifts, so much so that Paul wrote 3 entire chapters to correct that problem. So, in this whole area I think naturally, and in the flesh, we have the tendency to over-emphasize some gifts and particularly those that have the more visible or public gifts, thinking that ‘your gift is not as important as mine’.

We need a *grace* perspective, which is the grace that Paul recognizes in his apostolic gift. He had the ‘highest’ gift that you could experience in the 1st Century which also led to the highest *position* in the body of Christ. We need that same attitude as well.

Key Terms

1. Think highly - ὑπερφρονέω (hyu-per-fro-néh-o)
to hold too high self-opinion
2. Think - φρονέω (fro-néh-o)

12.3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly [ὑπερφρονέω (hyu-per-fro-néh-o)] of himself than he ought to think [φρονέω (fro-néh-o)]; but to think so as to have sound judgment [σωφρονέω (so-fro-néh-o)], as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

So, we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to; rather we are to think in a different way. So he is giving a contrast—which leads to the next word. ‘To think’ φρονέω (fro-néh-o) is used by Paul in other passages as well. The use of the word, σωφρονέω, (so-fro-néh-o), has a prefix that is from the Greek word σῶς, ‘sos’, which means ‘sound’, ‘temperate’, ‘discrete’, etc. The translation, then, of ‘sound judgment’ is a good one. Thinking results in ‘judging’ and the prefix makes it solid, temperate, accurate judgment.

Key Terms

1. Think highly - ὑπερφρονέω (hyu-per-fro-néh-o)
to hold too high self-opinion
2. Think - φρονέω (fro-néh-o)

3. Have sound judgment - σοφρονέω (so-fro-néh-o)
to be in a right mind, wise thinking,
be reasonable

There is a balance in this word. Some believers think they have gifts that they don't actually have; in their thinking, 'That's the gift that I want and am pursuing, and the one I want to be seen exercising'. And they don't have a realistic view of who they are or what God has given them. In their imagination they are imagining a ministry that God never intended for them. That is one tendency.

I think the balance here also is the majority of people who don't exercise their gifts because they don't think their gifts are of much value. So you don't want to depreciate what God has given you, but you want to look at the giftedness that you do have with sound judgment. And the passage is going to go on later to encourage us to find our place in the body of Christ and to exercise it—the whole thrust of this passage is that we all, every single one has a spiritual gift, a part in the functioning of the body of Christ. Everyone should be exercising that gift, whether it is a prominent, up-front gift or one that is a service gift.

Paul says that everyone needs to have a proper, Biblical perspective on who you are, not an elevated, out-of-proportion perspective but also not a diminishing of who you are and thinking that you are not of value in the body of Christ—and not thinking that you just need to attend and write a check. But, in fact, the body of Christ is incomplete without every single believer contributing to the functioning of the body of Christ. And that is what it means to have **the humility of sound judgment**—σοφρονέω (so-fro-néh-o)—to be in a sound mind or reasonable or right mind.

So to diminish your place in the body of Christ is insanity, not being in your right mind. But we should be in our right mind which is a proper evaluation of what our gifts are. And the utilization should be such that we know that without our gift we are actually diminishing the body of Christ because it is not fully expressed unless all of the gifts present are in fact used.

“not to be high-minded above that which height to be minded, but to be minded as to be sober-minded”

“not to over estimate one's self, beyond a true estimate but to estimate one's self with a proper estimate”
--SL Johnson

12.3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

The humility of faith: God has allotted to each a measure of faith. God has given the gifts, equipped every one of us with a measure of faith. He is recognizing that there is diversity as well, there are differences within the body of Christ, in terms of giftedness, ministry, everyone is unique and different. We are like snowflakes; there is none identical and I don't think any one of us has the same combination of giftedness as another, but whatever that may be, God has allotted to each a measure of faith. In other words, in proportion to the measure of faith, we have different maturity levels, maybe even levels of trust, but to that measure we are to exercise our gift. But it starts with this attitude of humility in terms of how I relate to the rest of the body.

I am going to stress, as we go through this passage, that all believers are to be part and involved in the functioning of the body of Christ: in verse 3 and in the following verses, using various phrases.

All Believers

12.3 - everyone among you
allotted to each

12.4-5 - many members

12.5 - are many ... individually members one of another

12.6 - each of us

This is an emphasis of the unity of the body on an individual basis — that we all have a part. But we are also going to see a diversity:

Diversity

12.3 - allotted faith

12.4-5 - different functions

12.5 - different members

12.6 - different gifts

How does righteousness look, how is it lived out in the church? The first thing we have to have is that commitment to God because if not everything else is out of balance. And we have to have the proper attitude of humility. So that is the starting point: The right relationship to God and the right attitude, which summarizes verse 3.

And the different gifts are, 'vertically', to glorify God which is addressed in the problem in Corinth. The 'horizontal' purpose is the building up of the body, and, in the process, we are encouraged and blessed ourselves. Exercising our gift builds *us*, encourages us; it gives us a purpose for living, for life. That is more an 'internal' purpose. And there are many secondary purposes fulfilling God's designs.

Living - Church

1. Commitment - to God
2. Attitude - of Humility

So the living out of righteousness within the body of Christ has to start with that commitment to God and secondly, it manifests itself in how we respond in an attitude of humility. It has to have a right commitment, a right attitude, and then that moves us into verse 4:

[Romans 12.3-6 Each believer has Spiritual Gifts 169]

- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision of God's Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
- III. Vindication of God's Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
 - A. Application to God 12.1-2
 - B. Application to Church 12.3-21
 - 1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
 - a. Encouragement for Humility 12.3-5
 - 1) Evaluation for Humility 12.3
 - 2) Extensive Function of Body 12.4

In verse 4 we have the extensive function of the body: we are many, with different functions, different individuals and together we make up that one unified body.

12.4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Notice that it begins with 'For...', it is moving ahead from that attitude of humility.

Notice that it is one long sentence, 4-5. 'Just as....', then a subordinate clause 'so we are one body in Christ, and individually member one of another.' He is talking about this relationship that we have with a body—and are a part of.

12.4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

And he summarizes (there is a longer explanation in 1 Corinthians where he give detail and examples): 'just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function'. The illustration is of *one body*. We can think of our own bodies. We have, for example, two hands that work together; likewise we have two eyes

that work together and if one is destroyed depth perception is somewhat impaired...

12.4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

Also Paul points out that not all are a hand or a foot. And all members do not have the same function—in the spiritual body of Christ. In the human body, you can look at it on the micro level and see the multiplicity of parts. Every part plays a role or has a place in the functioning of every single cell. Diseases are a result of the accumulation of cells not functioning right. But cells that don't function right are a result of some of the individual parts not working.

I like what Michael Behe says,

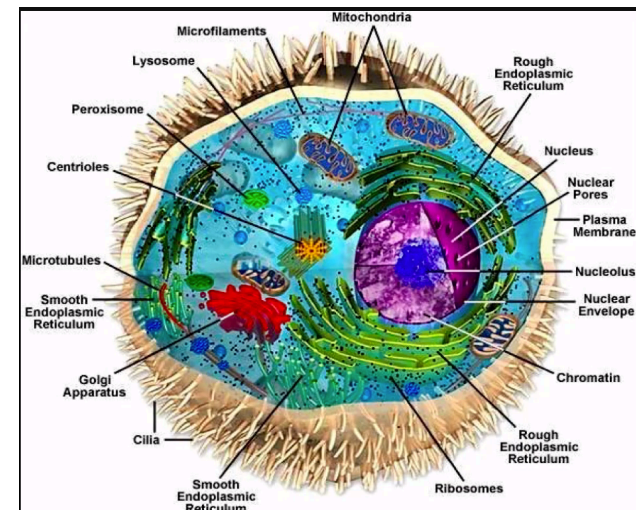
“The cumulative result shows with piercing clarity that life is based on machines—machines made of molecules!”

—Michael Behe

Each person is very complex, like a greater functioning machine. Machines are made of molecules. (This is also an argument for the impossibility of evolution.) It illustrates the importance of each individual part. Michael Denton also says:

“Molecular biology has shown that even the simplest of all living systems on earth today, bacterial cells, are exceedingly complex objects. ...far more complicated than anything built by man ...”

—Michael Denton



The illustration is that all of the parts have to fit together and function together before that cell can do *its* job. They all function together to make up who we are as a whole, as a body, and the idea here is that we all have a place in the body of Christ. And the reason the church is not such a powerful entity in the world today is because most of the parts are not functioning. We pay somebody, one individual, that may not have a complement of gifts to do all of the work of the ministry. The design is that each *part* have a place, some more prominent or visible, but each is important. The point being that you are *gifted*. God has designed each and every one of us to fit in the body.

All Believers

- 12.3 - everyone among you allotted to each
- 12.4-5 - many members

Diversity

- 12.3 - according ... to each measure of faith
- 12.4-5 - different functions

- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision of God's Righteousness 1.1 8-8.39
- III. Vindication of God's Righteousness 9-11
- IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13
 - A. Application to God 12.1-2
 - B. Application to Church 12.3-21
 - 1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
 - a. Encouragement for Humility 12.3-5
 - 1) Evaluation for Humility 12.3
 - 2) Extensive Function of Body 12.4
 - 3) Exercise of Differing Gifts 12.5

Then, in verse 5, reiterating verse 4,

12.4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

'so we, who are many...'

12.4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

... 'are one body in Christ': A multiplicity of parts that God has designed to fit together, and all of the parts functioning as a unit. We don't think about it: you use your right hand and then the left hand helps the right hand to perform a task; and then the eyes, obviously give us the coordination of how to fit whatever you are doing with the arm, etc, that facilitates the activity. All of these things work together to perform a particular task, and that is the design of the body of Christ.

12.4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

All Believers

- 12.3 - everyone among you allotted to each
- 12.4-5 - many members
- 12.5 - are many ... individually members one of another

Diversity

- 12.3 - according ... to each measure of faith
- 12.4-5 - different functions
- 12.5 - different members

Living - Church

1. Commitment - to God
2. Attitude - of Humility
3. Relationship - to one another

The whole point here is that you have to have the right relationship to one another, the right commitment, and right attitude, but it also includes a right relationship to one another of interdependence and inter-utilization of each of the parts—working together.



So we have seen in this passage already is that these gifts function with humility, knowing the proper place, and we have seen, verse 3, that it is by grace—which is the underlying attitude of humility, knowing that everything stems from God Himself. And the gifts are to be utilized in *unity*, not giving over-emphasis to some and under-emphasis to others. (The problem at Corinth).

Then in verse 6 we are encouraged to Exercise these gifts:

IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13

- A. Application to God 12.1-2
- B. Application to Church 12.3-21
 - 1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
 - a. Encouragement for Humility 12.3-5
 - b. Exercise of Gifts 12.6-8
 - 1) Encouragement to Exercise 12.6

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

This is a rather long sentence. The translators, in order to communicate it, have to add a lot of words because there are a lot of ellipses (words left out). In fact, there is no main verb in the Greek text; we have to supply it and there are in only some in the dependent clauses. They supply the *is* in the phrase 'each of us *is* to exercise them accordingly.' This is not unusual, nor poor grammar; Greek functions that way.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

From 6-8 is the *exercising* of these gifts, how the body is to function.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

'Since we have gifts that differ'. He has already established that each one is unique and we function as a whole together, in the body of Christ. This is what it looks like for righteousness to work itself out in our relationships to one another within the body of Christ—through the exercise of spiritual gifts.

Diversity

- 12.3 - according ... to each measure of faith
- 12.4-5 - different functions
- 12.5 - different members
- 12.6 - different gifts



The gifts are very diverse, everyone is unique. We will talk a little about personal gifts and the uniqueness. But first let's look at the words used. The word for gift is χάρισμα (khár-ees-mah). This is related to the word for 'grace' χάρις (kháhr-is).

Terms

- 1. Gifts
 - χάρισμα (khár-ees-mah) Romans 12.6
 - 1Corinthians 12 - πνευματικός (nu-mah-tee-kós) χάρισμα (khár-ees-mah)
 - Hebrews 2.4 - μερισμός (mer-ees-mós)
 - Ephesians 4.7 - χάρις (kháhr-is)
 - 1Peter 4.10 - χάρισμα (khár-ees-mah)

Another word, in 1Corinthians 12 is πνευματικός (nu-mah-tee-kós) which mean breath or *spirit*. I think that word stresses the source or origin—they come from the Holy Spirit. They are spiritual, or breath-like, relating to the HS.

In Hebrew 2.4 he uses still another word: μερισμός (mer-ees-mós), but in his verse is not focusing on gifts per se.

Ephesians 4.7 has the very word for grace χάρις (kháhr-is), which is a gift of Christ.

And 1Peter 4.10 has the word χάρισμα (khár-ees-mah) again.

There are four lists of spiritual gifts:

Lists

- > 1Peter 4 - 2 categories
- > Ephesians 4 - Foundational Gifts
- > 1Corinthians 12-14 - Misuse of Gifts
- > Romans 12 - Major Church Gifts
- > Not comprehensive lists
- > Infinite combinations

1Peter 4 give two categories for gifts: *speaking* gifts, visible, speaking, public gifts; and there are *servicing* gifts that are less visible and perhaps even behind-the-scenes or non-speaking gifts.

Ephesian 4 has a list of Foundational Gifts. The emphasis is on Jesus Christ who gives them.

The focus of 1Corinthians 12-14 is the misuse of gifts but there is a spectacular list, some controversial gifts. The misuse, in Corinth, is of the more spectacular or miraculous gift; and he is trying to give them a balance.

The Romans 12 list includes also those that are, at any point in time, the more ongoing which are the prominent gifts that probably should have more focus than the more spectacular ones.

These lists are not comprehensive and I think what we have are samples of what they may look like, but you could probably have an infinite number of combinations because everyone is unique. So who you are is so unique, like fingerprints, that no one has the exact combination of spiritual gifts that you have such that your place in the body of Christ is absolutely essential. And God wants to use you in a unique way, in the unique combination of gifts that He may empower you to have. Some may be more prominent, some more minor.

I think we shouldn't over emphasize the identifying or seeking a gift but to seek more the presenting of our bodies as a living sacrifice. And then, just functioning and as we function, I think that is how we discover what those gifts are. And we can help new believers identify a gift by mentioning, eg, that they do something well and it could be one of his/her gifts. They can tell if it was something the Spirit was doing through them rather than their forcing themselves to do it. You become confirmed in that gift as you exercise just faithfulness to God.

I think our focus should be more just moment by moment walking with God and letting Him use us with an awareness that if there is a need there, just jump in and try to meet the need the best you can, and over time you can see that people seem to respond to my gift, eg, of mercy.

Description: Everyone has at least one gift

1. Not Natural
2. Not Office
3. Spiritual
4. Gracious
5. Vary
6. Abused

God can combine a spiritual gift with some natural talents, but not always; sometimes they are different from natural abilities, so they are Not Natural.

Some people emphasize the office, like apostle or maybe, today, pastors, but spiritual gifts are not offices. Some may create an office of evangelism, but they really are not offices.

They are spiritual, from the word πνευματικός (nu-mah-ti-kós), so in some ways they are unseen. You see the outward manifestation of them but the essence of them is their spiritual workings that are unseen.

We have stressed that they are *gracious*, undeserved; God decides. In fact 1Corinthians tells us that the Spirit is the one that decides; they are granted according to the Spirit, so they are gracious.

We have been stressing that gifts vary; they are very different and each of us is unique. Sometimes He puts a desire in us and that is part of His granting of a gift so we can pursue it to see if that is what He wants. 1Corinthians 12.31.

Unfortunately gifts can be abused. Probably the biggest abuse that I have been stressing in this passage is their neglect—the non-usage of gifts. There was a lot of abuse at Corinth: the abuse of speaking in tongues, even the abuse of prophecy and other gifts. Paul had to spend 3 long chapters dealing with the abuse. So I think that everyone of the gifts can be counterfeited by the dark world; there are false teachers, false apostles, and all the other gifts.

I am not entirely a cessationist (one that believes that certain gifts ended and are no longer ever given), as are most in my circle. But, on the other hand, at this point I think there is a high level of abuse of the miraculous gifts. But all of the gifts can be abused in one way or another. We are human, sinful, sometimes in the flesh and any time we are exercising a gift in the flesh this is an abuse of a spiritual gift.

We have said what gifts are not. What they are is the supernatural abilities or enablements for serving our Lord. This is how God wants to

utilize us in the body of Christ with all of our unique aspects—background, areas of maturity, etc—God is behind them; they are supernatural and are enablements, but any enablement is to be utilized, implemented in the area of serving our Lord.

I think it is totally unbiblical to say: ‘We are paying that man to do the ministry while he has the office that calls for him to do ministry.’ I don’t think that is a Biblical concept and I consider it an abuse of spiritual gifts in the area of neglect. So just as a team has different members and each one has different skills, they work together.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

Notice again he stresses: ‘according to the grace given to us’. The idea of grace again—undeserved, unmerited—and given to each of us individually...

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

..but each of us ‘is to exercise them accordingly—in humility, etc, all the things we talked about. That phrase is elliptical but I think the translators are capturing emphasis of the passage here. And, again, each of us,...

All Believers

12.3 - everyone among you
allotted to each

12.4-5 -many members

12.5 - are many ...individually
members one of another

12.6 - each of us



...and the gifts are not only to be utilized in humility, but also recognizing that they are by grace, in unity, with diversity, by *each* believer. This kind of captures the essence of 12.3 and the following verses which are emphasizing the diverse ways that each believer may manifest any particular spiritual gift.

We can look more closely at these verses as they all refer to *each one*. So each believer has, I think, at least one supernatural enablement and probably a combination of maybe three or even several; we are all gifted and therefore we all have a place in the body of Christ.

You are Gifted!

> Ephesians 4.7 - to each one

> 1Peter 4.10 - each one

> 1Corinthians 12.6-7 - to each one

> Romans 12.6 - each of us

Living - Church

1. Commitment - to God

2. Attitude - of Humility

3. Relationship - to one another

4. Ministry - in one’s gift

So how does the righteousness of God work itself out? What does it look like in terms of the church? It starts with the right commitment to God, the right attitude of humility, the right relationship to one another and finding our right ministry in the body of Christ, functioning in one’s spiritual gift.

[Romans 12.6-8 Gifts 170]

Everyone is to exercise spiritual gifts. Each of us should be thinking: ‘How am I using my gift today?’ Not just Sunday morning—in fact, I think many of the gifts are better and more appropriately exercised throughout the week in personal contact with one another. We will see some of them on the list. Now we want to look at Ephesian 4.7-12:

Ephesians 4.7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.* 8 *Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.”* 9 *(Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)*

Notice that he is using different words for ‘gift’, in verse 7 δωρεά (do-ray-áh), and in verse 8 δόμα (dó-mah). Also he refers to the *grace* which is given *to each one*. This is the same emphasis as we have in Romans, and in 1Peter 4.10. Now if we look at 1Corinthians 12.6-7 we see it there also:

6 *There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.* 7 *But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

The gifts are a manifestation of the Spirit, ie, the ways people can see the working of the HS in the believer as they function in the body of Christ. But the emphasis I am making is the emphasis *to each one*. Then, in Romans 12.6: *each of us*, stressing the idea of everyone not only having at least one gift, but God has designed that we *function*, how we relate to one another through spiritual gifts—not the only way, but this is the prominent way.

It begins with a commitment to God—if we have put ourselves on that altar and are growing in that relationship, that is the source of power, the source of knowing and displaying God’s will. If we don’t have that right, then the exercise of spiritual gifts will be an abuse of those gifts. So, in a right relationship to God it will spill over in our relationship to other believers. It starts with the right commitment and the right attitude (having an accurate or humble assessment which is having an accurate view of ourselves from God’s perspective). This gives us a right relationship with one another in the body and in that relationship we have a vital function and a vital place. The right *ministry*, then, is related to the functioning of one’s gift. That is a summary of what we have seen in Romans 12.

Ephesians 4 has a lot of similarities and I will use a similar chart here.



We already read verse 7, but if you read verses 8 and 9, he describes the giver as Christ Himself. Now we have the whole Trinity involved—in 1Corinthians 12 God is mentioned. In Ephesians 4.8-9 Paul quotes Psalms 68, expanding on Christ’s *gift* of verse 7. *Therefore it says, “WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF*

CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.” The essence of what he is saying is that the ascended Christ, from the right hand of the Father, distributes gifts. Then he expands it in 9 and 10. And they are given through the Holy Spirit, which is the emphasis of the 1Corinthian passage. They are *by grace* as we saw in verse 7, to *each believer* also in verse 7. And, if you read the rest of Ephesians 4, it is for the purpose of the *edification of the body* that ultimately is *for God’s glory*. You can see some of that in verses 11-16 of Ephesians 4.

But notice a couple of other things here in Ephesians 4: skip to verse 11. This is a list that Paul uses to give us that I would describe as *Foundational Gifts*. 11 *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*

I don’t have the cessationist view that many in our circle have, ie, that some of the gifts have ceased to be given, since the 1st Century. One of them would be *apostleship*. Doing a word study on it in the NT, you see that it is used in 4 different ways.

1st it is used of the 12 (one was replaced in Acts 1 because God has a plan in the future for the 12, Matthew 19.28). They are unique.

The second category is people like Paul, who is an apostle, so named, but there are a few others like Barnabas. They had a similar function as the first group.

Thirdly, I think there is the *gift* of apostleship. That is what is in view in the Ephesians passage; the 12, Paul, Barnabas and some of the others had the gift. But there are others, that are not named. I summarize the essence of it by noting that these are the ones that *planted churches*, those that went out and planted churches. In Acts we see churches reaching out and planting other churches. I know of a church started near Albuquerque, and missionaries who have started churches. It operates differently in each case, because we are unique, but I think the *gift* can go on.

The fourth use of the word ‘apostle’ is in the context of *falsos* apostles.

Foundational

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| > Apostle - | Plants Churches | Matthew 19.28 |
| > Prophet - | Speaks Revelation | |
| > Evangelists - | Leads People to Christ | |
| > Pastor - | Shepherds Flocks | |
| > Teacher - | Explains God’s Word | |

In a similar way, I think some of the other gifts, for example, the gift of *prophet*, would be another one that some of the cessationists say

no longer is utilized. But I would say that some aspects are no longer utilized today. It is in the list at Ephesus and we will see it in Romans.

The church is founded on the apostles and the prophets. That is a unique function of those of the 1st Century in the overall foundation of the church. The church was founded once-and-for-all. Individual churches throughout church history have different times of founding, and people with gifts that have the ability to do that have existed throughout the church age including people with prophetic gifts.

Evangelists, obviously, exist today with the ability to lead people to Christ. That one is not listed, but clearly in the founding of the 1st Century church there was a great need for people to lead people to Christ. I think this gift was given in greater abundance than perhaps in any other time in church history. People have that gift today as well.

These are foundational and I have separated them, but the Pastor/Teacher gift is very common today as well. Also, by way of introduction and a little bit of this idea of everyone having the gifts, I want to mention that I believe that God can give every single one of the gifts to both male and female, including the gift of Pastor/Teacher.

There are limitations of where this gift can be used by male and female, but I think—since there are more females in some churches—that they have more pastors in the Biblical sense who are females than males. They have the gift of *shepherding*, of children and other women. In fact their gift can be more prominent than some of the men that also have the gift. I think women are more inclined to be shepherds than men are because they have those nurturing gifts. They know their place, do not step outside the bound that Scripture has set, but they are examples of this gift. I say all this so that you don't limit how God may equip you. Some verses limit the use of this gift in terms of functioning, but not in terms of giftedness.

That takes us to the passage in Romans.

IV. Application of God's Righteousness 12.1-15.13

- A. Application to God 12.1-2
- B. Application to Church 12.3-21
 - 1. Exercise of Spiritual Gifts 12.3-8
 - a. Encouragement for Humility 12.3-5
 - b. Exercise of Gifts 12.6-8
 - 1) Encouragement to Exercise 12.6
 - 2) Explanation of Gifts 12.6b-8

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

Notice that he gives a string of gifts, encouraging their use: *do it*. And because it is in this list, I think God still gives the gift of prophecy, but not in the sense of new revelation. I think that aspect of the gift of prophecy ceased in the 1st Century. When the canon of Scripture was completed that was the extent of the revelation that God desired to have today, so I don't think there is new revelation. The gift can be *manifested* by *speaking* God's revelation. (The word group, prophet, prophecy, etc is used very commonly in the OT.) In the NT up to a certain point they were speaking *original* and *new* revelation which, essentially became the New Testament. The revelation was complete, but the prophets were the ones that drew attention to the revelation; they were the ones that proclaimed it.

In the OT also they were the ones that proclaimed God's word. And sometimes it was not original; oftentimes it was God's word in terms of the Law which they would quote and proclaim. They also had the function of anointing and judging kings; and they were the ones that *wrote* Scripture, and another thing they did in the OT that is no longer done: they enforced the Covenants. Many of these things were related to Israel. They were also the prosecuting attorneys in that they revealed where Israel failed to live up to the Law.

Terms

- 1. Gifts - χάρισμα (kháh-rees-ma)
- 2. Prophecy - προφητεία (pro-fay-tay-ée-a)

Spiritual Gifts

- 1. Prophecy - Speaks Revelation
 - Prophet's Role**
 - > Proclaimed God's Word
 - > Anointed & Judged kings
 - > Writers of Scripture
 - > Enforced Covenants
 - > Showed God's Faithfulness in History
 - > God's prosecuting Attorneys
 - > Predicted Messianic Kingdom

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

They exposed sin and called people to repentance. This is not an easy thing to do and those doing it have to really trust God 'according to the proportion of his faith'. This is one of the main roles of a *prophet*.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

If you have the gift of serving, *do it*. Don't be shy, find a place to serve.

Terms

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Gifts - | χάρισμα (kháh-rees-ma) |
| 2. Prophecy - | προφειτία (pro-fay-tay-ée-a) |
| 3. Service - | διακονία (dee-ah-ko-neé-a) |

This is the word related to 'deacons' and in a broad sense is related to any area of service. It can be used in virtually *any* context.

I think the majority of people in the church *have* the gift of service. In fact, the counsel I would give to a person who does not know what gift he has, is to get involved in *servicing*, ie, if you find an opportunity, an occasion to serve, *serve*. In that context, you will learn quite quickly that this *is* or *isn't* your gift. God will guide as you step out in faith, just as the prophet does.

Acts 6:1 *Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily servicing of food....4 "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*

Same word: *servicing* and *ministry*: διακονία (dee-ah-ko-neé-ah). The same word, in verse 4, applies to the apostles, the *ministry*... is exactly the same word. I saw a man who was insisting that his gift was *service*, working behind the scenes, even though he seemed to have a gift for speaking. But whenever there was a need, he would rise to the surface and volunteer to do the teaching when their usual teacher was away, and over time he developed into one of the better 'preachers'. The point is that the gift of service can manifest itself in any variety of ways, not just those behind the scenes, quiet, unseen service, but it can include even speaking gifts, depending on how God has gifted an individual.

Paul used this word in regard to his own *ministry*. So it can manifest itself in a variety of ways.

Spiritual Gifts

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. Prophecy - | Speaks Revelation |
| 2. Service - | Serves without being noticed, or publicly |

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Teaching is a more obvious gift, generally referring to expounding God's word.

Terms

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Gifts - | χάρισμα (kháh-rees-ma) |
| 2. Prophecy - | προφειτία (pro-fay-tay-ée-a) |
| 3. Service - | διακονία (dee-ah-ko-née-a) |
| 4. Teaching - | διδάσκω (dee-dáhs-ko) |

Spiritual Gifts

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Prophecy - | Speaks Revelation |
| 2. Service - | Serves without notice |
| 3. Teacher - | Expounds God's Word |
| 4. (Eccentricity) - | uniqueness |

My gift is *teaching*, but I probably have a more prominent gift that is not on the list. My gift is the gift of *eccentricity*. I just want to mention that I have a combination of gifts that primarily manifests itself as teaching with a little bit of a *discerning gift* and maybe some others as well.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

If you are an *exhorter*, get on with it. This goes with the prophetic gift: they both exhort and motivate but the word is παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-lé-o) which is where we get the word 'paraclete', 'Helper' or Holy Spirit (John 14-16) with a ministry of comforting. But it also has the idea of 'coming alongside of', walking along with someone to help them. So it can manifest itself not only in words, but in service as well. A person might have this gift and that of *service* together. So it includes comfort and in some contexts and it also includes motivation and encouragement.

Terms

1. Gifts - χάρισμα (kháh-rees-ma)
2. Prophecy - προφητεία (pro-fay-tay-eé-a)
3. Service - διακονία (dee-ah-ko-neé-a)
4. Teaching - διδάσκω (dee-dáhs-ko)
5. Exhortation - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)

Spiritual Gifts

1. Prophecy - Speaks Revelation
2. Service - Serves without notice
3. Teachers - Expounds God's Word
4. Exhortation - Motivates to action

I would summarize it as the motivation to *action*. We need the *speaking* gifts but also the gifts to encourage people to move on to grow.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The *giving* would not be just the financial area.

Terms

1. Gifts - χάρισμα (kháh-rees-ma)
2. Prophecy - προφητεία (pro-fay-tay-eé-a)
3. Service - διακονία (dee-ah-ko-neé-a)
4. Teaching - διδάσκω (dee-dáhs-ko)
5. Exhortation - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
6. Giving - μεταδίδωμι (meh-tah-deé-do-mee)

Spiritual Gifts

1. Prophecy - Speaks Revelation
2. Service - Serves without notice
3. Teachers - Expounds God's Word
4. Exhortation - Motivates to action
5. Givers - Giving of resources

I think it is giving of one's resources which can include time, or hospitality. So it can manifest in a variety of ways, not just in writing a check.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The gift of *leadership*: be diligent, don't hold back.

Terms

1. Gifts - χάρισμα (kháh-rees-ma)
2. Prophecy - προφητεία (pro-fay-tay-eé-a)
3. Service - διακονία (dee-ah-ko-neé-a)
4. Teaching - διδάσκω (dee-dáhs-ko)
5. Exhortation - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
6. Giving - μεταδίδωμι (meh-tah-deé-do-mee)
7. Leading - προΐστημι (pro-eés-tay-mee)

Spiritual Gifts

1. Prophecy - Speaks Revelation
2. Service - Serves without notice
3. Teachers - Expounds God's Word
4. Exhortation - Motivates to action
5. Givers - Giving of resources
6. Leadership - Lead with vision

I think it is *leading* with vision, ie, you can envision a ministry, the direction, how things can better work out, and then you are able to take the resources and the people and organize then in such a way that you can *lead*.

12.6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Terms

1. Gifts - χάρισμα (kháh-rees-ma)
2. Prophecy - προφητεία (pro-fay-tay-eé-a)
3. Service - διακονία (dee-ah-ko-neé-a)
4. Teaching - διδάσκω (dee-dáhs-ko)
5. Exhortation - παρακαλέω (pah-rah-kah-léh-o)
6. Giving - μεταδίδωμι (meh-tah-deé-do-mee)

7. Leading - προΐστημι (pro-eés-tay-mee)
8. Mercy - ἐλεάω (ay-lay-áh-o)

Show mercy with cheerfulness. If someone is hurting they don't need somebody else who is depressed; they need someone that is cheerful and can build them up.

Spiritual Gifts

1. Prophecy - Speaks Revelation
2. Service - Serves without notice
3. Teachers - Expounds God's Word
4. Exhortation - Motivates to action
5. Givers - Giving of resources
6. Leadership - Lead with vision
7. Mercy - Aid afflicted

There is a desperate need for people to aid those that are afflicted and are hurting.

So we have the outward external gifts mixed in with the behind-the-scene serving gifts that can manifest themselves in a variety of ways. There is the combination, eg, of the teaching with exhortation. I probably have a limited gift for exhortation; I tell people what they should do and they do the opposite. The givers sometimes are behind the scenes as well. I don't think the list is in any particular order; Paul is making a list that you can see manifested within any given body.

All of them are essential and no single pastor has all the gifts. So when churches pay a staff or pay a pastor to do the work of the ministry, Ephesians says that they are to *equip* the saints to do the ministry. And the saints—some of them have prophetic gifts, serving gifts, are teachers, are motivators, are givers of their resources, some lead, some pastors don't have the gift of leadership, but they have mercy. The gifts can come in any combination, any variety of manifestations.

We can use our gifts only when walking in the Spirit or when walking in the Spirit we will naturally use our gifts. Part of the abuse of the gifts is if you use it while walking in the flesh when you would not be empowered. If I teach when walking in the flesh, it probably would not have the effect it would if I were walking in the Spirit.

Do you know your giftedness and are you using it?