



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Chapter 12

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Introduction

- Having concluded the dogmatic part, St. Paul now starts with the practical one
- He begins with asking us to be transformed by renewing our minds (1-2)
- He then instructs us how to use our gifts for the glory of God (3-8)
- Finally, there are some commands regarding the Christian's attitude (9-21)

Living Sacrifices to God (12:1-3)



- The depth of God's mercies has been shown in the previous chapters and now St. Paul appeals in the name of that mercy, to continue in the goodness of God (Rom 11:22)
- A living sacrifice: our bodies with all their members should be consecrated (holy) and dedicated to His service (acceptable)
- Reasonable service: The consecration of the body to God is not an outward act but an act of the mind, and reason

Living Sacrifices to God (12:1-3)



- The spirit of the world is opposed to that of Christ
- Instead of following the ways of the world, the Christian must be transformed, changed into the new form of life
- Renewing of your mind (Meta = change; Nouia= mind); is internal as well as external
- By doing this you will experience the will of God which is good, acceptable, and perfect

Serve God with Spiritual Gifts (12:2-8)



- Through the grace given to me: apostleship
- To be puffed up is the end of any growth
- Let each one take a sober judgment of himself, of his powers, and duties
- The measure of faith: It is not the ordinary faith that saves the soul, but the faith which would enable one to exercise spiritual gifts
- The church is likened to the human body in which the various organs each has its own office

Serve God with Spiritual Gifts (12:2-8)



- In the church, all are related to each other as the organs of the body are related.
- There is diversity and unity in the body of Christ as in the natural body
- Each in the church has his gifts as indicated by the Grace (we should not feel either superior or inferior based on the number or the quality)
- Seven gifts are now spoken of
- To prophesy was to speak by inspiration and divine authority

Serve God with Spiritual Gifts (12:2-8)



- As all the gifts of believers are according to their faith, let the prophet not prophesy with pride but humbly since it is a gift of God
- The Greek word rendered ministry is diakonia, deaconship, or service
- Teaching is the work of the bishop, who must be apt to teach, to preserve the pure teaching of the Church
- Exhort: He whose peculiar strength was to encourage feeble believers, and to stir them up

Serve God with Spiritual Gifts (12:2-8)



- He that gives: A duty of all, which must be done with modesty and liberality
- Also it may refer to he who distributes the resources of the church, let him do so faithfully, and without any favoritism
- He that leads. One who is a leader should attend to his duty with diligence
- If the leader is not diligent nothing will be done
- He that shows mercy: Those that are occupied with the care of the poor must do it with cheerfulness, lest they add sorrow upon sorrow

Behave Like a Christian (12:9-21)



- Let love be without hypocrisy. Not a deceitful love like Judas's, but a genuine one
- Abstain from the evil, and do the good; turn away from the evil, and draw to the good with deepest sympathy
- The brotherhood of the believers is a real tie of tenderness and love
- Each, in the spirit of true brotherhood, was to seek the honor of his Christian brother

Behave Like a Christian (12:9-21)



- In diligence, not slothful lest they perish because of laziness
- Fervent in spirit: Zealous, enthusiastic, not indifferent or apathetic
- Serving the Lord: Whatever we do is to be done for the glory of God
- Prayers strengthen the hope and make it rejoicing hope

Behave Like a Christian (12:9-21)



- The rejoicing hope encourages endurance in tribulation
- So, perseverance in prayers is needed
- Relieve all Christians that are in want
- Given to hospitality: The entertainment of strangers
- This duty was especially needful in those early days when Christians were so often driven by persecution from their homes

Behave Like a Christian (12:9-21)



- Bless those who persecute you: Thus did Christ on the cross and St. Stephen
- V.15 is a beautiful spirit of sympathy with others and partaking in their joy and sorrow
- Let there be harmony; a spirit of unity even when we disagree
- Do not seek for official or social distinction
- Lack of harmony is usually the result of pride

Behave Like a Christian (12:9-21)



- Instead of seeking superiority, we are to walk in lowly spirit like our Savior
- Do not be puffed up with an opinion of your own wisdom
- The Christian repays evil with good
- Christians should take care not to offend others and to do so not in a spirit of hypocrisy
- Christians are peacemakers

Behave Like a Christian (12:9-21)



- If it is possible because reconciliation depends on the two parties
- As much as depends on you: you need to do your part 100%
- Beloved - So he softens the harsh spirit
- If we are injured, we are to leave the matter in the hands of God, otherwise we take the place of God (Deut 32:35)
- Give place to wrath. God sees and resents the injuries of His children

Behave Like a Christian (12:9-21)



- This is the spirit of Christ's command, to return good for evil (Pro 25:21,23)
- By this kindness you will subdue the opponent, and make him feel the wrong he has done.
- "Coals of fire" is in the Old Testament expressing the figurative expression of Divine vengeance
- If you see no present fruit, persevere, do not let the evil overcome you (as all are who avenge themselves)
- But conquer your enemies with kindness and patience



Conclusion

- In what ways can we present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God?
- Name some of the spiritual sacrifices that the Christian believer should offer to God?
- What is meant by “reasonable service” or “spiritual worship”?
- What are the characteristics of God’s will, and how we may prove it (know it & see it) in our lives?
- Mention 2 verses in chapter about humbleness, and another 2 about love.



Conclusion

- What is the analogy that St. Paul uses to describe the relationship between Christ, the Church & the believers?
- Mention some of the different gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to believers.
- Describe what kind of fellowship should exist between Christian believers (Christian behavior).
- What is the Christian way of defeating evil and inuring enemies?