

# ROMANS: The Gospel of God

## Chapter 12

### Introduction:

1. Paul ended eleven chapters of doctrine with great praise and an “Amen.” Then he took up our duties to God.
2. This division was typical of Paul – what God did for us should convict us to serve God (Ep 3:21; He 10:18).
3. Briefly consider the previous chapters and hints of all they taught of God’s gracious and sovereign salvation.
  - a. 1:15-16 ... “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation ...”
  - b. 2:28-29 ... “For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly ... but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ...”
  - c. 3:23-26 ... “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ...”
  - d. 4:24-25 ... “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”
  - e. 5:19 ... “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one ...”
  - f. 6:23 ... “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ ...”
  - g. 7:24-25 ... “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me ... I thank God through Jesus Christ ...”
  - h. 8:28-39 ... “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth ...”
  - i. 9:21-24 ... “And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy ...”
  - j. 10:11-13 ... “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference ...”
  - k. 11:5-6 ... “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace ...”
4. Grasp the definite climactic exclamation of Paul by the Holy Spirit as he finished chapter 11 with praise.
5. Let the “Amen” be the pivotal word that changes the apostle’s direction, emphasis, objective, and method.
6. Here is found one of the Bible’s most concise and powerful calls of self-consecration to God and against sin.
7. God saved us to live holy, honest, righteous, true, and wise lives; Paul will now list many Christian duties.
8. The true Christian religion is much more than mere doctrinal facts, hypotheses, mysteries, or speculations.
9. True Christianity is predominantly a practical religion based on changed lives that evidence divine grace.
10. The emphasis on relational duties in this chapter is obvious, indicating the importance of all relationships.

### Simple Outline:

- 1-2 Call to holy living by God’s mercies.
- 3-8 Various offices and gifts used humbly.
- 9-17 Miscellaneous duties as Christians.
- 18-21 Love enemies in peace without wrath.

***1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.***

*I beseech you therefore, brethren.*

- A. Here is the Christian mandate – its great apostle in his epistle of the gospel of God to the Gentiles.
  1. A mandate is a command, order, or injunction. God by Paul summarized the Christian life here.
  2. It frightens me to read church “mission statements” that have little apostolic or scriptural basis.
  3. They often exalt the “Great Commission” to the compromise or sacrifice of this inspired order.
  4. They cannot find the “Commission” in this epistle or any other, including the Pastoral epistles, but they prefer getting everyone busy with “saving the lost” (though they cannot) to reject doctrinal dogmatism and holy living in an age of carnal Christianity and moral compromise.
  5. The previous eleven chapters have been doctrinal of God’s mercy to save sinners, and when practical religion was mentioned, it was often indicative in mood – but this here is imperative!
  6. It is a mandate (12:1-2) by apostolic authority (12:3), but given by asking, begging, entreating.

- B. Paul now begged and asked his audience for what they should do for the God of their salvation.
  - 1. The Spirit chose *beseech*, but it should not dilute the authority or importance of the mandate.
  - 2. **Beseech**. To beg earnestly for, entreat (a thing). To supplicate, entreat, implore (a person). To make supplication or earnest request; to ask. [OED]
  - 3. It is spiritual wisdom and gracious speech to be gentle wherever possible, even with an order.
  - 4. When an ambassador uses *beseech*, we know there is a king behind it (II Cor 5:20; 6:1; 10:1-6).
  - 5. Paul by the Holy Spirit compared his beseeching with exhorting by the Lord Jesus (I Thes 4:1).
  - 6. Paul had not used this term to this point, but he will again twice and elsewhere (15:30; 16:17).
  - 7. Arminians are confused about salvation, and then they demand their new victims to make more.
  - 8. If the Great Commission is the primary purpose for churches, where is it in Paul's epistles?
  - 9. Rather than distract new converts with proselytizing activities, they should teach godly living.
- C. When Paul or any minister beseeches you, remember he is Jesus Christ's ambassador (II Cor 5:20).
- D. Paul drew a conclusion from what had gone before in eleven chapters presenting God's mercies.
  - 1. The mercies of God covered in eleven chapters should prompt love and obedience by the elect.
  - 2. **Therefore**. In consequence of that; that being so; as a result or inference from what has been stated; consequently. [OED]
  - 3. Paul, the consummate logician or rhetorician, knew he could draw a powerful application here.
  - 4. He would present doctrine to then draw practical duties from it (Eph 3:21 – 4:1; Heb 10:18-19).
  - 5. The mercies of God in the plan and execution of salvation deserve your very best response.
  - 6. God saved us for good works, which we must do with zeal (Ep 2:10; Phil 2:12-13; Tit 2:11-14).
  - 7. A carnal or weak response by you suggests you were never a sinner or do not appreciate grace.
- E. Paul and the Roman saints (and you by inference) are all *brethren* in the family of Almighty God.
  - 1. From the mighty apostle to the youngest or weakest member at Rome – they were all brethren.
  - 2. There is a separate kingdom in this world separate from all worldlings – the kingdom of God.
  - 3. The citizens of that kingdom are brethren by predestinated adoption in Jesus Christ (Eph 1:3-6).
  - 4. The many brethren that have gone before us are connected to us by the Spirit (Heb 12:22-24).
  - 5. The work of redemption includes glorious practical ramifications of brethren (Heb 2:10-13).
  - 6. The Spirit's word is more than just politeness or formality – it separates us from all worldlings.

### *By the mercies of God.*

- A. God's mercies shown in various phases and aspects of salvation in 11 chapters provide the appeal.
  - 1. What would you do for the king or president that would pardon you for a terrible capital crime?
  - 2. What would you do for the king or president that would then adopt you as a son to be his heir?
  - 3. What should you do for the God that did far more when you had committed crimes far greater?
  - 4. What is ridiculous is the effort men will put forth for a boss with merely a little check involved!
- B. This kind of reasoning worked well with Paul (II Cor 5:14-15), and it should work well with you.
- C. If there is any appreciation and thankfulness for God's gracious salvation, then Paul appealed to it.
  - 1. Consider Philippians 2:1, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort ..."
  - 2. Consider Colossians 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are ..."
  - 3. Consider II Thess 2:15, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye ..."
- D. Consider how God and Paul reasoned positively from seven precious promises (II Cor 6:14 – 7:1).
- E. The goodness (or mercy) of God should lead to repentance ... or to terrible judgment (Rom 2:3-4).
- F. Paul and Timothy kept God's rules for their ministries based on His mercy to them (II Cor 4:1-2).
- G. Paul reasoned that God's merciful salvation should constantly affirm good works (Titus 3:3-8).
- H. Peter, pursuing many practical duties, reasoned from God's mercy to elect Jews (I Peter 2:7-12).
- I. This is positive reasoning; be thankful. There is negative reasoning (Col 3:25; Heb 12:6; Rev 3:19).
- J. Do not copy Hezekiah, who did not serve God according to the benefit done to him (II Chr 32:25).
- K. Do not copy apostates Peter condemned for even denying the Lord that bought them (II Pet 2:1).

### *That ye present your bodies.*

- A. Most of the previous eleven chapters have been doctrinal of God's mercy to save sinners, and when practical religion was mentioned, it was often indicative in mood – but this here is imperative!
- B. The O.T. was filled with sacrifices of dead animal bodies for ceremonial cleanness before God.
- C. There is a sacrifice you can present to God worth more than any sacrifice Solomon ever presented!
- D. God wants your heart, mind, soul, strength, and thoughts totally dedicated to Him (Matt 12:29-30).
- E. But the body gets us into many sins by the lust of flesh and eyes, like fornication (I Cor 6:13-20).
  - 1. This passage should be studied in depth to appreciate God's desire for your bodily sacrifice.
  - 2. God created your body; Jesus died for it; He is coming again for it; the Holy Spirit lives in it.
  - 2. Some sins are different than others sins by involving this temple of the Holy Ghost in the sins.
  - 3. Smoking cigarettes or eating red meat or eating junk food is not under consideration at all here.
  - 4. The sin Paul blasted when considering the body was fornication – a temple used with a harlot.
  - 5. Get your mind working with a few examples of bodily sins: abortion, appearance, baptism, burial, clothing, cremation, drunkenness, exercise, fasting, fornication, gluttony, hair length, marriage, makeup, neglect, nutrition, sleep, sodomy, tattoos, tobacco, virginity, weight.
- F. There are three descriptive phrases following that describe the presentation of your body to God.
  - 1. It is *a living sacrifice* – a life of self-denial that exalts God and His things over worldly things.
  - 2. It is *holy* – the pure and sanctified lifestyle that is commensurate with a holy God that hates sin.
  - 3. It is *acceptable unto God* – in that it is done by God's definitions and rules for godly living.
- G. Are you as committed as Paul, who in boldness intended his body for life or death (Phil 1:20-21).
- H. For more about your body belonging to Jesus Christ ... [www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/your-body-is-the-lords.pdf](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/your-body-is-the-lords.pdf).

### *A living sacrifice.*

- A. Jesus presented His body a dying sacrifice now living for us, and our living bodies are dead to sin.
- B. Jesus was given a body to once for all replace all sacrifices for sins (Heb 10:1-10; I Pet 2:21-24).
- C. Though it is a living sacrifice, meaning while you are alive, you must put it to death (Col 3:5-7).
  - 1. We have been saved from this world, not to continue playing with it, but to deny it altogether.
  - 2. This is taking up your cross and being crucified for Christ (Luke 9:23-24; Gal 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).
  - 3. It is the life of self-denial that is sorely lacking in a carnal, compromising age (Tit 2:12; 1:16).
  - 4. It may involve some bodily mutilation, as plucking eyes and cutting off hands (Matt 5:29-30).
  - 5. It may involve cutting off associations and friends to be like David (Psalm 101:1-8; 119:63,79).
  - 6. You are to limit even the possibility of fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (Rom 13:14; II Tim 2:22).
  - 7. When done correctly, you are but strangers and pilgrims on earth (Heb 11:13; I Pet 1:17; 2:11).
  - 8. A sacrificed life includes choices reducing carefulness (I Co 7:25-35; Mat 19:10-12; Heb 12:1).
- D. Losing your life for Jesus Christ will find it in several ways (Matt 10:39; 16:25; Mark 10:28-30).
- E. Pagans (implicit devil worship) require the dead sacrifices of children; God's religion trumps!
- F. Muslims (implicit devil worship) require your own martyrdom for jihad blessings in heaven!
- G. For more about a sacrificial life of self-denial ... [www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/take-up-your-cross-daily.pdf](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/take-up-your-cross-daily.pdf).
- H. For sojourning here in fear ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/exposition/sojourning-here-in-fear/sermon.php>.

### *Holy.*

- A. God is holy, so any sacrifice of value to Him must be holy (I Pet 1:13-17; Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:7).
- B. Holiness is moral or spiritual purity without blemishes or spots of sin or wickedness in your life; it is consecration to God only and separation from the filth of this world that is God's vile enemy.
- C. Cleanse yourself from all filth of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear (II Cor 7:1).
- D. Paul carefully taught about walking a life to please God, and it included holiness (I Thess 4:1-8).
- E. For more about holiness from Israel's ribband of blue ... [www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/holiness-fringe.pdf](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/holiness-fringe.pdf).

### *Acceptable unto God.*

- A. **Acceptable.** Capable, worthy, or likely to be accepted or gladly received; hence, pleasing, agreeable, gratifying, or welcome. [OED]
- B. To accomplish this descriptive phrase, we must present our bodies by His definitions and rules.
  - 1. Do you or will you pray like David that thoughts and words would be acceptable (Ps 19:14)?
  - 2. Can you cheerfully serve a bad boss and suffer for doing well? This is acceptable (I Pet 2:20).
  - 3. It takes reverence and godly fear for service to God to be acceptable in His sight (Heb 12:28).
  - 4. Justice and judgment, or mercy, is more acceptable than sacrifice to God (Pr 21:3; Matt 12:7).
  - 5. Those who follow their agenda of manmade rules are not acceptable to God (Rom 14:16-19).
  - 6. Praying for pagan rulers, and our president is no exception, is acceptable to God (I Tim 2:1-3).
  - 7. Children should requite parents rather than mooch off the church to be acceptable (I Tim 5:4).
  - 8. Pastors perform their office and duties by the rules – God’s rules – for their crown (II Tim 2:5).
  - 9. Isaiah and Jeremiah condemned worship that was not acceptable (Isaiah 58:3-7; Jer 6:18-20).
- C. Paul stressed that God must accept us, though Arminians only see us accepting Him (II Co 5:9-11).
- D. Peter said Cornelius was accepted with God by his fear and works of righteousness (Acts 10:35).
- E. Though nothing we do is perfect in itself, our sacrifices are made acceptable by Christ (I Pet 2:5).

### *Which is your reasonable service.*

- A. In light of God’s mercies, any sacrifice we could give would be nothing – due to (1) the greatness of our crimes, (2) our inability to help ourselves, and (3) God’s sovereign choice to show us mercy.
- B. What do you reckon your salvation debt to be? What quantity and quality of existence can repay it?
- C. Can you forgive \$10k, if you have been forgiven \$15 billion (Mat 18:21-35)? This is Christ’s ratio!
- D. Those that have been forgiven much, love much. How much have you been forgiven (Lu 7:36-50)?
- E. Paul’s reasoning should be our reasoning – we owe God and Christ our entire lives (II Co 5:13-15).
- F. Even when we do all we should, we are only unprofitable servants fulfilling our duty (Luke 17:10).
- G. David asked, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?” (Psalm 116:12).
- H. It is entirely reasonable to follow a lifestyle that results in our greatest happiness for His great gift!
  - 1. His gift is unspeakable, so how will any man debate about any unreasonableness in response?
  - 2. His requirements and rules are for our own profit and pleasure, not foolish divine indulgences.
- I. There may be some sarcasm in this appeal to reasonableness, since we owe more with greater zeal!

## ***2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

### *And be not conformed.*

- A. Most of the previous eleven chapters have been doctrinal of God’s mercy to save sinners, and when practical religion was mentioned, it was often indicative in mood – but this here is imperative!
- B. **Conform.** To form, shape, or fashion according to some pattern, model, or instruction; to make of the same form or character, to make like. To bring into harmony or conformity, to harmonize; to make accordant to, adapt. [OED]
- C. We conform to the world when we adjust our choices and conduct to match or please the world.
  - 1. It may be done to be accepted by the world in some measure of peer pressure or persecution.
  - 2. It may be done to look like the world so as to participate in their goodies and access their sins.
  - 3. It may be done to participate in the world’s pleasures, which seem so desirable to sinful lusts.
  - 4. It may be done consciously or unconsciously depending on the person, temptation, and setting.

- D. The world is after you – it is not a neutral or nonaggressive enemy – it hopes to capture you for sin.
  - 1. It is a kingdom under intelligent leadership with a purpose to destroy your witness for Christ.
  - 2. It does not matter what the dupes obeying Satan think, though most do think very satanically.
  - 3. Example: compulsory education is not a result of loving leaders wanting to help little children.
  - 4. Example: television producers are not good people using an invention for family entertainment.
  - 5. They want you like them, liking them, and approving them; but they will hate you (I Pet 4:1-5).
  - 6. They talk about freedom and rights incessantly – but they have never intended it for Christians.
  - 7. The ACLU is often causing trouble around the nation – generally for sin against righteousness.
- E. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, and that is all it took to quickly and totally ruin him and his.
  - 1. Consider the indignant answers you would have had to questions to the seven of them before.
  - 2. From top to bottom, from inside to out, the family was totally ruined by worldly conforming.
  - 3. For more about Lot and Sodom and playing with sin ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/playing-with-sin.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/playing-with-sin.pdf).
  - 4. For another angle about Lot and his worldly wife ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/remember-lots-wife.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/remember-lots-wife.pdf).
- F. Will examples help you examine yourself as to how easily you conform yourself to the world?
  - 1. Are your clothes more based on Biblical chastity and modesty or worldly lust and popularity?
  - 2. Is your speech based on Bible sobriety and graciousness or worldly impulse and frivolity?
  - 3. Do you outwork everyone on the job like the Bible teaches or pace yourself like the rest?
  - 4. Does your marriage reflect a standard deviation of the world rather than God's high duty?
  - 5. What role does bodily exercise have in your life and why? How are you different from them?
  - 6. What music do you listen to? Why do you listen to it? What artists perform it? Why do they?
  - 7. What entertainment do you enjoy? What is the content? How much faith or holiness or truth?
- G. Are your church and you keeping a few steps behind the world yet moving toward worldliness?
  - 1. Being definitely different from the world but moving away from holiness is sinful conforming!
  - 2. Are you proud parents for having children that are not dope dealers but not preachers either?
  - 3. We do not want to compromise at all, though it is hard to see when the world is imploding fast.
- H. We cannot practically go out of the world, and we are not directed to do so (I Cor 5:9-10; 7:29-31).
- I. We want to be conformed to the image of God's Son, not this stinking world (Rom 8:29; Gal 4:19).

### *To this world.*

- A. God and this world are enemies, so to present yourself to God requires opposition to the world.
- B. The *world* is the kingdom of Satan, darkness, and wicked men distinct from and opposed to God.
  - 1. The course of this world is Satan's kingdom leading the children of wrath to ruin (Eph 2:1-3).
  - 2. The devil and his conspiracy against Jesus Christ's kingdom is our enemy (Ephesians 6:10-12).
  - 3. He is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8; II Corinthians 11:3-4,13-15).
  - 4. The world is its ideas of origins, priorities, purposes, pleasures, politics, programs, music, etc.
- C. The more worldly education a man has the more he will believe and follow the devil's profanities.
- D. John described the *world*, its properties, and its relationship to God and His children (I Jn 2:15-17).
  - 1. Each property of the world – lust of eyes, lust of flesh, pride – the devil personally presented to Eve and Jesus; Eve could not resist the three-fold seduction; Jesus blew it away with scripture.
  - 2. The lust of the eyes: advertising, marketing, immodest clothing, television, movies, magazines, Internet, Facebook, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching (layaway), pornography.
  - 3. The lust of the flesh: adultery, carelessness, drunkenness, drug addiction, fornication, gluttony, laziness, masturbation, over-talking, sodomy.
  - 4. The pride of life: anger, backbiting, contentious, covetous, debate, hair length, heady, immodest, implacable, overworking, overspending, revenge, self-righteousness, stubborn.
- E. The conflict between God's children and the world is ancient, deep, passionate, and permanent.

- F. You should be excited about hating this world, for it is God's enemies and you love God this way.
1. If you are a friend of the world, you are God's enemy and a spiritual adulteress (James 4:4).
  2. While the language of whoring is usually applied to idolaters, here it is flirting with the world!
  3. The war began with Adam and Eve, then Cain and Abel, and it lasts forever, though in victory.
  4. Do you rightly know this deep-seated hatred and perpetual warfare (Gen 3:15; Ps 5:5; 7:11; 11:5; 139:19-22; Pr 11:20; 15:8; 16:5; 21:27; 29:27; John 7:7; 8:44; 15:18-19; 16:2; 17:14; I Cor 16:22; II Thess 3:1-2; I John 3:12-13; Rev 6:9-17)?
- G. How can you contend with the world? Keep God's commandments to the anger, chagrin, shame, and warning of the world (Pr 28:4; John 3:19-21; Rom 12:17-21; II Tim 3:12; I Pet 3:16; Jude 1:3).
1. Let our opposite-sex marriages and families with children mock their same-sex abominations!
  2. Let our beautiful, modest, and gracious women shame their painted, naked, and odious whores!
  3. As simple as it is, let us pray boldly and thoroughly to bless our food, even in public places!

### *But be ye transformed.*

- A. You were born again when a worldling in desires, choices, and conduct; you should be different.
- B. **Transform.** To change the form of; to change into another shape or form; to metamorphose. To change in character or condition; to alter in function or nature. To undergo a change of form or nature; to change. [OED]
- C. We need a metamorphosis – a complete change in the appearance, circumstances, condition, and character of a person! Like a caterpillar turning into a beautiful butterfly!
- D. Being transformed is being conformed to Christ rather than the world, which oppose each other.
1. It is the educational process of conversion to learn more and more what God desires of you.
  2. It is the sanctification process of practical temperance to think, speak, and act by God's word.
  3. It is bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) and making everything new (II Cor 5:17).
  4. It is advancing in the image and glory of God stage by stage by the Spirit of God (II Cor 3:18).
- E. Consider examples of how your family and you can be transformed different from this evil world.
1. The world lives by what it sees and feels; we live by what we believe out of sight (II Cor 4:18).
  2. We look for Christ's glorious appearing, while they have nothing but another iPhone (Tit 2:13)!
  3. Our affection is on glorious things above; theirs is on this dying earth (Col 3:2; Mat 6:19-21).
  4. They deny the existence or relevancy of God; let us see and praise God in every part of life.
  5. They are petrified by death and any afterlife; let us rejoice in saints dying and their great hope.
  6. While they emphasize the physical that has so little value, let us value godliness (I Tim 4:7-8).
  7. While they emphasize academic education of little value, let us value character and spiritual.
  8. While they rebel against and ridicule all authority spheres, let us honor them and be thankful.
  9. While they stress self-love, let us make sure we always love others more than self (Phil 2:3-4).
  10. While they teach letting feelings and spirit lead you, let us rule these to faith and fortitude.
  11. While they treat adultery, drunkenness, revenge and such like as fun, let us fully hate them.

### *By the renewing of your mind.*

- A. The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost is vital phase; this is practical phase.
1. There is a renewing of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, but that work is all of God (Titus 3:5).
  2. You have a new man of righteousness and holiness you can put on (Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:8-11).
  3. Putting off the old man and putting on the new includes active, imperative renewal (Eph 4:23).
  4. God worked in you both to will and to do His good pleasure – you work it out (Phil 2:12-13).
  5. By regeneration our spiritual man judges all things to know Christ's judgment (I Cor 2:14-16).
  6. The Romans were born again, but like quickened Ephesians, they needed to wake up (Ep 5:14)
  7. This is a choice and effort you make to restructure your thinking to please God in all things.
  8. Regeneration did not make David's sanctifying decisions for his life and house (Ps 101:1-8).

9. Regeneration did not fully instruct the mind, so regenerate men ask what to do (Luke 3:7-14).
10. Regeneration did not burn books of witchcraft, but regenerate saints loving truth (Acts 19:19)!
- B. Ministers are to tear down every imagination and thought you have contrary to truth (II Co 10:4-6).
  1. Inspired scripture make ministers perfect and thoroughly furnished for this great reformation.
  2. Preaching the word is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction (II Tim 3:16-17).
  3. Pastors only help the man humble enough to be corrected and reprov'd (Pr 15:10; I Thes 5:20).
- C. You must install a completely new mindset about life in every respect that makes you entirely new.
  1. This renewing of your mind includes a new worldview that is totally different from the world's.
  2. You have all new reasons for living, rules for living, and rewards for living by those very rules.
  3. We must esteem all the Bible teaches about anything and hate every contrary idea (Ps 119:128).
  4. Paul practically described saints as new creatures, old things gone, all things new (II Cor 5:17)!
- D. We do not give our bodies a living sacrifice in mere external, outward compliance to God's laws.
  1. We must renew our minds so that we deny and sacrifice our bodies by personal conviction.
  2. If our new man is properly enthroned in our hearts, our outward compliance will be instinctive.
  3. No wonder we appeal in marriages to make the relationship with Jesus Christ first and highest.
  4. Outward compliance without mind renewal is mere hypocrisy and will seldom last very long.
  5. It is by keeping the heart with all diligence we can change every issue of life (Proverbs 4:23).

### *That ye may prove.*

- A. **Prove.** **B. I.** To make trial of, try, test. 1. To make trial of, put to the test; to try the genuineness or qualities of; to try, test. 3. To find out, learn, or know by experience; to have experience of, to experience, 'go through', suffer; also with compl., to find by experience (a person or thing) to be (something). 4. To try, endeavor, attempt, strive. **II.** To make good, establish. 5. To establish (a thing) as true; to make certain; to demonstrate the truth of by evidence or argument. 6. To show the existence or reality of; to give demonstration or proof of by action; to evince. 7. To establish the genuineness or validity of (a thing or person); to show to be such as is asserted or claimed. [OED]
- B. We summarize this variable word in three definitions: to test, to experience, and to demonstrate.
  1. We do not *prove* God's will in sense of testing to determine validity (Da 1:12,14; I Thes 5:21).
  2. Paul had already commanded acceptable obedience to God, requiring the will of God (12:1).
  3. Renewing the mind, leading to proving, presumes God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect.
  4. A properly renewed mind is already totally convinced, convicted, and committed to God's will.
  5. We do not have to discover the genuineness of God's will, for faith already presumes it perfect.
  6. We do *prove* God's will in sense of experimental knowledge and demonstrable evidence of it!
  7. We prove God's will by experiencing it, demonstrating its validity, establishing it as true, and showing existence and reality of it (I Sam 17:39; Acts 9:22; Rom 3:9; II Cor 8:22; Eph 5:10).
  8. We find no difference between Paul's use of prove here and approve elsewhere (Phil 1:9-11).
  9. **Approve.** To make good (a statement or position); to show to be true, prove, demonstrate.
  10. Choosing two definitions that fit the text and scripture illustrate inspired ambiguity (Ps 119:96).
- C. There is a witness to the world we establish by our conduct (I Peter 2:15; Matt 5:16; Deut 4:5-8).
- D. The world is against God's will; our lives should realize and demonstrate the superiority of God's!

### *What is that good, and acceptable, and perfect.*

- A. The will of God is *good* – without anything bad, corrupt, evil, painful, sinful, or troublesome in it.
  1. The will of God is good – beneficial, helpful, merciful, pleasant, productive, right, true, wise.
  2. Moses gave laws and statutes for Israel's *good* always to stay alive (Deut 6:24; 10:13; 30:15).
  3. His commandments are not grievous (I Jn 5:3), though disobedience will certainly grieve you!
  4. His yoke, or His will for you, is easy, and His burden is light, to rest your souls (Mat 11:28-30).
  5. It is only our sin nature that causes the good, just law for life to condemn us (Romans 7:7-13).

6. The best way to live for the abundant life is keeping God's precepts, no matter how confining.
  7. Consider any aspect of life – God's rules for it are the wisest and will yield the best results.
- B. The will of God is *acceptable* – it pleases God and makes us acceptable in His sight by doing it.
1. Paul already used this descriptor of how bodies should be presented – by God's rules (12:1).
  2. Thankful saints are the happiest saints – they are also acceptable to God's will (I Thess 5:18).
  3. Can you cheerfully serve a bad boss and suffer for doing well? This is acceptable (I Pet 2:20).
  4. It takes reverence and godly fear for service to God to be acceptable in His sight (Heb 12:28).
  5. Justice and judgment, or mercy, is more acceptable than sacrifice to God (Pr 21:3; Matt 12:7).
  6. Those who follow their agenda of manmade rules are not acceptable to God (Rom 14:16-19).
  7. Praying for pagan rulers, and our president is no exception, is acceptable to God (I Tim 2:1-3).
  8. Children should requite parents rather than mooch off the church to be acceptable (I Tim 5:4).
- C. The will of God is *perfect* – without confusion, defect, inadequacy, or ignorance in any part of it.
1. The will of God is perfect – complete, consistent, finished, proportionate, sufficient, thorough.
  2. The partial gifts of the apostolic age were imperfect by their incompleteness (I Cor 13:8-10).
  3. Pastors can be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works, by His scriptures (II Ti 3:16-17).
  4. It is so complete and profitable to be more sure than God's voice from heaven (II Pet 1:16-21).

### *Will of God.*

- A. The *will of God* here is much more than trivial items like vocations, jobs, spouses, cars, houses, etc.
- B. God's will is clearly revealed in the scriptures, which we and our children should do (Deut 29:29).
1. Ministers by using inspired scripture can be perfect and thoroughly furnished (II Tim 3:16-17).
  2. All saints should take heed to the more sure word of prophecy in the scriptures (II Pet 1:16-21).
- C. The *will of God* here is that righteousness and holy living taught from cover to cover in the Bible.
1. Much of God's will is right here in context ... rest of this chapter ... chapter 13 ... chapter 14.
  2. Example: His will includes sanctification of your sexual lives against fornication (I Thes 4:1-7).
  3. Example: His will includes giving thanks in everything through Jesus Christ (I Thess 5:18).
  4. Example: His will includes submitting, suffering by imperfect human authority (I Pet 2:12-20).
  5. Example: bodily exercise (I Tim 4:8-9); care of parents (I Tim 5:4); prayer for civil rulers (I Tim 2:3); ministerial giving (Phil 4:18); serving God reverently with godly fear (He 12:28-29).
- D. Epaphras prayed for the Colossians to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Col 4:12).
- E. The world is against God's will; our lives should realize and demonstrate the superiority of God's!
- F. The will of our God trumps all the good, acceptable, and perfect ideas of the world. They are trash!
- G. Paul then took up the will of God by both short and medium statements of the Christian's duties.

### ***3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.***

#### *For I say, through the grace given unto me.*

- A. Having declared the mandate for Christian living (12:1-2), Paul then presented the details of living.
1. The coordinating conjunction *for* indicates elaboration on how to fulfill the mandate (12:1-2).
  2. The mandate is powerful in and of itself, but all Christians need specific instructions in how to present their bodies a living sacrifice and prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.



- B. Consider the logical development of Paul's instruction to the Romans and to us for Christian living.
  - 1. A mandate for Christian living (12:1-2) was followed by humility for church officers (12:3-8), who could think too highly of themselves (I Tim 3:6), and it set a greater-to-lesser precedent.
  - 2. Paul then taught all the church at large the most important grace of the Christian – love (12:9).
- C. When Paul speaks, we should listen attentively, for he was God's chosen apostle for us Gentiles.
  - 1. The apostles were the highest office in the church, and Paul was high, especially for Gentiles.
  - 2. To rightly follow Jesus Christ, we should follow Paul's interpretation of Him (I Co 11:1; 4:16).
  - 3. For more about ministries of Paul and Jesus ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/scripture/jesus-or-paul.php>.
- D. The grace given to Paul by God was exceptional, and that grace was not bestowed on him in vain.
  - 1. He soon wrote of gifts differing by God's grace given, and it describes him most of all (12:6)!
  - 2. The grace given to Paul was for apostleship (1:4), and he was no ordinary apostle (15:15-16)!
  - 3. He was a wise masterbuilder, and he was expert in the mysteries of God (I Cor 3:10; Ep 3:7-8).
  - 4. God's grace given to Paul was not in vain; he outworked all others (I Cor 15:10; II Cor 11:5).
- E. If anyone had a right to boast or glory in gifts, deeds, or successes it was Paul (II Co 10:7 – 12:12).
- F. The most useful passage to help interpret and apply this section is also Paul's – I Corinthians 12.
  - 1. This section – Rom 12:3-8 – deals with unity, members in a church, and offices in the church.
  - 2. Due the Charismatic strife and trouble at Corinth, Paul dealt with the issues in greater depth.

*To every man that is among you.*

- A. The *every man* here in this phrase is every gifted man with an official position or role in the church.
  - 1. Not every man is addressed, but every man *among you*. Paul knows the difference (Phil 2:4).
  - 2. He shortly addressed the fact that not all members are equal but have offices from God (12:4).
  - 3. He then identified the differences in gifts, offices, and duties of various church members (12:6).
  - 4. He will identify gifts and offices held by only some ... such as prophet or teacher (I Cor 12:29).
  - 5. He began this section by identifying his authority as resulting from God's gift of grace (12:3).
  - 6. Similar language for officers is found in other places (Galatians 3:5; I Thes 5:12; I Peter 5:1-2).
  - 7. When the language for gifts below is analyzed, it clearly is not common grace to all believers.
  - 8. Paul compared these men to himself (12:3), for he will describe the grace to them later (12:6).
- B. The proper and right place to start with godliness is at the top, so Paul started with church officers.
  - 1. Like a family, a church is seldom better than its leaders in fulfilling its mandate (I Tim 4:16).
  - 2. Solomon identified the confusion of authority and roles as an evil from rulers (Eccl 10:5-7).
  - 3. How can church members fulfill their roles and practice unity, if the leadership does not do so?
  - 4. Do not be frustrated by some verses without direct application due to the apostolic period then.
- C. To maximize the profit of this section for all church members, indirect application will be made.
  - 1. We must not distract ourselves from the lesson by trying to perfectly identify every gift/office.
  - 2. The early church had very many gifts and offices, as the context below will show at least 23.
  - 3. Of those gifts that remain, they are rolled up into only two church offices – bishop and deacon.
  - 4. While the direct application of Paul's words apply officially, there is plenty of indirect wisdom.
  - 5. No one can be exempted from the following exhortation, for all persons are tempted by pride.
  - 6. No one is exempt from Paul's warnings, for men, women, and children have God-given roles.

*Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.*

- A. When detailing the Christian life based on the mercies of God for the will of God, humility is first.
- B. The first application of this exhortation and warning must be to the gifts and offices Paul identified.
  - 1. Gifts, as seen by the mess at Corinth, can produce ambition, envy, pride, strife, and other sins.
  - 2. The most useful passage to help interpret and apply this section is Paul's – I Corinthians 12.
  - 3. Starting with himself and prophets, Paul worked down to a deacon's role to shew mercy (12:8).
  - 4. No man, no matter what his gift, should be puffed up in pride of his gift or envy gifts of others.

5. A prophet should not get proud about his gift, for he needed others to complete his partial gift!
  6. A minister should not envy a prophet, for God's sovereign choice made the difference, and desiring or reaching beyond one's office is like Korah or Uzziah (Nu 16:8-11; II Chr 26:16-21).
  7. Men must not think too highly of themselves, nor of other gifted officers as well (I Cor 4:6-7).
  8. How ought a man with gifts in an office think of himself (Pr 30:1-3; I Cor 15:9-10; Eph 3:8)?
- C. Pride considered in general for all church members is important, because of its universal influence.
1. The Romans would have been tempted to pride and rank, as it was rampant in their city as the capital of a dominant world empire, where various degrees or forms of dictatorship prevailed.
  2. Yet leaving the Romans directly, pride is certainly one of the most prevalent sins of every man.
  3. Humility and meekness are key virtues of the children of God (Ps 131:1; Mic 6:8; Jas 4:6-10).
  4. Peter exhorted believers to be clothed with humility in subjection to one another (I Peter 5:5-6).
  5. Pride and self-righteousness must be always considered and consciously avoided by the godly.
  6. For more about the terrible danger and sin of human pride ... [www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/pride2.pdf](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/pride2.pdf).

*But to think soberly.*

- A. Thinking highly of yourself is vainglory; it is the opposite of sober thinking, for you are nothing.
1. This is a precious use of words – for thinking highly of yourself is ridiculous, like drunkenness!
  2. To think highly of yourself means you have allowed your imagination to run wild to excess.
  3. To think highly of yourself is to think thoughts the best never thought (Num 12:3; Eph 3:8).
  4. Consider David's inspired description of the vanity of man no matter their position (Ps 62:9).
- B. Instead of thinking of oneself with the self-exaltation and self-protection of pride, think soberly.
1. Remember that without God's gracious and sovereign gifts, you are nothing (I Cor 4:5-6).
  2. Remember that with God's gracious and sovereign gifts, you are actually nothing (Luke 17:10).
  3. Remember that you have squandered most of God's grace given to you, unlike brother Paul.
  4. Remember that if you were in an office higher than you presently hold, you could not do it.

*According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

- A. God Himself dealt the gifts and offices to the official men among the church members in Rome.
1. Though *everyman* is used here without *among you*, it is understood from the earlier phrase.
  2. The context of this section, Romans 12:3-8, indicates a difference made of gifts to some men.
  3. The explanation following and connected by *for* indicates this is an unequal granting of gifts.
  4. As they are called gifts (12:6), there is a Giver, and He should get the glory and the gratitude.
  5. Since God gave the gifts here, His sovereign judgment should be trusted and His rules obeyed.
  6. Since the gifts were given, no man should glory as if he himself were different (I Cor 4:7).
- B. What is the measure of faith? Men have guessed at interpretations, but the context calls it for us.
1. Some have tried to explain this as an equal distribution of basic faith or of the Christian faith.
  2. It is true God deals faith to His elect (Jas 2:5; Ac 18:27), but the context rejects this truth here.
  3. The context, as always, must drive our interpretation, and the differing gifts and offices are key.
  4. Every man among them – those with gifts and offices – were to soberly grasp their gift's limits.
  5. No man, whether with official or unofficial roles, should fail to reach or reach beyond his duty.
  6. The *measure of faith* – differing *offices* in 12:4 – is the limit or parameters of the offices given.
  7. The *measure of faith* – called *grace given* in 12:6 – is the degree of spiritual power in the gift.
  8. The *measure of faith* – *proportion of faith* in 12:6 – is the degree of spiritual power in the gift.
  9. *Faith* itself was a spiritual gift in that era and the basis for spectacular gifts – the power to move mountains (I Cor 12:9; 13:2; Matt 17:19-21; Mark 11:20-24; Luke 17:5-6; Heb 11:33).
  10. Paul will refer to this explanation shortly when he limited a prophet's use of his gift (12:6), but he will insert two verses comparing the nature of a human body with that of a church body.

#### ***4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:***

*For as we have many members in one body.*

- A. The human body has many different internal and external parts that make it a functioning body.
- B. The body is a whole and all members contribute and participate in each bodily activity or goal.
- C. From feet to ears, and from elbows to eyes, and from lungs to glutes, all are necessary for a body.
- D. The body remains one whole, and no part can function without help of the others, for bodily acts.
- E. The wonderful human body – created by God and capable of feats – has many different parts.
- F. The most useful passage to help interpret and apply this section is also Paul's – I Corinthians 12.

*And all members have not the same office.*

- A. The body's various members do not have the same ability, contribution, or role in body activities.
- B. No two bodily parts have the same ability, contribution, or role in the activities of the body, even consider two arms, legs, ears, or eyes, for differences even exist there in lesser degrees.
- C. The ear cannot move the body, but the feet can; the eyes cannot lift anything, but the elbows can.
- D. We are content with lowly feet and exalted eyes, for we cannot see much without feet carrying us.
- E. We would not want our feet to be ears, for then our better hearing would be limited to one place.
- F. We do not allow or expect any body part to do less or more than what is its given role in the body.
- G. Even the most precious body part isolated by itself is reduced to total inability and fruitless vanity.
- H. The most useful passage to help interpret and apply this section is also Paul's – I Corinthians 12.

#### ***5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.***

*So we, being many, are one body in Christ.*

- A. The church is like a human body – it has many different members that together compose one body.
- B. Every member has different abilities, contributions, or roles in the activities of the church body.
- C. The church is one whole, and no part can function without help of the others, for any church act.
- D. From the least to the greatest members based on gift or office, the church needs all for a body.
- E. The wonderful church of Christ – created by God and capable of feats – has many different parts.
- F. The most useful passage to help interpret and apply this section is also Paul's – I Corinthians 12.

*And every one members one of another.*

- A. All church members are tied to all other members, like all body parts are connected in one body.
- B. Gifts, as shown by the mess at Corinth, can produce ambition, envy, pride, strife, and other sins.
- C. We do not allow or expect any member to do less or more than what is its given role in the church.
- D. Paul argued this very point in pressing for honesty and truth against lying by members (Eph 4:25).
- E. Even the most precious member isolated by itself is reduced to total inability and fruitless vanity.
- F. There should be neither pride nor envy, for we are nothing by ourselves, and we need the others.
- G. The most useful passage to help interpret and apply this section is also Paul's – I Corinthians 12.

**6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Having then gifts differing.**

- A. Leaving the two-verse review of body members and church members, Paul made reference to 12:3.
- B. We shall not distract ourselves from the lesson here by trying to perfectly identify every gift/office.
- C. God has never intended all Christians to be equal in office or role, as He has made the differences.
- D. For example, women are equal to men in Christ, but they have a very subordinate role in marriage.
- E. If they are gifts, then what room does any man have to be puffed or boast about them (I Cor 4:7).
- F. If we view this passage as official gifts, we are limited now to bishops and deacons (I Tim 3:1-13).
- G. Consider all the gifts, offices, or roles found in the New Testament churches of the apostolic age.
  - 1. Paul ranked the gifts and offices at Corinth for us: *apostle, prophet, teacher, miracles, healings, helps, governments, tongues, and interpretation of tongues* (I Cor 12:28-30).
  - 2. A shorter but similar list is found in Ephesians 4:11, where we discover *evangelist* and *pastor*.
  - 3. Paul listed others at Corinth: *word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, discerning of spirits*.
  - 4. We apply I Corinthians 11:3-16 to adjoin supernatural *praying* to supernatural prophesying.
  - 5. Here in Romans 12:6-8 we further find: *ministry, exhorter, giver, ruler, and shewing of mercy*.
  - 6. Peter applied Joel's prophecy to Pentecost, adding the gifts of *visions and dreams* (Acts 2:17).
  - 7. Even women had official or unofficial roles in the early churches (Acts 21:9; Romans 16:1-2).
  - 8. The apostles had all the gifts (Mark 16:17-29; Acts 19:11-12; Rom 15:18-19; Hebrews 2:3-4).
  - 9. Those calling themselves apostles today do not have any apostolic gifts, let alone all of them!
- H. There are now only two official gifts or offices in the N.T. church – bishop and deacon (Phil 1:1).
  - 1. Consult Timothy and Titus, where only bishops and deacons remain (I Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9).
  - 2. There are two reasons for the great reduction in gifts and offices in the New Testament church.
  - 3. First, the apostles' lives ending eliminated the need for their confirming signs and wonders, for they had established the fact they were from God for their preaching and writing of scripture.
  - 4. Second, the completion of the New Testament eliminated the need for revelatory gifts, which were the means God used to communicate His will to the churches while scripture was written.
  - 5. We recognize one official teaching gift or office today – bishop, elder, pastor and teacher – the only one qualified by aptness to teach to defend the faith (I Tim 3:2; II Tim 2:2,24; Titus 1:9).
  - 6. We recognize one official serving gift or office today – deacon – to oversee church carnal matters to help the bishop, elder, pastor and teacher stick to prayer and God's word (Ac 6:1-4).
- I. When considering gifts, there are a few things that ought to be remembered by all church members.
  - 1. There is a more excellent way of serving Christ than an apostle – charity (I Cor 12:31; 13:1-7)!
  - 2. The man with two talents received the same commendation as him with five (Matt 25:20-23)!
  - 3. The greater the responsibility, such as a master-teacher, the greater the condemnation (Jas 3:1; Lev 10:1-3; Num 18:1; Mal 2:1-9; Matt 23:14; Luke 11:52; I Cor 4:1-4; I Tim 4:16)!
  - 4. If you are a wise man or woman with knowledge among us, show it by a perfect life (Jas 3:13)!
  - 5. Earnestly coveting the best gifts is good, but proves nothing (I Cor 12:31; 14:1,39; I Tim 3:2)!
  - 6. No man is to be in an office ordained by God without God's call (Heb 5:4; Num 16:5-7,37-40)!
  - 7. When you exercise a private and unofficial role, it must be done with meekness (Jas 3:13; Gal 6:1-5), where meekness is humility, easy to be intreated, submissive, patient, not self-willed: these traits are easily seen by reservation, willingness to be corrected, and a cooperative spirit !

**According to the grace that is given to us.**

- A. The *grace given* differs from member to member and from office to office, as *the measure of faith*.
- B. Paul by *us* included himself among the gifted men in office in the church by the plural first-person.
- C. He continued this first-person, plural pronoun usage as he progressed through several church gifts.

- D. God had gifted Paul with the grace of apostleship, and he included himself beside these other gifts.
- E. The *us* is the every man among you, referring to the members with gifts e.g. bishops and deacons.
- F. It is God's sovereign choice as much as salvation or other choices in which you were not consulted.

### *Whether prophecy.*

- A. The gift of *prophecy*, resulting in the office of prophet, was an apostolic office next to the apostles.
  1. The gift and office of *prophet* was second in the church by power and instruction (I Cor 12:28).
  2. The gift and office of *prophecy* could involve foretelling the future (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-14).
  3. The gift and office of *prophecy* involved revealing God's will supernaturally before the canon of the New Testament was completed (I Cor 13:2,9; 14:1-5,29-32; II Pet 1:19-21).
- B. The gift and office of *prophet* was only until the N.T. was finished (I Cor 13:8-10; I Tim 3:1-13).

### *Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.*

- A. The apostle's argument by the context is humility and sobriety in the exercise of the various gifts.
  1. He has already stated very clearly that the lesson was not to think too highly of oneself (12:3).
  2. He did not address the other apostles here, so he started with the next highest office to himself.
  3. A prophet was not the body by himself, though his gift was great; he was limited to his office.
- B. Some have tried to be creative here and arrived at interpretations contrary to context and grammar.
  1. They first change the word proportion to *analogy*; then they add an article to make it *the* faith.
  2. They then apply their manmade phrase, *analogy of the faith*, to limit preaching to the Bible!
  3. They then teach a rule of hermeneutics that interpretation is limited to the system of doctrine.
  4. While II Peter 1:20 clearly teaches this rule for interpretation, it is not taught in Romans 12:6!
- C. The proportion of the faith has already been defined in the small and larger contexts of the phrase.
  1. It has been explained in the first clause of the verse, *according to the grace that is given to us*.
  2. Any man with the gift of prophecy should exercise his office only to the extent of his gift.
  3. Any man with the gift of prophecy should submit to apostolic knowledge and other prophets.
  4. It was explained as Paul began, *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*.
  5. Any man with the gift of prophecy should exercise his office soberly to the extent of his gift.
  6. Any man with the gift of prophecy should not think of himself more highly than his own gift.
- D. Prophets in the church should appreciate their gift and as use it as far as God blessed but no further.
- E. Men with the supernatural gift of prophecy were somewhat limited in their gift and needed others.
  1. Paul referred to this gift of prophecy as being partial for the start of the church (I Cor 13:8-10).
  2. Several prophets could speak with the others judging and interrupting at times (I Cor 14:29-32).

## ***7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;***

### *Or ministry.*

- A. The word minister means servant, and any gift or office can be called minister for its serving role.
- B. Gospel preachers are ministers, for their calling is the work of the ministry (Acts 6:4; 20:24; Eph 4:12; II Cor 5:18; Eph 6:21; Col 1:7; 4:7; I Thess 3:2; I Tim 4:6; II Tim 4:5).
  1. There is a pastoral (shepherding) aspect of their ministry distinct from teaching, as in Eph 4:12.
  2. Paul continued here using the first-person plural pronoun including himself in this gift/office.
- C. Deacons are also servants in the few times they are mentioned as over the ministration (Ac 6:1-6).
- D. There was a whole household of ministers addicted to serving the church at Corinth (I Cor 16:15).

*Let us wait on our ministering.*

- A. The minister, or servant, less than a prophet, should wait on his ministering as sufficient for him.
  - 1. He could please Jesus Christ and profit the church by keeping to his office rather than reaching.
  - 2. Do not desire to prophesy or anything more than the office of servant to which you are called.
- B. **Wait.** 4.e. To take precautions, be watchful or cautious. In imperative: Take care, see to it that 14.d. To attend to (a business, a duty). [OED]
- C. **Wait.** Aaron and sons waited on their priest's office and Levites on them (Num 3:10; I Chr 23:28).

*Or he that teacheth, on teaching.*

- A. The wording here is not elaborate or definitive – God-called teachers should be content to teach!
- B. *Wait* is understood here by ellipsis – teachers should attend to their business and duty of teaching.
- C. It is a shame when Benny Hinn and other so-called teachers want to do sham miracles *and* teach.

***8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.***

*Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation.*

- A. Exhortation is part of the office or work of apostles, prophets, and bishops (Luke 3:18; Acts 15:32; I Cor 14:3; II Thess 3:12; I Tim 2:1; 4:13; 6:2; II Tim 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:15).
- B. **Exhort.** To admonish earnestly; to urge by stimulating words to conduct regarded as laudable.
- C. Every church member should be able to admonish and exhort one another (Rom 15:14; Heb 3:13).
- D. *Wait* is understood here by ellipsis – exhorters should attend to the business and duty of exhorting.

*He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.*

- A. This is more than just giving your offering, as it implies a gift or office, distributing church funds.
- B. New Testament churches had deacons appointed to give the daily supply for widows (Acts 6:1-6).
- C. New Testament churches had men specially appointed to carry gifts internationally (II Co 8:16-23).
- D. **Simplicity.** 3. A. Freedom from artifice, deceit, or duplicity; sincerity, straightforwardness; also absence of affectation or artificiality; plainness, artlessness, naturalness. [OED]
- E. **Simplicity.** Paul's ministerial conduct toward Corinth was in godly simplicity (II Cor 1:12; 11:3).

*He that ruleth, with diligence.*

- A. Every Christian should diligently fulfill any authority in his life e.g. husbands, fathers, masters.
- B. Due to the clear context of serving the church body, we understand this of some sort of gift/office.
  - 1. A bishop's work includes ruling a church under his care (I Thes 5:12; I Tim 5:17; He 13:7,17).
  - 2. They take this oversight willingly, which means a ready desire to rightly serve (I Peter 5:1-3).
- C. Deacons had duties of oversight, for they had a business to rightly manage (Acts 6:3; I Tim 3:12).
- D. There was an office in the N.T. church called helps and one called governments. We see deacons.

*He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

- A. Every Christian should love mercy and show it at all times, so this must be some sort of gift/office.
  - 1. We do not know a specific gift/office/position in the church to which to directly apply mercy.
  - 2. Mercy and loving mercy is what the Lord requires of all (Micah 6:6-8; Luke 6:36; Col 3:12).
  - 3. There are also exceptional efforts of mercy by exceptional Christians (I Tim 5:10; Acts 9:39).

4. There was the official work of deacons for widows and other men to carry funds, which without God's grace and this order might lead to hard hearts at the many faults of the objects.
  5. There could easily have been members assigned to the afflicted in an age without hospitals.
- B. Due to the nature of mercy, having another without right to your kindness, cheerfulness is required.
1. Mercy means that another person does not deserve what you could and should do for them.
  2. In this situation, human nature being as it is, mercy may be shown begrudgingly or resentfully.
  3. Paul's command is to have that humility of self and love for the body that shows it cheerfully.
  4. Jesus Christ gave the perfect example, cheerfully serving thousands of sad and bad cases daily.
  5. The Good Samaritan, by the details and extent of his care for the Jews, showed his gladness.

## ***9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.***

*Let love be without dissimulation.*

- A. Consider the logical development of Paul's instruction to the Romans and to us for Christian living.
1. A mandate for Christian living (12:1-2) was followed by humility for church officers (12:3-8), who could think too highly of themselves (I Tim 3:6), and it set a greater-to-lesser precedent.
  2. Paul then taught all saints the most important virtue of the Christian – love (12:9); he stressed faith earlier (chapters 3-4) due to Jewish legalism, but Arminians go way too far (Jas 2:19).
  3. His exhortations in this epistle are concise, short, and weighty; he covered numerous subjects.
  4. The words here are not indicative or instructive, but imperative and an apostolic injunction.
  5. A full study of love is far beyond this exposition, but it would be profitable for serious saints.
- B. **Dissimulate.** *verb.* To conceal or disguise under a feigned appearance; to dissemble. [OED]
1. **Dissemble.** To alter or disguise the semblance of (one's character, a feeling, design, or action) so as to conceal, or deceive as to, its real nature; to give a false or feigned semblance to; to cloak or disguise by a feigned appearance. [OED]
  2. Dissimulation is hypocrisy – pretending or speaking about love but not performing properly.
  3. There is unfeigned love, which indicates there is also feigned love (II Cor 6:6; I Peter 1:22).
  4. Love in word or tongue is not nearly enough. It must be deed and truth to be love (I John 3:18).
  5. We dissimulate when our daily actions do not match our profession or Sunday pretensions.
- C. Love of what? Before diving into the application of this injunction, what love did the Spirit intend?
1. Because brotherly love is listed shortly (12:10) and implied (12:13,15), we should see more.
  2. In addition to loving the brethren, we should also love God (Jude 1:21), Jesus (I Cor 16:22), good (Amos 5:15), scripture (Ps 119:97), spouses (Eph 5:25; Tit 2:4), children (Tit 2:4), ministers (I Thess 5:12-13), neighbors (Rom 13:9), and enemies (Matt 5:43-48).
  3. Loving God is the first commandment to be maintained without any pretense or sharing with any creature or any other thing (Eze 33:31; Matt 15:8; 6:24; Heb 3:12; I Jn 2:15-16; Jude 1:21).
  4. Hypocrisy and insincerity are two large faults that must be rejected in every kind of love, of God for sure and every other kind of love right down to enemies, it must be sincere action.
- D. What is the source of love? To reach this high standard of love, how should a person learn to love?
1. The source of love is God's work of regeneration in the human heart (Titus 3:3-5; I Thess 4:9).
  2. God's love for His elect and Christ's love for His church should both illustrate and provoke it.
  3. Love for God and Jesus Christ, if honest and sincere, will include the children (I John 4:20-21).
  4. The fruit of the Spirit starts with love, so walking in the Spirit is key (Gal 5:22; I Thess 4:9).
  5. Love is a choice, and the word of God speaks to every object of love a Christian should have.
  6. It is a choice to enlarge your heart and take the straitjacket off your feelings (II Cor 6:11-13).

- E. Real love is fervent and passionate, not just lukewarm social courtesy or perfunctory performances.
  1. Love flows from a pure heart with one motive and is felt and shown fervently (I Pet 1:22; 4:8).
  2. Is your love passionate and personal so you feel bowels for others (I Jn 3:17; Colossians 3:12).
  3. Your flesh, the world, and the devil lie that fervent love is “chemistry” or “connection,” but it is a choice, and you can choose to have bowels by selflessly, sincerely investing in another.
  4. You must choose an empathetic concern for others in compassion (Hebrews 13:1-3; I Pet 3:8).
  5. It is a choice to enlarge your heart and take the straitjacket off your feelings (II Cor 6:11-13).
- F. Real love is based in performance by works, regardless of thoughts, words, or pious impressions.
  1. Paul, raising money for Judea, told Corinth they could prove sincerity with cash (II Co 8:7-11).
  2. John, who dealt at length with love, says that bowels of love should move assets (I Jn 3:16-17).
  3. James, comparing faith to love, mocked loving words without performance (James 2:15-16).
  4. Jesus performed, and Paul used His example for love and giving to the Corinthians (II Cor 8:9).

### *Abhor that which is evil.*

- A. **Abhor.** To regard with horror, extreme repugnance or disgust; to hate utterly, loathe, abominate.
- B. Hate is good, and so is abhor, abominate, despise, detest, and loathe, when it comes to evil and sin.
  1. Canada and America have hate crimes, which is insane in concept and makes hatred look bad.
  2. Robert Schuller, Joel Osteen, and men like them cannot comprehend or state hate of anything.
  3. The perilous times produce effeminate doves that only fiercely hate good saints (II Tim 3:3)!
  4. These Christian perverts will talk about love *ad nauseum* while referencing Jesus in ignorance!
- C. God hates sin, the sinners that commit sin, and the world that is their home and base of operations.
  1. Reject once and for all the lie, God hates sin but loves the sinner (Ps 5:5; 10:3; 11:5; Mat 7:21).
  2. This world and all that is in it is God’s enemy, and you cannot befriend it (Jas 4:4; I John 2:15).
  3. For more about God not loving everybody ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/does-god-love-everybody.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/does-god-love-everybody.pdf).
- D. Do you abhor (hate, abominate, and loathe) abortion, adultery, backbiting, casual sex, complaining, covetousness, despising government, divorce, drunkenness, foolish talking, immodesty, jesting, labor unions, lying, mocking parents, purloining, same-sex marriages, revenge, self-esteem, self-love, sodomy, whispering, and everything else contrary to sound doctrine as defined in the Bible?
- E. If you love God, then you will hate the things that He hates (Prov 6:16-19; 3:32; 11:1,20; 15:8-9).
- F. If you love God, you will hate sin and the world, for they are enemies (Psalm 97:10; Prov 8:13).
- G. If you love God’s law, you will hate things His law condemns (Ps 1:1-2; 119:104,113; 128,163).
- H. If you love God and righteousness, you will hate the work of turning aside (Ps 101:3; Jude 1:22).
- I. By its close position to *cleave to that which is good*, we understand hatred resulting in rejection!

### *Cleave to that which is good.*

- A. **Cleave.** To stick fast or adhere, as by a glutinous surface. To cling or hold fast to; to attach oneself to. To adhere or cling to; to remain attached, devoted, or faithful to. [OED]
- B. Love the words of God. The Spirit rushes from *love* to *abhor* to *cleave*. These power words are by inspiration, and they are godly and spiritual, which is wisdom of words from heaven (I Cor 2:13).
- C. We should cleave to God and Jesus Christ, but this is set opposite abhorring evil (Acts 11:23).
- D. Hating evil and doing good will bring life and good days (Psalm 34:12-14; 37:27; I Peter 3:10-11).
- E. One way to abhor evil and cleave to that which is good is how you treat others (I Thess 5:15).
- F. The truly righteous are passionate and intense – loving good and hating evil (Amos 5:14-15).
- G. Diligently seeking good obtains favor, but the opposite is also true (Prov 11:27; 13:15; 14:14,22).
- H. What is good? Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8; Prov 22:1; 31:12).
- I. The combination of avoiding evil but choosing good is the evidence of being God’s (III John 1:11).
- J. Everything good thing scripture identifies for us is what we want to love and do (James 1:21-27).



## ***10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;***

### ***Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.***

- A. It did not take long to get to the greatest Christian grace – love of others, which is to be exalted.
  - 1. Contrary to Arminian obsession with faith, love is the greatest grace (I Cor 13:13; Col 3:14); the devils believe, but they do not love, and faith without love is worthless (Jas 2:14; Gal 5:6).
  - 2. The words here are not indicative or instructive, but imperative and an apostolic injunction.
- B. **Kind.** Naturally well-disposed; having a gentle, sympathetic, or benevolent nature; ready to assist, or show consideration for, others; generous, liberal, courteous. Affectionate, loving, fond. [OED]
- C. **Affection.** Good disposition towards, goodwill, kind feeling, love, fondness, loving attachment.
- D. The concept of brotherly love may be warped by your ungodly relationship with your brothers.
  - 1. Brotherly love is repeated by Paul for a very intimate, instinctive love (I Thes 4:9; Heb 13:1).
  - 2. There may be exceptional friends that stick closer than a brother, but not ordinarily (Pr 18:24).
  - 3. Believers are all blood brothers in a relationship greatly trumping any earthly bond by DNA.
  - 4. For more about brotherly love of church members ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/brotherly-love-2.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/brotherly-love-2.pdf).
  - 5. For more about blood is thicker than blood ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/blood-is-thicker-than-blood.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/blood-is-thicker-than-blood.pdf).
  - 6. For more about members as brothers' keepers ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/am-i-my-brothers-keeper.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/am-i-my-brothers-keeper.pdf).
  - 7. For more about the tenderhearted duty of believers ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/tender-hearted.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/tender-hearted.pdf).
- E. The best measures of love are far more than talking about it – there must be a cost to benefit others.
  - 1. It is measured by forbearing and forgiving, costing pride and revenge (I Cor 13:4-7; Col 3:13).
  - 2. It is measured by giving that costs you in your wallet (I Tim 6:17-19; I John 3:17; Jas 2:15-16).
  - 3. It is measured by longsuffering and patience, when others keep offending (I Cor 13:4; Eph 4:2).
  - 3. It is measured by initiative, for who cares when you say or do something prompted by others?
  - 5. It is measured by spirituality, for real love seeks godliness and wisdom (Lev 19:17; Pr 27:5-6).
  - 6. It is measured by need, for love responds to adversity, not convenience (Pr 17:17; Heb 13:3).
  - 7. It is measured by selflessness, needing nothing in return (Lu 14:12-14; I Co 13:5; II Co 12:15).
  - 8. It is measured by liberality, for miserly or begrudging is not love (Deut 15:12-15; Isaiah 32:8).
- F. What is love? In order to fulfill this apostolic injunction, each believer should define love properly.
  - 1. Love is selfless desire for the spiritual and personal welfare of another person; it does whatever is necessary to help another person grow in grace to please God and men more perfectly.
  - 2. Note that love is not infatuation, lust, chemistry, connection, mere duty, mere feelings, etc., etc.
  - 3. Love is also pleasure we provide others out of sheer desire for their joy (Is 63:7; Matt 5:43-48).
  - 4. Love is also service we provide others in their time of need, as the Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).
- G. Real love causes real changes and conduct that do not come easily or naturally. Start loving today!
- H. For more about the greatness and importance of love ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/love-is-the-greatest.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/love-is-the-greatest.pdf).
- I. For a lengthy definition of love from I Cor 13:4-7 ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/definition-of-love.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/definition-of-love.pdf).

### ***In honour preferring one another.***

- A. This is a *one another* duty, meaning each individual church member owes it to each other member.
  - 1. Therefore, take the number of church members less one and fulfill your duty to that number.
  - 2. This means every other church member is more important than you, the least of all members.
  - 3. For more about *one another* duties ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/church/one-another/sermon.php>.
- B. Honour is what you owe every other member, and you should fully understand the general term.
  - 1. **Honour.** High respect, esteem, or reverence, accorded to exalted worth or rank; deferential admiration or approbation. [OED]

2. It is one of the Holy Spirit's words in scripture for respect of God (I Tim 1:17), civil rulers (I Pet 2:17), parents (Eph 6:2), masters (I Tim 6:1), and wives (I Pet 3:7); the usage for ministers (I Tim 5:17) and widows (I Tim 5:3) refers to financial support, not merely respect or esteem.
3. If you think a church member is uncomely, you should give them more honour (I Co 12:22-25).
- C. Preferring them is honouring them above yourself, for the preference is left without modification.
  1. **Prefer.** To set or hold (one thing) before others in favour or esteem; to favour or esteem more; to choose or approve rather; to like better. [OED]
  2. The Holy Spirit's use is this definition and sense of the word by comparison (Ps 137:6; Esther 2:9; Dan 6:3; John 1:15,27,30; I Tim 5:21).
  3. The opposite of this instruction is vainglory – seeking honour yourself (Phil 2:3), which is what the world is addicted to and obsessed with (Ps 49:18; John 5:44; II Cor 10:12).
  4. Abraham is an example of this glorious concept – he allowed Lot the choice of land (Gen 13:9).
  5. Saints are not interested in the vainglory of self-importance; they get down in lowliness of mind to esteem every other member more deserving and important than self, and they show it.
  6. Each church member should honor others in every way they can as being more important than self – it has nothing to do with what you think or say – it has only to do with your actions.
- D. This inspired clause regarding one another rebukes against selfishness and exhorts to selflessness.
  1. Since it is preference for others, then they always get the benefit of the doubt and you do not.
  2. Your comfort or convenience is quite irrelevant, since their comfort and convenience is higher!
  3. If you have spending money, then others should get some or all of it, since they are higher.
  4. It is amazing how self-righteous smugness sees others' faults but it fully oblivious to their own.
  5. Your attendance for church benefit is much greater than yours, so do not miss (Heb 10:23-25).
  6. It means you forgive whether they ask or not, and you volunteer apology without their asking.
  7. Guys should mark girls off (and girls guys) for marriage, if in any setting they want their way.
  7. Guys should mark girls off (and girls guys) for marriage, if in a setting they avoid participation.
- E. If a church fully practiced this simple admonition, the benefits and protections would be fabulous.
- F. For more of the difference of selfishness or selflessness ... [www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/selfish-or-selfless.pdf](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/selfish-or-selfless.pdf).

## ***11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;***

### ***Not slothful in business.***

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.
- B. These phrases are independent of each other, yet we cannot reject connection; we see them broadly.
- C. Though God saved some poor, there is no virtue in poverty; God expects Christians to work hard.
- D. Bible Christians reject a monastic or convent view of life that rejects career wisdom as worldly.
- E. Even before man fell, Adam had a job, to dress and keep the garden (Ge 2:15). Work is very good.
- F. Christians work hard to (1) show virtue, (2) live without charity, (3) save up extra, (4) leave an inheritance, (5) support parents, (6) have to give to others, and (7) support the kingdom of Christ.
- G. What is slothful? Slow like a sloth. What is a sloth? A slow animal of Central and South America.
- H. **Sloth.** Physical or mental inactivity; disinclination to action, exertion, or labour; sluggishness, idleness, indolence, laziness. [OED] This short phrase of the Holy Spirit is about a job or business.
- I. Both testaments have much to say about diligence in business (Prov 6:6-11; 10:26; 15:19; 18:9; 19:15; 22:29; 24:30-34; 26:13-16; Matt 25:26; Acts 20:34-35; I Tim 5:13-14; 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10).
- J. Sanctification, or holiness, includes hard work at a job (I Thes 4:1-2,11-12; Ep 4:28; Col 3:22-25).
- K. Laws to avoid work no more justify sloth than divorce laws justify divorce. God rejects such laws.
- L. God's standards are high (De 24:19-21; Ru 2:2; Pr 20:4; 26:13) and hard (Pr 20:4; II Thes 3:6-15).
- M. There is no mercy in the Bible for those that do not do all that they might possibly do (Titus 1:12).
- N. Christians should be the most dedicated workers at their jobs (Ec 9:10; I Pet 2:18-23; Col 3:22-25).

- O. Christians should work to the Lord (hard), for the Lord (money), and to honor the Lord (adorn).
- P. Productivity is the measure of a Christian (also called fruitbearing), but especially in employment, for even the virtuous woman has her fear of the Lord only mentioned – she is overall industrious.
- Q. Some nations or generations have a problem with their work ethic (II Thess 3:6-12; Titus 1:12).
- R. This profane generation thinks that life is for fun, work should be easy, and work should be short.
- S. This profane generation thinks they deserve handouts from workers; Christians should be different.
- T. God does not care about your desire to take it easy, and the mercy principle will not cover your sin.
- U. Your life should be structured not to have fun, but rather to be diligent, energetic, and productive.
- V. Your work is your calling, and you should value it highly and do it the best you can as to the Lord.
- W. Even earned retirement should be carefully considered that it matches God’s word. Many do not.
- X. For much more about a Biblical, Christian work ethic ... [www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/christian-work-ethic.pdf](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/christian-work-ethic.pdf).
- Y. For Proverb commentaries regarding business ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/proverbs.php?chapter=1>.
- Z. For a study of Bible Economics ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/practical/bible-economics/sermon.php>.

### *Fervent in spirit.*

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.
- B. These phrases are independent of each other, yet we cannot reject connection; we see them broadly.
- C. **Fervent.** Of persons, their passions, dispositions, or action: Ardent, intensely earnest. From 17<sup>th</sup> century almost exclusively with reference to love or hatred, zeal, devotion, or aspiration. [OED]
- D. Compare Bible usage (Acts 18:25; II Cor 7:7; Col 4:12; Jas 5:16; I Pet 1:22; 4:8; II Pet 3:10,12).
- E. There is only one way to do what God has assigned to us in our lives – all out, white hot (Ga 4:18).
- F. **Zeal.** Intense ardour in the pursuit of some end; passionate eagerness in favour of a person or cause; enthusiasm as displayed action. **Ardour.** Heat of passion or desire, vehemence, ardent desire; warmth of emotion, zeal, fervor, eagerness, enthusiasm.
- G. The Bible also speaks of “vehement desire” (II Cor 7:11), “vehement flame” (Song 8:6-7), “spirit was stirred” (Acts 17:16-17), “burning fire” (Jer 20:9), “heartily” (Col 3:23), “heart was lifted up” (II Chr 17:6), and “with all his heart” (II Chr 31:20-21), and so forth. Do you fit this emphasis?
- H. A calm, paced demeanor may indicate that the furnace has gone out and zeal is a foreign word.
- I. Calm consistency may be good if you have no zeal, but it is no substitute for zeal. Read the verse!
- J. Zeal is all in, committed, convicted, drastic, extreme, fanatical, intense, passionate, radical, severe.
- K. Zeal hates average, comfortable, cautious, indifferent, lethargic, moderate, normal, paced, steady.
- L. David was a great example of zeal overachieving for the LORD (I Chr 22:5; 29:1; Ps 18:29; 27:4).
- M. Jehu king of Israel was a great example of zeal to do God’s will, for awhile (II Kgs 9:20; 10:16,30).
- N. Jesus Christ was a great example of zeal to do God’s will, for ever (John 2:13-17; 4:34; Ps 69:9).
- O. Paul was a great example of zeal for the kingdom of Jesus Christ (I Cor 15:10; II Cor 10:12-18).
- P. Other examples are God, Moses, Phinehas, Caleb, Joshua, Jephthah, Samuel, Jonathan, Elijah, Asa, Josiah, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, James and John, Apollos, Epaphras, and the Thessalonians.
- Q. Are you on fire about the things in your life God gave you to do, rather than those you want to do?
- R. The examples above did not just perform zealously at commandments, but went beyond with zeal!
- S. By proximity to your business, the fervency here must include your job (Col 3:22-25; I Cor 10:31).
- T. The Christian life is like a race, and there is only one way to run it (I Cor 9:24-27; Heb 12:1-3).
- U. Perilous times are when Christians are zealous for pleasures over God (II Tim 3:1-5; Matt 24:12).
- V. The threat to souls, families, churches is not Islam or Mormonism, but compromise and lethargy.
- W. If the Bible is half true, what effort do God and His commands deserve? Nothing but the very best!
- X. For much more about zeal in every part of your life ... [www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/zeal-for-the-lord.pdf](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/zeal-for-the-lord.pdf).
- Y. For more about zeal by the example of Jehu king of Israel ... [www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/jehu.pdf](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/jehu.pdf).
- Z. For more about a cause justifying fervent zeal ... [www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/is-there-not-a-cause.pdf](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/is-there-not-a-cause.pdf).

### *Serving the Lord.*

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.
- B. These phrases are independent of each other, yet we cannot reject connection; we see them broadly.
- C. Everything must be subordinate to serving Christ, especially the preceding context of employment.
- D. The tendency of worldly employment is to take eyes off Jesus Christ, but not with this reminder!
- E. Christians work a job as to Jesus Christ, not to men (I Co 7:22; Ep 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25; Tit 2:9-10).
- F. A very great work ethic without the object being Jesus Christ and His kingdom is foolish and vain.
- G. Some think full-time Christian service requires being pastor or missionary, but not Paul (Col 3:24).
- H. Christians do everything with diligent zeal to Jesus Christ e.g. wives (Eph 5:22), children (Ep 6:1), civil rulers (Rom 13:4-6), liberty (Rom 14:6-8, 14-18), and anything else (I Cor 10:31; Col 3:17).
- I. Paul wrote that whether we live or die, we do so unto the Lord, for we are the Lord's (Rom 14:8).
- J. How did you serve Jesus Christ this past week? What did you produce for the kingdom of heaven?
- K. How will you serve Jesus Christ this next week? What will you provide in the kingdom of heaven?
- L. Some have well said, "Only one life, it will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."
- M. For much more about serving Jesus Christ by your life ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/kingdom-priorities.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/kingdom-priorities.pdf).
- N. For identifying and examining your reason for living ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-do-you-live.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-do-you-live.pdf).
- O. For identifying priorities to make your life count ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/make-your-life-count.pdf>.

### ***12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Rejoicing in hope.***

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.
- B. **Hope.** Expectation of a desire. Compare Psalm 10:28; 11:7; 13:12; Philippians 1:20; Rom 8:24-25.
  - 1. Faith is confidence in God and His word – hope is the patient waiting for promises of His word.
  - 2. Faith and hope are related as faith is the substance and evidence of things hoped for (Heb 11:1).
  - 3. Hope is not baseless, or it is only fantasy and wishful thinking: it is not delusional optimism.
  - 4. Hope is based in God, in His character, in His words, and in His promises of future things (Ps 33:22; 38:15; 39:7; 62:5; 71:5; 130:5,7; 131:3; 146:5; Jer 14:8; 17:13,17; 50:7; Joel 3:16).
  - 5. Hope is reasonable and logical and can be defined and explained by those with it (I Pet 3:15).
  - 6. If the spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, how much more a saint with hope (Prov 18:14)!
- C. Hopelessness is an evil blight and curse on men; hope is a gift from God for your joy and peace.
  - 1. It is the painful belief that nothing will do any good and the future is full of pain and trouble.
  - 2. It is the soul-destroying resignation and despair that there is no relief from within or without.
- D. The Christian religion is one of hope, never despair, when it is rightly understood and believed.
  - 1. Our God is the God of hope, and by His power He can make you abound in hope (Rom 15:13).
  - 2. If we show the hope our religion provides, then others will ask us about our hope (I Pet 3:15).
  - 3. The reversals of fortune in the Bible are many and powerful for building great hope (Ro 15:4).
  - 4. In prison in Babylon for horrible sins against God, Manasseh was restored (II Chr 33:12-13).
  - 5. Even facing total economic ruin, the believer can rejoice and dance with God (Hab 3:17-19).
  - 6. Even facing horrific persecution, the believer can rejoice and leap for joy (Luke 6:22-23).
  - 7. Time would fail to tell of Joseph, Esther, Ruth, David, Daniel, Paul, and many others. Rejoice!
- E. Death is the king of terrors (Job 18:14; Ps 73:19), which terrifies the men of this world (Heb 2:15).
  - 1. Every man must live his short life with the increasing awareness of his impending mortality.
  - 2. It is a shadow over happy events, a thief that cannot be resisted, and the war with no discharge.
  - 3. Others show the vanity of their religion at funerals, but we should be different (I Thess 4:13).
  - 4. We walk by faith, not by sight, which brings confident hope even after death (II Cor 5:1-8).

- F. But death to the believer is far better than life! Believest thou this? Let the word of God bring faith!
  1. We believe in a place called heaven, where we have had reservations from before the world.
  2. God promised eternal life, which is the basis of hope through life and at death (Titus 1:2; 3:7).
  3. The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the blessed hope of wise believers (Titus 2:13).
  4. The resurrection of the body and a future life in glory makes all our faith fruitful (I Cor 15:19).
- G. But bare hope is not enough and not appropriate for God's promises. You should rejoice in hope!
  1. The future for believers is so good and sure that joy should result no matter life circumstances.
  2. It is so sure that God swore with an oath providing two immutable guarantees (Heb 6:17-19).
  3. It is a lively hope since Jesus was raised already; He is our firstfruits (I Pet 1:3-5; I Cor 15:23).
  4. Your hope will never be disappointed, though the wicked lose all hope (Pr 10:28; 11:7; 14:32).
  5. Your hope is by appointment to obtain salvation and live together with Christ (I Thes 5:8-10).
- H. What will you do to build your hope now before you need true confidence and joy in it at death?
  1. The world is hopeless, so we cannot be conformed; we must renew our minds (Rom 12:1-2).
  2. You must build your hope with the word of God and all the glorious promises of your future.
  3. The time to do that is not when you are dying but today to be prepared to die like a believer.
  4. The reason for a church is to come apart from the world and encourage each other in hope.
- I. Hope should lead to holy living, but that is not the thought here (I John 3:1-3; II Thess 2:16-17).
- J. For much more about hope and the danger of hopelessness ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/hope.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/hope.pdf).

### *Patient in tribulation.*

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.
- B. **Patience.** The suffering or enduring (of pain, trouble, or evil) with calmness and composure.[OED]
  1. It is wrong in this context to define it as waiting a long time without getting angry or frustrated.
  2. While the sense of waiting is the sense in other Bible uses, it is not in context with tribulation.
  3. We define patience here as cheerfully enduring painful events, regardless of how long they last.
- C. Believers are to count various temptations, tribulations, or trials as matters of great joy (Jas 1:2-4).
  1. The reason for this is that they are necessary for the development of the great grace of patience.
  2. Furthermore, this is the right response since patience is a perfecting trait of a great Christians.
  3. To support James' calling for joy, Paul wrote of joyfulness and glory (Col 1:11; II Co 12:9-10).
- D. We can connect patience and hope by adding Paul's explanation to that of James (Romans 5:3-5).
  1. Believers should glory in tribulations, since it takes negative events to build positive character!
  2. As you weather painful events with joy and glory, your experience turns into confident hope.
  3. And by this process, the Holy Spirit spreads God's love in our hearts through these afflictions.
- E. There are other benefits that flow from learning to cheerfully endure negative events now on earth.
  1. Paul knew that greater glory comes to Christ by tribulations than by triumphs (II Cor 12:9-10).
  2. James indicated there may be reward even in this life for enduring (Ja 5:10-11; Mark 10:28-30).
  3. Peter indicated that patience under a froward master is thankworthy from God (I Pet 2:19-20).
  4. An evidence of election is patience, like Thessalonica (I Thes 1:2-4; II Thes 1:4; II Pet 1:5-11).
  5. The stony ground hearer (without patience) will have the word of God taken away (Luke 8:18).
- F. This kind of patience taught by Paul is how you save yourself from despair to assurance of heaven.
  1. Notice how Jesus told His apostles to view the trials coming for them (Luke 21:19; Mat 24:13).
  2. Notice how John encouraged the believers under pagan and papal Rome to view it (Rev 13:10).
- G. It is your wisdom to know the Bible, especially O.T. history for patience and comfort (Rom 15:4).
- H. For much more about patience and possessing your souls ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/enduring-affliction.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/enduring-affliction.pdf).
- I. For more about negative events to good Christians ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf).

### *Continuing instant in prayer.*

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.
- B. *Continuing in prayer* is easy to grasp; an important trait of saints is praying often without quitting.
  - 1. To pray continually does not mean from conversion to death (I Thess 5:17; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2).
  - 2. It means to use prayer at all times, for all reasons, without giving up, without laying it aside.
- C. *Instant in prayer* is more difficult to grasp, but it simply means a fervent and importunate effort.
  - 1. **Instant.** Pressing, urgent, importunate. Said of persons and their actions.
  - 2. **Importunate.** To solicit pressingly and persistently; to ply or beset with requests.
  - 3. **Importunity.** Pertinacity or constancy of action; bothersome pertinacity in solicitation.
  - 4. **Pertinacity.** Persistent or stubborn in holding to one's opinion or design; resolute; obstinate.
  - 5. Some Bible uses of "instant" refer to time and speed (Is 29:5; 30:13; Jer 18:7,9; Luke 2:38).
  - 6. However, the adverbial use of the word signifies action done in a pressing, urgent, and importunate fashion (Luke 7:4; 23:23; Acts 26:7; Romans 12:12).
  - 7. Consider Jacob's example: he would not quit; he used the most intense effort (Gen 32:24-32).
  - 8. Consider Jesus Christ's example and His strong crying and tears (Heb 5:7; Luke 22:39-44).
- D. There are two illustrations by the Lord Jesus Christ that match the two descriptions of prayer here.
  - 1. *Continuing* describes prayer that will not give up until it gets the things it seeks (Luke 18:1-8).
  - 2. Jesus clearly identified the parable's purpose for teaching the lesson of not giving up in prayer.
  - 3. The unjust judge eventually avenged the widow due to the irritation of her *continual* coming.
  - 4. Jesus applied the parable to His praying elect by God bearing long with them day and night.
  - 5. *Instant* describes prayer done intensely, almost rudely, for a present response (Luke 11:1-10).
  - 6. Even though he would not rise because he is his friend, his obnoxious persistence got the help.
  - 7. Observe that the relationship of friend to friend was not enough, drastic effort was required.
  - 8. Jesus explained to the lunatic's father that his situation required prayer and fasting (Mat 17:21).
- E. What is the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man (Jas 5:16)? It is exactly what is stated here.
  - 1. A prayer is effectual when it accomplishes a desired end; *continuing* and *instant* are required.
  - 2. Fervent is the passionate approach to prayer that matches up with *instant* or *importunate*.
- F. Fighting saints doing their best against the devil and his wiles persevere in prayer (Eph 6:10-18).
- G. Are you praying as much as you should? How can you be encouraged to pray more like this text?
  - 1. How consistently do you pray? How continually? How insistent and pressing? Demand it.
  - 2. David and Daniel prayed three times a day, and their greatness is known (Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10).
  - 3. Are you too busy with life, as the apostles were once too busy with church matters (Acts 6:4)?
  - 4. What hinders your praying? Carnality? Lack of faith? Loss of habit? God bearing long with you? Lack of emphasis? Lack of instruction? Too busy?
  - 5. The rule to us here is a part of the living sacrifice for our reasonable service back to God.
- H. For much more about prayer from every aspect ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/effectual-prayer.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/effectual-prayer.pdf).
- I. For help with inspired prayer requests ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/inspired-prayer-requests.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/inspired-prayer-requests.pdf).

## ***13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.***

### *Distributing to the necessity of saints.*

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.
- B. What Paul delivered to us by the Spirit in only six words is contrary to popular, Christian thinking.
  - 1. We go to the Bible to determine our charity; we do not take our charity to the Bible for support.
  - 2. The world operates by the direction of the devil through human sentimentality and emotion.
  - 3. These six words declare the duty of giving, objects of the giving, and the reason for the giving.

- C. *Distributing* describes the act of giving and dispersing your goods to others in Christian charity.
1. **Distribute.** To deal out or bestow in portions or shares among a number of recipients; to allot or apportion as his share to each person of a number. [OED]
  2. The verb means to give. Though limited by context and scripture, Christians are liberal givers; this is not an option for exceptional Christians; this is a duty of every person naming Christ.
  3. Jehovah's religion provides for the poor (De 15:7-11; Job 29:12-16; Ps 41:1-2; 112:9; Pr 11:24-25; 14:21,31; 19:17; 28:27; Eccl 11:1-2; Is 58:7; Acts 2:44-45; 20:35; Gal 2:10; I Jn 3:16-18).
  4. This is not a ministerial text, therefore it applies to every church member, overseen by pastors.
  5. Christian charity is to be overseen by God's ministers to insure proper qualifying and equitable distribution (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-6; 11:30; I Cor 16:1-3; II Cor 8:16-24; I Tim 5:3-16).
  6. Distribution in a scriptural church is public by officers assigned to formally oversee charity.
  7. Money went to the apostles, who then distributed it fairly (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-37; 5:1-2; 6:1-3).
  8. The church grew large enough for this distribution to become a time-consuming business, so the apostles ordained deacons to distribute the charity fairly to the proper objects (Acts 6:1-7).
  9. Corinth's gifts for Jewish saints was by apostolic administration (II Cor 8:18-24; 9:1-5,12-14).
  10. Paul taught Timothy the only widows to be supported had relieved the afflicted (I Tim 5:10).
  11. Paul taught Timothy to tell the rich to be ready and willing to distribute (I Tim 6:17-19), yet he did not require redistribution of all assets to reduce them to average or poor, as communists.
  12. The rich young ruler would not distribute his assets to the poor, so he went away (Luke 18:22).
- D. *Necessity* limits the distribution to legitimate needs as defined in God's charity manual, the Bible.
1. The Bible has defined rules for charitable giving, because Christianity is not at all communism.
  2. Liberal to qualifying widows, Christianity has strict qualifying rules, which shows that godly giving is objective, rather than emotional, subjective, or universal (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim 5:3-16).
  3. Communism is "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" nonsense.
  4. Christian charity does not try to artificially create equality in income or assets, as communism, for the rich are fully allowed to remain rich (Job 1:1-3; 42:10-12; Acts 5:4; I Tim 6:17-19).
  5. Bible charity requires an act of God; it does not provide for human foolishness of slothfulness or waste, nor does it provide desired things or privileges not essentially necessary or common.
  6. Bible charity is limited to food, clothing, shelter, or life-threatening medical treatment – not luxury, pleasure, privileges, support, toys, Christmas presents, or any other such nonsense (Job 31:19; Isaiah 58:7; Ezek 18:7; Luke 10:25-37; Acts 11:27-30; Jas 1:27; 2:15-16).
  7. Bible charity is limited to the truly needy e.g. widows, orphans, an act of God – not the slothful, foolish, wasteful, uninsured, or extravagant.
- E. *Saints* limits the objects of distribution to those of the household of faith, not the world's needy.
1. Many Christians have operated under the false burden of worrying about the world's poor.
  2. God has chosen us out of this world; we are strangers and pilgrims here; our primary duties are to the household of faith (John 15:19; I John 3:1; 4:4-6; Heb 12:22-24; I Pet 2:9-12; Gal 6:10).
  3. The Christian order of charity is family, poor saints in your church, poor saints in other churches, and those emergency situations God puts directly in your ordinary path.
  4. The unity the world feels because they are all human is a foreign concept to us, for our unity is in the blood of Jesus Christ by adoption into the family of God, and they are not part of it.
  5. The early church was the most charitable church – toward each other (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37).
  6. Paul was committed to charitable giving by the churches, but it was always for poor saints: it is your duty to read and understand this Bible emphasis (Acts 11:27-30; Rom 12:13; 15:25-27; I Cor 16:1-3; II Cor 8:4; 9:1-2,12; Gal 2:9-10; Philemon 1:7; Heb 6:10; Jas 2:15-17; I John 3:17).

7. There is not a single mention of the poor that were in every city; the churches sent their money abroad to poor saints, ignoring unbelievers in their own nation or the destination nation.
  8. The giving honored by God is charity to believers (Mat 10:40-42; 25:40; Mark 9:41; Heb 6:10).
- F. When God warned of a famine, the disciples sent money to their brethren in Christ (Ac 11:27-30).
1. The famine was throughout all the world, but the disciples did not worry about starving pagans.
  2. Here is fundraising and charitable giving identified very clearly for your learning in such cases.
  3. Money was sourced from saints in Syria to help saints in Judea, ignoring the starving Syrians!
  4. Money was raised in this passage from Syria to help saints in Judea, ignoring unbelieving Jews!
  5. Jerusalem was 300 miles south of Antioch, which meant that a lot of opportunities were passed.
  6. Money was sourced in Greece for Jerusalem, ignoring the Greeks (Rom 15:25-28; I Cor 16:3).
  7. Money was sourced in Galatia for Jerusalem, ignoring the Galatians (I Cor 16:1-3; Gal 2:9-10).
  8. Obviously, there were poor orphans and widows at all times in these foreign cities and nations!
  9. Obviously, there were poor orphans and widows at all times in other foreign cities and nations!
  10. The saints of Jesus are strangers and pilgrims in the earth: they are not moved for pagans.
  11. They seek first God's kingdom, and therefore there is not much left for the Satan's kingdom.
  12. But they would be first in line to help a pagan orphan or widow God put in their ordinary path.
- G. Under neither testament did God's people give charity to pagans, which is quite shocking to most.
1. Remember that in Israel the church and state were the same, so we can learn by studying Israel.
  2. Though ten plagues ravaged the nation (Ex 10:7), the people spoiled Egypt further (Ex 12:36).
  3. There is not a single precept in all the Law of Moses to send any contributions to U.N.I.C.E.F.
  4. Jesus Christ, though speaking proverbially, denied bread to Gentile dogs (Matthew 15:24-26).
  5. God told Israel to take interest from pagans for loaning money to make money (Deut 28:12-13).
  6. The bag carried by the apostles of our Lord had to have been for the poor saints in Israel, not starving children in Ethiopia, for He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, which was the church of God under the Old Covenant (John 12:6; 13:29).
- H. A few other considerations will keep readers of Romans from making errors in their distribution.
1. If men will not work diligently and wisely, they should starve; wisdom does not subsidize folly, which establishes that not everything that looks like a need qualifies as a need (Prov 6:6-11; 16:26; 18:9; 19:15; 20:4; 30:25; Mat 25:8-9,24-29; Rom 12:11; I Thes 4:11-12; II Thes 3:6-12).
  2. Giving to the poor was not the most important thing for Jesus – His anointing cost many children many meals, but He blessed and recorded the priority of honoring Him (Mark 14:3-8)!
  3. The age of those in need, or extra sentimentality for children, is not an emphasis in the Bible, for sin and its judgment includes the youngest without discrimination (Gen 6:6-7; Exodus 12:29; Num 16:27; 31:17; Deut 2:34; Josh 7:24; II Sam 12:13-14; Ps 137:9; Ezek 9:5-6).
  4. To have a pure heart before God applying the limits of this passage, you had better be generous and liberal with opportunities for legitimate charity (Prov 11:24-25; Luke 6:38; II Cor 8:6).
  5. If you were to search the Internet enough, you could find a “disaster” daily, hourly, or more!
- I. Saved from bondage for the world's poor, we must be liberal distributors to those God approves!
1. With parameters and priorities, Christians know charity, love, and giving better than the world.
  2. Giving in faith is proof of eternal life (Mat 25:31-46; I Tim 6:17-19; II Pet 1:5-11; I The 1:2-4).
  3. Liberality toward the poor is a trait of great Christians (Ps 112:1-9; Eccl 11:1-6; Isaiah 32:8).
  4. It is easy to sing, “Oh, how I love Jesus”; it is better to put your money where your mouth is.
  5. Expecting charity by this text is wrong and should rather consider giving, for even the widow was more concerned about giving her two mites than receiving (Luke 21:1-4; Acts 20:35).



6. Charitable giving without the daily actions of charity has no profit whatsoever (I Cor 13:3).  
J. For more about charity giving ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/practical/charity-haiti-earthquake/sermon.php>.

### *Given to hospitality.*

- A. This is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; this is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.  
B. *Given to* something, like hospitality here, is to be inclined, disposed, addicted, or prone to a thing.  
1. **Given to.** Inclined, disposed, addicted, prone. [OED] See Act 17:16; I Tim 3:2,3,8; Tit 1:7; 2:3.  
2. Given to filthy lucre = greedy of it (I Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7). Compare the Spirit's words (I Co 2:13).  
3. Given to hospitality = lover of hospitality (I Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8). Compare the Spirit's words.  
4. A person given to hospitality loves to do it, wants to do it, cannot stop from doing it, and so on.  
5. Ministers, or bishops, are to be given to hospitality as examples to the flock (I Ti 3:2; I Pet 5:3).  
6. While we do not want to be under the power of some things (I Cor 6:12), we do hospitality!  
C. *Hospitality* is the reception and entertainment of others with food and/or lodging warmly given.  
1. **Hospitality.** To receive and entertain guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.  
2. Hospitality is providing food, drink, and/or lodging for brethren, but especially for strangers.  
3. Jesus taught acts of hospitality will be recalled in the Day of Judgment (Matt 25:35; Heb 6:10).  
4. Paul in the New Testament used the example of Abraham feeding angels for you (Heb 13:3).  
5. Paul by the Spirit forbid churches to support widows that had not lodged strangers (I Tim 5:10).  
6. Hospitality occurs among brethren, but emphasize those in need, those less comely, and those that cannot repay, over family/friends to please God (I Pet 4:9; Luk 14:12-14; I Cor 12:21-25).  
7. What is grudging hospitality (I Pet 4:9)? Concerned about it being returned! Or inconvenient!

## ***14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.***

### *Bless them which persecute you.*

- A. This is persecution by gospel enemies – below is wrongs by brethren and others (Rom 12:17-21), though of course there is some overlap, because some same principles and responses are for both.  
B. A good demonstration or vindication of the gospel is to return blessing for cursing to persecutors.  
C. God does this every day to His enemies, and we will also if we are His children (Matthew 5:43-48).  
D. It is not wrong to ask or wait for God's vengeance, but we do not avenge (II Thes 1:6; Rev 6:9-11).  
E. If you think the above inconsistent, compare God's gentle sunshine with flaming fire (II Thes 1:8)!  
F. Christians should be the most forgiving, forgetting, and overlooking people the world has in it!  
G. One of the great blessings you can give yourself for health and joy in Christ is to forgive enemies!

### *Bless, and curse not.*

- A. When Jesus died on the cross, He prayed for his murderers in their sinful ignorance (Luke 23:34).  
B. When Stephen was stoned, he prayed for his murderers to not be punished for murder (Acts 7:60).  
C. Jesus practiced the same righteousness during His crucifixion that Peter taught you (I Pet 2:21-23).  
D. The apostle Paul practiced this same rule of righteousness that he taught the Romans (I Co 4:9-13).  
E. Peter taught it as well, and he included the blessing of God that He will reward such (I Pet 3:9-15).  
F. Recall the history of the martyrs and their prayers of forgiveness for their torturers and murderers.  
G. This kind of conduct, totally foreign to the natural man, demonstrates our religion to persecutors.

## ***15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.***

### *Rejoice with them that do rejoice.*

- A. This is the very same lesson Paul taught Corinth about participating in each other's lives (I Cor 12:26), but in Paul's language there the whole church participated in one member's providence.
- B. A church to be like a body, the Spirit's popular metaphor, should participate in each member's joy.
- C. If you are happy for something emotional or mental, even your legs dance with heart and head!
- D. It is more pleasure and reward to share a blessing than to enjoy it yourself (Luke 15:5-6,8-9).
- E. You are to empathetically recall the other members of the body as bound up with them (Heb 13:3).
- F. True friendship, a reason two are better than one, is to share the rewards of blessings (Eccl 4:9).
- G. How glad do you get for weddings, conceptions, births, jobs, promotions, degrees, rewards, favors, etc. of other church members? Getting excited about others is apostolic doctrine (Phil 2:3-4).
- H. The periodic church updates are to help you know and rejoice with those that have had blessings.

### *And weep with them that weep.*

- A. This is the very same lesson Paul taught Corinth about participating in each other's lives (I Cor 12:26), but in Paul's language there the whole church participated in one member's providence.
- B. A church to be like a body, the Spirit's common metaphor, should participate in members' grief.
- C. True friendship, why two are better than one, is to help each other in trouble (Pr 17:17; Eccl 4:10).
- D. Remember the example of Jesus Christ weeping at the temporary tomb of Lazarus (John 11:33-36)!
- E. A fair-weather friend is no friend at all, and the church of Jesus Christ has blood brothers in Him!
- F. You are to empathetically recall the other members of the body as bound up with them (Heb 13:3).
- G. For either half of this text to occur, you must consider your brethren and learn triumphs and trials.
- H. How sad do you get for broken friendships, miscarriages, family deaths, lost jobs, business trouble, health problems, child problems, etc. Being empathetic and personal is apostolic doctrine (Gal 6:2).
- I. The periodic church updates are to help you know and weep with those members having had trials.

## ***16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.***

### *Be of the same mind one toward another.*

- A. Unity in all real matters is important (I Co 1:10), but this is rather church unity in mutual affection.
  - 1. The rule is not – be of the same mind about the gospel, or be of the same mind in judgment.
  - 2. The rule is not – be of the same mind with one another, or be of the same opinion with others.
  - 3. The rule is rather – be of the same mind *one toward another* – it is clearly mutual affection.
  - 4. We fulfill this rule if we treat others as we desire to be treated or how others desire treatment.
  - 5. We fulfill this rule when we see others equal and affectionately care for others one at a time.
  - 6. Each member's view and treatment of the church is the welfare of all without any neglected.
  - 7. Every member should take care of every other member; every member should be fully secure.
  - 8. The whole church is called to perfect unity in love by each member loving each other member.
- B. This rule of God's perfect will excludes cliques or such divisions (Rom 15:5-7; Phil 2:2; I Pet 3:8).
- C. The church of God should be a happy family with great camaraderie and affection from and to all.
- D. David wrote a short but precious Psalm in respect of brethren loving one another like this (Ps 133).
- E. Your mind should be compatible and concerned for brethren, especially the lowly, not the loftier.
  - 1. You should not have loftier ideas of yourself or your things than the lives and things of others.
  - 2. You should constantly work for peace, affection, compassion, and excitement by each for all.
  - 3. Paul raised this rule again when teaching Christian liberty and your duty to others (14:19-21).

- F. The following context of this clause indicates to consider yourself 100% equal to each member.
- G. There are heretical efforts made today to throw away the N.T. church model for ungodly equality.
  1. The house church movement removes any leadership or rule for assemblies or real instruction.
  2. Let us show such rebels the N.T. church model can work fine with true saints and true doctrine.

### *Mind not high things.*

- A. This warning is not against speculation of high doctrines (Ps 131:1), but rather liking high society.
  1. It is understood by the immediate context before and after, church members are the context.
  2. Though “things” are used, the things are connected to brethren, due to the low “men” next.
  3. Your mind should be concerned and desirous for brethren, especially the lowlier, not the loftier.
  4. Therefore, it warns against being mentally ambitious or interested in matters of the successful.
- B. Each man must be content with his place and direct attention and affection downward, not upward.
  1. Paul already warned about the importance of humility in not overestimating one’s roles (12:3).
  2. The next clause, its disjunctive “but” creating an obvious contrast, directs attention downward.
  3. Remember, Jesus Christ your king will take note of minding His least brethren (Matt 25:40,45).
  4. Remember, Solomon and Jesus taught men to sit with the lower class (Pr 25:6-7; Lu 14:8-10).
- C. It is a fault in a church that esteems or honors the worldly rich or wise (Jas 2:1-9; I Cor 12:21-25).
  1. Ministers must show no partiality at all in their judgment or service to the church (I Tim 5:21).
  2. It is wicked men that admire the successful and wealthy in order to gain advantage (Jude 1:16).
- D. Forget anything like vainglory to get down in mind and heart to exalt others over self (Phil 2:3-4).
- E. Never talk above your station, ability, or reputation in life – be an ugly sinner saved by great grace.
- F. Your role in the church of God should be void of ambition except to out-love and out-serve others!

### *But condescend to men of low estate.*

- A. An axiom of life: all men low and high added together are less than vanity in God’s sight (Ps 62:9).
  1. If any man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he has lied to himself (Gal 6:3).
  2. Instead of deceiving yourself as being wise, become a fool in order to be wise (I Cor 3:18).
  3. Those who think highly of themselves put themselves in an irremediable situation (Pr 26:12).
  4. The best of men, Solomon and Paul for example, could get way down (I Kgs 3:7; Eph 3:8)!
- B. *Condescending* is haughtiness in current usage, but here it is humbly getting down to the lowly.
- C. No member or child of any color, status, income, strength, or intelligence should ever be slighted.
  1. This rule has already been taught in this chapter – the repetition is for emphasis (Rom 12:10).
  2. Jesus Christ befriended the lowest in society – repentant prostitutes and tax collector traitors.
  3. Remember, Peter taught husbands that their submissive wives were equal heirs (I Pet 3:1-7).
  4. The sense of this verse includes all members submitting to one another (Eph 5:21; I Pet 5:5).
  5. Of course, fools are a different sort, where their conduct may earn some avoidance or rebuke.
  6. Of course, those too selfish for Christ will often complain that others do not love them enough.
- D. The world is ignorant of equality/unity like this except to flatter special interest groups in pride.

### *Be not wise in your own conceits.*

- A. Self-conceit or self-righteousness is one of the worst sins of all and highly incurable (Prov 26:12).
  1. It is often caused by worldly success, so the rich or successful must guard carefully (Pr 28:11).
  2. Jesus sure put the church at Laodicea in their place for their presumptuous thinking (Rev 3:17).
- B. This is to be puffed up about yourself and your things rather than caring about others (Phil 2:3-4).
- C. The Bible condemns self-willed or implacable persons (Titus 1:7; II Peter 2:10; Romans 1:31).
- D. To be like the Lord Jesus Christ, who left heaven for the cross, you must flush all vain ambitions.
  1. Do not think of yourself as superior in any way but rather prove excellence by serving others.
  2. If you will be great, and Jesus taught this plainly, then, slave, you will out-serve others. Period!

## ***17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.***

### ***Recompense to no man evil for evil.***

- A. This is persecution by brethren and others – above is wrongs by persecutors (Rom 12:14), though of course there is some overlap, because some same principles and responses are for both.
- B. Christians will have enemies ranging from persecuting antichrists to offensive spouses at home.
  - 1. Our lives are pampered and protected in comparison to the Romans, so we will apply broadly.
  - 2. Cannot think of any that treat you evilly? Bullies at school, colleagues at work, neighbors, cousins, bosses, teachers, in-laws, church members, children, parents, siblings, spouses, etc.?
  - 3. Jesus said a man's foes will be those of his own household in gospel enmity (Matt 10:34-36).
  - 4. Paul described an evil situation at Corinth of church members suing one another (I Cor 6:1-6).
- C. The rule is simple – Christians should not repay to others what those others do against Christians.
  - 1. The opposite rule is simple – Christians should repay others with good they want from others.
  - 2. The rule has two parts – the negative and positive – what you do not repay, what you do repay.
- D. You first should not repay evil for evil, and you will have plenty of opportunities to practice this.
  - 1. Jesus taught it this way – resist not evil, turn the other cheek – blasting the Jews (Matt 5:38-42).
  - 2. Paul taught it this way – allow yourself to be wronged or defrauded – at Corinth (I Cor 6:7-8).
  - 3. Of course, the natural man instinctively wants to repay in kind, but we are saved spiritual men!
  - 4. How can you do it? Forgive, forget, forebear (Prov 19:11; I Cor 13:4-7; Eph 4:2; Col 3:13)!
  - 5. How can you do it? Remember your 10,000 talents and mock their 100 pence (Matt 18:21-35)!
  - 6. Consider David – ever the faithful servant even to Saul who made many attempts on his life.
- E. You second should repay good for evil, and you will have plenty of opportunities to practice this.
  - 1. Jesus taught it this way – love, bless, do good, and pray – blasting the Jews (Matthew 5:43-48).
  - 2. The golden rule is to treat others as you want them to treat you, not as they treat you (Lu 6:31).
  - 3. Of course, the natural man instinctively wants to deny all good, but we are saved spiritual men!
  - 4. How can you do it? Take the initiative to pray a blessing on them, send them a card, etc., etc.
  - 5. How can you do it? Forgive them fully in your heart so you respond right when you meet them.
  - 6. Consider David – the loving eulogist that wept and sang the praises of Saul far above reality
- F. For a Proverb commentary on the matter here ... [http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/24\\_29.php](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/24_29.php).
- G. For considerations about righteous relationships ... [www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/righteous-relationships.pdf](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/righteous-relationships.pdf).
- H. In case you forget how many relationships you have ... [www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/relationships-chart.pdf](http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/relationships-chart.pdf).

### ***Provide things honest in the sight of all men.***

- A. A similar statement to this one intends a fiduciary sense of financial responsibility (II Cor 8:21).
  - 1. If we love sound of words rather than their sense, then we could say much here about money.
  - 2. Since we love the sense of words rather than their sound, we know it has to do with enemies.
- B. All your dealings with your adversaries should be done consistently with integrity for all to see.
  - 1. Your enemies will be dishonest, deceitful, subversive, and conspiring – you should be opposite.
  - 2. Let James 3:17 and its first requirement of *pure* motives and consistent thoughts be guide here.
  - 3. Your honesty here rejects partiality, hypocrisy, inconsistency, conflict of interests, and so forth.
  - 4. It is wrong to act or say things to one audience that are done or said differently to another one.
  - 5. Do not give any room for enemies to accuse you for even perceived contradiction to the gospel.
  - 6. Put to shame those that falsely accuse your good life in Christ by noble living (I Peter 3:16).
- C. There is more here than merely to react honestly – the word *provide* indicates preparation to good.
- D. There is more here than bare honesty – rather charity, mercy, and piety of true religion to others.
- E. Though the world does not honor our religion, they should be silenced by the good way we live it.
- F. Though we conduct ourselves carefully before the world, our one goal is to glorify God to them.

## ***18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.***

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you.*

- A. The importance of this matter, though difficult for the flesh, is to be done by any means possible.
- B. The call to peace is great and important, and the Lord Jesus Christ calls you to be a peacemaker.
- C. The Bible exalts diligent might and zeal (Ec 9:10; Gal 4:18), but here is maximum effort for peace.
- D. It is a shame that so many Christians put forth such little endeavor to maintain peace (Eph 4:1-3).
- E. Rather than seek to excuse yourself by impossible enemies, do all things through Christ (Phil 4:19).

*Live peaceably with all men.*

- A. The wisdom from God is peaceable, gentle, merciful, and righteous by peacemaking (Jas 3:17-18).
- B. Fighting may be manly in Hollywood and to reprobates and teenagers, but it is not to Christians.
- C. This is not just about the church of God and household of faith but rather all men of every kind.
- D. For more about peace in the life of a Christian ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/peace.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/peace.pdf).
- E. For a Proverb commentary about peacemakers ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/10\\_12.php](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/10_12.php).

## ***19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.***

*Dearly beloved.*

- A. This chapter began with Paul beseeching, now he further beseeches with emotion for their holiness.
- B. The apostle in sagacious wisdom was not beneath using emotional appeals to exhort to godliness.
  - 1. How many times have you expressed your affection for a person you were warning against sin?
  - 2. Consider how King Solomon used “my son” twenty-three times in writing his Proverbs!
  - 3. If you want to see Paul at his emotional best, read Philemon carefully noting his many appeals.
- C. The greatest apostle of Jesus Christ beseeches you to the importance of not avenging wrongdoing.

*Avenge not yourselves.*

- A. One of the most natural instincts in our depraved nature is to punish those persons who hurt us.
- B. The driving emotion is anger (see next clause), which flows from sinful pride (Prov 13:10; 21:24).
- C. The world and its heroes commend it, as they consider it manhood, but it is doghood (John Trapp).
- D. Others are going to disappoint you, frustrate you, irritate you, and offend you as surely as anything.
- E. The apostolic command is plain and simple – do not punish those persons who hurt or offend you.
- F. The instruction here is the same as taught by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:38-42).
- G. Anyone who sins this way is a wicked fool, and consequences in his/her life are Legion (Jas 3:16).
- H. What good do you think you can possibly accomplish by avenging yourself (Prov 15:1; 17:14)?

*But rather give place unto wrath.*

- A. The inspired disjunctive means this phrase is opposite of avenging yourself, the previous clause.
- B. This little phrase has many interpretations, but comparing scripture might well help (I Cor 2:13).
- C. Paul used it negatively against your wrath, as sinful anger gives place to the devil (Eph 4:26-27).
- D. The words give place simply mean *make room*, as two other uses reveal (Isaiah 49:20; Matt 9:24).
- E. How can it mean make room for our own wrath, when such a usage would involve sin (Eph 4:27)?
- F. Therefore, it is best understood of your adversary’s wrath, which you allow without responding.
- G. The rule of the flesh is to never let others’ wrath stand but to immediately oppose it with the same.
- H. You give place to wrath when an angry enemy smites a cheek and you offer the other (Matt 5:39).
- I. Is Proverbs 19:11 the best proverb? It is certainly one of the best proverbs for the topic of revenge!

- J. Slow to wrath shows great understanding, the opposite shows folly (Pr 12:16; 14:29; 15:18; 16:32).
- K. We are to love as Christ loved us (Jn 13:34), and we are to forgive as He forgave us (Col 3:12-13).
- L. Do not allow your delusionary thinking to deceive you, the rod of your anger will fail (Prov 22:8).

*For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

- A. The quotation by Paul here is from Deut 32:35, confirmed by Psalm 94:1; Nah 1:2; and Heb 10:30.
- B. The language of Moses by the Spirit is ferocious in the context of this quotation (Deut 32:41-43).
- C. A foundational axiom to ignore your own vengeance is to know God will avenge all wrongdoing.
  1. If vengeance is God's prerogative, then it is not yours, and you should let the fantasy dissipate.
  2. If God will repay, then you should never allow the lie that God does not see or will forget it.
  3. If God will certainly avenge all wrongdoing, and He is infinitely perfect, then His will be best!
- D. There are four reasons to accept, appreciate, and defer to God's vengeance, hating your own ideas.
  1. God promised to repay wrongdoing, so trust His perfect wisdom, justice in conflict (Heb 13:6).
  2. Submitting to evil treatment will bring God's reward in this life and the next (Prov 25:21-22).
  3. Loving your enemies shows the character of God and adorns the gospel best (Matt 5:43-48).
  4. Loving enemies is the best vengeance anyway according to God's judgment (Rom 12:20-21).
- E. David foolishly sought vengeance against Nabal but forgave to a fault against Absalom, and with wisdom we should see the event in between that worked the change – God's forgiveness of David!
- F. For much about this key premise of promised vengeance ... [www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/vengeance-is-mine.pdf](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/vengeance-is-mine.pdf).

***20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.***

*Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.*

- A. Paul quoted from Solomon's Proverbs, who tacked on a blessing at the end (Pr 25:21-22), "*If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.*"
- B. We have a conclusion being drawn by use of *therefore* from what has been laid down as premises.
- C. The conclusion is much more than – okay, I will not get mad at offenders – it is to entertain them!
- D. When you know your adversary or enemy has a need, then you should want to be first to fulfill it.
- E. This is not to be limited to food and drink, since the Saviour called for general good (Matt 5:44).
- F. If you are set on making things right, you do wrong, if you can grasp the gospel rule (I Cor 6:7-8)!
- G. An example of feeding enemies was Elisha to the marauding bands of Syrians (II Kings 6:22-23).

*For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

- A. Our goal is not to this end but rather to obey God, trust God, love enemies, and adorn the gospel, for if we make the coals our goal, then we are merely substituting one form of revenge for another.
- B. However, God in infinite knowledge of men knows that this can be the outcome of such conduct.
- C. What does it mean to heap coals of fire on an enemy's head by doing him good instead of revenge?
  1. Coals of fire on the head would be a very painful event (Psalm 11:6; 120:4; 140:10; Song 8:6).
  2. Therefore, we conclude this is the guilt and shame resulting from returning good for evil done.
  3. This is so contrary to nature it proves a virtuous victim to exacerbate the enemy's evil deeds.
  4. The effect is to smite the conscience of the enemy by the saint taking the high road over him.
  5. The guilt and shame that accompanies such return treatment is to be appreciated and pursued.
  6. Some martyrs won their murderers by the forgiving, gracious way in which they gladly died!

- D. We pass over the interpretation that the coals of fire is kindness securing God's greater judgment.
  1. It is true that God is made righteous the more cruel and profane the persecution (II Thess 1:6).
  2. There is no need to assume greater vengeance by God, for it is something the saint does, and the summary is overcoming evil with good, with the overcoming being virtue or repentance.
  3. If the coals are greater wrath from God, you only substitute one form of revenge for another.
  4. If the coals are greater wrath from God, how honest have you provided things before all men?
  5. If the coals are greater wrath from God, how sincere without hypocrisy is your feeding table?
- E. The actual conduct of the enemy in return should be disregarded, for you do not know his heart, and you do not know the Lord's timing in such a matter, so keep on pressing him with goodness.
- F. Do not forget that in Solomon's original there is the promise of reward from God (Pr 25:21-22)!

## ***21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.***

### *Be not overcome of evil.*

- A. If you respond with wrath or revenge to mistreatment, your enemy has defeated you by his evil.
- B. If you respond with wrath or revenge to mistreatment, your religion is so weak it means nothing.
- C. Do not let evil carry the day! Defeat evil rather than let it defeat you by returning kindness instead.
- D. What do you mean when you say, "I'll show them"? You show them you are likely not a Christian.
- E. While you are angry at your adversary for his evil, you foolishly commit a similar crime by yours.
- F. Is your religion so vain and your faith so small that another's evil can steal from you God's good?
- G. David was foolishly and wickedly overcome by Nabal's evil in one chapter (I Sam 25:21-22,34).
- H. Why will you take the low road your despised and foolish adversary takes in order to be like him?
- I. He is hardly a Christian that resorts to devilish wisdom to respond to paltry offences by others.

### *But overcome evil with good.*

- A. Good can overcome evil by resisting it and being better than it or by converting the evil adversary.
- B. Good can overcome evil ... if ... if ... it be possible ... as much as lieth in you ... to keep this rule!
- C. The fool says, "I will get even!" The apostle says, "I will be better and do good above his evil!"
- D. David gloriously overcame Saul's evil before and after Nabal (I Sa 24 & 26) and at death (II Sa 1)!
- E. Slow to anger marks greatness (Pr 16:32)! What is he that goes past slow to anger to feed enemies!
- F. God and Jesus have overcome the world their way, why not overcome your world the same way.
- G. Why not take the high road to show your ignorant or weak adversary the road he should take?
- H. He or she is a great Christian that resorts to godly charity to win over profane offenders to good.
- I. How do you know vain man that you might win your enemy to repentance or conversion? Amen.