

Romans 12:13-18 Answers
Marks of a True Christian, Part B

Context: The last section of Romans is generally about Service (Ro 12-16). In Romans 12-13, Paul detailed our service in relation to God (12:1-2), other believers (12:3-16), our enemies (12:17-21) and the government (13:1-14). Romans 1-11 is the “what”. Romans 12-16 is the “so what”. If you really believe Romans 1 – 11, then *this* (Ro 12-16) will be true in your life. Romans 1-11 is the foundation and Romans 12-16 the superstructure.

Key Text: The driving text for this whole section is **Romans 12:1-2**. We are studying what it looks like to present our bodies as living sacrifices that are transformed through renewed minds. Romans 12:9-21 list the marks of a true Christian.

Arrangement: The marks of a true Christian are arranged in singles, couplets and triplets. Last week we started in on the first paragraph, 12:9-12 (reread aloud).

Contribute, v13a

******Many people are pressured at work to give to the United Way. To whom are we urged to give in 12:13a?** First and foremost we are to contribute to the needs of the saints. Even when persecuted (12:12), one should not allow himself to be so preoccupied with his own problems that he grows insensitive to others who are hurting (Harrison, p. 133).

ESV **John 12:8** The poor you always have with you . . .

ESV **1 John 3:17** . . . if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Word Study: “Contribute” (12:13a) is from *koinoneo* (the verb form of *koinonia*). If we are in fellowship with other saints, we will give to meet their needs. In this sense our giving is to be personal; we are to be so involved in the lives of the people of our church that we know each other’s needs.

Locally there are struggling believers who need full time work; help with educating their children (many Christian schools pro-rate their tuition based on income); seminary students struggling to pay tuition; widows who can barely make ends meet, etc.

ESV **Hebrews 13:16** Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

ESV **1 Timothy 6:17-19** . . . the rich in this present age . . . are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future . . .

Compared with the rest of the world, most Christians in America are indeed rich.

1. What types of needs do saints have today world-wide (12:13a)? World-wide the needs are many: Refugee Christians in the Middle East who fled their homes to avoid the advances of Islam, Christians in Iran imprisoned for evangelism or converting to Christianity, Chinese Christians persecuted for holding church meetings in their homes, impoverished believers in North Korea, etc. One way to give to Christians in other countries is through Voice of the Martyrs.

Application: Here a direct, flat-out command to contribute to the needs of the saints. If you are not contributing, it is a sin. It is disobedience.

2. If you got a pay check as regularly as you contribute, how would your bank account look? Would you be overdrawn? Don't be a financial Dead Sea!

Be Hospitable, v13b

******According to 12:13b, what are we supposed to seek opportunity to do?** We are to seek to show hospitality. "Seek" (12:13b) is a strong word; it is translated as "persecute" in 12:4. We are to persecute hospitality. In the days before safe hotels, this was very important. In an era before church buildings, opening one's home to host the church meeting was critical.

ESV **1 Peter 4:9** Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Why would a host grumble over having to show hospitality? It can be a lot of trouble: having to clean up your house, the guests themselves making a mess, wet towels on the furniture, sunscreen on furniture, no help from the guests in meal prep and clean up, etc.

3. What constitutes hospitality (12:13b)? "Hospitality" (12:13) is from *philoxenia* (5381); *philé* means love and *xenos* means stranger (xenophobia is the fear of strangers). *Philadelphia* is love for brothers and *philoxenia* is love for strangers. A word means more than the sum of any composite words; it simply means hospitality, which is the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.

ESV **Hebrews 13:2** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

4. Do you actually seek out chances to show hospitality (12:13b)?

5. When was the last time you had someone else over to your house for a visit (for dessert, to play games, to chat over coffee)? Purpose this week to have someone/another family over to your house.

When was the last time you had someone over for a meal who was not a family member?

When was the last time someone spent the night with you who was not a family member?

Have you ever hosted prayer meeting?

Have you ever hosted a home Bible study?

Have you ever hosted a house church meeting?

Bless & Curse Not, v14

****** The world-over Christians are right now at this very moment being persecuted by Islamists, Buddhists, Hindus, Communists, dictators, evolutionists, secularists, etc. How should Christians deal with those who persecute them (12:14a)?** We are to bless our persecutors. So important is this that he says it twice. We are to bless the hateful.

6. What would it look like to bless one's enemies (12:14)? One of the main things it looks like is that you do not curse them. Bless is from *eulogeo* (2127); *eu* means good and *logeo* means to speak. To bless is the opposite of to curse. It is hard to imagine saying anything good about a person who is persecuting you for following Jesus.

ESV **Matthew 5:43-44** You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

ESV **Acts 7:60** [Stephen being stoned] . . . falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Paul witnessed Stephen being stoned and Stephen's attitude no doubt played a role in Paul's conversion. Augustine said, "The Church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen" (Barclay, p. 182).

How are we not to respond to persecution (12:14b)? We are not to curse them.

ESV **1 Peter 2:21-23** . . . Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps . . . When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

How do you feel when someone zooms in and takes your parking space, or cuts in line ahead of you, or makes an offensive gesture at you in traffic? People are consumed with their rights and their egos get them into a lot of trouble. They get hot-tempered, abusive and offensive. Christians are not to be like that. Let it go! (MacArthur, *Supernatural Living*, p. 45).

Booker T Washington: "I will not allow any man to make me lower myself by hating him" (Barclay, p. 184).

Rejoice & Weep, v15

******What is the idea behind this verse (12:15)?** This idea seems to be that we are to sympathize with other people. We are to identify with them out of true concern. This is sort of an emotional version of the Golden Rule. Be considerate of other people's situations. Be caring!

If someone is excited about something, be excited with (or at least for) him. Don't be part of the bucket brigade. Be happy for him. If someone is sad, slow down and feeling for him; feel with him. Be sad with him. If a man's wagon is stuck in the mud, sometimes all you can do is climb up in the wagon and sit there with him.

ESV **1 Corinthians 12:26-27** If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together . . . you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

7. Which is harder: To rejoice with others or to weep with others (12:15)? Why? Chrysostom (Archbishop of Istanbul/Constantinople back the A.D. 300s) said, "It requires more of a high Christian temper to rejoice with them that do rejoice . . . [it] requires a very noble soul, so as not only to keep from envying, but even to feel pleasure with the person who is in esteem" (Barclay, p. 182).

8. What would it look like to disobey this verse (12:15)? Sym-pathy means to have emotions with. The opposite of sympathy is a-pathy, to be apathetic, which is to show no emotion, to not care, to be disinterested, to be unmoved. Spiritually dull people have all the sensitivity of a sledge hammer.

ESV **Proverbs 27:14** Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.

Harmony, v16

We should live with one another in harmony (12:16). In music, to be in harmony means the sounding of two or more musical notes in a way that is pleasing. If we are in tune with Jesus we will be in tune with each other.

ESV **Philippians 4:2** I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

ESV **Philippians 2:2** . . . complete my joy by being of the same mind . . .

ESV **1 Corinthians 6:7** To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?

9. Is there anyone in our church with whom you are not in harmony (12:16)? If not, what do you need to do?

The Greek literally says to be of the same mind with one another, to be of the same thinking. Thus the NASV reads:

NAS Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another . . .

To be of the same mind toward each other means we are not a respecter of only certain persons. Instead, we treat everybody the same.

ESV James 2:1-9 . . . show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? . . . if you show partiality, you are committing sin

Not Haughty, But Lowly, v16b

******If everyone in our church lived out 12:16, what would our church be like?** It would be harmonious (12:16a)! The last three things listed in 12:6 will help us to live in harmony with each other.

10. What does it mean to be haughty (12:16b)? The Greek word translated haughty means high or lofty. Today we might say haughty person is putting on airs. It is the idea of being proud or arrogant. There is no place for aristocracy in the church; there are no castes in the Body of Christ (MacArthur, *Supernatural Living*, p. 49).

Martin Luther: "This word is addressed to those who are conceited, stubborn and obstinate . . . persons who accept no advice, even though they have been convinced by every argument of reason. They are the cause of dissensions, the most vicious peace breakers and destroyers of the unity of faith" (p. 177).

What concept is paired with not being haughty (12:16c)? It is paired with associating with the lowly. The Greek literally states we are not to be high, but rather associate with the lowly. Only in the early church did master and slave sit side by side as equals (Barclay, p. 183).

11. Lowly what (12:16c)? People or things? The Greek could refer to either lowly people or things. This could also be translated, "give yourselves to humble tasks" (ESV alternate translation). That would mean there is no ministry that is beneath us (cleaning bathrooms, sweeping, shopping, care for the sick, whatever).

Not A Wise Guy, v16c

12. How does being wise in your own sight (12:16d) factor into the other attributes listed in 12:16? If you think too highly of yourself, you will tend to be haughty, you will think certain lowly tasks and people to be below your standing in life.

ESV Proverbs 3:7 Be not wise in your own eyes . . .

ESV **Proverbs 3:5** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

So What?

13. How should we view the things we have in light of the needs of other believers?

14. Why must we have a premeditated response to those who harm us?

In Romans 12:1-2 we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, which is our spiritual service of worship. Romans 12:9-21 explains what it means to be a living sacrifice whose mind is renewed and transformed.

ESV **John 14:15** If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
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