

Sermon Outline March 13, 2016
"Christian Thinking" Romans 12:1-3

I remember the first sermon I heard on Romans 12:1-2. I was in college, at a Navigator's Conference. I don't remember the details of the sermon, I only remember how I felt! I wanted to give my all for Christ! I wanted to devote my life to Him, to serve Him! I did not consider Romans 12:3 at the time. It was not part of the sermon! Last week I spoke without it! It uses forms of the Greek Word *phroneo* "to think" four times.

^{BGT} **Romans 12:3** Λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως.

It is telling us quite clearly God wants us to use our minds! Even Romans 12:1-2 taught this –

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2 NKJ)

The word translated "reasonable" in the NKJ is the Greek word *λογικός* *logikos* {log-ik-os'} From which we get our English word *logic*. Note too, *renewing your mind* is not throwing your mind away! In another place, Paul compares the Christian life to a race -

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for an imperishable crown*.²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJ)

I read such verses as a young Christian and thought of the Christian life in terms of discipline and exercise. Yet, even these verses speak of purpose, direction -²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. We must find God's purpose / fight the fog!

I. See in these verses the reasonableness, the logic, of self-sacrifice –

1. This is something which is NOT appreciated by the ungodly world, they do not even appreciate Christ's cross –

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJ)

A. They see us as fools for our faith, this was the case with Paul, neither he, nor any of the other apostles were celebrity Christians –

⁹ For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! (1 Corinthians 4:9-10 NKJ)

B. Paul's Christian life meant giving up what was once "gain" – But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:7-8 NKJ)

- He certainly had a level of respect and wealth as a Pharisee, scholar and leader among the Jews
- He traded this for a life even church members seem to have counted foolish – see 2 Corinthians 11:21-30 NKJ Paul is comparing himself to the so-called super apostles!

2. Nevertheless, this self-sacrifice is logical, reasonable for several reasons:

A. Christ sacrificed Himself for us – and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, (Revelation 1:5 NKJ)

B. Our self-sacrifice actually gains us much more than we ever lose – For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NKJ)

which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1 NAS) The logic *logikos* {log-ik-os'} is spiritual logic, it is about eternal things not seen!

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Jim Elliot, was one of five missionaries killed while participating in Operation Auca, an attempt to evangelize the Huaorani people of Ecuador.

C. Our self-sacrifice gains us rewards and joy even now – and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. (Acts 5:40-41 NKJ)

II. See in these verses the “against the world” nature of Christian thinking -

² *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*

1. By nature we are conformists – All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6 NKJ) 450 Sheep Jump to Their Deaths in Turkey

2. We are like beasts in our sin and defection from God – I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. (Psalm 73:22 NKJ) The unconverted world remains like beasts, while the converted, godly, those with renewed minds are compared to craftsmen – ²⁰ Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. ²¹ And I said, “What are these coming to do?” So he said, “These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.” (Zechariah 1:20-21 NKJ)

3. We are called to go against the flow – Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17 NKJ)

4. We love the WORD not the world – Psalm 1, the letter “L” in world stands for lies!

III. Finally, Christian thinking militates against worldly ideas about self-esteem, being #1, etc...

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3 NKJ)

Notice Romans 12:3 warns us against thinking too highly of ourselves but says nothing about the GREAT SO called danger of the opposite, LOW SELF esteem. In fact, I do not believe there is a single verse in Scripture that says anything about low self-esteem being a problem.

However, high self esteem/ huper pronien – thinking too highly of yourself, pride is condemned throughout scripture –

1. Pride leads to destruction – ^{NKJ} Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. ^{NKJ} 1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

2. Pride moves us away from God – ^{NKJ} James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

*3. Humility comes with great blessings – A. Even low self-esteem can be positive – **Matthew 5:3** B. Better to lose(humbly) than win (haughtily) – **NKJ Proverbs 16:19 Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.***

*C. Humility brings us close to God and wins us His favor - ^{NKJ} James 4:6 & 4:10; Isaiah 57:15 D. Humility helps us understand Scripture, because God becomes our teacher – **Psalm 25:9** E. Humility makes us Christ-like – **Philippians 2:5-8***

*4. Thinking soberly means thinking accurately, our minds are still weakened by sin – **Psalm 119:11***

5. “Thinking” remembers God gives us the “measure” we have – For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:7 NKJ) See also Psalm 100:3

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