

Romans 12:1-21

Life in God's Service

- ◆ So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect. And because of God's gracious gift to me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking, and judge yourself according to the amount of faith that God has given you. We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully. Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly as Christians, and be eager to show respect for one another. Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times. Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers. Ask God to bless those who persecute you—yes, ask him to bless, not to curse. Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep. Have the same concern for everyone. Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. Do not think of yourselves as wise. If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, “I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord.” Instead, as the scripture says: “If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame.” Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.
- ◆ This chapter is a guide or pamphlet of what living a life in God's service is like. Firstly, it is God who showed us mercy by giving us his son to redeem us from death that comes from our sins. Through our faith in Jesus, we receive God's mercy and grace.
- ◆ Now that we've received mercy, we need to play our part in this new life. We need to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God; we do this by being dedicated to his service and doing what is pleasing to him, this is true worship.
- ◆ How then do we know what pleases him and what service to offer? We should not conform ourselves to the standards of this world, but we should let God transform us inwardly by a complete change of our mind. This will enable us to know the will of God, what is good, what is pleasing to him and what is perfect.

- ◆ Paul then speaks of how we should lead our lives, the does and don'ts. We should not think of ourselves as more superior to others, rather we should be modest/humble. This thought of superiority comes from having different gifts, hence, we might consider our gift as better than that of others. In so doing we lose our humility, e.g, an intelligent person might think of themselves as more special/superior in comparison to others. Rather, such a person should judge themselves according to the gift or faith they have been blessed with and not according to how he is different from others. Just like a body has different parts for different purposes, we also have different gifts for different purposes according to God's will. We should use our different gifts accordingly and to their fullest; if our gift is it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others...
- ◆ As we use our gift(s) or do anything in life we should do it generously, sincerely, intentionally, cheerfully, etc; it should come from the heart. Other life instructions:
 - We should hate what is evil and hold on to what is good.
 - We should love and respect each other.
 - We should work hard and not be lazy.
 - We should serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion.
 - We should let our hope keep us joyful.
 - We should be patient in your troubles.
 - We should pray at all times.
 - We should share what we have with the needy and welcome strangers.
 - We should bless and not curse.
 - We should be happy with those who are happy and weep with those who weep.
 - Read again the last part of the chapter to see the other instructions expected of us as Christians.