

Comments About Romans 12

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Romans. This week, we will talk about chapter 12.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Romans.

Christian-living principles

Many Bible students note that the first 11 chapters in the book of Romans deal more with spiritual concepts of God's righteousness, and that chapter 12 begins a section of Christian-living principles.

- Present your bodies a living sacrifice (verse 1).
- Don't be conformed to this world, but rather be transformed by the renewing of your mind—to prove what is good, acceptable and the perfect will of God (verse 2).
- Don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to think (verse 3).
- There is one body with many members (verses 4-5).

Seven gifts

The apostle Paul proceeded to list seven practical gifts among the Body of Christ (verses 6-8). Those gifts are listed next.

- Prophecy
- Ministry (serving)
- Teaching
- Exhorting
- Giving
- Leading (mentioned as ruling in the King James)
- Showing mercy

The following statement may seem odd to you—but these seven gifts are not ranks of authority. Why do I say that?

Many religious organizations like to view No. 1 (prophecy), No. 2 (ministry) and No. 6 (ruling in the King James Version) as ranks of authority. I would ask people who believe such ideas the following questions.

- Who has the highest rank of exhorting?
- Who has the highest rank of giving?
- Who has the highest rank of showing mercy?

Beware of people who seek to define gifts from God as some type of system that acts as a control mechanism.

Matthew 20:25-28—"But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.' "

Great advice

The rest of the chapter has much great advice.

- Verses 9-13 discussed several aspects of love and service.
- Bless those who persecute you (verse 14).
- Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (verse 15).
- Associate with humble people (verse 16).
- Do not repay evil for evil (verse 17).
- If it is possible, live peaceably with all people (verse 18).

Romans 12:18—"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

- Paul paraphrased Deuteronomy 32:35 (verse 19) and Proverbs 25:21-22 (verse 20).

Romans 12:19-20—"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' "

- Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (verse 21).