

## ROMANS 12

Title- Serving Christ/ Presenting ourselves in service

Introduction-

Picture yourself meeting the Queen of England, what do we do to present ourselves? We try to look good- spend money on clothes, hair, etc... The same occurs with weddings and also when soldiers are going to get an inspection. They make sure their shoes are clean, their uniform is ironed and their hair tidy.

But this is all external. God looks on the inside.

When we present ourselves to God, we should present ourselves in such a way as to give glory to God

(Proposition)

BUT HOW?

(Interrogative sentence)

HOW IS ANSWERED in Romans 12.

We need to present ourselves as living sacrifices and encompasses our whole being- body, mind, gifts, love, attitude and actions

(Transitional sentence)

(Main divisions+Transitions+Subdivision)-

I) Bodies (vs 1-2)

- a) Living Sacrifices- as opposed to dead sacrifice- In the old testament, unblemished animals were presented to God as an offering- burnt, grain, fellowship, sin- young bull, guilt- ram (Leviticus 1-6). Abraham's son was presented as an offering! (replaced with a ram) (Genesis 22). If there was a dead and a live chicken hanging from a clothes line- it would look very different- no movement

with one and a lot of noise and movement with the other! We need to present our bodies to God by the mercies (blessings) of God

- b) Requirements of living sacrifices are given as to how we are to present our bodies. We need to present our lives as holy and pleasing- every area of life- What is holy? When we think of 'holy', we think of purity. Some people compare between Hitler and Mother Teresa but compared to God who has no sin whereas all others are sinful then there is no comparison. Being holy is pleasing to God which is our act of worship (spiritual). Only God can help us to be holy (as seen in Romans 7 regarding struggling with sin). God does not ask what is not possible- by His grace we will be able to present our lives holy and pleasing to Him. That means every aspect of our life including our lifestyle- includes work life (career), home life (where we live, children), relationship life (all relationships).

Having in mind that we need to be living sacrifices with bodies that are holy, we need to have our minds right

## II) Mind (vs 2)

- a) Transformed (changed) not conformed (shaped)- in the mind. We are encouraged not to be conformed to the pattern of this world. That means that our minds should not be influenced by society. It should be according to God's word. That means that we do not have to go along to what the world says. As we see in today's world, there are a lot of things that are acceptable but according to the Bible, it is not acceptable. We need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We need to renew our mind. We need to be focussed on Jesus. If our focus is on Jesus and his word, our minds will have clarity so with renewed minds, we should be able to know God's will- His good, pleasing and perfect will. God's will is always good and perfect. We may think we know best but

we do not. God knows what is best for us. He knows what He wants for us. We can not think as the world. If we think as the world, if we get hurt, we will not forgive. We need to forgive because God has asked us to forgive and he forgave us so we should also forgive others. In order to renew our minds, we need to meditate on God's word so that we are transformed and not conformed. There have been times when circumstances have occurred in my life which I did not know why but by meditating on God's word have made me realise that what is important- salvation and peace and joy that God gives.

- b) Not only do we need to be transformed daily to become more and more like Christ, part of it involves thinking not only of all circumstances within our lives but also of others positively . We are encouraged to think of ourselves with sober judgement

Having our bodies and minds right in our personal lives and thinking of others in a positive light, we can then minister in ways that God wants us to as members in one body where God has given each of us gifts.

- III) Gifts- As the Church body, we are members of one body so we all need one another. We all have different gifts. No gift is more important than another as seen in 1 Corinthians 12 (vs 3-8). Some of the gifts are described in this passage.

- a) Prophecy- according to faith

Prophecy is the divine enablement to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance or edification and may have immediate or future implications.

- 1) Expose sin or deception in others for the purpose of reconciliation
- 2) Speak a timely word from God causing conviction, repentance and edification
- 3) See truth that others often fail to see and challenge them to respond
- 4) Warn of God's immediate or future judgment if there is no repentance
- 5) Understand God's heart and mind through experiences he takes them through

Discerning, Compelling, Uncompromising, Outspoken, Authoritative, Convicting, Confronting

Cautions- need to be aware that listeners may reject the message if not spoken with love and compassion, need to avoid pride which can create a demanding or discouraging Spirit that hinders the gift, should remember that discernment and scripture must support and agree with each prophecy

Rom 12:6. 1 Cor 12:10,28, 13:2, 2 Peter 1:19-21

With prophecy, Romans 12 says it should be according to faith

Faith is the divine enablement to act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief in God's ability to fulfil his purposes

- 1) Believe the promises of God and inspire others to do the same
- 2) Act in complete confidence of God's ability to overcome obstacles
- 3) Demonstrate an attitude of trust in God's will and his promises
- 4) Advance the cause of Christ because they go forward when others will not
- 5) Ask God for what is needed and trust him for his provision

Prayerful, Optimistic, Trusting, Assured, Positive, Inspiring, Hopeful

Cautions- need to act on their faith, should remember that those who speak with reason and desire to plan do not necessarily lack faith, should listen to and consider the counsel of wise and spirit-filled believers

1 Cor 12:9, 13:2, Heb 11:1, Rom 4:18-21

Therefore, revealing and proclaiming truth for understanding or correcting with unwavering belief in God's ability

#### b) Ministry/Serving

The definition for helping is the divine enablement to accomplish practical and necessary tasks which free-up, support, and meet the needs of others

- 1) Serve behind the scenes wherever needed to support the gifts and ministries of others
- 2) See the tangible and practical things to be done and enjoy doing them
- 3) Sense God's purpose and pleasure in meeting everyday responsibilities
- 4) Attach spiritual value to practical service
- 5) Enjoy knowing that they are freeing up others to do what God has called them to do

Available, Willing, Helpful, Reliable, Loyal, Dependable, Whatever-it-takes attitude

Cautions- need to esteem their gift remembering that doing practical deeds is a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ, find it difficult to say "no", need to be responsive to the priorities of leadership instead of setting their own agendas

1 Cor 12:28, Rom 12:7, Acts 6:1-4, Rom 16:1-2

### c) Teaching

Teaching is the divine enablement to understand, clearly explain and apply the word of God causing greater Christ-likeness in the lives of listeners

- 1) Communicate biblical truth that inspires greater obedience to the word
- 2) Challenge listeners simply and practically with the truths of scripture
- 3) Present the whole counsel of God for maximum life change
- 4) Give attention to detail and accuracy
- 5) Prepare through extended times of study and reflection

Disciplined, Perceptive, Teachable, Authoritative, Practical, Analytical, Articulate

Cautions- should avoid pride that may result from their "superior" biblical knowledge and understanding, could become too detailed when teaching and fail to make life application, should remember that their spirituality is not measured by how much they know

Rom 12:7, 1 Cor 12:28-29, Acts 18:24-28, 2 Tim 2:2

#### d) Exhorting/ Encouragement

Encouragement is the divine enablement to present truth so as to strengthen, comfort or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith

- 1) Come to the side of those who are discouraged to strengthen and reassure them
- 2) Challenge, comfort, or confront others to trust and hope in the promises of God
- 3) Urge others to action by applying biblical truth
- 4) Motivate others to grow
- 5) Emphasize God's promises and to have confidence in his will

Positive, Motivating, Challenging, Affirming, Reassuring, Supportive, Trustworthy

Cautions- can sometimes be overly optimistic or too simplistic or flattering, should first take time to understand where others are and what they really need, may want to just say "positive" things to others and avoid being confrontational when it's needed

Rom 12:8, Acts 11:22-24, Acts 15:30-32

#### e) Giving- simply- not complicate it and give generously

Giving is the divine enablement to contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality where not ask "How much money do I need to give to God?" but "How much money do I need to live on?"

- 1) Manages their finances and limit their lifestyle in order to give as much of their resources as possible
- 2) Support the work of ministry with sacrificial gifts to advance the Kingdom
- 3) Meet tangible needs that enable spiritual growth to occur
- 4) Provide resources, generously and cheerfully, trusting God for his provision, May have a special ability to make money so that they may use it to further God's work

Stewardship-oriented, Responsible, Resourceful, Charitable, Trusts in God, Disciplined

Cautions- need to esteem their gift remembering that giving money and resources is a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ, need to remember the church's agenda is determined by leaders and not by the giver's gift, need to guard against greed

Rom 12:8, 2 Cor 6:8, Luke 21:1-4

Therefore on giving money or resources, it should be done simply and not made difficult but with generosity

f) Ruling/ Leading- with diligence- not careless

Leading is the divine enablement to cast vision, motivate and direct people to harmoniously accomplish the purposes of God

- 1) Provide direction for God's people or ministry
- 2) Motivate others to perform to the best of their abilities
- 3) Present the "big picture" for others to see
- 4) Model the values of the ministry
- 5) Take responsibility and establish goals

Influential, Diligent, Visionary, Trustworthy, Persuasive, Motivating, Goal-setter

Cautions- should realise their relational credibility takes time and is critical for leadership effectiveness, should remember that servant leadership is the biblical model, do not need to be in a leadership "position" to use this gift

Rom 12:8, Heb 13:17, Luke 22:25-26

So as one casts vision and motivate and direct people, one needs to be clear and not careless

g) Mercy- with cheerfulness- not with sadness

Mercy is the divine enablement to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering or are in need, compassion moved to action

- 1) Focus upon alleviating the sources of pain or discomfort in suffering people
- 2) Address the needs of the lonely and forgotten
- 3) Express love, grace, and dignity to those facing hardships and crisis
- 4) Serve in difficult or unsightly circumstances and do so cheerfully
- 5) Concern themselves with individual or social issues that oppress people

Empathetic, Caring, Responsive, Kind, Compassionate, Sensitive, Burden-bearing

Cautions- need to be aware that rescuing people from their pain may be hindering God's work in them, need to guard against feeling "unappreciated" since some of the people helped will not show or express any appreciation, should guard against becoming defensive and angry about the sources of others' pain

Rom 12:8, Matt 5:7, Mark 10:46-52, Luke 10:25-37

So as we help people who are suffering or in need, we need to be joyful and not pitiful or with a 'sour' face!!

As we use our gifts, we need to be under the umbrella of love

- IV) Love- with sincerity and brotherly love preferring one another, as we serve- we have to show agape love (vs 9-10). This is expanded in 1 Corinthians 13 after spiritual gifts. God is concerned that we have the right motivation when we serve and that we serve in love (servanthood). It means nothing without love as seen in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. "If I speaking the tongues of men and of angels (Spiritual Gift of Tongues), but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy (Spiritual Gift of Prophecy) and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith (Spiritual Gift of Faith) that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" God is concerned about the way we serve than what we do with our Spiritual Gifts, that is with LOVE. Spiritual Gifts without love do not reflect who God is and so do

not have KINGDOM IMPACT. The love that God is talking about is Agape Love. There are four types of love- storge (family), eros (sensual), phileo (brotherly) and Agape (sacrificial) love. This type of love seeks the other's best interests being a selfless kind of love

With love, we will then have the right attitude leading to the right actions

V) Attitude and Actions-

- a) Fruits of Spirit- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) -Love what is good and hate what is evil, devoted to one another, joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer (vs12), live in peace (vs 18)
- b) Attitude- Humility- Not proud (vs 16) and empathy- rejoicing and weeping (vs 12,15)
- c) Actions- Serving and sharing- with zeal, not lazy or slothful but fervent in business (vs 6-8, 12).  
When we are serving or working, we need to serve/work as if working for God so not do a "half-measure job"! Sharing with those in need (vs 13)
- d) GOAL OF CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE- Blessing enemies (vs 14). Not repay evil with evil and not revenge but overcome evil with good (vs 17-21)

Conclusion- As we serve, we need to serve with holy bodies having the right attitude having renewed minds and with love and using our gifts to the glory of God