

# Romans 12

## Verse by Verse



Previously in Romans

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- Paul began by describing our need for the gospel.
- He then moved on to explaining the gospel itself.
- In the last few chapters, he has focused on how Jews and Gentiles are united in the church by Christ.

# Key Verse for Romans

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- **Romans 1:16** (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

# Romans Outline of the Book

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1. The Purest Gospel 1:1-18
2. Our Need for Grace 1:18 – 3:20
3. God's Gift of Grace 3:21 – 8:39
4. God's Gracious Plan 9:1 – 11:36
5. Life Lived by Grace 12:1 – 16:27

# Romans 12 Introduction

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- In **Romans 1 – 11**, Paul has been describing right belief.
- This was a brief course in Christian theology.
- In **Romans 12 – 16**, he will now describe right conduct.
- Right belief needs to lead to right behavior.

# Romans 12 Introduction



*All theology is practical, and all practice, if it is truly Christian, is theological.*

*– Douglas Moo,  
Wheaton Graduate School*

# Romans 12 Introduction

- Christian **theology** is the basis for Christian **practice**.
- Otherwise, the gospel would be just another system of morals and rituals – and nothing more.
- Here in **Romans 12**, Paul makes the transition from **theology** to **practice**.

# Romans 12    Key Verses

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- Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

# Romans 12 Outline

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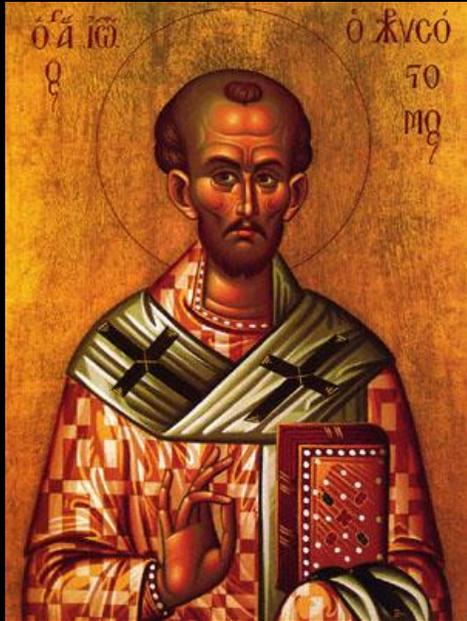
1. A Living Sacrifice 12:1-2
2. Humble Service 12:3-8
3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

# 1. A Living Sacrifice 12:1-2

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- What does it mean to become a “living sacrifice”?
- No one has answered this question better than **John Chrysostom** did in the early centuries of the church.

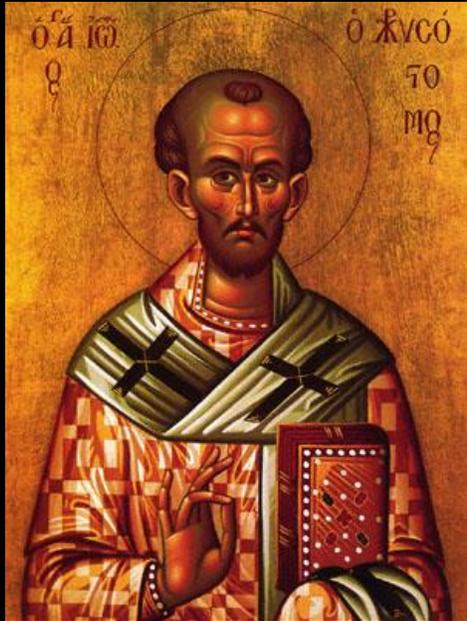
# 1. A Living Sacrifice 12:1-2



*Let thine eye look upon no evil thing, and it hath become a sacrifice; let thy tongue speak nothing filthy, and it hath become an offering; let thy hand do no lawless deed, and it hath become a whole burnt-offering. But this is not enough, we must have good works also. Let the hand do alms ...*

*– John Chrysostom (~345 – 407),  
Archbishop of Constantinople*

# 1. A Living Sacrifice 12:1-2



*... the mouth bless them that despitefully use us, and the ear find leisure evermore for the hearing of Scripture. For sacrifice can be made only of that which is clean; sacrifice is a firstfruit of other actions. Let us, then, from our hands, and feet, and mouth, and all our other members, yield a firstfruit unto God.*

*– John Chrysostom (~345 – 407),  
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# 1. A Living Sacrifice 12:1-2

- Paul describes our self-offering as our “spiritual worship”
- **Spiritual** = Greek *logikos*, rare in the NT, but often used by philosophers.
- It usually meant something like “being carefully thought through” or “thoughtful.”
- The ESV footnote says, “*Or your rational service.*”

# 1. A Living Sacrifice 12:1-2

- In other words, when we really think about it, offering ourselves to God is **the most sensible thing** we can do.
- This will consist of both a **consecrated body** and a **consecrated mind**.
- Paul emphasizes a renewed mind in our sanctification process.

# 1. A Living Sacrifice 12:1-2

- We need to think differently.
- This includes the way we think about ourselves.
- Paul now gives us more specific instructions.

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8

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- **12:3** We should **not think too highly** of ourselves, but that **does not mean** having a purely negative view.
- If we think with **sober judgment**, our assessment of ourselves will be accurate.
- Paul illustrates this in the next verses.

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8

- 12:4-8 If we focus **only on our strengths**, we can think too highly of ourselves.
- If we focus **on our weaknesses**, we can think too little.
- We should focus on our strengths while still being aware of our weaknesses.
- **This leaves room to see the strengths of others.**

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8



*A good toe-nail is not an unsuccessful attempt at a brain: and if it were conscious it would delight in being simply a good toe-nail.*

*– C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963)*

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8

- 12:4-8 We can add 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 to this section on spiritual gifts.
- We also find a little more in Ephesians 4.
- The NT gives us plenty of information to guide us.
- Personally, I do not believe any of the lists of gifts are meant to be complete – but they show a good variety.

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8

• 12:4-8 In this list we see:

- Prophecy
- Service
- Teaching
- Exhortation
- Giving
- Leadership
- Mercy

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8

- 12:4-5 members of one another
- By way of application.
- The pandemic has disconnected people.
- Technology has helped this trend along.
- When we are not with one another it is harder to exercise our spiritual gifts to help each other grow.

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8

- Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

## 2. Humble Service 12:3-8

- And speaking of love and good works ...

### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

- 12:9 Let love be genuine There is no exact connection with what comes before.
- Also, there is no verb. Only “Genuine love.”
- We can see it as more of a heading than one in a series of instructions.
- This section shows us what love looks like in action.

### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

- Let's read the whole thing slowly once again.

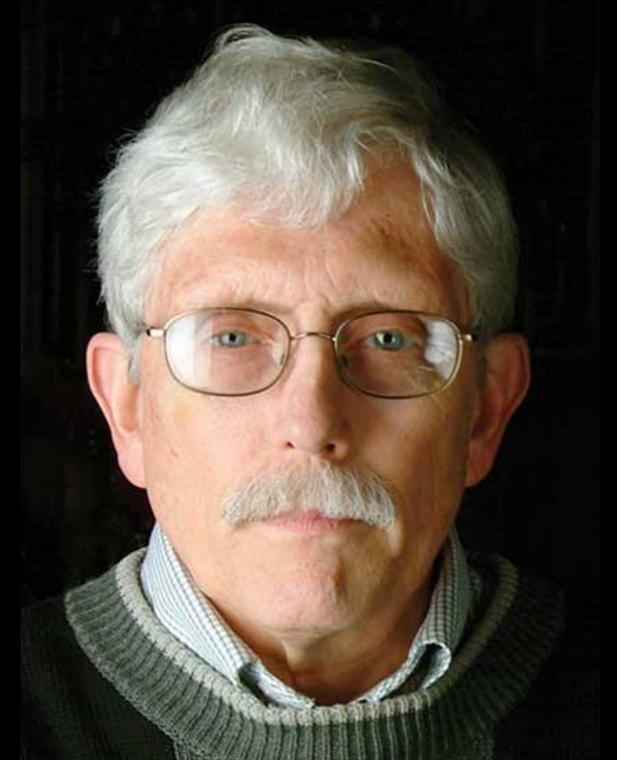
### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

- Here is Grant Osborne on v.10.

### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

*There are two ways to translate the second sentence: (1) As in the NRSV, “outdo one another in showing honor”; or (2) as in the NIV, “honor one another above yourselves.” ... The one emphasizes strong effort, the other preference for one another.*

*– Grant Osborne,  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

- Either way, Paul envisions a congregation with each person habitually showing honor to all the others.

### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

- 12:11 How important it is that our Christianity not become a lazy, lackluster faith.
- The more we put into our relationship with Jesus, the more it will benefit us in the end.

### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

*Going beyond the simple avoidance of vengeance, he tells Christians to live in peace, as far as this depends on them ... believers should not be the ones responsible for any lack of peace in their communities or in their relationships with unbelievers.*

*– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian University of the Congo*



### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

- By reminding us that only God should take vengeance, Paul is careful **not to minimize** the wrong.
- He is, however, going beyond the wrong itself to God's perspective of it.
- God will deal one day with all wrongs from his all-knowing, all-loving vantage point.

### 3. Genuine Love 12:9-21

- The **burning coals** I understand as our kindness bringing shame upon someone determined to hate.

# Romans 12    What We Just Read

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# Romans 12    Key Points

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1. The chapter starts by focusing on our transformed mind which leads to a transformed character.
2. Do whatever it takes to help you think more like a Christian, more like Jesus and more like the Bible.
3. From there we need to think of ourselves as part of a body – members of a local church.
4. This is the primary context in which we serve one another for the benefit of all.

## Romans 12    Key Points

5. In addition to serving according to our gifts, we can also look for ways to express genuine love.
6. One way that we show love is by working hard to show honor to one another.
7. Another way is by doing all we can to live in peace with others, even our most obvious enemies.

# Romans 12    A Prayer

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- Dear Father in heaven,
- Thank you for giving us new life in Christ and the ability to live as new people with a new set of values.
- Please transform our hearts and minds to make us still more like you. Help us to give ourselves entirely to your service, so that we will each become a living sacrifice to you.

# Romans 12    A Prayer

- Teach us to see ourselves as essential and contributing members of your church and help us use our gifts to build others up in their faith.
- Show us how to express genuine love, honoring one another, loving one another, loving our neighbor and loving even our enemies.
- In Christ,
- Amen

# Romans 12      References

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