
a *Grace Notes* course

The Epistle to the ROMANS

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 12

Romans 12:1-21

Grace Notes

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The Epistle to the Romans

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Chapter 12

INTRODUCTION:

If we were under the law I would make it against the law to quote the first two verses of Romans 12 without also quoting the last verses of Romans 11.

These chapters are so separated that we fail to see the context of our response.

Just look at the last verse of Romans 11: For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Therefore: I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The act of presenting ourselves to God is a response to who He is. What we not only know about Him but act upon in faith. To not be conformed to the world but to be transformed by Him is to be conformed to God who is superior to the world in which we live. And then we can prove (very strong word) the very will of God.

BUT NOTICE: All of this is in the context of God whose wisdom and knowledge is unsearchable, whose judgments and ways are far beyond ours. And is deserving of all glory and honor.

EVERYTHING TO THIS POINT HAS been theological, positional and illustrative. Paul has laid down a foundation of truth that can now be used in the every day Christ Centered Life. And it all begins with your relationship with God.

Let me show a comparison of Romans 1 through 11 and Romans 14 through 16 by looking only at the number of imperative mood verbs.

REMEMBER: An imperative is a mood of command.

Romans 1-11 Only fourteen imperatives found. That is only 1.27 per chapter on average. None in Romans 1,2,4,5,7,8,9,or 10.

In Romans 11 they are either OT quotes or warning to the Church Age believer not to arrogant regarding Israel.

In Romans 6 the imperatives deal with us presenting ourselves to sin or righteousness. Which is then expanded in Romans 12.

In Romans chapters 12 to 16 there are fifty-one (51) imperatives.

So it is at Romans 12:1 that the whole mood of the letter shifts to the practical application of the theology, position, and illustrations that have been given.

PRINCIPLE: Good application requires good theology. Poor theology results in sloppy and inconsistent application. Which is where so much of the church is today.

Romans 12:1

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, [which is] your spiritual service of worship.

I URGE YOU is the GNT word **PARAKALW** which means to come along side and encourage someone to action or in athletics, to win.

Paul adopts the role of a cheering player on the bench, urging his team on to victory.

This is Paul's first use of this word in Romans.

When adversity is in view in the context, the word can mean **COMFORT**. But when there is no adversity and instead we see an encouragement to do something, it is an earnest desire that we do what is best for us.

Most often it is used to describe the close relationship we are to have with God and the resulting unity we are to have with other believers.

BRETHREN: It is very important to see that Paul directs this statement to believers. This is not a salvation passage but has to do with the living of the Spiritual Life. That which only a believer can do.

We then have a prepositional phrase: Through the compassion of God.

The DIA + the double articular genitive, “the compassion belonging to the God”, sets up the motivation for this, the method of doing this, and the means of doing this.

And one thing fill the bill, so to speak, for all three THE COMPASSIONS (plural) that belong to GOD...

COMPASSIONS is OIKTIPMOS, a plural noun. Of the ten times it is used in the GNT, eight times it is seen as something God has for us. Two times, in Philippians 2:1 and in Colossians 3:12 which describe the Christian's honor code, it is something the believer can have in relationships with other believers.

In the NT we have two words for mercy:

1) ELEOS is used by Paul as a characteristic of God in His attitude towards us.

2) Our word OKTIRMOS is also used of God but is used of the believer in his mercy towards others.

From the time of Homer, it was more than just the feeling of empathy, it was also the action of empathy.

This word tells us that God in His love for His children, you and me, has not only moved into understand our fallen position but has also done something about it. His perfect knowledge has moved Him to provide a way we can live the Spiritual Life.

This should motivate us. This also describes the means which is totally by His grace. This also describes the method, we can do nothing of merit but can only respond to His grace.

PRINCIPLE: This is why the first application of the doctrine we learn must be to our relationship with God. Because it is that which will cause us to APPRECIATE Him and then comes back to us, motivating us to follow Him.

1. When we learn the Word we have a choice, where do we make application?
2. The unbeliever can learn the Word of God and apply its principles to self and to others. Some, especially in the area of divine establishment (marriage, family, personal responsibility, government, economics) will work. Other doctrines will not work.

3. Knowledge of the Word and application of its principles to self alone results in personal arrogance for the believer and even the unbeliever.

I Corinthians 8:1 We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

4. Knowledge of the Word and application of its principles to others alone results in relational arrogance in both the believer and the unbeliever.

I Corinthians 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

5. Only when we first apply all doctrine to our relationship with God can we develop the humility, the love, the compassion, to eliminate both personal and relational arrogance.

NOTICE: In religion man offers a sacrifice to gain the mercy of the gods he worships. In Christianity we already have the mercy of God and are motivated by it to offer a sacrifice.

So Paul calls us to be motivated by that which can only be developed in our relationship with God and the effect that relationship will have on us personally.

NOW, WHAT ARE WE TO BE MOTIVATED TO DO?

To present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God...

An infinitive phrase that ends with a dative of advantage.

This is a result which brings us to an advantage or point of benefit.

The infinitive sees this as a result. A result of what?

Everything we have seen in the first eleven chapters. The grace of God, live of faith, the faithfulness of God, the new life we have where

grace reigns through the new law of the Spirit of Life.

Summarized as Paul is overwhelmed by the grace of God in Romans 11:33-36.

A result of knowing and trusting in who God is! TO PRESENT is PARISTJMI which is a word Paul used five times back in Romans 6 for the believer presenting or yielding himself to either sin or righteousness.

In the Gospels and in Acts this word takes a very simple meaning of standing in one's presence.

In the Epistles it takes a more technical meaning indicating that the one before whom one stands accepts the one who is presenting himself.

While this word was not used in the LXX for the presentation of sacrifices, it was used in pagan Greek for the offerings at the Temple. Thus these Gentiles would have seen this as a religious term referring to an acceptable sacrifice.

In the NT Epistles it is used for commending, assisting, presenting mature, blameless, without sin.

The KEY issue in the word as used here and elsewhere is ACCEPTANCE.

Now back in Romans 6 it was used for the believer regaining the Spiritual Life, do not present yourselves to sin, to obey sin, but to God to obey righteousness. The word there look at the choice of position.

Here however, it takes it farther and looks at presenting ourselves to God for service, Not only the position of an slave but the service of slave.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Romans 6 deals with the dark side: Sin and the Sin Nature.
2. There the believer is told to recognize his former position and his current position.
3. The choice is given, present yourself to sin or present yourself to God.
4. The basis for that choice is our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection.
5. Here in Romans 12:1 the choice is on the positive side. We are urged to make is to

present ourselves to God for living the Spiritual Life.

The basis here is the mercy of God, His compassion for you as His dear child.

6. Therefore, this choice follows the one in Romans 6. There the faith decision we make is to the initial entrance into fellowship.
7. Here the choice is beyond spiritual recovery and has to do with walking by faith, walking in the Spirit, and Living the Spiritual Life.

That is why Paul tells us how we are to present ourselves.

...as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, your reasonable service.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The only way you can be a holy sacrifice is to be in fellowship claiming the forgiveness of sins that is your through faith in the Cross of Christ.
2. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:17 that our sacrifice has to do with service: But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.
3. In Hebrews 13:15 our sacrifice has to do with worship: Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.
4. Peter in I Peter 2:5 makes a statement that is parallel to Paul's statement in Romans 12:1 You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
5. The reason we can offer sacrifices, that is of ourselves, our service, and our worship, is because we are priests. The universal priesthood of all believers in Christ in the CA.
6. In the OT the priesthood was limited, Melchizedek king of Salem in Genesis 14, the Patriarchs of father leader of a family, and the tribe of Levi after the giving of the Law.
7. Today every believer is a priest. I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own

possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

IN ORDER FOR A PRIEST TO OFFER A holy sacrifice, he himself must also be holy.

This pattern was part of the OT priesthood. On the Day of Atonement the high priest had to first offer a bull for a sin offering for himself:

Leviticus 16:6 Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household.

Only after that could he offer the goat as a sin offering for the people and lay hands on the scapegoat and send it away into the wilderness.

SO FOR US the only way we can offer a holy sacrifice is to be holy and that means to be in fellowship. If we are denying sins, confess sins.

We are to PRESENT OUR BODIES to God. This use of the word SOMA, for BODY looks at the total being, everything about us is to be presented to God.

We have three adjective that describe this offering of our selves: Living sacrifice, holy, acceptable [or well pleasing].

Here is where the controversy comes in:

Does this mean we are to make our offering of such a character that it will be a sacrifice, that it will be holy, and that God will accept it?

Or does this mean that the offering of ourselves to God is a sacrifice in which we are assured by God that it is holy and acceptable?

THIS IS THE SAME controversy that invades Ephesians 5:18 and following:

Are the things mentioned in Ephesians 5:19-21 conditions to be meet in order to be F/HS or are they the divinely anticipated results of the F/HS?

This is a very subtle but very important difference. Your determination of what God is saying in passages such as this will make a difference in how you live the Christian Life.

But these are adjectives that describe the kind of sacrifice we are to offer extend far beyond what we are able to do.

HOW CAN I SACRIFICE TO A HOLY GOD that which is holy?

HOW CAN I determine the acceptability of what I offer?

I CAN'T...AND THAT IS GOOD

Because the demand of the sacrifice is so far beyond what I can do I must conclude that it is impossible, in my flesh.

And therefore it cannot be me making this sacrifice holy and acceptable by God but it must be His doing.

Let's look at the three descriptions of the sacrifice.

1. LIVING: As contrast to the dead sacrifices of the OT the sacrifice we make is a living sacrifice of our whole beings, our total self.

The death of the one Lamb of God swept off the alter the dead victims of sin forever.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

That newness of life allow us to offer a living sacrifice

2. HOLY: Here we see the demand of the Law given to God's OT people and restated for us:

1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, You shall be holy for I am holy.

And we know that there is only one way can fulfill that demand of the Law: Romans 8:4 In order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

So then, for this sacrifice to be holy we must be walking in the Spirit. We must have our sins confessed and we must be accessing the grace of God by faith.

3. Then we are told that this sacrifice will be well-pleasing or acceptable to God.

This is a dative of advantage and I think we can easily see that it is to our advantage to be acceptable to God.

But divine acceptance does not come by what we do but rather by way of what God did for us in

sending His Son to the Cross for us and our non-meritorious faith acceptance of His grace.

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

What is our part? Ephesians 5:8 and 10 For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light...trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

PRINCIPLE: We learn the Word and the Word worked in us by the Holy Spirit (as we are walking in the Light) conforms us to the image of Christ which is well-pleasing to the Lord.

The word translated SPIRITUAL is not the normal word translated in that way.

It is LOGIKOS from which we get the English word LOGIC or LOGICAL.

The presenting of ourselves to God is a logical thing to do in light of His mercies or compassion.

PRINCIPLE: The Christ centered life is a life that is a response to the greatness of God and the great things He has done. It is a logical response to Him.

The word translated SERVICE OF WORSHIP is LATERIA which is not the normal word for worship but is a word used under the OT covenant for the Temple Service of Sacrifice and Offerings (Romans 9:4 and Hebrew 9:1).

But now our sacrifice is not at the Temple made with hands nor is it a dead sacrifice which may or may not be acceptable to God. It is acceptable and well-pleasing to Him. When we present ourselves to Him.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

While verse 1 looked at presentation, this verse looks at transformation.

Two dramatic grammatical shifts occur from v 1 to v 2:

First, instead of an infinitive of results we have two finite verbs in the imperative mood (remember there are 51 imperative in Romans 12-16).

Also the tense changes from the aorist tense of offer to the present tense of not being conformed but instead being transformed.

Paul begins with a negative statement: Do not be conformed to this world.

John Murray in his two-volume work on Romans says of this verse that the Pauline ethic is negative because it is realistic and it takes into account the world in which we live.

Paul faces the fact that it is a lot easier to just go along with the world, letting the world conform you to its norms and standards than to take a road less traveled.

The word CONFORMED is found only here and in I Peter 1:14 and is taken from the word SCJMA from which we get the English word SCHEME.

It looks at an outward conforming, that which is external and does not represent what is on the inside.

For the believer this is to conform to the world view, the world standard, although on the inside he or she is a spiritual being.

This is contrary for the believer, to be effected by that which is on the outside. To be persuaded by that which is circumstantial, external, temporary, situation. Rather, we are to be effected by what is going on the inside and that is the effect the outside.

The believer being conformed to the World has it backwards.

The form of the verb can be either middle or passive but the prefix SUN denotes individual involvement which would tend to make this middle voice.

Here we see then, the motive of this conformity to the world, the believer thinks he will be benefitted by such conformity.

BUT HE WILL NOT BE, instead he will be allowing the erosion of the inner life by that which is effecting him from the outside.

WHY WOULD A BELIEVER let the world so effect him and influence him as to conform him to the world rather than to Christ?

Only once answer...a lack of faith!

He does not really believe that what God has for him is really best. So he opts for the world system rather than the divine person.

Paul ran into this problem in his initial epistle.

Galatians 1:6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.

Left a person for a thing...

ALLA strongest of contrasts.

Instead of being conformed the believer is to be transformed.

The word "transformed" is METAMORFOW And as with CONFORMED is a present, imperative, but here it is clearly passive.

The word looks at an inward change effecting the outside. A complete change in form. This word was used of Jesus at the transfiguration.

It only other occurrence is in II Corinthians 3:17-18 which is a chapter dealing with the Holy Spirit in our lives: Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Now by way of both position and reality, we are new creatures in Christ at the moment of salvation. But by way of practice we can imitate the unbeliever or progress in our practice living like the new creatures we are.

This word looks at that PROGRESS, the CONFORMITY to Christ, the life that is being TRANSFORMED.

Being changed from the inside out.

REMEMBER: This mandate is given to the believer who is in fellowship, who has spiritually recovered.

The believer who presents himself to the world, not merely by way of sin but also by way if influence, will be conformed to the world.

The believer who presents himself as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice, will then receive the transforming of the mind mentioned here.

RENEWING is ANAKAINWSIS A singular, fem, dative noun.

The singular looks at every believers individual responsibility to engage in this renewing process. But remember, it is passive, so letting this renewing process occur. The dative is dative of advantage and the feminine goes along with the passive in seeing this as that which is received by the believer in fellowship.

This word is found in only one other place:

Titus 3:4-6 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

In that passage the word refers to the renewing that occurred at Salvation and was the work of God the Holy Spirit.

Here in Romans 12:2 it is used for the sanctification of the believer as he grows in Christ by way of the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit is the agent at salvation and the agent in sanctification. He is the member of the trinity who is in charge of the communication of the Word and our learning of the Word.

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

So if we are to be transformed the one who will do this will be God the Holy Spirit.

The is renewal takes place in the MIND:

Here we see what is on the inside that has been effected by the outside (conformed to the world) and now can be transformed and renewed by the work of God the Holy Spirit.

The MIND is the battlefield...remember Romans 8:5

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

But also remember Romans 7:25

So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

The MIND is the battlefield but the mind is not the victor, the Holy Spirit renewing the mind with the word of God is where victory will be found.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

SO ALTHOUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT mentioned in this verse, He is present, He is there, because a part from Him we could not be renewed at salvation nor in sanctification.

AND REMEMBER, HE DOES THIS actively in us and we passively receive this ministry of the Spirit.

SOME PRINCIPLES:

1. The believer, at any time, may be called upon to make a decision of presentation. In our passage, Romans 12:1, the believer is in fellowship and faced with a decision of presentation. This could come in the form of temptation, but also in testing, trails, setting priorities, even in redeeming or regulating time.
2. The issue of verse one then is distraction from fellowship with God.
3. The motive for presenting ourselves to God in v 1 is that God's compassion have been poured out upon us. We have received such great mercy, grace, and love.

Romans 15:17 Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

4. In fellowship the believer is F/HS, being filled with the fullness of God. The Holy Spirit is works in the believer to fulfill God's plan.

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

5. We have to actively resist this ministry of the Spirit and we do so when we grieve the Holy Spirit though sin but also when we quench the Holy Spirit through disobedience and distraction. We present ourselves to the wrong thing.
6. That is where the problem comes in. We have responsibilities, we have families and jobs, we have a complex and often complicated lives. How do we know what decisions to make in our everyday lives?

And that is where the last part of this verse comes in. For it is the transformation, by the renewing of the Mind, by the Word and by the Spirit, that will allow us to test what is and is not the will of God.

7. The motive for the transformation is that we can know the will of God.

ILLUSTRATION: Nero, Emperor of Rome, burned the city of Rome in July of 64. He blamed the start of the fire which destroyed half the city, on Christians. Some Christians, hearing the lie that Christians were burning Rome, started to burn Rome. They did not know the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

v 2 Continued: That you may prove what the will of God is.

This prepositional phrase begins with EIS, with a view towards...

The verb is PROVE in the Greek DOKIMAZW

It is an infinitive that results from the renewing of the mind.

The word DOKIMAZW was a term used by a metallurgist when he would purify gold or silver. It would be heated up and the dross skimmed off, the process was repeated and repeated until the metal was at least 99.99 percent pure.

Used here it looks at our testing of situations that confront us in life and proving, or ascertaining if our decision in the midst of that situation is in line with God's will, God's purpose.

Paul uses a plural pronoun to demonstrate that this is an issue that faces all believers, wherever they are, in whatever culture, generation, nation, tribe...the burning question so often is: What is God's will?

THE ONLY WAY THAT WILL EVER BE ANSWERED is by the believer being in fellowship, being transformed by the Holy Spirit teaching him the Word of God resulting in the renewing of the mind.

v 2 Continued: Paul describes the Will of God with GOOD, ACCEPTABLE, PERFECT.

There is only one definite article for all three adjectives which tells us that these three are one unit. The Will of God if it is good, is also perfect and acceptable to God. If it is perfect it is also good, if acceptable it is also perfect and on and on.

PRINCIPLE: God's will for our lives is never shoddy, never in part, it is complete, total, perfect, good, acceptable.

The Three Adjectives:

GOOD is AGAQOS a good of intrinsic value, incomparable, absolute according to the divine standard. Not merely that which is better, but that which is absolutely good in God's estimation.

And whatever is good in God's estimation is the absolute best for us. Whether we think so or not.

ACCEPTABLE is the same word we saw in v 1 where we are an acceptable sacrifice to God.

Here it is the will of God that is acceptable which means that when we are in the will of God what we think, what we do, where we do it are all acceptable to God.

The quality of what we think and do in the will of God is expressed in the word PERFECT.

This is TELEIOS which is also used as mature.

We saw this word back in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:48 Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

There the response would have been HOW? Here we see the HOW, by allowing God the Holy Spirit to transform us in the renewing of our minds.

James used this word in James 1:4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Endurance in the will of God means we look at the fact that He is in control and whatever we have on our plate this day is perfect as part of His purpose in creation and history and His plan for our lives.

Romans 12:3

For you see...through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Most Bibles set this verse off as a new paragraph that extends to verse 8. But in doing so they ignore the explanatory conjunction GAR that begins this verse.

This little word is not strong enough to actually begin a sentence so it is the second word.

The first word is I SAY which is LEGW present tense, keep on saying.

The choice Paul had was to use either LALEW or LEGW. Both are translated I say. Had he used LALEW he put emphasis on the process of communicating. But by using LEGW he puts the emphasis on the content of what is said.

The use of LEGW further indicates that what Paul is about to say illustrates or explains the previous verses.

What he says is Through grace...

And the content is: For every man not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think.

REMEMBER: The apostle has just mandated by way of two imperative mood verbs that believers who have presented themselves to God are to not be conformed to the world but be transformed in the renewing of their minds by the teaching of doctrine by the Holy Spirit.

NORMAL REACTION: My mind is pretty good, why does it have to be transformed, renewed?? When I referred to Romans 12:2 once I had a person tell me that this was brain washing. Well folks, I don't know about your brain but mine could use a spin in the washer every now and then. It needs to be washed, renewed, transformed.

WE HAVE THREE WORDS FOR THINK used four times in this verse:

1. FRONEW which looks at a pattern of thinking, a consciousness or image of self. To be so minded in a certain way.
2. UPERFROVEW which means to be high-minded or to overthink ones image of evaluation of self.
3. Then we have SWFRONEW which means to think in sober terms or think realistically.

While it is a bit hard to see it, this word is from SWZO + FRONEW, hence, a saved mind. It was used in secular Greek for realistic thinking, sober thinking, straight thinking.

In Titus 2:6 the young man believer is to be encouraged to be SWFRONEW, a sober, realistic, straight thinker.

SO WE SEE A PLAY ON WORDS: Not to think in over-thinking of self but to think in realistic thinking.

PRINCIPLES:

1. First we must note that the believer is to think. We do not check our minds at the door of the Christ Centered Life.
2. However, we risk thinking too highly of ourselves which destroys humility and the ability to present ourselves to God. Remember, that is the first step in the process of knowing God's will.
3. Instead we are to think in realistic terms which means we correctly evaluate ourselves, our capacities, our abilities, our assets and our insufficiency to know God's will by our own thinking.
4. This verse then is a call to humility as well as a call to straight thinking.
5. When we think we know it all, when we think we have arrived, when we think we have all the answers, we are thinking too highly.
6. The way we can think accurately and realistically is to have our minds constantly being transformed and renewed by doctrine.

As God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

This is how we think in realistic terms, by faith. This is very contrary to the way the word thinks. The world, and by that I mean human nature,

thinks that faith has no part in realism or rational or logical thinking.

But God sets faith as the basis for straight thinking.

The word EACH is the EKASTOS which is a demonstrative pronoun and when used without a direct antecedent, as here, is used to include the broadest group. Here, all of mankind.

So to all of mankind God has divided a measure of faith.

DIVIDED is MERIZW and is used for distributing food, and inheritance, and here faith.

The common denominator of the way it is used in this sense is that what is distributed is not earned or deserved. So this is a little used verb for the action of grace.

The word MEASURE is METRON . Now Paul had a number of words to chose from to communicate the idea of a measured amount. This one is used because it looks at a moderate portion that is allotted or measured off.

PRINCIPLE: By using this word Paul tells us all members of the human race have been given faith by God. Every man has enough faith to be saved, to believe by faith alone in Christ alone. But this word also allows for the increasing or building up of faith...faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word or Christ.

So faith is both a capacity and a potential.

BUT THE BOTTOM LINE PRINCIPLE IS: No one has any excuse, we all have been given a measure of faith.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT WE can think in terms of faith rather than in terms of arrogance. Arrogant thinking eliminates understanding and proving what the will of God is.

Romans 12:4

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

The error in many believers' thinking is that if this is the will of God for me, it must also be the will of God for you.

Paul relates this error to a body and illustrates our uniqueness in the body of Christ by the function of our spiritual gifts.

Paul is not really giving us a dissertation on spiritual gifts. He does that in I Corinthians 12 through 14. Here he only mentions seven gifts but the emphasis is not on the gift but on the unique function of the various gifts.

Look at verse 6, the last part: ROM 12:6-8 If prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The gift is mentioned but also the way the gift functions or expresses itself in that believer making that believer unique.

Paul draws an analogy to the body. Different parts of the body function in very different ways. Eyes see, ears hear, noses smell and feet run [or nose run and feet smell]. You can pick up a fork with your hand, can't do that with your ear.

But all are part of one body and all work together. Consider walking, it involves the feet, knees, hips, inner ear, eyes, the swinging of the arms for momentum and balance. All doing a different function yet all working together.

Now in I Corinthians 12:14-18 Paul extends this analogy of the body: For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

PRINCIPLE in I Corinthians is that every part is important.

PRINCIPLE in Romans 12 is that every part functions differently.

Romans 12:5

So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

The uniqueness possessed by another believer, the fact that we are different, that the will of God for me is not the will of God for you, contributes to me...for we are the body of Christ and we are individuals yet members of one another.

INDEPENDENCY and INTER-DEPENDENCE working together at the same time in the body of Christ.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Christ has called us to freedom:

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

II Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2. God has, as a result of Christ's work on the Cross, accepted all who have put faith in Christ:

Ephesians 1:6 We are acceptable to God in Jesus Christ, God's beloved son.

3. We are to accept one another on the basis of God's acceptance of each individual believer:

Romans 15:7 Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

4. We can do this, we can accept one another because we have the grace ability to love one another with spiritual love:

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

5. Spiritual love is not tested by the ways we are alike but in the ways we are different. Yet this difference is part of our uniqueness and part of our liberty in Christ.
6. While there are some things that are common for all believers and declared to be God's will for all of us, most of what we do is not.
7. We are unique, we are individuals, God the Holy Spirit leads each one of us according to His will, in relationship to our maturity, and in relationship to our spiritual gifts.

8. Yet we also function together. If every part of the body of Christ were just like every other part, there would be no function, no uniqueness, no cooperation, no teamwork and we would go nowhere, be nothing, accomplish nothing.
9. You are not me and I am not you in function, we are each uniquely created in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works...

Romans 12:6

But having different gifts according to the grace given to us.

So what Paul is saying is that we are many, yet one body.

We are members one of another, yet different gifts.

NOW REMEMBER THE POINT OF ALL THIS: Paul is using the differences and the uniqueness of spiritual gifts to illustrate the fact that God's will for each believer is also different and unique.

So he in verses 6 through 8 he lists seven gifts and tells of their unique function:

1. **Prophecy:** According to the proportion of the faith. Here the word FAITH has a definite article and refers to the body of doctrine that has been learned and is being used.
Prophecy here is used in its broad sense. As it is in II Peter 1:19 And so we have a more sure word of prophecy, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.
- So the one who is gifted to speak the Word of God functions in doctrine.
2. **Serving:** Rather than ACCORDING TO this is IN, in the serving. The one who is gifted with a serving gift should be about the business of serving or ministering. That is their function.
3. **Teaching:** IN the teaching or in doctrine. That is the function of the one who teaches to communicate Bible Doctrine.
4. **Exhortation:** This is PARAKALW and could also be translated encouragement and

comforting. Here the one so gifted functions as an encourage and comforter.

5. **Giving:** This is gift, some who are so gifted to give beyond measure and those who do so do so IN simplicity. You will usually never know the one who has this gift. The word translated SIMPLICITY means sincerity that is not self seeking.
6. **Ruling or Leading:** Here the characteristic of this gift and its function is diligence or eagerness. To set one's self to the task and to take the lead, getting things done.
7. **Mercy:** The function of this gift is one of cheerfulness, joy, not in mere actions but in the mental attitude.

So what is the point? Different gifts, different functions:

1. Every believer is given at least one spiritual gift at the moment of salvation.
2. Spiritual gifts fall into three categories: Communication gifts, serving gifts, and leadership gifts that require an office [Deacon, Pastor-teacher]
3. Not only are our gifts different but our function in those gifts are different.
4. Gifts are given for God's organized ministry to, in, and out from the local church. Therefore, no one gift is ever to be viewed as more important than another.
5. Gifts differ, function differs. Even the combination of gifts that you may have will make you unique.
6. Gifts also function according to maturity and thus this function will make a difference.
7. The function you will have in your gifting will be unique just as you are unique.

Romans 12:7,8

There are no comments on Romans 12:7,8

Romans 12:9-21 Now we have a new paragraph:

PAUL HAS BEEN WRITING ABOUT DIFFERENCES but now, at verse 9, he addresses all believers regarding that which we do have in common.

The tendency may be, with all this talk of our uniqueness, to think that we are in a do you own thing kind of faith, but that is now the case. While we have tremendous liberty in Christ, so things serve us all as a common foundation of function.

INTRODUCTION:

Paul has established the way we can know the will of God for our lives in verses 1 and 2. By way of presentation and then transformation. He emphasized that God's will for each of us is unique because we are uniquely created in Christ when we are born again. All this emphasis on our uniqueness may tend to make one think that being a Christians means you do your own thing. So now at verse 9 he begins a list of things that are common to us all by way of activity.

Twenty-six relational statements

Nine negative statements

Seventeen positive statements

Nine imperative mood verbs

Twenty present active participles.

The participle looks at activity so we are looking at application and activity within relationships

Romans 12:9

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cling to that which is good.

With twenty nine verbs and a couple of infinitives thrown in, in the rest of these verses, it is significant that Paul begins this paragraph with an ellipsis...no verbs and thus very strong force.

“Without hypocrisy” is AN + UPOKPITOS the word hypocrite with the negative prefix.

Found six times in the NT and used twice to describe faith, once to describe wisdom, and three times to describe love:

In II Corinthians 6:6 it is used to describe love as being genuine

In I Peter 1:22 It is a result of obeying the Truth: Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.

In secular Greek the word hypocrite was an acting term for one who did not portray on the outside the intent of the character. This word became a

chant that the audience would shout out at a bad actor.

Here our LOVE the word AGAPJ is to be the real thing. As this word for love is used for the believer's attitude and actions towards other believers it is spiritual love.

To see the mechanics of Spiritual Love we must examine five things: the work of this love, the cause, the means, the consciousness of this love, and the person.

1. The work of this love is a work of sacrifice. Spiritual love is a sacrifice to the one loving and a benefit to the one being loved.

This love is an environment that includes magnitude, direction, and impact or effect. ILL: John 3:16.

MAGNITUDE: It can be measured, how great is it? How much do we love as Christ loved?

For God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten Son.

IT HAS DIRECTION: Spiritual love must have direction, God so loved what? The World.

In Spiritual love we are to love other believers.

FORCE OR EFFECT: What is it going to do. In John 3:16 the effect is eternal life. What is the effect of our spiritual love to other believers?

Spiritual Love is never defined but is described in I Corinthians 13 by the sixteen environment of Spiritual Love.

When a conflict occurs between believers, their first thoughts must not be of themselves but of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He loved from His humanity as a precedent for us. He had the power of the Word and the power of the Spirit to Love and we have that same power.

2. The CAUSE of this love is the Holy Spirit:

If we desire to love as Christ loved us we will have to depend upon God the Holy Spirit to produce that love in us.

Jesus Christ did not make a decision to love, He made a decision to trust in God the Holy Spirit to lead Him, to empower Him.

Luke 4:1 tells us that He was led by the Spirit, and He made a decision to Walk by

the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit and to live by the Spirit.

This is the only way we as believers can exist in both the seen and unseen world in which we find ourselves.

We cannot see what is going on in the unseen world, the Holy Spirit can and as God He is in control.

Romans 5:5 The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

When something is poured out it goes everywhere, every area of your life is affected by this love.

3. The MEANS of spiritual love is faith: Here is where we come into the picture. Do we believe by faith that God the Holy Spirit can overcome our human nature, our sin nature, and produce this love in us?

Do we believe it? We might understand it, we might be able to explain it, describe it, dissect it, but do we believe it?

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that: Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Faith is not a technique, faith has no power, the power is in the person in whom we place our faith.

We are to walk by faith just as we were saved by faith we are to live and to love by faith.

4. The CONSCIOUSNESS of this love: We come to an awareness of spiritual love as we study the Word of God.

There is so much in the NT about this love. And we need everything God has revealed to us about this love. We need examples, illustrations, mandates. methods.

We need to know how Christ loved because that is the standard, love one another just as I have loved you.

We need to know how this was done so that we can love as Christ loved.

This is impossible a part from that other source of power that was available to the Lord Jesus Christ and to us...the power of the Word.

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is our learning of Jesus Christ as our precedent and that includes how He loved us.

5. The PERSON of this love is Jesus Christ: Spiritual love is Jesus Christ himself in you.

We are to be conformed to his image, complete and whole in Him, mature in Christ, able to love one another just as He loved us.

In verses 9 through 13 we have the elliptical statement regarding spiritual love followed by six descriptions of how this love functions within the family of God.

In verses 14 through 21 we see how the love we are to have functions in the world.

Romans 12:10-13

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

SIX DESCRIPTIONS OF SPIRITUAL LOVE AMONG BELIEVERS:

1. Spiritual Love rejects sin and evil but not the sinner. Both EVIL and GOOD have definite articles making them specific, a specific evil that is part of Satan's plan and a specific good that is part of God's plan.

The word ABHOR is APO + STUGEW which means to detest, hate, abhor.

The object of the participle is EVIL, PONJROS and refers to that which is not only evil by way of its source in Satan's plan but has the effect or results of evil or harm.

Hence, that which is harmful to one's spiritual life.

The word CLING is KOLLAW which is the word for glue, so be glued to that which is good.

It is a passive participle so this is to be caused to be glued to what is good as a result of what God has given you, His truth, His V/Pt, His standards.

The word for GOOD is AGAQOS good of intrinsic value, divine good.

NOW HOW ARE WE EFFECTED BY EVIL AND BY GOOD? Through others.

Now a hypocritical love rejects others who do not behave according to our standard.

Many churches do this. They establish standards that are prejudicial and full of hate.

But one can also go to the other extreme and condone sin because you accept the person.

We need to love the sinner and hate the sin.

2. Spiritual Love remembers that relationship is the grounds of concern, not friendship.

That is why Paul says: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

We have a family relationship with others who are Christians, they are our brothers and our sisters in Christ.

The word DEVOTED is FILISTIRGOS which is a word normally used only for love within a family.

And we are a family. We should have a special care and concern for our fellow believers. Just as much as you would have for family members.

3. Spiritual love has a regard for other family members that goes beyond your regard for yourself.

Give preference to one another in honor;

This higher regard is described as giving preference:

The word is PROJGEOMAI which means to take the lead, to lead by example, to go before.

We are to consider the other believer above ourselves, their needs, their weakness, their spiritual growth.

Romans 14:15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

4. Spiritual Love maintains enthusiasm despite setbacks.

Paul states: Not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

One of the most noticeable characteristics of a believer walking in the Spirit and having the fruits of the Spirit is that he maintains an enthusiasm, always rejoicing in hope.

The zeal, the enthusiasm, the rejoicing may not be over the things of the moment but for that which lies ahead in the perfect plan God has for us.

David when he confronted Goliath had this kings of diligence and fervent spirit. All Israel was in despair at the taunts of the giant. But not David, young little David is fearless.

Why? He tells us, The battle is not ours it is the Lord's.

When we maintain this type of enthusiasm it is contagious and an encouragement to other believers.

To help us maintain our enthusiasm Paul reminds us that we are serving the Lord.

That is what keeps us going, not our might or strength or our MA, but knowing that what we are doing, what we are all about is serving the Lord.

5. Spiritual Love perseveres: Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

Even when tribulations and difficulties are encountered, rejoicing takes over because we have hope. Our hope is not mere wishful thinking but fixed upon Jesus Christ who is heaven waiting for us. We rejoice in our destiny. As a result we persevere in difficult times and we are devoted to prayer.

In the midst of difficulty, prayer is a constant reminder that we are to be dependent upon God and His resources, not ours.

6. Spiritual Love responds to needs: Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

In our society government has attempted to fulfill this role that should be the responsibility of the church and the believer. We are to be a people who are willing to help one another.

James, in the very first NT epistle spoke of this in James 2:15-16 spoke of this an application of our faith: If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and be filled, and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

When we give to others we give out of faith in God's provision for us. We believe He will supply us with bread for tomorrow so we give a portion of our bread today to the fellow believer in need.

HOSPITALITY is a compound word for rapport love for a stranger. Hence, this is kindness shown to ones who you may not well know.

In Hebrews 13:2 we are told: P

In the Gospels Jesus said (Matthew 25:42-45) For I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me. Then they themselves also will answer, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You? Then He will answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.

NOW WHEN YOU EXPRESS YOUR SPIRITUAL LOVE in this way, by contributing to the needs of others, being hospitable to strangers, will you at times be taken advantage of? Probably so...and so what? Just remember that our Lord will never allow anything to be brought upon us that He Himself has not also experienced and there were those who took advantage of Him, but grace is greater.

Romans 12:14-21 At this point Paul takes the issue of our love and directs it outwardly, to those who are not in the body of Christ.

Tomorrow morning you will be back at your jobs, back in the office, in the shop, back in school, and back in the fallen world filled with fallen people.

So of them will not like you, some will harass you, even persecute you. What does love do at that point?

AGAIN PAUL LISTS SIX descriptions of our love in the world.

Romans 12:14

Bless those who persecute you, bless and curse not.

Paul sets this off from the previous statements by making both verbs, bless (used twice) and curse, imperative moods. These are commands.

v 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

v 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

v 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

v 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

v 19-21 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath {of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Let's look at each of these functions individually:

FIRST: Love speaks well even of those who persecute you:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not.

This is a tough one, when we are spoken against our initial human reaction is to get even. We see the harm caused by others as a good reason to cause harm to them. This is one of those things in which grace is hard...but remember the Lord Jesus on the Cross, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.

This is blessing spoken upon those who hated the Lord Jesus, who wanted Him dead.

When you someone cuts you off in traffic, you want to yell at them, call them all kinds of name, roll down the window, tell them they are a jerk...but love blesses them...bless you, you jerk.

No, not even that. The impossibility of this mandate causes us to be so dependent upon the Holy Spirit that the Life of Jesus Christ will shine through us rather than our own get even nature.

Second: Our love for others adjusts to consider their moods and needs.

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

This simply tells us that love is sensitive to others. When one is in sorrow we do not bubble over and when one is rejoicing we do not try to diminish their joy with our heartache.

I THINK PAUL PUT REJOICING first because this is often the most difficult to do, especially when you are having a bad day.

Someone at work gets that promotion, or a fellow student get the best grade, a raise is given, a success is achieved and our human tendency is so often one of envy or self pity.

But love puts the other person first and says truly I am glad for you.

We can encourage others in their joy and in their sorrow:

Ephesians 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Next, this love does not show partiality.

Romans 12:16

Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Remember in our study of James how much time he spent on the showing of partiality. It was almost as if in that first book of the NT God used to James to forever prohibit this from this church.

James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with {an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, You sit here in a good place, and you say to the poor man, You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool, have you not made distinctions

among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

When Jesus came to Jerusalem for that last Passover He did not stay at the Hotel David or the Intercontinental. He stayed in the little village of Bethany with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. A simple home but one filled with people who loved their Lord.

To be haughty in mind is to be conceited.

Do not be wise in your estimation...in other words watch out when you start believing what you think you are.

This love is not covert or underhanded.

Romans 12:17

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Paul tells us not to react to others with evil even when others treat us with evil. But to repay what is right and do so in the presence of all men.

Now that last part takes away the silent covert revenge that we might seek.

That is the type of silent revenge Paul speaks of. We are to repay what we repaying the sight of all men.

Our love seeks to live in peace with others.

Romans 12:18

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Paul puts a disclaimer in this verse...as it depends on you.

There are so people who will never allow you to be at peace with them. Maybe this is a neighbor or even a family member. But do not let the lack of peace begin with you.

Remember the old saying: It takes two to tango, well it also takes two to tangle. If you refuse to tangle, at least as it depends upon you, you have done what you can do.

Pray about it, and then leave the person and the situation in the hands of God.

Our love does not try to get even.

Romans 12:19

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written (Deut 32:35), Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

While Paul goes back to the OT Law for this principle we also can note that it is mentioned throughout the NT. Here, Hebrew 10:30, I Thessalonians 4:6.

So it is a principle that transcends dispensations and is directly applied to every generation of believers and in every culture.

Romans 12:20

But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.

Paul then gives the antithesis of vengeance and quotes from Proverbs 25:21-22.

This again is a principle that is found in the OT, and in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:43-44 You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.

And it is mentioned here. This is what is called correspondence. We have a principle given in a prior dispensation and then re-stated for us in our dispensation.

The phrase: For in doing so you will heap burning coals upon his head, is open to two interpretations.

A figure for the burning pain that occurs when hostility is repaid by love. Most who support this interpretation go to an Arab proverb that speaks of coals in the heart and fire in the liver as an extreme form of insult.

Denny even goes so far as to say that this is the form of vengeance open to us to repay hostility with kindness and heap shame upon our persecutors.

A second interpretation is more literal. In the ancient world BIC lighters, matches, etc., were not available. A person kept the home fire burning at all times. If it went out he would have to go to his neighbor with a pail and borrow coals. To heap

coals means that enough are given so that some will still be burning when he arrived home to re-start his fire.

Upon the head may look at the way things were carried in the ancient oriental world. In containers on the head.

I favor the second interpretation. Because the first still deals with vengeance, just a more subtle form.

If we have the mental attitude that we are really going to get to those who have hurt us by being kind to them, is this not revenge? It is still seeking justice only the justice is smothered over with sweetness which I would see as a form of hypocrisy.

The believer says, Well I can't give hurt for hurt, I cannot repay evil with evil so I'll get back at my enemies another way, by being kind and shaming them.

So the mental attitude is still one of getting back, getting even...the method is just different.

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

In this concluding statement Paul goes back to imperative mood verbs of command.

OVERCOME is NIKAW our word NIKE.

EVIL is KAKOS which is evil at its very source regardless of how it may look or effect the moment. Sometimes evil has an attractive and beautiful side, sometimes it may appear to be the expedient thing to do, even the right thing for the moment, but it is not.

GOOD is AGATHOS the absolute good of God, intrinsic good. Not comparable to evil or even to other manifestations of that which is good by comparison.

The only way to have this is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and dependent upon the power and provision of God.

PRINCIPLE: We do not overcome evil by attacking evil but by manifesting the good of spiritual and Christian Love. WE deal with the authentic to defeat the counterfeit plan of Satan.

ILLUSTRATION: Secret Service agents who are trained to spot counterfeit money. They never see the counterfeit, only the real thing.

This last verse of Romans 12 provides an excellent introduction to the first part of Romans 13 because in every age there are Christians who want to go out and fight evil, especially evil in government. We have them today. But that is not God's solution to evil.
