

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 12:3-8 - "Thinking Rightly as Members of Christ's Body"

Two things summarize our relationship to God:

- A. The consecration of our bodies (vs. 1)
- B. The transformation of our minds (vs. 2)

Now that our bodies are consecrated and our minds transformed; How are we to think about ourselves, fellow believers, and our spiritual gifts?

Paul answers these questions in verses 3-8.

I. Thinking Rightly About Ourselves (vs. 3)

Romans 12:3, *"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."*

Notice that this is for everyone – think!

1st – the Negative – Don't think more highly of yourself (vs. 3)

Literally – Do not super think of yourself – do not get hyper about yourself.

Perhaps Paul put this first because it is such a natural tendency for us (our flesh).

It's the old problem of pride and it can take two forms:

a. You put yourself up – you brag

- your achievements
- your wealth
- your name drop
- your race
- your religion
- your position
- your power

b) You put yourself down – it's the reverse of pride

How are we to think about ourselves?

2nd – Think of yourselves soberly (vs. 3)

Instead of super thoughts of self, there is to be sober thoughts of self.

It's seeing yourself as God see's you:

Ray Stedman – When I get up in the morning I try to remind myself of three things: *First*, I am made in the image of God. I am not an animal and I don't have to behave like an animal, because I have an ability within me, given to me by God himself, the ability to react and relate to God. Therefore I can behave as a man and not as a beast. *Second*, I am filled with the Spirit of God. The most amazing thing has happened! Though I didn't deserve it in the least degree, I have the power of God at work within me. I have become in some sense, the bearer of God, and God himself is willing to be at work in me in terms of the little problems and the little pressures that I am going to go through this day. *Third*, I remind myself that I am part of the plan of God, that God is working out all things to a great and final purpose and significance and meaning. It is not just a meaningless thing that I am going to go through. Even the smallest incident, the most apparently insignificant word or relationship is involved in that great plan. Therefore all has meaning and purpose.

That gives me confidence without conceit. I have a sense of being able to cope, of being able to handle life. I know I don't deserve this gift of worth and grace, and yet I have it. Therefore I can't be conceit about it, but I can be confident in it. I don't know anything else that can set you on your feet like that.

- Made in God's image
- Saved and filled with the Holy Spirit
- Part of His plan – confidence without conceit

Notice the words in verse 3, "...according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Measure is a standard by which to measure ourselves.

It's not our feelings; it's not other people, or our circumstances and accomplishments.

It's The Faith (the teaching of scripture) and Jesus Christ

Philippians 2:5, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*"

Think of yourself with an attitude of true humility.

Remember, our salvation, sanctification, and service are all because of God's grace.

II. Thinking Rightly About Fellow Believers (vs. 4-5)

Romans 12:4-5, *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."*

Paul now uses the illustration of the human body as a picture of the Church.

There is such a great need today for right thinking about the Church.

1. There is only one body (vs. 4) – **Unity**
2. All members have not the same office (vs. 4) – **Diversity**

The Church needs both!

F.F. Bruce – Diversity, not uniformity, is the mark of God's handiwork. It is so in nature; it is so in grace, too, and nowhere more so than in the Christian community. Here are many men and women with the most diverse kinds of parentage, environment, temperament, and capacity. Not only so, but sincere they became Christians they have been endowed by God with a great variety of spiritual gifts as well. Yet because and by means of that diversity, all can co-operate for the good of the whole.

Be and do what God has called you too!

3. We need each other (vs. 5) – "...and every one members one of another." - **Interdependency**

The Christian life is not to be lived in isolation from other members of the body.

Don't cheat others!

This is the problem with the Church today:

- radical individualism – making your own rules
- narcissism – no truth

III. Thinking Rightly About Our Gifts (vs. 6-8)

Romans 12:6-8, *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth,*

on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

- A. Every Christian is given a gift
- B. We don't all have the same gift (vs. 6)
- C. They are grace gifts (vs. 6)
- D. They are given by the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:8, *"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;"*

- E. They are to be used for the common good of the Church

1 Corinthians 12:7, *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."*

- F. To bring unity, maturity and the glory of God

If used in humility and love.

Paul list's Seven gifts: (also see 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4 & 1 Peter 4)

1. Prophecy (vs. 6) - to speak the word of God (notice the word "faith")
2. Ministry (vs. 7) – to serve (deacon); the gift of helps

Literally, Just do it! – serve them well

3. Teaching (vs. 7) – get going teaching!
4. Exhortation (vs. 8) – to encourage and to comfort

Illustration – Barnabas

It's the same word used to describe the Holy Spirit

5. Giving (vs. 8)

How to do it:

- give generously
- give willingly
- give joyfully

6. Ruleth (vs. 8) – to lead – leadership

It's to take care of; give aid to

Notice we are told to be diligent (don't wing it)

7. Showing Mercy (vs. 8)

Showing kindness to people in need

Like offering rides to church!

APPLICATION: Taken From Romans 12:1-2

John McArthur, Jr. – The purpose of offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices is not mystical or monastic but eminently practical. Devotion to the Lord and active, faithful ministry for Him are inseparable. **We cannot be truly sacrificed to Him and be inactive in His work.** And, on the other hand, we cannot be truly successful in His work without being genuinely devoted to Him. Service to God brings honor to Him and blessing for us only when it is the outflow of our worship in offering ourselves as living sacrifices. Such commitment naturally and inevitably produces effective ministry. **There is no godly commitment without God-blessed ministry, and no God-blessed ministry without godly commitment.**