

(1) 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! 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.

(3) For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

(4) For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

(6) Having then gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

### Think on These Things

- 1) Altar sacrifices are a primary focus in the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy. Take a look at Leviticus 1:3, 10; 2:1, and 3:1. What were the primary conditions for selecting animal or grain sacrifices? What does Paul say in verse 1 is to be the “condition” of your own sacrifice?

**Animals had to be ‘normal,’ i.e., without blemish, and grains (food) needed to be ‘fine’ (pure, as in the best form). The condition specified in Romans 12:1 is that our own sacrifice must be ‘holy.’ Holy means clean, pure, and completely dedicated to God or God’s work and services. It must be more than ‘any old thing will do’...! The concept of holy includes the ‘best.’**

- 2) Think about the outcome for the animal. What is that outcome? So how do you reconcile being a “living” sacrifice with your body? Paul specifically says here, “body.” He doesn’t use the term mind or heart. Why body? See Romans 6:11-14; Galatians 2:20; and James 2:14-18.

**In any animal sacrifice, the animal is put to death. The oxymoron of ‘living sacrifice’ would be hard to understand without the earlier chapters of Romans. We are taught that ‘we must be dead to sin’ and ‘alive to God.’ So, to provide the sacrifice God seeks, we must set aside our attraction to sin (i.e., die to sin) and live new lives directed by the Holy Spirit.**

**Paul uses ‘body’ because we use our bodies to do all kinds of things, good and bad. The passions and drives that compel our behaviors are self-serving and mostly sinful. Instead of using our bodies in this way, God wants us to offer them up for His righteous works. Faith must be more than a mental agreement or academic exercise.**

- 3) Verse 2 is in “command” structure in Greek. We are commanded to do two things; what are the commands? Do you think we should try to be like everybody else?

Command 1 – **Do NOT be conformed to this world.**

Command 2 – **BE transformed by the renewal of your mind**

Be like others? **No, we should not be like everybody else ('the world'). This world is not our home. We should strive to understand God's plan for us and follow it obediently.**

- 4) Let's focus on a couple of terms here. Transform comes from the Greek "metamorphousthe," from which we get the English "metamorphosis." Remember elementary school: it is the caterpillar changing into a butterfly. Now read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Since we can't transform ourselves, how does this happen? See John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Ephesians 1:13-14.

**2 Corinthians 5 says we are 'new creations' in Christ. John records that the Holy Spirit will take all that is Christ's and glorify Him. 1 Corinthians 2 says the Spirit helps us understand spiritual things that come from God, while natural man cannot grasp them. The Spirit's presence is our guarantee of being God's children, and that God seals us through the Spirit when we believe. We also know that being 'born again' - the new creation - is the specific work of the Spirit (John 3:3-8).**

- 5) When your mind is transformed and "made new again," what are you able to see and understand?

**Romans 12:2 says transformation allows us to grasp God's Will about what is good and acceptable.**

- 6) What is the Christian's perspective on life supposed to be (v. 3)? See also Micah 6:8; Philippians 2:3-8; and 1 Peter 5:5.

**We are to avoid taking too much pride in ourselves: make sober self-assessments. We are to walk humbly with God and others, following Jesus' example. God opposes the proud!**

- 7) The irony is that the teaching from Q6 is covered in all three major passages on spiritual gifts; why do you suppose that is? See Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 12:21-26; and Ephesians 4:2-3.

**People with many gifts and capabilities may be drawn to an inflated sense of self-worth...! God has a purpose --- and place of service --- for every believer, and humility leads to unity.**

- 8) Let's identify the spiritual gifts from today's passage. List the gifts found in verse 6-8.

| <u>Gift</u>                 | <u>Guidance on how to use it</u>                                                             |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Prophecy (preaching)</b> | <b>in proportion to one's faith (1 Peter – as handling 'God's oracles')</b>                  |
| <b>Serving</b>              | <b>as one serves others (1 Peter – in God's strength, with hospitality and no grumbling)</b> |
| <b>Teaching</b>             | <b>as one teaches others</b>                                                                 |
| <b>Exhortation</b>          | <b>as one exhorts others</b>                                                                 |
| <b>Contributing</b>         | <b>give generously to others (money or items)</b>                                            |
| <b>Leading</b>              | <b>lead with zeal and passion (a dedicated commitment)</b>                                   |
| <b>Acts of Mercy</b>        | <b>cheerfully extend mercy (forgiveness, help, or support) to others</b>                     |

**NOTE –** The three primary passages announcing Christian spiritual gifts are found here: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-31; and Ephesians 4:11-13, with church applications given in 1 Peter 4:7-11.

- 9) Let's summarize: why does God give individuals spiritual gifts (v. 5 and the NOTE passages)? Do you know your own spiritual gift(s)?

**Individual gifts are given for a Church congregation's common good (1 Corinthians), to unify faith and mature our knowledge of God (Ephesians), and to be done in loving service for each other as good stewards --- so that God may be glorified (1 Peter)!**

**"Do you know yours?" is a personal question. Gifts are a Bible study unto themselves!**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: