THE BOOK OF ROMANS

The Law of Connection: Paul touches hearts then asks for a response

After climbing an enormous theological hill, Paul shifts gears in Romans 12. The first 11 chapters provide a basis for our belief, but from chapter 12 to the end of the book, the apostle supplies a basis for our behavior: first doctrine; then duty. This is how Paul always attempted to connect with his readers.

Paul pleads with his friends, based on God’s mercy, to lovingly surrender themselves to the Lord. He urges them to respond in 4 ways:

1. Presentation: we are to present our bodies to God as living sacrifices (v.1)
2. Separation: We are to avoid conforming to the world’s ways (v.2)
3. Transformation: We are to renew our minds and thus change our lives (v.2)
4. Demonstration: We are to prove we belong to God by doing His will (v.2)

Spiritual Gifts

Paul describes seven spiritual gifts, distributed to different members in the body of Christ (Romans 12: 6-8)

The list of gifts in Romans 12 is not exhaustive. They are commonly called “motivational gifts” which means they are central to our lives, the hub of the wheel around which our particular set of gifts revolve. Paul’s list includes:

1. Gift of Prophecy: to challenge others by declaring God’s truth and calling for action
2. Gift of Service or Ministry: to serve others and meet their needs
3. Gift of Teaching: to explain truth so that others can understand and apply it.
4. Gift of Exhortation: to encourage, strengthen, and inspire others to be their best.
5. Gift of Giving: to generously share what God has given.
6. Gift of Leadership: to govern and oversee others so that the group moves forward.
7. Gift of Mercy: to empathize with, cheer, and show compassion to those who hurt

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to present your body as a living sacrifice for God?

2. Dwight Moody observed, "The problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar." What does this say about our tendency to hesitate in surrendering ourselves to God? How can you offer yourself and your spiritual gifts as a living sacrifice to God?

3. What do you think Paul means when he says you should be "transformed by the renewing of your mind?"

4.  Share a time when you blessed someone who persecuted you. What was the result?

5. What advice does Paul offer about getting along with one another in the body of Christ?

6. What are some areas of your life where you need to be more patient and seek God's will?

7.  What spiritual gifts do you think God has given you? How has this enabled you to be part of the body?

8. When and where did you first hear the gospel- the good news that Jesus loves you and died for your sins?

9. Paul longed to visit the Roman Church, but had been prevented from doing so. In God’s providence, Paul's inability to visit Rome, live under house arrest for years, and prison sentences gave him time and reason to write many letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, etc) to churches which we cherish today. Has there been a time where you wanted to do something for God’s kingdom, yet He didn’t allow it …and it has fruited even greater things for the God's Kingdom?