

Dear Friends and Family,

The Library of Congress states that there are over 650 named muscles in the human body, with some sources stating there are as many as 840, depending on how they are classified. That is just counting muscles! This number does not include tendons, organs, or bones which comprise the rest of our body. And all of these parts are controlled by the millions of synapses firing in the brain every second. Our bodies are an absolute miracle in scope, intricacy and function - all of our parts work together as a whole.

For You formed my inward parts;  
You wove me in my mother's womb.  
I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Wonderful are Your works,  
And my soul knows it very well.  
Psalm 139:13-14

The 12th chapter of Romans begins with the word “therefore”. This reminds us to look back at the context which came before this statement. Recall that chapter 11 reiterated that Israel was not being forsaken by God, instead Gentiles were grafted into that natural branch. Romans 11 explains how the Gospel was available to non-Jews. Romans 11 then ends with a few rhetorical questions. “Who has known the mind of God? Who has been His counselor?”

Romans 12 begins with “Therefore,” as Paul begins the chapter with an urgent request.

Day 1: READ Romans 12:1-2

What is Paul’s urgent request of us?

Go back and read about the Old sacrificial system described in Leviticus 1-5. What is it we are to present as a sacrifice?

Compare and contrast conformation vs. transformation.

Why is it important that we renew our mind? What does this mean?

Day 2: READ Romans 12:3-8

Paul continues his admonition that we are to place ourselves below others, not thinking more highly of ourselves. (Matthew 22:39).

What does it mean that God has allotted to each a measure of faith?

How does this pertain to us not thinking too highly of ourselves?

We are called to teach and to disciple those younger in the faith for what reason? Refer to verses 4-8.

Meditate on what it means to be ONE body, yet have MANY parts. What if your feet tried to walk in two different directions at the same time?

Day 3: READ Romans 12:9-13

List out all of the things Paul outlines that we should and should not do in these verses.

Which of these character traits is the most difficult for you?

Which is the easiest?

How can you grow this week in these ways?

Day 4: READ Romans 12:14-21

Paul's transitions here into how we are to treat or interact with others.

Again, take the time to list these traits out and meditate on them as they pertain to you personally.

I want to elaborate on one specific instruction here:

Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Paul is NOT saying "do what the world proclaims is right." Paul IS saying "do what is right, based on the absolute truth of scripture, in front of all men." He is reiterating what other passages in Scripture command:

2 Corinthians 6:3 - "We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry..."

1 Peter 2:5 "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Paul addresses this topic further in Romans 14. We are to live a life holy and pleasing to God. The morals of the world change like shifting sand. The truth of Scripture and God are unchanging. Without an absolute standard of right and wrong, there is no standard. When the moral compass is made by man, the world falls into disarray.

Paul ends this chapter with some encouragement that may be difficult to implement in our flesh, but possible through Christ. If we live our lives in the manner outlined, we will be persecuted for our faith. However, through Christ, we do not turn to vengeance. Instead we place our trust in the Lord and do the opposite of what the world would tell us to do.

"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 ON HIS HEAD."

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

Walking with you,

Pastor Matt

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*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*