

ROMANS

THE GRACE OF GOD: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Love

• Romans 12 : 9 - 21 •

Week 21

DEVOTION

This week we see what “presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” looks like through a list of ~20 commandments/instructions. Each day, meditate on 4 (i.e. Day 1: #1-4, Day 2: #5-8, etc.) and consider how you can grow in them. Wording has been taken from the KJV.

Monday

1) Let love be without dissimulation (Philippians 2:19-21)

•Dissimulation is a false or counterfeit appearance which conceals the real opinions or purpose. Paul notes that Timothy naturally cared for people’s state without self-seeking motives, and that it was a rare quality, even in the church! Not praying for someone is a potential indicator we are not loving them properly (1 Samuel 12:23) – what are other indicators?

2) Abhor that which is evil (Psalm 36:1-4)

•Reflect: are there things you do, attend, listen to or watch that you wouldn’t if Christ was standing beside you? (Does He not live inside you)? Are there social norms (abortion, sex outside of marriage between a man and a woman, etc.) that are contrary to God’s will that are fine with you? (Is your judgement more righteous than His)? Are there worldly ideas (theory of evolution, etc.) that contradict God’s Word that you have received? (Are you true and Him a liar)?

3) Cleave to that which is good (Joshua 22:5)

•Cleaving is an action. Are you intentional about seeking the Lord? Do you set aside time to seek him in prayer / reading of the Word / worship – preparing your heart to do what is good and pleasing in His sight?

4) Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another (2 Corinthians 8:9)

•Reflect: are you self-seeking, or are you more concerned about the welfare of others? How can you grow in this?

Tuesday

5) **Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord (Ephesians 6:5-8)**

·Reflect: do you become lazy when others are not watching? Or do you continue to work diligently as unto the Lord?

6) **Rejoicing in hope (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)**

·God has given us all things in Christ (Revelation 21:7). Do you have a posture of rejoicing in the incredible hope God has given us in Jesus Christ, or one of murmuring/complaining? How can you grow in this?

7) **Patient in tribulation (Matthew 13:20-21)**

·Are you easily shaken in times of trouble? Or are you deeply rooted in the faith of Jesus Christ? Are you easily provoked to anger, despair, doubt, etc.? Do you think #6 (rejoicing in hope), and #8 (being constant in prayer) contribute to patience in tribulation?

8) **Continuing instant in prayer (ESV: being constant in prayer). (1 John 5:14-15)**

·Our God is the living and true God, unlike all other gods that can't do anything! Christians that are constant in prayer and see Him answer in faithfulness, and, as Psalm 26:7-8 says, 'with thanksgiving...tell of all His wondrous works' have much joy. As it says in John 16:24 "ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." What steps can you take to grow in prayer?

Wednesday

9) **Distributing to the necessity of saints (2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 provide a detailed example of this)**

·Thinking back to #1 above, this is a proof of love. We are encouraged to use the blessings God has given us to be a blessing to believers in need, locally and around the globe. Does anything keep you from giving cheerfully?

10) **Given to hospitality**

·Listed as a requirement for bishops in 1 Timothy 3:2; all believers are here called to be hospitable. When is the last time you hosted someone new to the church in your home, or invited them out to coffee/lunch? What steps can you take to grow in this area of service to Christ?

11) **Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. (Matthew 5:44-45)**

·We need to abide in Christ and have God's heart and mind towards people to be able to bless those that are hurting us. What a beautiful victory it is when we have love for our enemies despite any harm they are doing to us. Reflect on your circumstances and how this applies to you.

12) **Rejoice with them that do rejoice**

·Though we are instructed to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4), oftentimes another's rejoicing is the result of something going well for them. Thoughts of envy can rob us of the blessing of rejoicing with them, but how greatly our joy is multiplied when we rejoice with others in their victories! Reflect.

Thursday

13) **Weep with them that weep**

·As we share in other's rejoicings, we are called to share in their sorrows. We see this in Psalm 35:11-16 where the Psalmist humbled himself and fasted for certain people who had been sick; conversely, and sadly, when he was in adversity, they rejoiced 😞. Is there someone you know that is weeping that you can come alongside?

14) **Be of the same mind one toward another**

·God promised that He would write His law in our minds (Hebrews 10:16) and we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) and as such, as we grow in the Lord, we will come to unity of mind among believers. If there is disagreement, we are called to resolve it in submission to the Lord (Philippians 4:2). Reflect.

15) **Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.**

·How easily we can get absorbed/swept along by currents of the world (social media trends, extra-Biblical ideas), and lose sight of the good works God has prepared for us to do before our faces (our families, church, neighbours, co-workers, etc.). As soon as we become wise in our own conceits, we have lost perspective (Isaiah 55:9). Reflect.

16) **Recompense to no man evil for evil.**

·This comes so naturally to our old nature (he hurt me, he deserves to be hurt back, and why shouldn't I be the one to do it?). These useless tit for tat battles can rob us of much joy (think of families with kids always fighting to 'get even' with each other, for example). As #20 says "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Reflect.

Friday

17) **Provide things honest in the sight of all men.**

·See 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 (8:21 in particular) regarding the collection of a financial offering to help believers in need. Three overseers were appointed, men who had been tested and proved diligent in the past, so that there was no opportunity to question the integrity of the endeavour. As Christians, for Christ's sake, it is important that we do not 'cut any corners,' providing opportunity for accusations/reproach (whether true or false). Reflect.

18) **If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.**

·Sometimes this is not possible (Psalm 120:7). Prayerfully consider your own circumstances - are there any adversarial relations for which you can take a step towards peace?

19) **Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.**

·1 Peter 2:21-24. When we try to avenge ourselves, we give no place to God to show Himself strong on our behalf. Reflect - are you giving place for God to be God in your life?

20) **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

·This encompasses many scenarios. Disobeying God (repaying evil for evil, resorting to sinful vices to cope with evil circumstances, etc.) does not lead to victory. To overcome we need to submit to God, Christ is our victory. Reflect - are you being overcome, or are you overcoming in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).