



The Gospel Life

God's grace in living day to day:

The Gospel in Practice

Romans 12-16



Life Group Guide 2024

Part 5

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GOD'S GRACE IN LIVING DAY TO DAY

Romans 12-16 (part 5)

As we embark on the book's final section of God's Grace in Living Day to Day, we will learn about the implications of all that we learned in the book's first 11 chapters. Once we are declared righteous, we are then to live a life of service to God and others. What does this service look like? How is it manifested? How then should we live?

These last five chapters speak to practical Christian living as detailed and precise as perhaps any other comparative section in the Bible. Paul gives specific instructions as to how Christians are to relate to one another. Romans 12:10 gives a great example when Paul encourages us to *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*

As the section progresses, Paul answers many questions we still have regarding the validity and worth of secular governments. The apostle makes an overarching statement in chapter 13, verse 1 saying, *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.* Paul then goes further by explaining the rationale behind this weighty command and how Christians are to live.

This fifth section includes Paul's pointed discussion related to the believer's freedom in Christ, and how a proper application of these freedoms will shield the Christian from legalism on one end and license on the other. As we study this section, our aim and prayer is that we will see Scripture's clear call for Christians to live differently on account of being saved from our sins. Amen.

PRAYER | CARE | SHARE

PRAYER Leads to **CARE** Opening Ways to **SHARE** the Gospel.

The Prayer, Care and Share strategy is an evangelistic tool intended to equip Christians to pray for unbelievers, show acts of kindness, and share their personal testimony and Gospel with the unredeemed.

PRAYER

When talking about sharing our faith, "Prayer" is asking God to prepare our hearts and the heart of the unbeliever. That our lives would be holy. That our hearts would long for the salvation of the people around us. That we would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and that the unbeliever's heart would be open to the truth of the gospel.

CARE

"Care" can be described as "building relationships that clearly display a love for God and a love for the unbeliever." Our desire is that we would be a living example of Christ's love for them, and because of this they would be open to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As it has been said before, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

SHARE

Our evangelism starts with Prayer, continues with Care, and finally arrives at Share. "Share" can be described as being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading as we clearly explain the complete Gospel of Jesus Christ to an unbeliever who is open to receive it.

LIVING SURRENDERED



Share Together

As you look back on your own life, describe a way you have been transformed through God's Word.

Study Together

1. These verses are built on Paul's previous statement about God's plan for unredeemed Israel (11:25-36). Discuss the relationship between God's mercy and worship from 11:30-31 and 12:1. When we consider God's mercies, how does it lead you to a place of surrender (a living sacrifice)?
2. Worship is an expression that happens both inward and outward. According to verse 12:1b, how does Paul describe spiritual worship? What is the meaning of holy? What does it look like to present yourself as holy and acceptable to God?
3. As a group discuss what "conformed" to this world means. Contrast this with Paul's command to "be transformed" by the renewal of your mind (v2). How is this imperative truth foundational to spiritual worship? What role does the Word of God, prayer and fellowship have in helping live a transformed/holy life?
4. Being transformed means having our minds renewed. What does it mean to have a "renewed mind"? What is the mindset that the world promotes? How does a biblical orientation in our thinking help us better test and discern God's will?



ROMANS 12:1-2

Notes

- Romans 11:25-36
- 2 Corinthians 10:5
- Ephesians 4:18
- Colossians 3:2

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Discuss your burden to share Christ with the unredeemed. How has your redemption story shaped the burden you have for others?



HUMILITY IN GRACE



Share Together

Discuss the different ways that people serve the church that have impacted your family and their spiritual walk.

Study Together

1. Paul's model of ministry was humility; he understood that grace leads to humility (v3). How are grace and humility distinct yet interconnected?
2. Why is humility key for the church body to function and grow? How is the body a perfect example of humility (v4-5)?
3. God's design for the body is that it works in harmony with its different parts. In verses 6-8, how is Paul encouraging the body to accomplish their gifts? Why is it important for someone to recognize the gift that God has given them?
4. Paul reminds the early church that these gifts are to be completed with outward focus on the church body. What would the body look like if these gifts had an inward focus in their practice?
5. In what manner are we supposed to use the gifts God has given us (v6-8)?



ROMANS 12:3-8

Notes

-Philippians 2:3

-James 4:6

-1 Corinthians 12:12

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Consider over the next few months sharing your testimony with one another. How does hearing someone else's experiences remind you that God is a God of grace? How does it help bolster your faith?



LOVE IN GRACE



Share Together

Discuss how your perspective of love has changed as you have grown as a disciple.

Study Together

1. Read together 1 John 4:7-10 and discuss how God's love distinguishes the disciple from the rest of the world.
2. What is genuine love? Is love a natural response for the Christian (v9)?
3. Keeping the rest of this passage in mind, what does it mean to abhor what is evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22)? Discuss what it means to outdo one another in showing honor (v10).
4. Look at verses 11-13 and the list of encouragements found in the text. Which of these has had the greatest impact on your life? Which do you find the most challenging?



ROMANS 12:9-13

Notes

- Colossians 3:12-14
- 1 John 4:7-10
- 1 Thessalonians 5:22

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

How has this week's study encouraged you to be more bold in sharing your faith with others?



EMPATHY IN GRACE



Share Together

Share a time when you were persecuted or treated differently because of your beliefs. How did you respond?

Study Together

1. Why does Paul encourage the church to understand and share the feelings of one another? Where do we see reminders of God's empathy in scripture?
2. In verse 15 Paul encourages the believer to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. How does a disciple grow in their empathy?
3. Contrast sympathy and empathy (v15). How does our empathy toward others illustrate Christ's love for us?
4. Why are we drawn to associate ourselves with people of higher means and status? Why is it important for the believer to associate with the lowly (v14)? How is this a picture of the gospel?



ROMANS 12:14-16

Notes

-Hebrews 4:15

-Romans 8:26

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

What role does empathy have in being an ambassador for Christ?



PEACE IN GRACE



Share Together

Consider what it takes to live peaceably with others. Does living a life of peace mean a life without conflict?

Study Together

1. How would you re-state verse 17 in your own words? Why do you think Scripture reminds us that “good” ends do not justify evil means?
2. How does verse 17 reflect the influence of Jesus on Paul (Matt. 5:39-41)? How might this verse help us think of Paul as a fellow disciple of Jesus, much like ourselves?
3. What do you think verse 18 teaches us about personal responsibility and our inability to control other people? Why is peace a fitting characteristic for a Christian to be known for?
4. How does verse 21 reiterate verse 17, while also expanding on it? What do you think it means to “conquer evil with good”?



ROMANS 12:17-21

Notes

-Matthew 5:39-41

-John 14:27

-Hebrews 12:14

-Isaiah 26:3

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Why do you think Paul keeps emphasizing humility in this chapter? How can pride ruin relationships and your testimony to others?



RESPONSIBILITY TO AUTHORITIES



Share Together

Who are some of the authorities God has put in your life presently? Share a time when submitting to authority was difficult.

Study Together

1. In the context of what we've studied in chapter 12, the true marks of the believer, why is it important that the Lord is the believer's ultimate source of authority? Why are believers called to subject themselves to governing authorities as well?
2. Human institutions and governing authorities have been put in place by God himself (v1). How has Paul provided clarity on the position authority has in the believer's life and how it is different from the unbeliever (v3-4)?
3. Consider Paul's conclusion and the two-fold reasoning in why someone is to be subject to authority (v5-6). What role does the believer's conscience have in being subject to authority? How does a believer show respect to and honor an unbelieving authority that they disagree with (13:7)?
4. After reading Chapter 13:1-7 together, contrast being subject to and resisting authorities. In what ways does this concept relate to the gospel? What does this reveal about God?



ROMANS 13:1-7

Notes

-1 Peter 2:13-15

-Matthew 28:18

-Acts 5:27-32

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Discuss how being subject to authorities strengthens our witness to unbelievers.



LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW



Share Together

Discuss what Christian love is and how it differs from how the world defines love.

Study Together

1. Take a moment to consider Christ's love and the debt He has paid for us as believers. What does it mean to "owe no one anything, except to love?" (v8)?
2. Agape love is a selfless love that unites and heals. How do the commandments in verse 9 show the agape love Christ wants us to have (John 15:13)?
3. A summary of the law, to "love your neighbor as yourself", is not a new command (Lev 19:18), but rather an unfulfilled one outside of Christ (1 John 3:16). How are these commands loving others as yourself?
4. Read Luke 6:32-36 as you reflect on the measure of love Christians are to give. Recall the definition of worldly love from our Share Together time. Compare this to the love that Jesus calls us to in this text. How are they fundamentally different?



ROMANS 13:8-10

Notes

-Romans 6:23

-Romans 5:8

-John 15:13

-Luke 6:32-36

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

How can we use the truths from tonight's conversation to pursue those who have not yet put their faith in Christ?



LAWLESSNESS IN DARKNESS



Share Together

Share what hour of the day you typically wake up. Are you someone who wakes easily or likes to hit snooze? What is the lure to continue to sleep and press snooze?

Study Together

1. Paul uses the imagery of sleep to call the believer to spiritually wake up (v11). Discuss the urgency Paul expresses and what it looks like to be a “sleeping” Christian.
2. Discuss what Paul means in verse 12 that, “the night is far gone; the day is at hand.” What does it mean to live in the light (1 John 1:6-7)?
3. How does casting off the works of darkness compare to the verses we previously studied 13:8-9? How do these lawless works gratify the desires of the flesh?
4. What does it mean to put on the armor of light of the Lord Jesus Christ?



ROMANS 13:11-14

Notes

-Ephesians 2:1-5

-1 John 1:6-7

-John 8:12

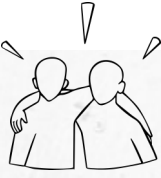
Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

What are some of the challenges you have in being a light in the darkness? Close your time by praying for one another.



RECEIVING ONE ANOTHER



Share Together

Share a time when your faith was weak. How were you strengthened? Was there someone who came alongside you? If so, how?

Study Together

1. How are we to receive someone who is less mature (or weaker) and has a different conviction than you (v1)? What does it mean to be weaker in faith (v2-3)?
2. Paul reminds us that there is one Judge - and it is not us (v4)! We should be cautious not to hinder another believer's spiritual growth. In the context of weaker believers' spiritual growth, what does it mean that God has "welcomed" them or that they will be "upheld" by the Lord (v4)?
3. The believer's practices (opinions) and principles (truth) occasionally meld together and lead to unnecessary arguments and divisions (v5-6). When addressing our different practices, why is it helpful to keep the principle first? How does Paul model this for the early church in verses 7-8?
4. Consider that in Christ's death and resurrection, He is Lord over all. Discuss how Christ being Lord over all gives Him authority to be the judge over all (v9-12).



ROMANS 14:1-12

Notes

-2 Corinthians 5:6-7

-Philippians 2:1-30

-Hebrews 12:1-2

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Discuss how Christian care and unity reflect the gospel and aid in our witness to unbelievers.



BUILDING UP ONE ANOTHER



Share Together

Share your response to rules as a child growing up. Has your attitude toward rules changed? Why?

Study Together

1. What are some of the stumbling blocks or hindrances Paul references in this passage? What are some of the stumbling blocks the church faces today?
2. Although Paul shares that he believes nothing is “unclean in itself” (v14), he exhorts the believers to adapt their practices for the purpose of building one another up. What does he mean to “not destroy the one for whom Christ died” (v15)?
3. Consider the context of this passage and what it means to be “walking in love” (v15). How do the characteristics Paul mentions in verses 17-19 reflect the kingdom of God and Christian love? How does the Christian pursue these in the midst of differing opinions and practices?
4. As you reflect on Paul's statements related to faith (v22-23), discuss the role faith has for the growing Christian who's trying to live out God's word. What does it look like for the mature disciple to build up the growing believer?



ROMANS 14:13-23

Notes

-Ephesians 5:2

-Luke 9:23

-1 Peter 2:2

-Philippians 1:6

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

How would you describe the difference in your life since coming to know Christ? Who has God put in your life for you to share the difference Jesus has made?



CHRISTIAN HARMONY



Share Together

Share a time when you had to make a sacrifice or a decision based on the conviction of a fellow believer.

Study Together

1. What does Paul mean to bear with the weaker saint (v1)? What does it look like to build up someone in Christ (v2)? How was Christ an example of this specifically (v2-3)?
2. Reflect on Paul's exposition of Psalm 69:6-12 in Romans 15:3. What does Scripture mean when it says, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." Specifically, what did Paul say the Scriptures provide for the early church (v4-5)?
3. Discuss how a proper interpretation of Scripture can lead to a greater harmony in the believer's life; and how harmony is not something we achieve but rather something we receive from Christ (v5).
4. This is the second time Paul has referred to the welcoming nature of Christ (14:3 & 15:7), an important command to care for one another. What does it look like for us to welcome one another and how does this bring honor and glory to God?



ROMANS 15:1-7

Notes

-Philippians 2:5-11

-Psalm 69:6-12

-Galatians 6:2

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Discuss how our lives should reflect Christ's welcoming nature to unbelievers around us.



CHRISTIAN HOPE



Share Together

Why is a regular leaning on the Old Testament vital to the spiritual growth of the disciple today?

Study Together

1. Consider that Jesus did not “come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). How did Christ become a servant to the Jews and a savior to the Gentiles (v8-9)?
2. Why was it important that God came to the Jews first? How does this fulfill God's promises and show His truthfulness?
3. God's promises are truthful and accounted for throughout all of Scripture. Read 2 Peter 3:9 together and discuss the patience of God and its role in leading people to repentance.
4. Look up the Old Testament prophecies that Paul's referenced. What do these texts reveal about the will and work of God (2 Sam 22:50, Deut. 32:43, Psa. 117:11, Isa. 11:10)? What does it look like for the believer to abound in hope (v13)?



ROMANS 15:8-13

Notes

-Deuteronomy 32:43

-Psalm 117:11

-Isaiah 11:10

-2 Samuel 22:50

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

What can we learn from Paul's evangelistic fervor? Who has God put in your life and how can you express your desire to God for that person to be saved?



CHRISTIAN MISSION



Share Together

Share a time when you received a bold reminder to prioritize the preaching of the gospel.

Study Together

1. Why did Paul reach out to the church in Rome for support in preaching the gospel? What characteristics did they have that satisfied him (v14)?
2. In verses 15 and 16, what is the purpose Paul gives for writing this letter? What does it mean for the Gentiles to be acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit (v16)?



3. Consider all of the different aspects of Paul's ministry (v18b-19), none of which distracted him from the gospel message (v18a). In what ways can ministry programming become a distraction from the gospel?
4. What does it look like to be an ambassador for Christ and how do we know when one has "fulfilled the ministry of the gospel" (v19)?



ROMANS 15:14-21

Notes

-Acts 28:28

-Romans 10:14

-2 Corinthians 5:20

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

When we talk about giving our lives in service to the gospel, does that make you excited, scared, or somewhere in between? How do we cultivate a desire to give our all for the sake of Jesus?



CHRISTIAN EFFORT



Share Together

Share a time when you've been refreshed by the company of another believer.

Study Together

1. Paul wrote to the Romans from Corinth at the end of his 3rd missionary journey. When you thumb through Romans what are some of the key principles Paul taught that helped establish the early church?
2. Why is giving financially to advance the gospel an essential matter for the church today? What are some of the spiritual and material blessings we have to share (v25-27)?
3. Consider Paul's missionary effort and the measures he took to share the gospel. What disciplines do you imagine were the source of Paul's ministry success?
4. Discuss Paul's appeal in verses 30-33, and what he was seeking prayer for in ministry. What does Paul mean when he asks to be "delivered from the unbelievers in Judea" (v31)? How did Paul see God answer his prayer (Acts 21:27-35)?



ROMANS 15:22-33

Notes

-Acts 21:27-35

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Pray together and challenge each other to be purposeful in praying for an opportunity to share the gospel message with someone in the coming weeks.



PARTNERS IN CHRIST



Share Together

As you look back, who has encouraged you and helped shape you spiritually? Why do you think God designed the work of the ministry to be a shared responsibility among Christians?

Study Together

1. Consider Paul's praise of Phoebe. How do you think these two traits - a sister and servant - would have encouraged her and the church in Rome? What do you think it means to welcome another believer "in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints" (v1-2)?
2. Discuss Paul's display of love for the saints, considering he has yet to meet some in person but knows them by name. What are the variety of people and gifts we find in these verses (v3-16)? Does anything surprise you about this list? If so, what?
3. Consider that the church is made up of diverse people who know the Lord and are seeking to serve Him and love others. How does a person's belief about the church, the body of Christ, impact the way he or she lives?
4. Paul finishes his letter by commending fellow believers who have impacted him. If you were to write a letter to SCC who would you commend and why?



ROMANS 16:1-16

Notes

-1 Thessalonians 5:11

-Hebrews 10:24-25

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

Discuss how Christian care and unity reflect the gospel and aid in our witness to unbelievers.



FALSE TEACHERS



Share Together

Share a time when you found yourself listening to false teaching. How did you come to realize it was false teaching?

Study Together

1. Discuss the marks of false teachers that Paul gives in verses 17-18. Using supporting scriptures, can you think of other markers we should be cautious of?
2. As disciples we must be trained and steadfast in sound doctrine. How do you define sound doctrine? What does it look like to “watch out for” or to “avoid” false teachings?
3. In verse 19, what is the relationship between obedience and wisdom? Discuss what it means to “be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.”
4. Why is verse 20 particularly encouraging to the Christians in Rome and to us today? Read James 4:7 for additional insight.



ROMANS 16:17-20

Notes

- 1 John 4:1
- 2 Peter 2:1
- 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- James 4:7

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

How has the Lord used our study in Romans to increase your heart for the unredeemed?



TO GOD'S GLORY



Share Together

Share an Old Testament story that you find particularly intriguing in how it points to Jesus.

Study Together

1. What specific aspects of God's character and work did Paul affirm in these final verses of Romans?
2. What is Paul referring to when he mentions the "revelation of the mystery"? Even with having God's Word, why did Israel struggle to see Christ as the Messiah (v25)?
3. How does knowing that God's plan was hidden from ages past help you appreciate the significance of Jesus' arrival?
4. Why is obedience an important aspect of our response to God's plan? How does faith play a role in obedience (v26)?



ROMANS 16:21-27

Notes

-Amos 3:7

-Colossians 1:26-29

Supporting Scripture

Sent Together

How has our study in Romans encouraged the way you view God and His plan for the unredeemed?



GOSPEL: A SAVING FAITH

Being a Christian is more than identifying with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, humankind and salvation. Consider the following truths about God.

God is Creator. We were created by a personal God to love, serve and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals that it was Jesus Himself who created everything. Therefore, He owns everything and has authority over our lives (read John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

God is Holy. God is absolutely and perfectly holy; and therefore, He cannot commit or approve of any evil. God requires holiness of us as well (read Isaiah 6:3; James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:16).

Humankind is Sinful. God tells us that “there is no man who does not sin.” That does not mean we are incapable of acts of human kindness. But we are totally incapable of understanding, loving or pleasing God on our own (read Romans 3:10-12).

Sin Demands a Penalty. God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by death. That is why simply changing our patterns of behavior cannot solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences (read Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23; Psalm 145:20).

Jesus is Lord and Savior. God tells us that “If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for sinners (read 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26).

Saving faith is accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sin to Him, and making a choice to turn from sin and to follow Christ as your leader (read Luke 13:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; John 17:3).

SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

If you've never thought about preparing and communicating your story, that's fine (most Christians haven't). Here are simple principles to get you started.

Keep it short. Communicating too many details about your life can distract listeners from the central point: how you met Christ. Keeping it short can help with that. Three minutes is a good target. Remember that the purpose of telling your story is not about you; it's about God. Clearly and succinctly communicate what *he* has done in your life.

Have a before, how, and after. There should be a pretty clear timeline and logical flow to your story. Talk about what your life was like before Christ, how you met him, and what your life's like now. This timeline is different for everyone, of course, but it brings a sense of structure to what you're saying and helps keep your listener tracking.

For those who've been Christians since childhood, be vulnerable about your struggles as a growing Christian—the “how” may be a time when the gospel really sank in, and you understood it at a deeper level. Everyone's story is unique, and there's flexibility in how to share it, but thinking in terms of a timeline can be very helpful.

Clearly present the gospel. You want people to clearly grasp the source of your transformation: Jesus Christ. If people aren't pointed to Christ, they'll be pointed in another direction, which will (of course) ultimately fail them. We want people to come away from our story thinking, “Isn't Jesus amazing? I want him in my life, too.”

Your testimony should show people that God loves them, they're sinful, Jesus is the payment for the penalty of their sin, and they need to trust Christ as the payment for the penalty of their sins in order to have a personal relationship with God. If you haven't shared the gospel in your testimony, you haven't really shared your testimony.

Avoid 'Christianese.' Avoid Christian slang—those words believers use all the time in everyday Christian circles but make no sense to anyone else. We're trying to be clear about what we're communicating, and we need to understand the importance of speaking a language that can be easily understood. We want anyone and everyone to have intellectual access to what we're saying, so eliminate alienating language (or at least be willing to quickly define it).

Practice, practice, practice! You should know your testimony by heart without having any notecards or outline in front of you. If someone asks about your life at the public swimming pool, you won't be able to whip out a piece of paper for reference—so have your story memorized and ready at a moment's notice. It's a good idea to write it out or make an outline, then practice it aloud on your own or with a friend. Eventually you'll know it by heart.

The Gospel Collation: 6 Principles for Sharing your Testimony -2021

NOTES

NOTES



at Snohomish Community Church

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