

OUR RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

Romans 12:1-8

Introduction: What Do We Do Now?

I. Responding to the Gospel Personally (v.1-2)

- A. Be Properly Motivated: "By the mercies of God"
 - o The core motivation for our obedience is always the mercy *already* shown to us
- B. Be Seriously Committed: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice"
 - o Paul intentionally uses words from OT temple worship: "present," "sacrifice," "holy and acceptable"
 - o In the NT era we no longer bring animals but ourselves! We are "*living sacrifice*"

****Key point:** *All of life* is worship to God!
- C. Be Visibly Distinct: "Do not be conformed to this world"
 - o The word for "world" is αἰὼνι which means "age"
 - o In essence, Paul is saying don't live for the *present*; live like you belong to another world

****Key question:** How well do you fit in to this world?
- D. Be Radically Changed: "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind"
 - o Why does Paul use "be transformed" instead of "be conformed"?
 - o The Primary means of being transformed is the "renewal of your mind"
 - Notice the priority Paul puts on the *mind* as the driving force of change, as opposed to the will
 - In essence, Paul is saying we need to be "re-programmed" in the way we think; we need a whole new worldview
 - What are some practical ways to renew our minds?

Key point: problem for many believers is less about how they act and more about how they *think*!

II. Responding to the Gospel Corporately (v.3-8)

A. The Gospel Leads Us to be Involved in the Church Community

- o If you are in Christ, then you are (by definition) part of Christ's body, the Church.
- o Why do you think so many people today downplay commitment to a local church?

B. Key Mistake in Community: Thinking too highly (or lowly) of yourself (v.3-5)

- o Rather than arrogance or despondency, Paul calls us to consider ourselves with "sober judgment"
- o Paul addresses both extremes by:
 - Reminding us that each "has a measure of faith that *God has assigned*" (v.3) and that "gifts differ according to the grace given" (v.6)
 - Providing the analogy of the human body—we are all one in the body of Christ and therefore need each other.

C. Use Your Gifts in Community (v.6-8)

- o Paul mentions just a sampling of spiritual gifts: Prophesying, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, mercy
- o How do you discover your spiritual gifts?
 - Scriptural study
 - Prayer
 - What are you passionate about?
 - What are you good at? (make sure to ask others!)

**** Key Point:** Your gifts represent what God has made you to do. Use them! Christian individualism and isolation will dry up your spiritual life.

Discussion Groups

1. How well do you fit into this world? Have an honest conversation with the group about what areas in your life you need to think/act differently than the world.

2. How's your commitment and involvement in your local church? Do you think you are seeing your gifts and abilities accurately, with "sober judgment"?

3. Share with the group which spiritual gifts you think you might have. In what ways can you better use those in the church?
