

Series: Debunking Lies that Disrupt Intergenerational Community

Sermon Text: Romans 12 Part 2

(**App** to get lesson/slides, ask questions. **Color Pg**)

This series is about debunking falsehoods we've been raised to believe that disrupt intergenerational spiritual formation. We're doing the uncomfortable work of unlearning, which feels a bit like corrective surgery. **We've discussed** Satan being "*the father of lies*" (cf. John 8:44) who employs a variety of warfare (e.g., spiritual, physical, psychological) to **trick every generation into forgetting what God deems essential**. We also dug into how **Church is a family before we're anything else** and unpacked the term "*family*" to discover **We have much to relearn after being born again**. Last time, we dissected *Romans 12* to learn **Informed Worship erodes our exclusivity and comfort**, and we asked you to prepare for this lesson by contemplating your views of Christ's body and your participation in it. I hope you're ready for some practical, hands-on stuff related to this...

BIG IDEA: Every child of God has been gifted to contribute.

Part 1: From the youngest among us to the oldest, everyone matters to how people experience Jesus through our church. Loving God and others are the 2 greatest goals, which means nothing matters more than how we love and welcome one another. Sadly, churches commonly measure what's easy, not what matters. I mean, it's fine to track attendance for seating/parking needs and offerings for budget purposes but *Romans 12* is full of other metrics that matter. **For instance, verse 9 says:** *Let love be genuine*. This raises the question: "What distinguishes sincere Christian love from selfish, play acting?" One answer is that *genuine love abhors what is evil and holds fast to what is good*. Here, *evil* and *good* are relational matters like we find in texts like 1 Timothy 5:1-2 NLT "*Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters.*" Likewise, *Romans 12:10* urges a church to function like a family: **Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor**. **I wonder:** "How might having a family mindset improve relationships between generations, genders,

and other groupings? Which age groups do you struggle to honor and why? Knowingly and unknowingly, we all **hold fast** (cling) to relationship-crushing behaviors, so “Have you discovered any of yours?”. **Sincere love** proactively roots out relational repellents that could divide us from others. For example, I’ve heard older educators railing on young parents with little concern for their circumstances. On a positive note, one of our wonderful 92-year-olds, Alice, recently participated with a group of us to learn better ways to communicate in all types of scenarios. Change doesn’t come naturally for anyone, but Christ’s Spirit supernaturally makes us “*eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (cf. Ephesians 4:1-3). **God has also gifted us with Tim and Codi** who train our leaders to become relational healers. Tim is going to share a little taste of that, along with ways we can contribute alongside them in developing our church family.

Part 2: I’ll restate our **BIG IDEA: Every child of God has been gifted to contribute**. So, from the youngest among us to the oldest, everyone matters to how people experience Jesus through our church. **We’ll see this as we read *Romans 12:3*, *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith God has assigned***. While I grew up hearing, “*We can be/do anything we want*”, this verse implies that “*Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should*.” Figuring out who I am and what I can do requires **humility** to confess that I’ve been created on purpose, for certain purposes. This is what it means to see our value by **the standard of faith**, instead of conforming to a culture which preaches we’re interchangeable, replaceable, and accountable only to self. **Notice the helpful metaphor in verses 4-6: *For as in one body, we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them***. The **standards of faith and grace** reveal how we’re designed to be better together. God restores us to healthy humanness by means of our church family as we practice the graces of Christ’s cross (e.g. confession, forgiveness, patience, reconciliation), remind ourselves of who God says we are, and do the hard work of helping every diverse member

contribute per their divine design. **Consider what these truths imply:** 1) No other churches will have our DNA. 2) Churches in our area won't look the same. 3) There are unrecognized/underutilized gifts among us, and new ones arriving daily. 4) If you can't find a spot to serve, we may need to expand our org chart (family tree). 5) Serving with God's church improves how you serve His world. The more we practice healthy humanhood, the more we can embody it where we live, work, and play! **Krista will now share** about her contributions to our church family and her special passion for helping people find and appreciate their identity and purposes in Christ. (Krista share)

Part 3: According to [Lifeway Research in 2019](#), 3,000 Protestant churches were started in the U.S., but 4,500 churches closed. We had a small net gain in 2014 where 4,000 churches got planted, and 3,700 closed. So, there's a legit need for new churches to be started everywhere (even nearby), but existing churches must also remain open. I wonder, "*How can we ensure Landmark outlives us?*" **2 cancers that can kill us are:** 1) Blindly copying what other churches do. 2) Not supporting young voices. People often say children and young adults are "*future leaders*", **but the fact is:** Leadership is influence, and we all have influence in every stage of life. The YOUNGER need opportunities to experiment with leading before the older depart! Like bowling lane bumpers, the wisdom of older people can help young people roll far fewer gutter balls! To wrap up, let's hear from a few young Landmark influencers about valuable contributions they make to our church family.

Having heard from a diversity of Landmark voices today, please consider these next steps...

1. Show them some appreciation.
2. Offer to invest your gifts in their areas.
3. If you'd like training and support to start a new group, contact Tim@landmarkcares.org.
4. If you want to learn more about your identity and gifting, contact Krista@landmarkcares.org.

And remember, wherever you are on your journey of trusting Christ, you don't have to work through anything alone. **May Christ's empowerment** be with you!

Sunday to Monday Connection:

- **Question:** See above throughout the lesson.
- **Next Step:** For training and support with starting a new group, contact Tim@landmarkcares.org. To learn more about your identity and gifting, contact Krista@landmarkcares.org.
- **Note:** If you are not a Christ follower and would like to investigate further what all this might mean for you, please come talk with any of our leaders, or the person who brought you.

Takeaways to discuss with your people (also see underlined questions above!):

1. In what ways are you being or doing more than the faith/gifts God has assigned you? Are there things you need to start or stop doing, and who is best suited to help you figure all this out?
2. Why do you think local churches fall into the trap of being so “cookie cutter” instead of embracing diverse functions and ministries?
3. How might assessing people by God’s measurements expand your circles? In what ways will this help us weave more diversity into our lives?
4. Listen to and discuss [this podcast episode](#) with your people (it’s a little bit “job” focused but certainly transferable to whatever we do in life).

Quotes related to this passage:

- “He begins in 12:3–8 by reminding us that we live out our transformed existence in community. Central to our community life is a fair and sober estimate of ourselves in line with the Christian faith and with the gifts God has given us...he may also have one eye on the Roman church itself, where both ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ believers were thinking more of themselves than was healthy for the community.” (Moo, 401)
- “Most of the tasks in verses 7 and 8, in fact, involve hard work, and Paul encourages his readers to get ready for it. The passage has a ‘get-your-sleeves-rolled up’ feel to it. Find out what your task is and give yourself to it properly: plan the work, think it through, get up early and get on with it. Expect to work till you’re tired, and to keep at it even on the days when you’re not in the mood. You can’t just play at it when you ‘feel like it’. Christian service isn’t a hobby, though people sometimes think of it like that; it’s a divine calling, and if that calling is to make cups of coffee after church, that needs to be done with energy, care and flair.” (Wright, 76)

Considerations for discussion leaders:

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the group small for deeper sharing. Single underlined sentences are for discussion, while key points are double underlined.
3. Keep the discussion around 30 mins. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

Other Articles/Songs/Videos: Please ask us for help obtaining other resources.

Bibliography (Note: Our use of these materials does not imply full agreement with them)

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