

After praising God for the mercy He has shown us despite our sin (Rom. 11:30-36), Paul now talks about what our response should be to this mercy. We should present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, continually loving and serving Him. We should also use the gifts He has given us to love and minister to one another as fellow believers in the same body.

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

“I beseech [to urge; to plead; to call on] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God” – Paul is urging the brethren (and us, believers who read this) on the basis of the mercies of God, for which He was praising God just prior to this (Rom. 11:30-33). Since God has been so merciful as to redeem us through faith in Christ, here is how we should respond.

“that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice” – A normal sacrifice required the death of the animal being offered. However, the sacrifice we owe God for our redemption is ourselves. Paul says we should present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, not a dead one. A dead sacrifice is a one-time gift, but a living sacrifice is a continual gift to God. Our bodies (and all that we do with them) should be given in service to God.

“holy, acceptable [well pleasing] unto God” – We are not free to do what we want with our bodies. Rather than following the sinful nature of our bodies, we are to live in a manner that is holy and well pleasing to God. **1 Cor. 6:18-20** *“Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”*

“which is your reasonable [following reason or logic] service [service to God]” – The Greek word translated “service” refers to what a priest would do in service to God. We are to live our lives in spiritual service to God for we are no longer our own. God is not asking for something extraordinary or unreasonable from us by requiring that we live for Him. Rather, it is the reasonable and logical response of gratitude for what He has done for us. **2 Cor. 5:14-15** *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”*

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

“And be not conformed [to follow the pattern of another] to this world [age]” – We are not to pattern our behavior or way of thinking after the world. The Greek word translated “world” is *aion* is where we get the English word “eon.” The world during this period of time before Christ returns is characterized by sinful thinking and behavior of people following their flesh and because of the dominance of Satan. The child of God should not follow the world’s example.

“but be ye transformed [to change into another form] by the renewing of your mind” – The Greek word translated “transformed” is where we get the English word “metamorphosis.” Instead of allowing the world to influence and shape our thinking and behavior, we should instead allow the Holy Spirit to transform us by changing our attitudes and thought processes through the word of God.

“that ye may prove [to test and show something is genuine] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” – When we allow the Holy Spirit to renew our minds through the word of God, we will see how that it leads to that which is the good, acceptable, and perfect (complete) will of God. As we live our life in a manner pleasing to God, we demonstrate to the world that God’s way is superior to theirs.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you” – In the previous chapter Paul urged his Gentile readers not to boast in the fact that God had saved them and not many Jews (Rom. 11:18-21). Now Paul demonstrating humility to all his readers by attributing his authority to instruct them in humility upon the grace that God has shown him, both in saving him and giving him the spiritual authority as an apostle.

“not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” – He doesn’t say that we should think of ourselves as worthless but that we ought to not let pride give us an inflated view of ourselves. Pride does not allow us to take a realistic view of ourselves.

“but to think soberly [to be of sound mind], according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” – We are to look at ourselves realistically, understanding both our strengths and weaknesses. There’s nothing prideful about recognizing the strengths and abilities that God has given to us as long as we understand that the credit goes to God and not us. He’s given each of us spiritual gifts for the edification of the church and we should not ignore them. However, we should not allow pride to cause us to think more highly of ourselves than we realistically should. **1 Cor. 4:7** *“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”*

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office” – Paul points to our human bodies as an illustration. The human body has many parts and not all of the parts perform the same role, function or purpose.

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” – All believers collectively make up the body of Christ and each one of us are joined to the others because we belong to the same body.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, *let us wait on our ministering*: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it with simplicity*; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us” – The different parts of our bodies are designed to serve different purposes and have been “gifted” with the various abilities needed to serve those purposes. We, as the different parts of Christ’s “body,” are designed for various purposes and have been gifted by God’s grace to serve those purposes. Whatever our gifts, we are to exercise them in service to God’s people.

“whether prophecy [to speak forth], *let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith*” – “Prophecy” seems to be referring to speaking forth the word of God, which can include foretelling the future but also to what we today call “preaching.” If God has gifted you to be able to preach, you should do it according to the “proportion” (amount) of faith that has been given to you. Some men are more gifted in that area than others and the same idea holds true for the other gifts. Whatever gift God has given us, we are to exercise that gift to the extent of the ability that God has given us.

“Or ministry [serving], *let us wait on our ministering*” – “Ministry” comes from the same root word used for the word “deacon.” It refers to the gift of being able to serve the needs of others. Such serving is not the exclusive domain of deacons.

“or he that teacheth, on teaching” – Refers to the ability to explain God’s word.

“Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation” – Refers to calling on and encouraging God’s people to obey and follow God’s word.

“he that giveth, *let him do it with simplicity [sincerity]*” – Giving to those in need should be done sincerely, with no desire or expectation of reward or personal glory. All Christians should be generous, but God has gifted some with the means and the heart to be especially generous.

“he that ruleth, with diligence [haste; earnestness]” – Church leaders should be diligent and earnest in their desire to lead the church in obeying and glorifying God. Laziness has no place in the work of God.

“he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness [readiness of mind]” – Those with the gift of mercy are able to show mercy to others willingly and cheerfully even when the flesh does not want to. Mercy should not be shown begrudgingly merely because it’s our duty to show mercy. True mercy is motivated by love.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

“Let love be without dissimulation [sincere; without hypocrisy]” – Each of the gifts should be practiced in love and that love should be genuine. Sometimes we are guilty of going through the motions of showing love toward someone without actually being sincere.

“Abhor [dislike; hate] that which is evil; cleave [to join oneself to] to that which is good” – One shouldn’t do one of these two admonitions without doing the other. We should always hate and avoid evil while embracing and doing good.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

“Be kindly affectioned [love of family] one to another with brotherly love” – We ought to love other believers with the same sort of love we would have for our own family. Such love is not based on personal preferences but on the fact that we are all members of the family of God.

“in honour [value] preferring one another” – We are to consider others of more value than ourselves and treat them accordingly.

“Not slothful in business [diligence]” – Whatever we do for God should not be done in a lazy, half-hearted fashion. We should do it with earnestness and zeal.

“fervent [to boil] in spirit” – Instead of being slothful when working for God, we should work with enthusiasm.

“serving the Lord” – No matter who immediately benefits from the work we do (the church, others, etc.), ultimately we are serving the Lord and that should increase our enthusiasm for what we do. **Col. 3:22-24** “*Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*”

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

“Rejoicing in hope” – Regardless of how circumstances look, we can rejoice in the hope of Christ’s return and our ultimate salvation.

“patient in tribulation [pressure]” – The hope we have in Christ allows us to be patient when we must endure the pressures of life.

“continuing instant [to persevere] in prayer” – We should never give up on prayer for it is our lifeline to God.

“Distributing to the necessity of saints” – We should be ready to share what we have with other Christians who are in need.

“given to hospitality [love to strangers]” – We should be willing to show hospitality not just to our friends but even to people that we don’t know. Christians should be noted for their love to all.

Verses 14-21: Love seems to be the theme for the remainder of the chapter, for Paul speaks of blessing those who persecute us, empathy toward others in their good times and bad and treating all people equally, regardless of their financial state or social standing. We should be honest in our dealings with others as well as try to get along with them as best as we can. If someone has done us wrong, we should trust that the Lord will make things right and not seek our own vengeance. Instead, we should treat our enemies well and allow good to overcome their evil. Otherwise evil will overcome us through our desire for vengeance.