

Romans 12

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Tape #8131
Pastor Chuck Smith

Open your Bibles to Romans, chapter twelve. Paul has just exuded his marvel at the wisdom of God and the knowledge of God. His judgments. His ways. The mind of the Lord. The plan of God of bringing salvation to all men.

Then he declares, *I beseech you therefore, brethren*, The word, “therefore” always refers back to what he has been referring to and talking about, in the past few sentences or you can go way back here, in the Book of Romans, the justification by faith and all that God has wrought.

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*. After all that God has done. The mercies that God has manifested. Bringing us redemption from sin. Deliverance from the power of the enemy. This beautiful new life in Christ Jesus. Therefore present your bodies to God, as a living sacrifice.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6:19), teaches that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. That we are not our own. We have been bought with a price. Therefore we are to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are His. Present your body to God as a living sacrifice. Lord, here is my life. Here is my body. It’s sort of expressed in that hymn, “Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord, to Thee. Take my hands, let them move at the impulse of Thy love. Take my feet, let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.” Lord, take my body and use my body as you see fit.

Paul tells us to yield the members of our body, that is, as instruments unto righteousness (Romans 6:13). Let the Holy Spirit, dwelling in us, use our bodies for God’s purposes in the accomplishing of things for the kingdom of God and the things that are eternal. Paul said this is your reasonable service. In other words, this makes sense! It doesn’t make sense for people to use their bodies as they often do as instruments of unrighteousness, following after the lust of our flesh. Or seeking really to bring glory, honor to ourselves.

I think of, for the sake of glory, how many times people abuse their bodies. I’m reminded of it every time I walk down the steps of the platform here and head for the back door. I feel the pain in my right knee. Pain that goes back to my college days and playing football. And ever since college days, I’ve had that pain in my right knee. For what? For the glory of the cheers of the crowd when you’ve done some special exploit on the football field. A moment of glory. Close to fifty years of pain. The glory has past, long, long, ago. The pain remains. And so often that is so. The abuse of our bodies for a moment of glory but bringing oftentimes a lifetime of pain.

The abuse of our bodies for a moment of pleasure often bringing a lifetime of regret. There was a man who was brought by his friends to Jesus, one day. The Scriptures said he was suffering from palsy. The Greek word indicates a disease similar to our syphilis in its advanced stages. A disease that was transmitted by sexual union. This man had become an invalid as the disease progressed in his body. He had to be carried now by his friends. A moment of pleasure and now suffering the consequences. And don’t you know in his mind he was being tormented and plagued, having to be served by others? In this advanced stage of this disease. All because of his folly. All because of his sin. All for a moment’s pleasure. When his friends came to the house, they found they couldn’t get in because of the crowd that had surrounded the house, wanting to hear the words of Jesus. So you remember the story. They climbed on the roof. They removed some tiles and let him down in front of Jesus. And as the dust and the dirt from the tiles being removed probably was sifting down into the room, and as Jesus looked up to see what the commotion and the noise was, I picture Him smiling at the ingenuity of these fellows and of their determination to get their friend to Jesus. And as he was let down in front of Jesus. As Jesus looked at him, He said, “Your sins are forgiven.” Don’t you know that those were the sweetest words that man had heard. For months no doubt, he had been mentally tormented because of his sins and the consequences of that sin. A reminder of it, daily every time he woke up and became conscious he was reminded of his sin as he was suffering the consequence of it. I imagine that his mind was plagued. He was tormented. The old, why? Why, did I do it? Why was I so foolish? Why did I sin like that? And to hear the words of Jesus, your sins are forgiven. His heart must have leaped for joy.

I'm certain that his friends on the roof were disappointed. I can hear one of them say, Hey, that's not why we went to all of the trouble to get him to You. We want him healed! That's why we brought him. So You could heal him. But Jesus took care of first things first. The first issue was unresolved sin. Of course the Pharisees sitting there, they were upset. They said, that's blasphemous. No one can forgive sins but God! They were right! And so Jesus said, "What's easier to say? Your sins are forgiven or rise, fold up your mat and go home? But that you might know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." In other words that you might know that I am God. He said to the man, take your mat. Roll it up and go home. The man stood up, took his mat and went on out.

The Bible encourages us not to use our bodies for sinful purposes. Paul said your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And if you go out to a prostitute, because you are joined with Christ and your body is the temple of God, you are actually joining God with that prostitute. We are not to use our bodies for sinful purposes. But we are to present our bodies unto God as living sacrifices, that God might use our bodies to fulfill His purposes.

You see God is sovereign and God can do anything. I'm convinced of that! And God doesn't need me, I'm convinced of that. God could do His work very well without me. But God has chosen to use me and to use people to accomplish His work. Not that He needs us but He has chosen to use men and women in the accomplishing of His purposes. He could have used angels. Probably they could, and I am certain, they could do a much better job. But God, for His own purposes, has chosen to use my hands and my body. So the exhortation is to yield or present your body unto God. A living sacrifice.

Then Paul goes on to say, ²*And be not conformed to this world:* Now the Bible tells us that we are not to love the world or the things that are in the world for he that has the love of the world in his heart, has not the love of the Father. What do you mean by world? Well, John said (1 John 2:16), all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. That sort of sums up the worldly life. People living after their own lust. People living for glory for themselves. The pride of life. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, these are of the world and they are not of God.

James said (James 4:4), know you not that friendship with the world is enmity with God and he that would be a friend of the world is an enemy of God. There is the world system. We are very familiar with it. We live in it. We see it. It's portrayed in the movies, that whole world system. It's the music of the world. Paganism has invaded our nation. We are no longer a Christian nation. We are a pagan nation. You can tell by listening to the talk shows on secular radio. The pagan philosophies. The pagan ideas. The pagan values that are expressed on talk radio. And by the music that is played on the popular radio stations.

I had a fellow installing some garage doors at the house this week. A nice fellow. But he brought his radio as so often I guess is the case on jobs. I didn't realize the stuff because I don't listen to those stations. But to save money I installed my own garage door openers as he was there. I didn't want to come off like a prude, so I let him play his music. But I thought, why fill your mind with that stuff when you can fill your mind with music that edifies? Music that will build you up Spiritually? You know that whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. If you sow to your flesh, then of your flesh you are going to reap. But if you sow to the Spirit then of the Spirit you are going to reap. Life everlasting. The flesh you'll reap corruption. And it's corruption. The lyrics are corrupt. The music is corrupt. It is Spiritually degrading. I hope that any of you that listen to music on the secular radio will be convicted. Why pollute your minds? Whatsoever is good, whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is righteous, whatsoever is holy, think on these things! And then the God of peace will keep your heart and your mind. But no wonder, the world is going down the tubes. No wonder our society is falling apart. Be not conformed to the world, Paul said, *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, By putting into your mind those things that do edify and build you up Spiritually.

After the second service this morning when I had mentioned about the Newport Beach crowd who jogs around Newport Beach, I had a fellow come up to me. You know, the tennis shoes with no socks, a kind of the Newport crowd. He said I'm one of those who jog in Newport Beach, but he said I have a little Walkman that I take with me. And he said I've listened practically to your whole five thousand series of tapes while I'm jogging around Newport Beach. Well, that's using your time for something worthwhile. I can understand jogging you know, if you are listening to edifying music or if you are listening to the Word of God. I can accept that. I can buy that. I personally of course, obviously, don't jog. But I do my own gardening. And I figure that I expend you know a

lot of calories and all, out there, keeping my yard up. I watch the guys jog by. And I think, what a waste of time. They could be doing their yards you know, and get the same kind of fresh air and exercise and all. And you are accomplishing something. I mean, I just can't see just jogging for jogging's sake. I can see exercise. Yes. And I enjoy getting out in the yard. But jogging, that's another thing.

Be ye transformed by the renewing your mind, by the things that you are planting in your mind, *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* How many times people come and they say, oh, I long to know the will of God for my life. How can I discover God's will for my life? And here is the key right here. Present your body to God as a living sacrifice. Don't be conformed to the world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And you will discover what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God for your life. Because when you do this, your life then becomes a progressive revelation of God's will.

What we usually are saying when we say I really want to know the will of God for my life, we're saying I want God to sort of spell out what He wants me to do. Sort of giving me details of what He wants. So that I can decide whether or not I want Him. But I find that God's revelation of His will is a progressive experience. That day by day He shows us day by day, His plan and His purpose. And it is a progressive revelation to our lives as we present our bodies, as we renew our mind in the things of the Spirit. As we are praying and reading the Word, the Lord begins to guide and direct our lives in His good, perfect, and acceptable will.

So then Paul talks about our service to God. When you do this, then God begins to use you. But He first of all empowers you or He gifts you with various gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill a particular area of ministry and service for God.

So in introducing now the subject of serving God through some type of ministry, he prefaces the remarks by declaring, 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.* Now, again, your reasonable service, be reasonable. Paul is saying, if God anoints you with His Holy Spirit and gifted you with one of the many gifts of the Spirit or several of the gifts of the Spirit. Don't get haughty. Don't begin to think that you are something special. Don't think more highly of yourself that you ought.

Now this is a common, prevalent danger. One of the three, major dangers of the ministry. There are many ministers who have been destroyed because God was using them in such a powerful way and people began to praise them and lift them up and put them on pedestals. They began to believe the press reports, thinking that they were something special, God's special gift to the church or to the world. And that is a sure way of falling. Now don't think more highly of yourself. This is, I say, a common danger when God begins to use a person's life, people have the tendency of sort of exalting that person that God is using. And if you listen to it and accept it, then you are really cutting yourself off.

As Billy Graham instructed the ministers, don't touch the women, don't touch the money, and don't touch the glory. Those are the three things that can bring a quick end to your usefulness by God. So don't think more highly of yourself that you ought. Let's be reasonable, let's be sober about this. Because God has dealt to every man a measure of faith.

Paul in writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:7), said but what do you have but what you have received. And if you have received it, why do you boast as though you didn't receive it? You see if there is any value coming from your ministry and your life, it's because you've received it from God. If you received it from God, why are you so puffed up, so haughty and proud, and think that you are something? It's something that God has done. So Paul is saying be sober now in this. God has given to each man a measure of faith. What you have has come to you by the grace and goodness of God. It's not that you're anything, but God in His grace and mercy has chosen to use you to accomplish His purposes. What a great blessing and what a privilege, but don't get puffed up over it. God didn't choose you because you were so righteous or you were so good, or He knew that you had the ability. No, forget that! God chose you because He wanted to confound the wise. That's what Paul says (1 Cor. 1:27). Not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world in order to confound the wise. How can he do that? He doesn't have a Ph.D.? And so God has chosen. So think soberly. Don't think more highly of yourself than you ought.

Now as Paul talks about the gifts of the Spirit here and also in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, he relates the gifts of the Spirit to their function and their use in the body of Christ. So he makes the analogy and the likeness of the church being like a body. And the body has many parts. Each part has a separate function. All of the parts are necessary. And for the body to truly to function and to be effective, we need all of the parts working together, coordinated. So he sees the church as this body of Christ.

Some people are like the thumb. Some are like the finger. Some are like the hand. Some are like the feet. And each part of the body is necessary and each part of the body is important. Even those parts of the body that we don't see are vitally important for the body. None of us are complete in ourselves. No man lives unto himself as the Scripture says. And we are all needing each other in order that the body might be complete and whole.

So you can't say, well, I don't need to go to church, I can get, you know, everything I need, right by myself with the Lord, and all. I have no need of the church. Paul said, that's not so! The ear can't say to the eye, hey, I don't need you. I can hear without you. He said, if you didn't have your eyes where would your seeing be? Sure, you can hear, but where would the seeing be? Thus, we are needing each other. So we each have our place, our function. And thus we are each anointed by the Holy Spirit to fill that place in the body of Christ, where God has placed us.

Now as a body, there needs to be a unity as to mind and purpose. We need to work together. Paul will give us those characteristics that we need in order to function and to work together in just a little bit. But the body of Christ, oh, how beautiful it is, when the body of Christ is functioning as the Lord wants it to function. What a powerful influence it can be in a community, when the body of Christ is functioning as a body.

The problem with the body of Christ is that it is sort of spastic. And there doesn't seem to be a full cooperation from one part to another. And there are parts of the body that sort of, are wanting to be exalted. It's like the big toe saying, I'm tired of being in this dark, smelly place. No one ever sees me. I don't get any recognition. It's always dark and smelly. I don't like it here. I want to exalt myself. I want people to notice me. So it decides that it needs to plant itself in the middle of your forehead. Well, it's out of place there. It doesn't belong there. And thus we see the striving so often within the body of Christ, wanting to be placed where God didn't place me. Wanting to be noticed.

So Paul said, ⁴*For as we have many members in one body, (Your hands, your feet, your fingers and so forth.) 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.* So that interrelationship through the Holy Spirit, where each of us are members of each other, all one body. Each of us having a different function within the body. Each of us fulfilling that place in the body. How exciting! How wonderful! What tremendous potential.

So then, ⁶*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy* (That is speaking for the Word of God.), *let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;* God has given to each of us the measure of faith. If my place in the body is to speak forth the Word of God, then I am to speak it forth, according to that proportion of faith that I have received.

⁷*Or ministry,* (Now, this is in reference to serving. It is used in Acts of those who waited on the tables. That is, administered the church's welfare program. Serving. This isn't, well we gotten this word, minister as sort of mixed up in our usage of the word from its original intent. The word, minister, literally is servant.

And so if you have been called to serve, *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;* (The gift of giving. Have you met those people? They are marvelous people. Those people with the gift of giving. Oh, what a blessed gift that is in the body of Christ! And then let him do it with simplicity, not making a big fuss, a big "to do" and all. If that's your gift, just do it with simplicity.)

he that ruleth, with diligence; (If God has called you to a place of leadership, then be diligent about that leadership.)

he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Sometimes we have a way of showing mercy with a threatening kind of a manner or with a dourer attitude. Well, all right, I'll let it go this time, but you know, you'd better see that it doesn't happen again. You did what? I can't believe it, you know. How could you???? No, if you've got the gift of showing mercy, do it with cheerfulness. Well, praise the Lord! God is great. He will forgive you now.

Now as the body, here is a list of short little exhortations, instructions. These are the attitudes that we're to have toward one another as being a part of the one body. These are the attitudes that we are to have. First of all, ⁹*Let love be without dissimulation* (or without hypocrisy. Let your love be genuine. Let your expressions of love be genuine. Don't let there be any hypocrisy.).

Abhor that which is evil; Have a Godly hatred of evil. The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. The world in which we live calls for a toleration of evil. Let us alone. Accept us. Tolerate us. Make a truce with us. Let us alone, we'll leave you alone. The Bible tells us to abhor evil. Hate sin! Hate evil!

But *cleave to that which is good.* Hold fast to that which is good!

¹⁰*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;* Have this concern, this affection, this brotherly love towards one another.

in honour preferring one another; This is something I have noticed is sadly missing so often among Christian people, in honour, preferring one another. That is stepping back and letting some one else go first. Don't rush to be at the head of the line. Don't push ahead of others. In honour, preferring one another. That is graciousness toward each other.

¹¹*Not slothful in business;* Sometimes I think when people put a fish symbol on their business, oftentimes want people to accept shoddy work. Don't be slothful in business. Be fair. Be honest. Be upright. Be sincere.

fervent in spirit; Enthusiasm! Excitement in the things of God as you are *serving the Lord;* It's important to realize that I am actually serving God. Not serving people. Let me rephrase that. I do serve people because that is my service to God. You see what so ever you do in word or in deed, do as unto the Lord, knowing that from the Lord you will receive your reward (Col. 3:23-24). If you do it as unto the Lord, then you won't get upset when people snap at you for what you've done, even though you've done it out of kindness, trying to help them. They say, what are you doing that for? Leave me alone! Well, I was doing it as unto the Lord. Or you won't get upset when they don't praise you or say, Oh, my, thank you. Oh, that's so wonderful. You're so gracious and kind. I thank you, you know. Do it as unto the Lord. If they just say, ugh. All right, I didn't do it for you anyhow. I did it for the Lord, knowing that from the Lord, you see, you won't be disappointed then. A lot of times people won't respond like you really wish or want them to respond. So, as unto the Lord, serving the Lord.

¹²*Rejoicing in hope;* Oh, today when the world is so hopeless! Things are getting so bad. We have a glorious hope! Paul prayed for the Ephesian church that they might have the Spirit of wisdom and enlightenment. That they might know what is the hope of their calling. Oh if you only knew what God has in store for His church, for the Body of Christ. If you only knew the glory that God is going to reveal unto us in that glorious, heavenly kingdom! So we rejoice in that hope that is ours in and through Christ Jesus.

And then, *patient in tribulation;* Now the Scripture tells that tribulation produces patience. The purpose that God allows us to go through trials often, is to develop this patience and faith. God is going to take care of it. But, when is God going to take care of it? I don't know. In His time. Patience in tribulation.

Then and so important in the body of Christ, *continuing instant in prayer;* Prayer should never be the last resort. It should be the first resort.

So often times when a person comes in lays out their woes and their problems. And they tell you everything they have tried. Oh, I have done this and I went there and I did this program and I did this. The question then that we generally ask is, well, have you prayed about it? No! It's not quite that bad.

Prayer should be your first resort. Instant in prayer! Boy, how many arrow prayers have I shot up, you know, instantly! I am glad that God is there. You know, that the sign isn't on the door, "Do Not Disturb", but He's always there. When we are faced with an emergency situation, we can go immediately to the Lord and receive His help and His strength.

¹³*Distributing to the necessity of saints;* I want to commend you as a church for this, the generosity that you show. All of the shoeboxes that we collected for the needy children abroad. And we have never once made an appeal for a need here, but what you haven't responded just in such a wonderful, generous, commendable way. I thank God for the fact that this church is such a giving church for people who are in need. And you are really to be commended here.

As you know last week as we announced to the people if they were in need at Thanksgiving, that you could see Pastor Romaine. We had given him money to distribute to those who are in need, for a Thanksgiving turkey or whatever. So Romaine passed out several hundred dollars to people who are in need. But you know what? There were several people who came to Romaine to give his money to pass out. So actually I believe the total that was passed out from our fund was only \$80, even though he was able to pass out hundreds of dollars because people were giving to the necessity of the saints. And people were thrilled that the church was helping those in need, responded. And it's really again something that I want to commend you for, your distribution to the necessity of the saints.

given to hospitality. Now this is something that is almost a thing of the past, being hospitable. Inviting someone over for dinner. My dad, when someone would come to church who was new, he would go and introduce himself and invite them home for Sunday dinner. We were always having guests in our house for Sunday dinner. He'd say well why don't you come over to our house for dinner? We'll get acquainted. So my mom always knowing that there would be extra guests would always have extra food. She would always prepare for more than just the family's need because my dad would be inviting someone to come for Sunday dinner. Sometimes they were tramps. Sometimes they were ex-cons or whatever but we had some exciting stories around the dinner table. Given to hospitality, you don't find that too much anymore. But if you don't want to invite them home, invite them out to Coco's or something. You know, given to hospitality.

¹⁴*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.* Now we're not always going to get along with everybody. Not everybody is going to like you. You see there are some people who are sort of dumb. And they don't know how wonderful you really are. And they've only seen you at a bad moment. And so they've sort of thought, "I don't like him." And maybe they might even say something about you, but we are told to bless those that curse us.

Now Paul is actually quoting from Jesus here. This is what Jesus said in Matthew chapter five toward the end of the chapter in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, bless those that curse you. Bless, and curse not.

¹⁵*Rejoice with them that do rejoice,* Someone has been blessed and is rejoicing over what God has done, don't be jealous. Don't say why would God do it for them and not for me. But rejoice with them! Oh, praise the Lord! That's wonderful! I'm so thrilled that you've got that promotion! Oh, bless the Lord!

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Those that are going through sorrow. Join with them. Weep with those that weep.

¹⁶*Be of the same mind one toward another.* One toward another. The unity in the body of Christ.

Mind not high things, Don't be haughty. Don't have a feeling of superiority or that feeling of condescending.

Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. But in such a way that you are not condescending. Some of you will say, well, you know, he's stepping down. No, don't let that be.

Be not wise in your own conceits. ¹⁷*Recompense to no man evil for evil.* I'll get even with you. None of the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Jesus spoke also about that in Matthew, chapter five. Don't recompense evil for evil. I'll get even. No!

Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Be open. Don't have hidden agendas. Open and sincere.

¹⁸*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.* Now that is not possible, but as much as it is possible, and as much as lies in you. In other words, if there is friction, don't let it be from your side. You see, you can't always prevent friction. You can't always prevent someone else what they are thinking or what they are doing as far as contention or whatever. But as much as lies in you. Don't let the cause of the friction be from your side. Live peaceably with all men as much as lieth in you.

¹⁹*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, (Don't take vengeance.) but rather give place unto wrath:* Don't take vengeance but rather give place to the wrath that you feel. Put it aside. When we feel that we have been violated, we get angry. We want vengeance. But don't avenge yourself. But rather give place unto wrath.

for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. So, if you have been wronged. If you have been cheated. If you have some of your goods taken by fraud or by force, commit it to the Lord. He said, Vengeance is mine; I will repay. You don't have to get even yourself. You don't have to take it into your hands

to avenge yourself. Just commit it to the Lord. Say okay, Lord, take care of it. David would do this. He would say, Lord, break their teeth in their mouth. Leave it with God. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

²⁰*Therefore if thine enemy hunger feed him;* Oh, oh, how can I do that? You can't, except through the grace of the Spirit of God working in your life. How many times enemies have become friends because someone has reached out in kindness to them?

There was a pastor here in the area several years ago who was extremely jealous because of God was doing at Calvary Chapel and the experience we were having of rapid growth. He became very embittered against us because of jealousy. Practically in every sermon he was bringing up negative aspects that he saw concerning Calvary Chapel. Saying unkind things about us, so much so, (It was so eating him up inside, this attitude toward the Spirit, was so eating him up, he was so bitter that it was coming out practically in every sermon.) that the board finally dismissed him. They said we don't to hear how horrible Calvary Chapel is, we want, you know, to hear something that is positive from the Word. And his board finally dismissed him. He moved north. I received word that his wife was suffering. She had to have emergency surgery. Because he no longer had a church he didn't an income. He was faced with this stiff hospital bill and surgery cost. He was destitute. I sent him the money to pay the hospital and the surgery. He was no longer an enemy. That is what the Scripture is actually telling us here.

If your enemy hungers feed him; *if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.* In other words, you are not to take the vengeance. You are not to get even. You are not to respond in kind. They are unkind. You are not to be unkind, back. If your enemy is hungry feed him. And so you will heap coals of fire on his head. Now, going back, God said, don't avenge yourself. Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord. You see if they continue in that, God will take care of them. God will heap the coals of fire on their head.

Go back to Psalm 140:10. David here in one of these prayers of David, concerning his enemies. Notice he begins, Deliver me O Lord, from the evil men, which imagine mischief in their heart. They are gathered continually for war. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent. Adder's poison is under their lips. He said in verse ten, let burning coals fall upon them. Let them be cast into the fire, into deep pits, that they rise not up again. So the idea is, as we do good, as we commit the vengeance to God. God will take care of them. We don't have to worry about that.

Finally, Paul exhorts, ²¹*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* Don't let evil triumph. Don't let evil have a victory over you. But overcome the evil with good.

All of these little short exhortations, they are worth going over and meditating on each one. It would be good to take one a day and just meditate on it. And then ask, how can I put this in practice in my own life? How can I make application of this? These little short exhortations. The way I am to respond and react to others. The way God would have me to respond and react. Now, let me ask you this. These are the way God says we should be. These are the things we should do. This is the way I ought to be. Do you see anything wrong with this? Do you say, oh, no, that is terrible? That is no way to live. Or do you find yourself saying, oh boy, wouldn't it be nice to live in a community where people were doing these things? Wouldn't it be great if everyone was following these exhortations? I would like to live in a community. I would like to live in a society where these were the rules by which we were all living. It would be a great place to live. God wants His church, His community to live like this. This is the way He wants us to respond to each other and to react to one another. I see nothing wrong with it at all. I think it would be absolutely next to heaven. And how I thank God for His church, the body. And for those sincere within it who are seeking to live by the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the exhortations of God's Word. Loving one another, doing good, showing kindness, helping, strengthening, ministering. That's what the church is all about. That's God's purpose and intent for our lives here in the church. May God help us to be the church He wants us to be. Because when we are, we then become the light to the world around us, who lives in that bitterness and in that "get even" and in that whole mental state of agitation and upset and tension. Let God's Spirit speak to your heart.

As David said, "Search me oh God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there is some way of wickedness in me and Lord, lead me in Your path." Let that be our pray tonight. Lord, show me where I fall short. Help me to be everything you want me to be, in Jesus' name.

Thank You, Father for the path that You have shown to us. May we walk in it, pleasing, Lord, unto to You. Doing for others what we would like to do for You. Showing our love for You by loving others. Oh Lord, we feel convicted as we read these exhortations because we recognize the areas where we have fallen short. Help us, Lord, that we will not come short in any Spiritual gift. But that we through the power of the Spirit will become the men and the women that you want us to be, doing the things You would have us to do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.