

ROMANS WEEK 5

DON'T BE DEFEATED
BY EVIL, BUT
DEFEAT EVIL
WITH GOOD
ROMANS 12:21

THEREFORE, DO AND DON'T

ICE BREAKER

What do you think are the top 3 qualities that a genuine Christian should display?

PRAYER

As an act of worship listen to / sing the song by Reuben Morgan: Into your hands I commit again.
Alternatively use the words as the opening prayer:

Into your hands I commit again with all I am, for you, Lord
You hold my world, in the palm of your hand, and I am yours forever

*(Chorus) Jesus I believe in you, Jesus I belong to you
You're the reason that I live, the reason that I sing with all I am*

I'll walk with you, wherever you go through tears and joy I'll trust in you
And I will live in all of your ways and your promises, forever. (repeat chorus)

SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:1-2,9-10, 20-21; 13:8,10

Memory Verse: Don't be defeated by evil, but defeat evil with Good – Romans 12:21

REFLECTION

The doctrinal section of the letter is finished. In Rom 12:1, the word **“Therefore”** marks the introduction of an emphasis on the practical living out of the Christian life. The words **“in view of God's mercy”** refers to the gospel of grace Paul has expounded. This gospel is the ground of his appeal to the people to live a certain way. Firstly, Paul focuses on how Christian's should live in the church, in relation to other believers. He mentions worship, the exercise of ministry / gifts and the loving service of our fellow believers. He then goes on to (vs 14ff) to mention love expressed more generally to all people. The section on not taking revenge seems to lead him to speak about obedience to the state. He speaks of the obligation to love and that the motive and urgency of such living is in the return of Christ, which was expected to take place in their lifetime. Make a closing reference to the immorality of pagan life, he urges the congregation to live lives that are morally distinct, which represent Christ.

1. When it comes to witnessing for Christ, what is the value or importance of practically living out what we believe?

2. What daily opportunities do you have of loving service of others – both inside and outside the church? Share a few things you do – or could do.
3. What is the importance of loving service of our fellow Christians in our own church?

The passage selected from Romans 12 and 13, highlights some important themes in practical Christian living. Vs 1-3 – worship is not ritualistic or purely symbolic. It incorporates the offertory of our very selves to God, all that we are; and it is meant to be a means of our inner change or transformation to Christlikeness. John van de Laar says “*It is the transformation that worship creates in us that we seek to bring into our everyday routines.*” (The Hour that Changes Everything, p 20). It is significant that Paul begins this section of his letter with worship because he then proceeds to talk about living out a life in the process of being changed. In dealing with the practicalities of love towards our fellow Christians, Paul stresses that we must work hard at maintaining loving relationships with each other. This is not to say the church is a perfectly loving community – it isn’t. But it is where we learn sacrificial love in the context of accepting and forgiving relationships. The church thus equips us to express love in the often harsh environment of the world where we need to love our enemies; and where tough, demanding love is needed to sustain and transform societies.

1. What attitude do we need to bring to worship if it is to be for us a transforming experience?
2. If the church is to be a community where we learn and grow in love, what are some essentials in how we treat and relate to one another?
3. Looking at Romans 12:20-21, what are some the everyday ways in which we can apply this in our lives?

SOMETHING TO DO

Take the first step to reconciling or healing a relationship with someone that are in conflict with or have grown apart from.

PRAYER

Close saying together the famous prayer of St Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

GOING FURTHER

1. Looking at Romans 13:1-7, what does Paul say about the Christian’s relationship with civil authorities?
2. In view of what he says, is there any justification for civil disobedience? For example, how we justify not paying the e tolls on Gauteng roads?