

ROMANS 12:1-16:27 | LIFE TODAY

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 46*

ROMANS 12:1-15:14 | JEWISH LIFE BEYOND THE TEMPLE

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 47*

ROMANS 12:1-21 | DAILY PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

**VERSE 1 - GREEN**

Paul now turns to come alongside his Jewish brethren in Rome to address the issue of what a Jew does when there is no Temple. How should a Jew live now? Note that it would still be a dozen years or so before the Temple was actually destroyed, but with Israel in a partial blindness until the fullness of the Gentiles come in (v. 25), it was only a matter of time until the Jewish Temple would be destroyed.

In verses 1-3, I have chosen green for the Right Division Color Coding because Paul writes to Jews living the Christian life after the blindness of Israel has set in, when there is no Temple remaining by which to live any Kingdom commandments. Believers in the Body of Christ are not directly addressed, but the given teachings would not be doctrinally problematic to apply.

Paul begins with encouragement, fueled by "**the mercies of God.**" These are the same mercies he spoke of in the previous context (Romans 11:30-32). The "**therefore**" with which he starts the sentence is built on those verses. Since God's mercy is "**upon all**" (Rom. 11:32) in the age of grace, these instructions can incidentally apply to Gentiles.

With the inability to present a sacrifice in the Temple, Paul instructs the believing Jews to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. This sacrifice should be holy and acceptable to God and is considered a reasonable service.

Paul referred to this service as "**reasonable**" and used the Greek word "logikos," which is the same root from which we get "logical." In the age of grace, believers should strive for this kind of service: one that is logical. We should use our thought process to give the best possible service today. It is notable that many modern translations, such as NASB and ESV, translate "logikos" into "spiritual." However, this is an interpretative leap, not a direct translation. For this and many other reasons, those who believe that NASB is the most literal translation should question that premise.

**Verse 2 - Green**

Paul gives more detailed instruction, asking the Romans not to be "conformed to this world." He uses the word αἰών [aion] rather than **cosmos**, thus emphasizing a confirmation to "the age," in terms of the standards of conduct of a particular era or generation. When Paul instructs them to rather "be ye transformed" it appears that he has made an assumption that they are going to change (he uses the word μεταμορφώω [metamorphoo]) from where they are to where they should be. While there may be some of the designs of this age in our thinking, a transformation away from the world's schematic to one more Biblical should be every believer's goal.

This transformation takes place "by the renewing of your mind." Once again Paul uses a **thinking** word rather than a **spiritual** word. It is this thought process which should serve as the **proving grounds** for the "good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." While most of Christianity would teach a renewal by more mystical means, Paul teaches a renewal by **thought process**. Further, most of Christendom would teach the we test the will of God by seeking the Spirit and

hoping for a Divine whisper, Paul teaches that we mentally investigate and come to reasonable conclusions concerning God's will.

This method is so foreign to thinking of evangelicalism that it would almost sound heretical to the evangelical torchbearers. Consider these quotes:

"The most obvious answer to the question, "How can I know God's will for my life?" is to ask Him. Turn to God in prayer and ask Him what He wants you to do."<sup>1</sup>

"This passage gives us an important sequence: the child of God refuses to be conformed to the world and instead allows himself to be transformed by the Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

Notice that finding answers related to proving God's will involves a spiritual journey rather than a mental one. The website *GotQuestions* even changes the clear teaching of Scripture to "be transformed by the Spirit." Personally, I think that Christianity would better understand the will of God by using their minds more. Much of the drift in Christian living and impact may result from following feelings and "still small voices" instead of using their minds.

### Verse 3 - Green

Paul speaks "**to every man that is among you,**" which does not directly include believers today. However, what he says is not off-limits to our thinking and lifestyle. He says that he speaks "**through the grace given unto me.**" It is difficult to know here whether this should be taken generally or specifically. In a general sense, God was gracious to Paul (Saul) on the road to Damascus and knew well the subject matter of verse 3. In a more specific sense, he could be speaking of the revelation of the mystery as "**the grace given unto me.**" In Ephesians 3:7, Paul speaks of being a minister "**according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me.**" In that verse, the context is also humility. In 1 Corinthians 3:10, Paul says that he laid the foundation "**according to the grace of God which is given unto me.**" None of these passages solves the argument about whether this is God's general grace or specifically the revelation of the mystery. Personally, I think the context calls for a more general grace, mainly because nothing in the teaching of v. 3 is specific to the age of grace.

The instruction is to promote humility in self-appraisal. Those who serve the Lord should consider themselves "**according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**" It would be both illogical and against grammar to argue that God gives a different measure of faith to one Roman Jew than to another. If this were the case, then Paul is not teaching humility of thinking but rather an appropriate measure of thinking. That is, if God has given me more faith than you, then I am Biblically obligated to think of myself better than you. Such an idea, of course, would be preposterous.

Furthermore, when Paul speaks about God dealing "**to every man the measure of faith,**" the grammar suggests that each man has received "**the measure**" equally. The phrase "the measure of faith" often refers to the body of doctrine or the received teachings of Christianity. It's not about how much personal belief or trust in God one has, but about the revelation of doctrine that God has given to all and hid from none. Compare Jude 1:3 and Acts 6:7 for examples. The English Standard Version translates (or, more accurately, interprets) the Greek into "each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned." By inserting (without indication) the word "each" and by using the word "assigned" rather than "dealt," that translation implies something that is not said: that God may have given me a greater measure of faith than He gave you. Such "translation" is the result of theological bias.

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<sup>1</sup> How To Know God's Will. <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/how-to-know-gods-will.html>. Accessed August 3, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> (How Can I Know God's Will For My Life? <https://www.gotquestions.org/know-God-will.html>. Accessed August 3, 2023).