

**November 26, 2006**  
**"The New Reformers"**  
**Romans 12 NLT**

[Click here for the notes in the handout.](#)

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And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

3 As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you. 4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.

6 God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. 7 If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

9 Don't just pretend that you love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Stand on the side of the good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically.

12 Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and always be prayerful. 13 When God's children are in need, be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night.

14 If people persecute you because you are a Christian, don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't try to act important, but enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.

19 Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written,

"I will take vengeance;

I will repay those who deserve it,"  
says the Lord.

20 Instead, do what the Scriptures say:

"If your enemies are hungry, feed them.  
If they are thirsty, give them something to drink,  
and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you."

21 Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Last week, as we concluded the series on revival, I began to mention that God is seeking a new breed of disciples / followers. I would like to revisit that thought today.

God is seeking those who are passionately, fervently and with much zeal pursuing an intimate relationship with Him. They refuse to go with the flow as many American "Christians" seem to be doing. Actually they want more than revival, they want a new reformation. You either stand for Jesus or you stand for all He is against. To these seekers of a new reformation it *is* as simple as that, it *is* as black-and-white as that. And they are willing to risk image, resources, whatever it takes, to be more compliant with the God Who means everything to them.

Will you commit yourself to be such a seeker after God? Let me warn you: Just as Jesus was misunderstood, rejected, persecuted, and even murdered for His extreme love, goodness, compassion, humility, wisdom, and grace, so are Reformers abused by the culture that is in chaos and crisis. Reformers are met with rejection simple because they are determined to honor the God they love. Would you like to be someone who lives only to love, obey, and serve God, overcoming every obstacle that tries to prevent such a life?

What is the test of a true disciple? Jesus told us many times that it is the fruit that comes from our life that determines who we are. Jesus encountered many people who talked a good game, such as the Pharisees, but He was only enthusiastic about those who lived what they claimed to believe. So we must look for fruit in our lives. In the book of Romans, Paul tells us to look for fruit in seven areas of life:

### **1. Spiritual Practices**

Committed followers of Christ, Reformers / Revolutionaries, are connected by a deep bond with God and relate to people because of that bond with God. The Spiritual practices of their life include:

Being in constant prayer and worship with God.  
Sharing the God News with all people.  
Using our God given gifts and abilities for acts of service.  
Being Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Doing whatever we can to build up the faith of others.

We want to be like Jesus Who was less concerned with religious ceremonies, traditions, and completing a check list of duties to accomplish. Rather He was much more concerned about people knowing and being tuned in to God. It is all about deepening our relationship with God.

## **2. Personal Faith**

God wants us to be available. God doesn't want our abilities, He wants our availability. Be available to God:

Available to do whatever it takes to grow, and make your faith stronger.

Available to hear and respond to the Holy Spirit.

Available to have God work through you because you trust Him

Besides Romans 12 Paul says, in Romans 6:13 (NIV), "offer yourselves to God." Surrender every dimension of your life to God. Nothing expresses your true faith in God more than your willingness to give control to Him and follow all He says to do.

## **3. Perspective on Life**

In Rom 1:13 (NLT) Paul wrote, "I want to work among you and see good results (or see fruit)." Paul wants us to be firm and focused. Focused on what? Producing fruit! Want what Paul wants...to work for God and see good results. Our faith is in God above all else, and we are therefore considerate of the needs of others. We can make a lasting and positive difference in the world. Have a clear perspective on life, God has a plan for us. You are here to serve God.

Let me give a warning. Be realistic. It is tough to live in this world and make a difference for God. Don't let illegitimate criticism get to you. There will be hardships. But you are a Reformer, a different breed of people. You have a different perspective on life because you accept the fact that life on earth is all about life after earth, and so you live your life accordingly.

## **4. Attitude**

Reformers know they are connected to the all-knowing, ever-present, all-mighty God. Therefore they have confidence, empowerment and joy. They are confident because they know and trust God through Whom they receive strength to do all things He wants them to do. They are empowered to obey God based on the clear direction He gives from His Word. For example (see Rom 12: 9-21), hate evil, love good, be patient, respectful, and forgiving. And why wouldn't they have joy and even be upbeat, knowing the promises of the God they serve and keeping focused on the big picture.

## **5. Character**

Integrity, honesty, reliability, trustworthiness, warmth, love, compassion, these are the characteristics of this new breed of disciples. And, of course, humility. Not arrogance, but humility. Why? For they know they did not earn salvation. They know their struggle is still with sin. They know they are far from their goal of being like Jesus, and knowing where they are in comparison to the standard set by Jesus and the Word helps them to stay realistic.

## **6. Relationships**

They are known by their love for God and people. Paul tells us to look for opportunities to bless people, all people, even our enemies. Jesus wants His followers to be peacemakers, which we can do by avoiding senseless arguments. We see in Romans 12 that we truly need each other. There is a team player mentality that fosters loving relationships, rather than a competitive or jealous relationship. We must seek unity with each other and we must honor others. The world is watching, we must reflect the love and holiness of God.

## **7. Behavior**

The lifestyle of these devoted followers of Jesus is clean and productive. This is what Paul writes about in Rom 12:1. A transformed life of holiness and goodness. We will be in heaven for one reason only...because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross. But in the meantime we are challenged to live pure and godly lives as evidence of our obedience to and cooperation with the Holy Spirit who lives within us. Obedience to God's standard, motivated by our gratitude and desire to please God helps us to pursue a holy life.

Paul tells us that this is associated with the way we think. Our thinking must be transformed. That means we must examine our thoughts in order to resist those that dishonor God. Reformers know that actions flow from our thoughts, we must think like a transformed follower of Christ if we hope to act like one. This effects our lifestyle choices.

Do you want to know if you are numbered among this new breed of followers of Christ, a Reformer, a Revolutionary Christian? Look at the characteristics (fruit) Paul lists in Romans, and compare them to your life. I know we will never find a 100 percent match. But you ought to notice a different from the "go with the flow Christians." You should stand out as different from the pack. Genuine worship, love motivated outreach, consistent spiritual growth, wise use of resources, servanthood, and meaningful spiritual relationships.

How are you doing in relation to these attributes? Do you see fruit of true discipleship in your life?