

The Book of Romans - Part 40

Our study today on "It's a Good Life" picks up with Romans chapter 12 and verse 12. We've been studying through this book for a while now, and I pray that you are receiving a blessing from God's Word, not from me but from God's Word. And I trust that you have your Bible open and that as we read along you will read with me and that God will open your mind and open your heart to what He has to say, not unto you but to myself, as well.

Romans 12:12 says, *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.* Remember, Paul the apostle here is speaking to Christians. And rejoicing in hope means our hope as saved people is best defined by Scripture. In I John 3:2, it says, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Our hearts need to rejoice in that.

There are so many things in the Scripture that tell us about rejoicing: *Rejoice in the Lord forever*, and *The joy of the Lord is my strength*; and we need to rejoice in the Lord constantly as saved people. I understand we all have a period of time in our lives when we feel a little down; we're human beings; but then we need to spring back and understand and grasp the promises of God that we are to rejoice in hope, and that hope is an assuredness of knowing that we're saved, on our way to Heaven, and that one day we're going to see Jesus as He is and we're going to be finally made like Him completely when we see Him in person.

The Bible says "patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." In Romans 12:12 though, the word "patient" carries the idea of persevering, hanging in there. And it says "continuing instant in prayer." This means that the believer is to be persistent,

giving him or herself instantly, being ready at all times to pray. We need to be in an attitude of prayer. We shouldn't wait till things get bad in our lives and the cares of this world bog us down. We need to be praying all the time, trusting Jesus Christ to answer those prayers of saved people.

Romans 12:13 says, *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.* Have you seen so far that Paul is talking to a Christian, that he's telling us the things that we need to be doing as Christians? And he says here "distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." Christians are to be willing to share financially, materially, for the needs of other Christians, as well as being hospitable to strangers, those who are not saved. We are to be kind to those people who are not saved. We need to reach those people who do not know Jesus as Savior. And I trust that you're doing that as a saved person, that you're sharing the Word of God... you're sharing Jesus with this world. And when I say "this world," I'm talking about the people of this world.

Romans 12:14 says this: *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.* Believers are to express their heartfelt desire for the Lord to bless those who go about continually saying unkind things about them. That's hard to do, isn't it? But we can do it through the Lord. A natural reaction to persecutors would be to curse them, but instead we are to ask God's blessings for them. Remember, when Jesus died on the cross, He says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." In Matthew 5:44, it says, *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* Now, the only way we can really do that is in Jesus Christ, is by giving

our lives to Him completely. Remember in the first part of this chapter, Paul says, "I beseech you; I beg you; present your bodies a living sacrifice unto the Lord."

Well, verse 15 in Romans 12 says, *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* Now, we as Christians are members of the body of Christ. We are to partake of the joys and the sorrows of other saved people. In I Corinthians 12:25-27, it says, *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.* ²⁶*And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.* ²⁷*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

We're all the same. We're saved people. There's not one person above another, but we're all the same in the sight of God. Romans 12:16 says, *Be of the same mind one toward another.* He carries on that thought of verse 15. *Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.* Be of the same mind. We are to live in harmony... be harmonious with other believers. Now, this does not mean we are robots who are not to express our thoughts on a matter; however, we are not to cause division in the body of Christ.

If we look on into this verse now, the last part of that says, *Be not wise in your own conceits.* Don't regard or show an excessively high opinion of your own qualities or abilities. Proverbs 3:7 says, *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.* Remember, none of us is better than the other. We're all the same in Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:17 says, *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.* "Recompense to no man evil for evil" means don't retaliate or try to get even with someone who has deliberately tried or

has done you harm in any way. We're not to do that. We're not to retaliate. It doesn't mean you have to stand there and let somebody beat up on you or shoot you or something like that. It means that we're not to seek vengeance. Second Corinthians 8:21 says, *Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.* That's a testimony. People will see that when somebody does you wrong and you don't retaliate, and that's one way to win people to Christ is to let them see Christ in you.

Verse 18 says, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.* "Live peaceably" means to be at peace, to live in peace, and we as Christians cannot control every situation, but as far as the peace depends on us, we should never cause or initiate a disturbance of the peace with anyone.

Romans 12:19 says, *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* You see, it's all coming together, and he's carrying on this thought as we go down through here. "Avenge not" means don't get revenge or satisfaction by punishing the wrongdoer. *Give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* We are to step aside and leave the matter to God. God's wrath will take care of it at the right time and in the right way. There are many verses that talk about this.

Now, in Romans 12:20, it says, *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.* True love for one's enemy involves choosing to give to that person what he needs in spite of how we feel toward that person for what that person has done to us. And then we see that the unmerited favor that we show our enemies brings them to a great point of shame, leaving

them no excuse for being our enemies, heaping coals of fire on their heads. It doesn't mean to hurt them. It means that they are without excuse then. That brings them to shame when we show them our love in the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Lord.

Verse 21 says, *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* Now this verse is teaching us not to give in to the morally wrong and sinful things of this world but to rise above the evil by actively seeking the good of others and the good of God, and, of course, we look to the Good Shepherd for victory. In John 10:11, it says, *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

First Peter 2:22 says, *Who did no sin... That's speaking of Jesus... neither was guile found in his mouth.* He was not deceitful. He said the truth.

First John 4:4 says, *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

First John 5:4-5 says, *⁴For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. ⁵Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

Now, as we end this chapter, this concludes chapter 12. We've learned that it is not the believer's job to punish evildoers. This is God's job. Vengeance belongs to the Lord. In chapter 13, we're going to see that it tells us that one of the ways that God punishes evildoers is through human government which He has ordained and established. In Romans 13:4, it talks about that, and we're going to see that as we go into that chapter. And I pray that you are praying that God is going to open your mind and your heart to the

things that He has for you as we study the Scriptures in the book of Romans.

Well, I'm praying for you and you say, "Well, you don't even know me." Well, God knows you. He knows whether you've trusted Him as Savior or not, and He knows where you are, and I pray for you. I pray for each person who listens to this program. I pray first of all that, if you do not know Christ, you'll receive Him as your Savior.

Secondly, if you know Christ as your Savior, I'm praying that you will get involved and you'll let Christ use you in His work, that you will tell others about Jesus, that you will help others understand that they need Jesus the way you needed Jesus and you've asked Him into your heart and you have Him now and you want to share that with other people. I'm praying for you. I'm praying, once again, first, that you know Jesus as your Savior. Have you trusted Him? Have you asked Him to come into your heart?

"Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior. I know I can't save myself. I know I'm a sinner. I can't save myself, and I want You to save me because You are the Savior."

If you'll pray a prayer something like that... my prayer won't save you, but if you'll be sincere in trusting Jesus as your Savior, He'll save you.

And Christian, you need to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. It's your reasonable service, and you need to be serving Him today because He first loved you. He gave Himself for you. He died on the cross for you. He shed His blood for you, and it's through that blood that we have remission of sin. God loves you today. He loves you if you're unsaved. He wants you to be saved. He loves you if you are saved, and He wants you to serve Him.

It's been good being with you once again today, and next week, we'll pick up where we've left off, chapter 13 of Romans.

But I'd like for you to look at our Website, www.LRWM.org. If you'll leave me an email there, I'll be glad to share your prayer requests with the Lord and if you'll write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731, I'll be glad to pray with you about the needs in your life. I'll take that to the Lord in prayer.

Until the next time when you hear me say, "It is a good life," may the Lord bless you richly in my prayer.