

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Directed Prayer

Romans 12:1-8

2000

Introduction

Last week a number of people were challenged and moved by the teaching from Romans 12:1-8.

1. Some recognized that their lives weren't the living sacrifice that God desired. They confessed that they had allowed the pressure and allurements of the world to squeeze them into its mold. They wanted to present themselves again as a living sacrifice to God, holy and pleasing in His sight.
2. Some confessed that they had drifted away from spending regular time in the Word and they needed encouragement to get back to renewing their mind on a daily basis.
3. Others voiced a desire to use the gifts and abilities that God had given them to a greater degree in the ministry of the church, but they weren't sure how to get started.
4. Still others shared that they were in the midst of spiritual warfare – discouraged and in need of encouragement and prayer.

Rather than rush on to the second half of Romans 12 today, I want to dedicate the rest of the service for a time of directed prayer -- a time for us to respond to God and be transformed through a time of direct fellowship with Him.

Directed Prayer in Pairs

I'll be guiding us through a series of brief prayer times with suggested topics for you to pray about.

1. Ground rules:
 - a. Pray with your spouse or someone of the same sex
 - b. Don't spend your time talking -- get right to prayer.
 - c. Keep your prayers brief. Instead of praying one long prayer, share shorter prayers back and forth-- don't be a prayer hog!
2. Begin by praying that:
 - a. God will bless your time of prayer.
 - b. God will use this time in a very powerful way to draw you closer to Him.
 - c. God will lead you by His Holy Spirit
3. Pray with your partner

I God's Mercy Leads to Transformation

Paul's appeal for a transformed life is based on the *mercies of God*.

1. His mercy expressed in not giving us what we deserved
2. His mercy expressed in the gift of salvation in Christ simply by faith alone.

3. His mercy expressed in delivering you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His own Son.

In Eph 2:3-6, Paul said it this way, "... because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions -- it is by grace you have been saved."

Application #1:

1. Take a few moments to express your thanks and gratitude to God for His many mercies
Worship Him for delivering you from death and reconciling you to Himself through the sacrifice of His Son.
 2. Pray with your partner
- A. We are to offer our bodies as **living** sacrifices to God [Verse 1a]
Not a sacrifice of atonement, but a "living sacrifice" which is an act of gratitude and praise for His great mercies showered on us in Christ.

1. This kind of living sacrifice is holy and **pleasing** to God [Verse 1b]
Holy = Hagios = "Set apart as sacred"
Pleasing = Euarestos = "Fully agreeable or acceptable (to God)"

2. This is our spiritual act of **worship** [Verse 1c]
Spiritual act = Logikos latreia = "Reasonable service"
In light of God's mercy, a life of total surrender and service to God is our only reasonable response.

2 Cor 5:14-15 "[Christ] died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

Jesus said in Luke 9:23 that, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Application #2:

1. Have you offered your body up as a living sacrifice? If you're not where you should be, which is on the altar of sacrifice, ask God to give you a heart of obedience and a heart of joy as you surrender yourself to Him once again. Take a few moments now to present yourself once again as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him – this is your reasonable service in light of what He has done for you.
 2. Pray with your partner
- B. We aren't to **conform** to the pattern of this world [Verse 2a]
Conformed = Suschematizo = "To be fashioned in the same pattern"
Philips translation: "Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold."

What pressures are you currently facing that are distracting you from God's call to a life of surrender and sacrifice? In what ways is the world attempting to squeeze you into its mold? Are you resisting the pressure to be conformed to the pattern of this world?

Application #3:

1. Open your Bible to 1 John 2:15-17. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."
2. Take the next few minutes to pray this passage back to the Lord. Take it in small phrases and respond in prayer back to the Lord as the Holy Spirit leads you.
3. Pray with your partner

C. We are to be **transformed** by the renewing of our minds [Verse 2b]

Transformed = Metamorphoo = "To change or transfigure"

We derive our English word "metamorphosis" from this Greek word

This transformation takes place through the renewing of our minds through the reading, meditation, memorizing, studying, and applying of God's Word.

Application #4:

1. What area(s) of your mind and heart need God's renewing touch today? Are you allowing God to renew your mind through the study of His Word?
2. Ask God to give you a new hunger and thirst for fellowship with Him through a consistent, daily time in the study of God's Word and for a mind and heart that is cleansed and renewed.
3. Pray with your partner

1. Then we will be able to **test** what God's will is

Test = Dokimazo = "To discern, examine, or try."

2. Then we will be able to approve what God's will is

a. His will is good, **pleasing** and perfect = "Without flaw"

II God's Mercy Leads to Humility

A. We aren't to think of ourselves more **highly** than we ought [Verse 3]

Think more highly = Huperphroneo = "To esteem oneself too highly"

If we were to put it into the vernacular we might say, "Hey, no get big head!"

1. Think of yourself with sober judgment
2. Think of yourself in accordance with faith

B. We are to recognize the **corporate** body of Christ [Verse 4]

1. There is one body
2. There are many members with different functions
3. There is corporate responsibility

Eph 4:15-16 “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

III God’s Mercy Leads to Service

A. We have been given different **gifts** [Verse 5a]

Gifts = Charisma = “A (spiritual) endowment”

Spiritual gifts are simply “tools” that enable us to carry out the vital functions of the ministry as members of Christ’s body. Every believer is given at least one gift for the building up of the body of Christ.

1 Peter 4:10 “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1. According to God’s grace

Eph 4:7-8 “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”

B. We have a responsibility to **exercise** these gifts [Verse 5b-8]

Spiritual gifts are not given so that we may set ourselves above or apart from the rest of the body. In fact, we will be incapable of properly using the gifts God has given us until our life-focus shifts from being self-centered to God-centered – from being self-centered to others-centered.

1. It is usually something that seems to come easily for us and that we enjoy
2. It is usually something that others are blessed and encouraged by

Application #5:

1. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? If not, ask God for wisdom and insight as to what they might be.
2. If you already know what your gifts are, are you using them to build up the body of Christ? If not, then ask God for a heart to serve the body of Christ and to maximize your gifts for His glory.
3. Pray with your partner

IV Closing prayer

- A. Pray for one another’s personal prayer concerns
- B. Pray for God’s blessing on one another

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