

Rom 12:3-6 <sup>3</sup> For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. <sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Paul here in chapter 12 begins now to instruct us, the believers, on how we are to respond to one another. Now it is important for us as believer to remember that two terrible things happened to mankind at the fall. First man fell as an individual and lost his relationship with God. But it did not affect Adam alone, or singularly. His sin brought a curse upon the whole of creation and as a result society became terribly disrupted, damaged, and broken. Man fell, society became hopelessly fractured. An ordered universe became disordered. An ordered society became disordered and the result was a state of disruption and chaos. Paul described it as creation being subjected to a state of futility. We read of this in Rom 8:20-23 *“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”*

Man has become only a shadow of what he had been before. And most seriously his ability to live in an ordered society was harmed because his intelligence had become perverted and irrational. Instead of rightly reflecting God's glory and wisdom man became confused in his thinking. Paul has already pointed out in chapter one of Romans that man had begun to worship all sorts of things, the creature instead of the Creator. Rom 1:22-25 *“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”* A prevalent example today can be seen in present day theory of evolution which is simply an ongoing of that foolishness that man fell into after the fall.

At the fall man ceased to be the proper reflection of God that he was intended to be. He ceased to reflect God's wisdom and moral goodness and instead became a dimly veiled and distorted caricature of God. It does not mean that man didn't remain smart and capable of doing remarkable even extraordinary things.

Man continued to have abilities far above the brute creatures. He could excel in the arts, in science, in woodwork, abilities to hunt and farm, etc. Indeed we know that Noah was most capable to build a remarkable boat. Man, fallen man remained one of the most remarkable parts of God's creation below the angels. But instead of living in a manner that honored God, man became self-possessed and prideful. Man became basically self-centered. And thus man's relationship with fellow man became distorted. As a result community was fractured. We see it coming to fruition very shortly after the fall when a brother killed a brother. Now as a redeemed people we are to restore that image of God in our relationship with one another. This is what the instruction of Romans 12 is all about. Paul wants us to move from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness. From having the mind of the world to letting the mind of Christ be in us, i.e., be not conformed to this world but be transformed.

From God's description of man in Genesis 6 where every intent and thought of the heart was only evil continually, to a mind that delights in God's law. From pride, and the lust of the flesh and eyes, to humility, care and concern for others. We who have been redeemed by the “Seed of Woman” are to be examples of what God intended man to be. The first step in this transformation will be dealing with our mindset. First we are not to think too highly of ourselves and Secondly we are to be mindful of those around us.

- A. We are not to think too highly of ourselves. - *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*
1. Paul begins his instruction with these words, “Through the grace the given me”.
    - a. As Paul instructs us in Christian living he wants us to understand this is not the mere teaching of man.
    - b. He is speaking with apostolic authority which had been given to him by means of an unmerited favor.
    - c. Paul is fully aware that he was not deserving of such a high office.
    - d. Thus, in an indirect way, he reminds us that we are not worthy of our calling either.
  2. It is to be noted that the first issue he deals with in us “new creations” is pride.
    - a. Again he begins with a negative. Do not think more highly of yourself than you ought to think.
    - b. We are not to be boastful.
      - (1) Not to boast against the natural branches. (Rom 11:20)
      - (2) Not to be wise in our own conceit. (Rom. 11:25)
    - c. There is always a danger of forgetting that we are nothing and have nothing unless God gives it.

3. We are to think soberly, carefully, thoughtfully.
  - a. Clear thinking, will remind us that our standing in Christ is the result of a **gift** of faith. - *as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*
    - (1) It is God who has given us this measure of faith.
    - (2) Christian living is not a self made, or a will-power religion.
  - b. Our actions as a believer is the product of a new mind and a new heart **created by God** in us.
    - (1) It is the result of a supernatural work of God in us.
    - (2) We cannot produce it on our own.

2 Cor 5:17 *If anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**.*

Eph 2:8 *We are **His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works,*

Col 3:10 *We have put on the new man **who is renewed in knowledge** according to the image of Him who created him.*

- B. Now that he has dealt with our inward thinking Paul points out that we are “**merely**” members of a larger body. - *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,<sup>5</sup> so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*
  1. Remind you the fall had affected society as a whole.
  2. Now as new creatures in a “new society” namely the church, how do we respond to one-another. – *many members **one body**.*
    - a. Not to think selfishly.
    - b. We are to be mindful to the needs of others.
  3. Our gifts may differ, but they are gifts.
    - a. Not whose gift or ability is of greater value.
    - b. Rather how can I use my gift for the greater good of all.
  4. God has made you a member of this congregation.
    - a. How important is that to you?
    - b. How important is the ministry, the outreach of this congregation to you?
    - c. Do you come just to receive? Or to give?

**CONCLUSION:** Paul reminds us that nothing happens by accident.

As God’s people we all know that all things fall out from the purpose, mind and will of God.

It is not that the church cannot exist without you – rather we should ask, “Why has God place me here?”

What Paul is saying here is quite clear.

In the church . . . each member is important.

We may have differing gifts, differing abilities, to meet different needs . . .

. . . but it is all for one purpose the edifying of the Body of Christ.

I will close with three thoughts this morning.

First the instruction Paul gave to Timothy is most appropriate and fitting . . . 2 Tim 1:6 *Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you*

And secondly the teaching of our Lord in the parable of the talents that God has given us.

He expects us to use them and increase them.

And finally: *Phil 2:3-4 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*