

Romans, Part 34

The book of Romans presents a strong arsenal to help develop the believer and strengthen their life and walk in Christ. The text calls believers to live out their faith before other believers, their community, enemies, government and weaker believers.

Romans 12:1 NKJV I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:2 NKJV And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

After telling us to serve God with the gifts, talents and ministries He gives us, we are instructed to behave like a Christian: loving one another, preferring one another, being fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The practical manner of a transformed Christian life is laid out before us throughout Romans. Our life and lifestyle is a testimony of the vital connection we have with Christ. We are to live out our faith by not being overcome by evil, but by overcoming evil with good as God's children and as a living testimony of Christ. All of our relationships should be controlled by the law of love.

Romans 13:8 NLT Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.

Romans 13:9 NLT For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Romans 13:10 NLT Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.

The primary governing rule of the transformed Christian's life and relationships is love. We should not find it strange that the guiding principle for our lives is love since God is love. It is only natural for our life and relationships to follow the nature of our Father. The Ten Commandments show how the life of love keeps us from committing sin. "Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law." As "God's children" we should demonstrate the same mercy, grace and love that we have received. The true test of our spiritual maturity and faith in Christ will be witnessed by those around us. We are not just believers inside the confines of a physically isolated community of believers, our faith is to be seen before the whole world. Rather than conforming to the manner and customs of the world, we are to maintain our faith by being transformed into the image of

Christ.

Romans 13:11-12 NLT This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.

Since we know that time is running out and the coming of the Lord is near, we should “put on the armor of light.” In Ephesians 6:12-18, the armor of right living is the “whole armor of God.” Paul mentions truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the word of God, and continual prayer as the whole armor of God. We must live daily with the awareness that the Lord is coming soon. Jesus said, “Watch, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming,” (Mark 13:35-37).

Several of Paul’s letters address the relentless temptations and pressures that attempt to cause us to abandon faith in Christ and fit in with the culture and trends of the world.

Throughout history, the world and its culture has tried to squeeze believers into its mold. Rather than conforming to the world, we are to throw off “*dark deeds like dirty clothes.*” The implication is that believers have some things that should be removed. If we have any lingering selfish or sinful pursuits, we should cast them off. If we have any behaviors that are contrary to our identity as a “son of God,” we should cast them off.

Romans 13:13-14 NLT Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don’t participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

As a child of God that has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, we must clothe ourselves with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a manner of practical Christian living that refuses to be involved in deeds of darkness. This short list demonstrates the kinds of things we should refuse to participate in: “wild parties, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, immoral living, quarreling, and jealousy.”

1 Peter 2:12 NLT Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when He judges the world.

This is a consistent theme for the church.

We are to live such exemplary lives that we are above reproach before the world. Romans 13:14 shows us how can we do this.

Romans 13:14 ESV But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:14 NLT Instead, **clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ**. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

Romans 13:14 AMP But **clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ** (the Messiah), and make no provision for [indulging] the flesh [put a stop to thinking about the evil cravings of your physical nature] to [gratify its] desires (lusts).

Clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Clothing ourselves with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ requires a conscious effort to put on a new set of clothes, the armor of light. Live covered with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. This quality of life is achievable when we have died to sin and have been made alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord, (Romans 6:11). In Christ, we have died to sin and its evil practices and desires. We have put off our dirty clothes and have put on Christ.

This manner of living clothed in the armor of light in Christ is more urgent because the time is short.

Romans 13:11-12 NKJV And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

Two thousands years ago the Holy Spirit gave the message that "the night was far spent." We are definitely in the last days before Christ's return. The answer for this world is in Jesus Christ's return. The day of the Lord is at hand. Bible prophecy details events that are upon us. As a Christian, we are anticipating a day of hope and reward in heaven.

Luke 6:23 NIV Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven.

This is the blessed hope of the child of God. We anticipate Christ's glorious coming and the redemption of the saints of God. We live with this blessed hope of the return of Christ in the clouds to receive us unto Himself. Jesus is coming back to receive us unto Himself. Because the night is nearly over, we must cast aside any works of darkness. The Holy Spirit is warning us to put aside every work of darkness and live a holy life in the sight of God.

Since we are nearing the end of the night season, we should cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

We must prepare ourselves in these last days by being clothed in the light. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul tells us to put on the breastplate of faith and love

and for a helmet the hope of salvation. In 2 Corinthians 6:4,7, Paul said to put on the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. Ephesians 6:12-18 tells us to put on the whole armor of God so that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Being so clothed, we shall not be found naked, (2 Corinthians 5:1-3).

The idea behind this clothing or covering refers back to the initial sin of Adam and Eve.

When they sinned they discovered that they were naked and ashamed. One of God's first redemptive acts was to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness. Now the Holy Spirit keeps reminding believers to be clothed in Christ. The illustration of being clothed and not being found naked refers to our preparedness for heaven and eternity.

When the Lord Jesus was speaking to the seven churches in the Revelation, He counseled them to be clothed.

Revelation 3:18 NKJV I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

These white garments refers to the righteousness of Christ that covers our sin and shame.

Revelation 3:21 NKJV To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

An allusion to the righteousness of Christ is seen in Christ's appearance in the midst of the church.

What John saw with Christ should also be seen in His church.

Revelation 1:12-13 NKJV Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

Christ's glorious garments and coverings are signs of His righteousness and holiness.

The believer is to be clothed. We must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might and be thoroughly clothed in His righteousness. When we put on the whole armor of God, we are enabled to stand in the evil day.

Revelation 19:7-8 NKJV Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine

linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

1 John 3:2 NKJV Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

This urgent message in Romans encourages us to be prepared and found in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the next paragraph, Paul recognized issues that divided believers. They were divided over being vegetarian or eating meat (14:2), observing sacred days (14:5-6), and drinking wine (14:21). At first glance it appears that Paul forsook the subject of being ready for the Lord's coming. This section is a practical part of living right before God.

Romans 14:7-8 NKJV For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Romans 14:9-10 NKJV For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

We will not be judged by our bias or historical and cultural ideas of what is acceptable. None of us have been given the responsibility of judging others. Everyone is answerable to the Lord, Who will judge us all. We must live in such a way that we are pleasing to God before whom we all will stand and give account of the things that we have done in this body.

Romans 14:11-12 NKJV For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

When we stand before God we will want to be covered in the righteousness of Christ. This is why we should clothe ourselves daily with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and let His righteousness be our covering.