

Manifesting the New Creation

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things
passed away; behold, new things have come”

2 Corinthians 5:17

Romans 12

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2

Because of the mercies of God that He has shown to Jew and Gentile, our proper response is to present our bodies as a sacrifice to Him. Paul likely means the entire person here and that the state in which we are to present our bodies is “living and holy.” The result is that this is our “spiritual” service of worship. In verse 2, believers should not be conformed to this world (age) (Gal.1:3-4). Like many Jews of his time, Paul believed in two “ages.” One is characterized by sin, rebellion, and death. The other, is the age to come, anchored in God’s just reign and way. This age began with Jesus, and now Paul is exhorting his audience to reject the present age and conform to the one to come. This happens by transformation which comes by the process of renewing of the mind. The old, corrupt, selfish, ignorant mind is regenerated so we can recognize and approve the will of God which is good and right.

	Romans 1:18-32	Romans 12:2
State of mind	Depraved	Renewed
Fruit	Without understanding - Rom. 1:31 The gospel is foolishness to them - 1 Cor. 1:18 Their minds are veiled to the gospel message - 2 Cor. 3-4 They cannot understand things of God; they are foolishness to them - 1 Cor. 2:14	The gospel is the power of God - 1 Cor. 1:18 We are able to understand the spiritual things of God - 1 Cor. 2:12-13
Result	Death - Rom. 1:32	Life - Titus 3:5

Rom. 12:2 - "...be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind..." - ανακαινωση

Titus 3:5 - "He saved us...by the washing of regeneration and **renewing** by the holy spirit" - ανακαινωσεν

The transformation of the mind is possible only through the spirit of God. Notice that transformation doesn't come through external rituals but through the healing of the mind which God is able to do by means of His spirit (Titus 3:5).

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us exercise them accordingly. if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberty; he who leads, with diligence; and he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. - Romans 12:3-8

This section seems out of place in the context of the whole chapter. However, when transformed individuals gather together, they form transformed communities. This leads, ideally to transformed ways of interacting with one another, such as what Paul mentions in this section – not thinking too highly of oneself and having sound judgement in relation to the gifts God has given him. In life apart from God, an individual uses his abilities for his own gain, and among a group, a pecking order naturally develops with the “most important” at the top and “least important” at the bottom. However, this is not the way the church operates. The head of the church is Christ (Col. 1:18), and every member has an **equally** important role to the edification of the church and to the advancement of the gospel. Thinking too highly or lowly of oneself can disrupt and ruin community life. Paul more fully expounds on this in 1 Corinthians 12. The renewal of a person's mind results in humility, recognition, and praise of one another (Rom. 12:10).

9 Love without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Romans 12:9-13

This section contains another example of how the New Testament places special emphasis on treating other Christians. This section speaks against attitudes of some Christians today, in which they feel they can be a Christian without participating in any community. It is very difficult to honor other believers and love them without being in community. In addition, love heads this section. For Paul love is the most important element a Christian can manifest (1 Cor. 13), and love is rooted in action. The following descriptions are manifestations of love.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone, Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 "but if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:14-21

This last section transitions to engaging with people outside the church, who don't know God. Particularly what stands out is the repeated idea of not returning evil with evil.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse"

"Never pay back evil for anyone"

"Never take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God"

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"

This had a much more profound meaning to them than it does to us today. Notice how Paul commands never to return evil for evil but leave it to God for Him to judge. Paul does not advocate for complete passiveness when faced with wrongdoing, but he calls for activism. We are to:

1. Bless
2. Do good
3. Take care of our enemy and provide for his needs

This is echoing the words of Jesus in the gospels.

“I say to you, **love** your enemies and **pray** for those who persecute you” - Matt. 5:44

“But I say to you who hear, **love** your enemies, **do good** to those who hate you, **bless** those who curse you, **pray** for those who mistreat you” - Lk. 6:27-28

Holy Spirit

Acts 19:1-6

“Did you receive the holy spirit since you believed?”

The spirit is not eternal life.

The spirit is the indwelling presence of Christ. (John 14:16-18, 23-26)

Romans 8:9-11

1 Corinthians 3:16 (2 Corinthians 6:16)

2 Timothy 11:12-14

The spirit is the seal and pledge of our hope.

Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

2 Corinthians 5:5

Sealed

Sealed with that holy spirit of promise

A seal was used to prove, confirm, attest, or authenticate a thing. A seal often was placed on a document to provide authenticity. It was used to prove one's testimony to a person that he is what he professes to be

Pledge

Given as a pledge of our inheritance

The word “pledge” is the Greek word ἀρραβών arrabon.

It is derived from a Hebrew word, ערבון *'arabown*.

It means an earnest. Used of money or other item given in purchase as a pledge or a down payment which will subsequently be paid. Only used in one record in the Hebrew Scriptures (Genesis 38:17-20).

The spirit is the power of God

Acts 1:8

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

1 Corinthians 2:4

Romans 15:13, 19

1 Thessalonians 1:5

1 Timothy 2:6-7

The manifestation (evidence) of the spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1 – “spiritual matters”

The word “*gifts*” is in italics. The word “spiritual” is the Greek word πνευματικός pneumatikos.

Other similar uses in NASB when there is no noun following the adjective “spiritual” include:

- Romans 15:27 - “spiritual things”
- 1 Corinthians 2:13 - “spiritual thoughts;” “spiritual words” (KJV – “spiritual things”)
- 1 Corinthians 9:11 - “spiritual things”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

The church has a variety of gifts, ministries, and effects, but it is the same spirit, the same Lord, and the same God.

1 Corinthians 12:7

Each one is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good. Everyone is enabled with the gift (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:7).

1 Corinthians 12:27-31

There is a “more excellent way” – love (1 Corinthians 13:1ff)!

1 Corinthians 14:1 – Pursue love

- Verse 5 “that the church may receive edifying”
- Verse 12 “seek to abound for the edification of the church”
- Verse 18 “that I may instruct others”
- Verse 26 “let all things be done for edification”
- Verse 31-33 “God is not *a God* of confusion but of peace”
- Verse 37-40 “all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner”

We can choose to walk by the spirit

Romans 8:4-8; 12-14

Galatians 5:16-25