



**KNOWING  
GOD'S  
WILL**

**DAVID W. CLOUD**

*Knowing God's Will*

Copyright 2019 by David W. Cloud

This edition May 2021

ISBN 978-1-58318-266-6

This book is published for free distribution in eBook format. It is available from theWay of Life web site. We do not allow distribution of this eBook from other websites.



Published by Way of Life Literature  
PO Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061  
866-295-4143 (toll free) - fbns@wayoflife.org  
[www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

Canada: Bethel Baptist Church  
4212 Campbell St. N., London Ont. N6P 1A6  
519-652-2619

Printed in Canada by  
Bethel Baptist Print Ministry

# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Salvation .....	8
Salvation Is Believing the Gospel.....	8
Salvation Has Evidence .....	13
Surrender.....	15
Separation .....	22
The Necessity of Separation .....	22
The Method of Separation .....	23
The Role of the Mind in Separation.....	24
Separation and the Global Pop Culture .....	25
Transformation.....	31
Transformation Comes by the Renewing of the Mind.....	31
Ministry.....	39
The Specific Calling .....	43
The General Calling.....	46
Application.....	65

*If God has a specific plan for my life, how  
important, how urgent it is that I find  
that will! - David Cloud*

# Introduction

## Romans 12

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. *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. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not

yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 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. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

This fundamental passage is the summary of knowing God's will.

This is what we preach to our young people. A great many churches are backing off of and toning down all of the elements of knowing God's will in Romans 12: of full surrender, of separation, of renewing the mind, of transformation, and of ministry. Most churches are either entertaining the youth or doing nothing with the youth. We intend to go in a different direction. Our daily prayer for our children and grandchildren is that they will walk in the steps of Romans 12.

Making wise decisions in God's will is necessary to avoid spiritual shipwreck. Multitudes of professing Christians have ruined their lives by not making important decisions, such as education, occupation, and marriage, in God's perfect will.

In Romans 12, *we see the mercies of God*. It is only by God's mercy that we can do the will of God. In ourselves, we deserve nothing but wrath. Mercy was made possible by the atonement that Christ made on Calvary.

*We see that there is a perfect will of God*. God does have a specific plan for every believer's life, a plan that He formed before the world was made. This is a great and wonderful thing. If God has a specific plan for my life, how important, how urgent it is that I find that will!

*We see that the will of God must be proven*. It must be lived; it must be sought.

*We see that the will of God is for every child of God* ("you," "ye" Ro. 12:1-2). The will of God is not just for preachers or missionaries. The will of God is not just for young people;

God has a perfect will for the father, the mother, the grandfather, the grandmother.

*We also see that surrender to God's will is an individual matter* ("every man," Ro. 12:3). Ruth didn't follow her sister-in-law Orpah. Daniel and his three friends didn't follow the crowd.

# Salvation

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God” (Romans 12:1).

The passage on knowing God’s will is addressed to “brethren.” These are born again children of God.

Salvation is the fundamental of fundamentals in knowing God’s will. You cannot please God or serve Him acceptably or be disciplined or know the will of God until you are born again.

We must pursue a regenerate church membership. We must be very careful about baptism, looking for scriptural evidence of salvation. There is not one example in the New Testament of someone who was saved and did not show a changed life. We must be careful about church membership. The biblical standard is found in Acts 2:41-42.

## Salvation Is Believing the Gospel

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Ro. 1:16).

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (1Co. 15:1-8).

You don't have to be a theologian to be saved, but you must know the gospel. There is a certain doctrine that must be believed from the heart (Ro. 6:17), and that is the doctrine of the gospel.

A great many Christians we meet don't know the gospel. A church-going taxi driver in South Africa is typical. He told me that the gospel is "obeying Jesus."

The gospel is what we need to teach children all through their childhood. This is how the Scriptures make the child wise unto salvation (2 Ti. 3:15).

Consider some lessons about the gospel from 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, which is the gospel in a nutshell:

**Believing the gospel means that I know who "Christ" is and I believe in Him ("Christ died...").**

I can't believe that Christ died for my sins in a saving way until I know who He is.

*Christ* means "the Anointed One." Christ is a Greek word that means the same thing as the Hebrew word *Messiah*. It refers to the man that God has chosen to be the Saviour of the world and to establish God's eternal kingdom.

*Christ* refers to Old Testament prophecies about the coming of God's anointed or chosen one. After the first man and woman sinned in the Garden of Eden, they were condemned to die and suffer eternal punishment. God planned to send Christ into the world to take the punishment that sinful man deserves so that he can be saved. The prophets said that Christ would come to earth the first time to be cut off or to die for man's sins (Da. 9:25-26; Isa. 53:4-7). And He would come again to rule on the throne of David and to establish the kingdom of God on earth (Isa. 9:6-7). These prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ.

The Bible warns about false christs. Believing in the true Christ means that I must reject every false christ, such as the Mormon christ who is the spirit brother of Satan, the Roman

Catholic host-christ, the Jehovah's Witness christ who is Michael the Archangel, the rock & roll party christ, the theological liberal christ who is not the virgin born Son of God, and the non-judgmental universalistic christ who will not condemn anyone to hell.

**Believing the gospel means that I acknowledge that I am the sinner that the Bible says I am (*"Christ died for our sins"*).**

To be saved, the individual must acknowledge that he is the sinner that God says he is. He must see himself as a sinner who is deserving of eternal condemnation. He must understand and acknowledge that he is not good (Ro. 3:12), that he has no righteousness that is acceptable to God (Isa. 64:6). In contrast, we think of a Roman Catholic man in California who prayed a sinner's prayer on door-to-door visitation, but he still believed his good works would get him to heaven. It is obvious that he was not saved even though he was counted in the church's salvation statistics.

It is the Holy Spirit who shows the sinner his sin and impresses this to his heart so that he is convicted and found guilty before God (Joh. 16:8). The soul winner must look to the Holy Spirit to do this supernatural work, and must look for evidence of this work in the sinner's life. He must be patient. The true work of salvation cannot be forced or rushed or manipulated by any salesmanship methodology.

**Believing the gospel means that I believe that Jesus died for my sins (*"Christ died for our sins"*).**

I deserve eternal judgment, and that judgment fell upon Christ. Salvation is an exchange (2 Co. 5:21).

The Bible emphasizes that Christ's atonement was sacrificial, vicarious. He suffered and died in the place of the sinner. This is repeated 12 times in Isaiah 53 (verses 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12). See also Ro. 4:25; 5:6; 1 Co. 5:7; 15:3; 2 Co. 5:21;

Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 5:2; Col. 1:14; 1 Ti. 2:6; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:12, 26; 10:12; 1 Pe. 2:24-25; 3:18; 1 Jo. 2:2; 4:10; Re. 5:9.

Believing the gospel means that I will not trust in anything other than Christ's atonement for salvation. If I am still trusting in baptism or sacraments or a church or my good works or my sincere heart, I am not believing the gospel and am not saved. We think of John and Charles Wesley, who were so zealous for Christianity that they formed a "holy club" at Oxford University, were mockingly called "Methodists" for their methodical habits of prayer and fasting and Bible reading, were ordained as Anglican priests, and hazarded the dangerous voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to America in order to preach to the natives. But the Wesleys were trusting in their good works rather than the grace found in the gospel of Christ. They knew *about* Christ, but they didn't know Him personally in salvation. When a Moravian preacher asked John if he had a hope to be saved, he replied, "I do"; but when the preacher asked him the reason of his hope, he said, "Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God." John Wesley was trusting in something in addition to the blood of Christ, and that something was his own works.

The testimony of a truly saved person is expressed in the hymn "Nothing but the Blood" by Robert Lowry:

What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus; ...  
This is all my hope and peace,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
This is all my righteousness,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
Now by this I'll overcome,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
Now by this I'll reach my home—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

**Believing the gospel means that I believe that “*Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture.*”**

I must know what the Scriptures are. Multitudes of people in the world do not know what the Bible is. They have never even seen a Bible. They might have heard the word “Christian Bible,” but they don’t know anything about it. A taxi driver in South Asia once asked me if I wrote the Bible. But there is widespread and gross ignorance of the Bible even in America today. We can’t assume that people know what the Scripture is.

That Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture refers to the amazing prophecies that described His death in great detail. Consider Psalm 22, which was written about 1,000 years before Jesus was born: *Christ would die by crucifixion* (Ps. 22:14-16; Jo. 19:16-18); *the soldiers would gamble for His robe* (Psalm 22:18); *the very words that He spoke from the cross* are recorded (Ps. 22:1; Mt. 27:46); *Christ would thirst* (Ps. 22:15; Jo. 19:28); *the people would mock Him* (Ps. 22:6-8; Mt. 27:39, 41-43); *the people would sit and stare at Him* (Ps. 22:17; Mt. 27:36).

**Believing the gospel means that I believe that Christ was buried (“*and that he was buried*”).**

Christ’s burial proved that He really died. He did not merely faint or merely appear to die as some have claimed. The reason the soldiers did not break Jesus’ legs is because He was already dead, and they were experts in the matter of death (Joh. 19:31-34).

Jesus’ burial fulfilled prophecy. It was “*according to the Scriptures.*” The Bible prophesied that Jesus would be buried in the tomb of a rich man (Isa. 53:9). This prophecy, written about 710 years before Jesus was born, was fulfilled when Jesus was taken down off the cross by a wealthy disciple and buried in that disciple’s own tomb (Mt. 27:57-60).

**Believing the gospel means that I believe that Jesus “rose from the dead the third day according to the Scripture.”**

To be saved, I must believe that Jesus Christ is alive and that He is ready to receive me when I call upon Him.

The evidence of the resurrection is the eyewitnesses and the changed lives, such as Saul, a hater of Christians who was converted after meeting the risen Christ.

Jesus’ resurrection was “according to the Scripture” in that it was prophesied in Psalm 16:10. This was written about 1,000 years before Jesus came. His resurrection proved that He is the Son of God (Ro. 1:4). Jesus prophesied that He would rise again the third day (Mt. 16:21), and if he had not done so it would have proven that He was a deluded man or a false prophet and not the Son of God that He claimed to be.

### **Salvation Has Evidence**

Consider 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 -- “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

When Paul speaks of “what manner of entering in we had unto you,” he is referring to their changed lives. Salvation is something that was “shown.” It is demonstrated. It can be seen. It is a heart matter, but it has external evidence.

*There was turning.* This is repentance; it is surrender to God’s authority; it is a turning from my way to God’s way, from the world to Christ.

*There was rejection of false religion.* When a person is born again, he will no longer hold to any false religion. He will renounce it, whether it be Hinduism, Buddhism, Darwinian Evolution, Islam, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Atheism,

Agnosticism. He will renounce every works religion and every demonic religion. There will be a willingness to stand against one's relatives, friends, and society for Christ's sake.

*There was a life-changing conversion.* The believers at Thessalonica not only turned from idols, they were busy serving God. The whole direction and purpose of their lives was changed. This is the fruit of the supernatural experience of being "converted" (Mt. 18:3) and being "born again" (Joh. 3:3). There is no exception to this in Scripture. We think of the woman at the well; Zacchaeus; the 3,000 saved on the day of Pentecost; Paul; the Ethiopian Eunuch; Lydia; the Philippian jailer.

*There was the expectation of Christ's return.* The author of Hebrews mentions this as an evidence of salvation. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

Knowing God's will requires that the individual be saved. If there is no spiritual life, there can be no discipleship, and spiritual life comes by the new birth.

# Surrender

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

When exhorting the believer to prove the perfect will of God, the first thing that Paul mentions is surrender.

It is a *free-will surrender* (“I beseech you”). The word “beseech” does not mean command; it means entreat. It is a word that is used when an individual has a choice. God has given man a free-will, both for salvation and for surrender. God says, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” and it is man’s choice to say, “Here am I, send me” (Isa. 6:8).

It is a surrender *by the mercies of God*. Only by God’s mercy in Christ, because of His blood, can a sinner present himself to God. We are saved “unto good works,” but the good works of the Christian life are by God’s mercies. From beginning to end, we deserve nothing but judgment, and every blessing of salvation is by God’s great mercies in Christ.

It is a surrender *to the merciful God*. Romans 12:1-3 mentions God four times. It is not a surrender to a philosophy or a religion; it is a surrender to God Himself. And it is not to just any “god”; it is not to a severe taskmaster; it is to the merciful God. Christ’s yoke is easy and His burden is light (Mt. 11:29-30). He does the heavy lifting. One woman told my wife that she was tired of trying to live the Christian life, because “it is too hard.” She said this because she isn’t saved and she was trying to live the Christian life in her own strength and without having experienced a converted heart. There are plenty of hardships in the Christian life, but the Christian life itself is not hard, because the essence of the Christian life is to know the merciful God personally and by

the Spirit to call Him “Abba, Father” (Ro. 8:15). The better I know Him, the easier it is to surrender to Him. His will is not to be feared. Hudson Taylor said, “He gives the very best to those who leave the choice to him.”

It is a surrender of the **body** (“present your bodies”). Here the body represents the whole person. To present my body is to say to the Lord, “Here is my body and everything that I am.” What an amazing gift the body is! God made man in His image and gave him an amazing body by which he can fulfill the divine purpose. For example, the human brain is “the most complex arrangement of matter in the universe.” The human brain has about 1 quintillion (1,000 trillion) synapses and each synapse functions like a microprocessor (“What Is a Neuron”? [faculty-washington.edu](http://faculty-washington.edu)). That is about how many stars are in 10,000 Milky Way galaxies (each one containing 100 billion stars)! New research shows that the synapses don’t operate like a computer transistor, with a simple on or off function. Rather, they communicate by at least 26 levels of electrical signal strength so that they are vastly more complex than previously thought. “They store and transmit information not with the simplistic 0s and 1s of computer code, but with degrees of synapse strength. In other words, THEY DON’T TRANSFER INFORMATION WITH A SINGLE INPUT SPIKE, BUT RECOGNIZE 26 DISTINGUISHABLY DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SYNAPTIC STRENGTH” (“Your Brain Has More Memory” by Brian Thomas, Ph.D., [icr.org](http://icr.org), Feb. 4, 2016). Latest research also shows that THE BRAIN’S MEMORY CAPACITY IS AT LEAST A PETABYTE, IN THE SAME BALLPARK AS THE ENTIRE WORLD WIDE WEB (“Memory Capacity of Brain,” *Salk News*, Jan. 20, 2016). A petabyte is 8,000,000,000,000,000 bits of information. “The mind-boggling levels of organization and necessary regulatory protocols in synapses refute all notions that brains evolved from single cells through merely natural processes. The strategies, algorithms,

and design principles brains employ could only have come from an otherworldly Architect whose genius mankind can only dream of copying” (Thomas). God gave me this amazing body, and it is my privilege to surrender it for His service.

It is a **full** surrender (“sacrifice”). This harkens back to the Levitical sacrifices that were offered in the tabernacle. The sacrifice was offered as a whole. All was consumed (Le. 6:23). This is what God requires. I cannot know the perfect will of God apart from *full* surrender. Most professing Christians haven’t done this. They profess faith in Christ and then continue with the plans they had before they were saved. They cut out large parts of their lives for their own will rather than God’s will. They don’t surrender to God’s will in everything: education, occupation, friends, dress, music, entertainment, marriage, living location. In 1974, I gave my life to the Lord in the fullest way I knew how in an apartment in Chattanooga, Tennessee, when I was in Bible School. I had no plan except God’s will. I died to my will. Though I didn’t want to go to South Asia, I went the first time at age 30 for ten years and returned at age 50 and have stayed by that calling. I do not envy any man on earth. Surrender to God is to have one Master. (“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other,” Mt. 6:24). Either you live for yourself or you live for God. When a young person makes a major life decision, that decision is either his own will or it is God’s will. Full surrender is described in many hymns, Philip Bliss’s “Where He Leads Me I Will Follow,” Judson Van De Venter’s “All to Jesus I Surrender,” Adelaide Pollard’s “Have Thine Own Way, Lord,” B.B. McKinney’s “Wherever He Leads I’ll Go,” Margaret Clarkson’s “So Send I You,” and Frances Havergal’s “Take My Life and Let It Be.”

Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days,

Let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing,  
Always, only for my King.  
Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my intellect and use  
Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine,  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart, it is Thine own,  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee.

It is a **continual** surrender (“a living sacrifice”). It is a surrender as a way of life, not a one-time thing.

It is a “**holy**” surrender. It is a surrender unto holiness and purity, not unto uncleanness. Holy means set apart for God, pleasing to God. It refers to righteousness and obedience to God's Word. It is a surrender to a pilgrim lifestyle.

It is an “**acceptable**” surrender. God can accept the believer's surrender because it is in Christ. By His blood, Christ has redeemed the sinner so that he is accepted by God,

and in Christ the believer's works are accepted. This is a most amazing and marvelous thing.

It is a "**reasonable**" surrender ("which is your reasonable service, Ro. 12:1). The Greek is *logikos*, from which the English word "logical" derives. To surrender to God's will is reasonable because this is man's very purpose for existing. As the Westminster Confession says, "Man's purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." We think of Jim Elliot, who gave his life to be a missionary to South American tribal people and was martyred by them at age 28. In 1949, seven years before his death, he wrote in his diary, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." He understood that it is reasonable to surrender to God's will.

It is a surrender **to service in the context of the church and Christ's Great Commission**. As we have seen, all of the pronouns in Romans 12 are plural--*you, brethren, ye, your*. The passage speaks of the body. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Ro. 12:5). The church is God's house, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Ti. 3:15). It is in the church where God's people are prepared to know God's perfect will and equipped to do it. The church is the headquarters for world evangelism. Every church should be an Antioch church (Acts 13-14). God has a business on this earth to which He calls all of His people to join. It is the work of Christ's Great Commission, which He emphasized so emphatically after His resurrection by repetition (Mt. 28; Mk. 16; Lu. 24; Joh. 21; Ac. 1). It is the work of preaching the gospel to every soul and baptizing those who believe and discipling them in all things Christ has taught us. It is the greatest business on earth, because it is the business of salvation. No matter what men attain in this world, if they don't have salvation, they have nothing in the end.

**To surrender to God is to surrender to my part in God's great harvest.** It is to surrender my plans to His plan.

Romans 8:28 is a promise to those “*who are the called according to his purpose,*” not those who pursue their own purpose. The Great Commission is the business that is of chief importance in this present time in God’s great plan of the ages. Christ said the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few and instructed us to pray for laborers (Lu. 10:2). Every believer is called to be an ambassador for Christ to call sinners to salvation (2 Co. 5:20). Every believer is to put on his gospel shoes (Eph. 6:15). Every believer has a ministry in the church.

Bill Sullivan said, “The evangelization of the world waits not on the readiness of God but on the obedience of Christians.” A.T. Pierson said, “If missions languish, it is because the whole life of godliness is feeble. The command to go everywhere and preach to everybody is not obeyed until the will is lost by self-surrender in the will of God.” Isobel Kuhn said, “It is not God who does not call. It is man who will not respond!” Hudson Taylor said, “The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.”

Over the past two millennia, multitudes of saints have surrendered themselves to God’s great harvest work, one by one.

This is the purpose of our annual missionary conference, and it is why we make a very big thing of this conference. We want all of our young people to say, “Here I am, send me.” We want each of them to find his or her part in this, the greatest business on God’s earth, and we have seen much success in this. We are labourers together with God (1 Co. 3:9), and when a church takes God’s business seriously and makes a very big thing of it, God is always ready to “do His part.”

We think of John R. Rice, founder of *The Sword of the Lord*, who at age 20 went out to a chaparral bush in a ravine in Texas where he had his “prayer closet.” “There I went down on my face and prayed. I told God that I would do anything

He wanted me to do; I would preach the Gospel, or I would be a gospel singer, or anything else that He should clearly lead” (Robert Sumner, *Man Sent from God*, p. 45). That same day he saddled his horse and left to travel 125 miles to begin Bible college.

Kupertto Kangleon surrendered himself to General Douglas MacArthur during World War II for service in the Philippines. After the Japanese captured the Philippines, Charles (“Chick”) Parsons was assigned by MacArthur to organize the guerrilla movement on the islands. Kangleon was a former colonel of the Philippine Army who lived on Leyte. He had been imprisoned by the Japanese and was in poor health when Parsons visited him to try to convince him to lead the guerrillas on Leyte. At first, Kangleon said, “I am very tired. My health is not the best. I wish only to rest here with my wife and children. I am weary of war. I am not young.” Parsons continued to reason with him. Finally, Kangleon replied, “Apparently it is not the time for a soldier to rest. You have made my duty clear, Commander Parsons. I have no choice. You may tell General MacArthur that I am at his disposition” (Travis Ingham, *Rendezvous by Submarine: The Story of Charles Parsons and the Guerrilla-Soldiers in the Philippines*).

A far greater war is raging and a far greater General is calling for volunteers!

# Separation

“And be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2).

When I was saved in 1973, separation was one of the major things that distinguished fundamental Baptists from Southern Baptists, but today separation is being given up by a great many fundamental Baptists. It is not being renounced so much as neglected and redefined (e.g., “Gospel-centric”). No position can be maintained without a campaign.

The biblical teaching on separation and a pilgrim lifestyle is something that impacted my life powerfully as a new Christian. I am a separatist because of the Bible’s clear teaching. I could have gone down the Christian rock path and kept my worldly music, my long hair, my raunchy movies, my friendship with the world, but God’s Word forbids this.

## The Necessity of Separation

God calls His people to a holy pilgrim life. Separation from the world is necessary to please Him. It is emphasized at the very heart of this fundamental passage on knowing God’s will. To not be conformed to the world is not an optional part of God’s will. Multitudes of professing Christians today claim to be surrendered to God’s will, but they are terribly conformed to the ways and thinking of the world. This is confusion. It is not New Testament Christianity. In 1978, Richard Quebedeux observed that “the wider culture has had a profound impact on the evangelical movement as a whole” (*The Worldly Evangelicals*, p. 115). He mentioned evangelical participation in such things as drinking, dancing, rock music, divorce and remarriage, profanity, pornography, smoking, marijuana, even homosexuality. Not long before he died, Francis Schaeffer wrote, “WITH TEARS WE MUST

SAY THAT ... A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE EVANGELICAL WORLD HAS BECOME SEDUCED BY THE WORLD SPIRIT OF THIS PRESENT AGE” (*The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 1983, p. 141). In 1994, Gordon-Conwell seminary professor David Wells warned, “Evangelicalism has ... lowered the barricades, it is open to the world” (*No Place for the Truth, or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology*, p. 128).

### The Method of Separation

To be conformed means to be pressed into a mold, to be fashioned according to a likeness. “**Conformed**” is the Greek *suschematizo*, which is a blueprint, a pattern. It is the basis of the English term “schematic,” referring to a drawing or representation of an object. The god of this world designed the schematic for this evil world system (Eph. 2:1-3). It is translated “fashion” in 1 Pe. 1:14, “not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts.” “Stop being molded by the external and fleeting fashions of this age” (*Complete World Study Dictionary*).

The world is aggressive and evangelistic and enticing. It wants to shape our lives. When a young person loves the world, you can see the stamp of the world on him (in his aspirations, beliefs, attitude, fashion, music, friends, entertainment).

Biblical separation is also aggressive. It requires going against the tide. It is the opposite of relaxing and being comfortable in the midst of this world’s wickedness.

Biblical separation is very strict. There is to be no conformity to the world. Consider the following Scriptures:

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and **TOUCH NOT** the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you” (2 Co. 6:17).

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from **ALL** filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Co. 7:1).

“And have **NO** fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11).

“Abstain from **ALL** appearance of evil” (1 Th. 5:22).

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself **UNSPOTTED** from the world” (Jas. 1:27).

“Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For **ALL** that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jo. 2:15-17).

Biblical separation is to bring *everything* into conformity to God's will.

This requires a surrendered heart; because you must reject things that your flesh likes (the world's music, the world's fashions, the world's entertainment, the world's proud ways). Choices must be made.

## **The Role of the Mind in Separation**

“the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

We will deal with the role of the mind in transformation or spiritual growth, but here we want to emphasize the role of the mind in separation from the world.

Worldliness is a mindset; it is not just certain actions, such as tight blue jeans or R-rated movies. Worldliness is a mind focused on the vain things of the world instead of the wisdom and holiness of God.

The renewing of the mind is the process of replacing the natural mind with Christ's mind through the Word of God. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul describes the Scriptures as "the mind of Christ." The Scripture is quick and powerful (Heb. 4:12), and the mind is renewed by reading, studying, memorizing, meditating upon it. The renewing mind is a testing mindset that measures everything by the standard of God's Word to reject anything that is not God's will--"be sober, be vigilant" (1 Pe. 5:8); "prove all things" (1 Th. 5:21); "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Co. 10:5). The renewing mind is alert and aware of what is happening and resists the world's influence, whether by literature, music, fashion, commercials, social media, fake news, or anything else. If the believer is not testing the culture, he is being conformed to it.

I don't want the world influencing my mind. I intend to be alert and aware of what is happening and to resist being conformed to the world.

## Separation and the Global Pop Culture

In modern times, the "world" of the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 Jo. 2:16) is the world of the pop culture. It has a philosophy ("do your own thing"), an attitude ("the pride of life"), and is driven by music. It is global. There are local flavors, but the major aspects are the same in every nation.

Following are some of the chief aspects of the pop culture that captivate the minds of people today and that are particularly enticing to youth:

**POP MUSIC.** There is a sound track to end-time apostasy, and it is the electronic pop music that blasted onto the scene in the 1950s and took over Western culture in the 1960s. *Pop*

*music is all about sex.* “That’s what rock is all about--*sex with a 100 megaton bomb, THE BEAT!*” (Gene Simmons of the rock group KISS). *Pop music is all about rebellion and narcissism.* “I’m free to do what I want any old time” (Rolling Stones, 1965). “It’s my life and I’ll do what I want/ It’s my mind, and I’ll think what I want” (The Animals, 1965).

Pop music videos are the most popular YouTube videos. The total views of the top 29 music videos in 2015 was 26 billion, and they are filthy.

Contemporary Christian musicians love secular rock and fill their minds with it. We have documented this in *Baptist Music Wars*. For example, in a 2017 interview, Joseph Rojas of Seventh Day Slumber said his favorite song was “August and Everything After” by Counting Crows. The filthy lyrics include cursing and talking about visiting prostitutes.

**FASHION.** Clothing is a language. It is a social message, a fashion statement, “a prevailing mode of expression.” American fashion designer Rachel Zoe said, “Style is a way to say who you are without having to speak” (goodreads.com).

Modern fashion designers don’t merely sell clothes; they sell a philosophy of life. Vivienne Westwood, who created the rock punk look, said, “I think fashion is the strongest form of communication there is. ... It’s only interesting to me if it’s subversive” (Jon Savage, *Time Travel: Pop, Media and Sexuality 1976-96*, p. 119).

Pants on women in Western society in modern times broke three fundamental Biblical principles: *First, pants on women broke down the distinction of the sexes.* It was created as a unisex fashion. The pantsuit was created by homosexual fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent in 1966 as part of the rebellious rock & roll culture (“How Yves Saint Laurent Revolutionized Women’s Fashion,” *Business Insider*, Aug. 8, 2011). Laurent has been called “the man who put women in trousers” (“Celebrating Yves Saint Laurent,” *Daily Mail*, June 2, 2008). The style was called “defiant,” “irreverent,” “daring,”

and “androgynous” (*Business Insider, Ibid.*). Models popularized the fashion by appearing with “slicked back hair and masculine posture.” Feminist Linda Grant observed that the pantsuit “put women on an equal sartorial footing with men” and “is what fashion gave to feminism” (“Feminism Was Built on the Trouser Suit,” *The Guardian*, June 3, 2008). *Second, pants on women are immodest, highlighting the woman’s figure in a sensual way, and the tighter the pants the greater the sensuality or “hot” factor.* Loose pants on women were invented by feminist designer Coco Chanel during World War II when women were leaving the homes to work in factories. Tight pants were created by Calvin Klein, a bisexual fashion designer. When his pants appeared in 1974, they sold 200,000 pairs *in the first week* (“Calvin Klein: A Stylish Obsession,” *Entrepreneur*, Oct. 10, 2008). Tights worn as pants (leggings) were created by Gianni Versace, a homosexual fashion designer who was murdered by a homosexual in 1997. *Third, pants on women destroyed shamefacedness* (1 Ti. 2:9). This is translated from the Greek word *aidos*, which “has the idea of downcast eyes” and means “bashfulness, i.e. (towards men), modesty or (towards God) awe” (Strong). It implies “a shrinking from trespassing the boundaries of propriety” (William Hendrickson). Shamefacedness is the opposite of the cheeky, saucy, impertinent, flippant, insubordinate attitude that the world seeks to develop in women today. The very concept of shamefacedness is mocked. Imagine reading this verse publicly anywhere in modern society (e.g., a mall, football game, rock concert, public school, even in the vast majority of churches).

In 2019, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London had a major exhibit on Mary Quant, the revolutionary fashion designer of the Beatles era. She invented the mini skirt and hot pants. She was all about revolution, liberation from biblical sexual mores, breaking down the barriers between

the sexes (unisex, androgyny). Following are some of the quotes from the exhibit: “using fashion to question hierarchies and gender rules”; “rebellious approach to established gender norms”; “mocking religion”; “subverting menswear”; “trousers were considered inappropriate for women [but] Quant wears them anywhere she wants”; “androgynous style”; “an independent style”; “self-expression”; “freedom.” “The miniskirt became an international symbol of women’s liberation.” The exhibit acknowledges that unisex clothing was a major facet of homosexual rights. “[Quant’s] provocative styles reflected increasing relaxed attitudes in society towards sexuality in all its forms, reinforced legally by the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967.” Why were Quant’s fashions so popular? It is all about ME! It is the “lovers of their own selves” generation prophesied in 2 Timothy 3:2.

**PORNOGRAPHY.** It is easily accessed by internet. It is addicting and destructive. It destroys marriages; it destroys ministries. I recall a student at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s who was accepted as a missionary with BIMBI, but his pornography addiction was brought to light and it harmed his marriage and disqualified him from being a missionary. Pornography use is a downward spiral which can lead to the depths of wickedness. The explosion of homosexuality, child molestation, and sexual serial killing can doubtless be traced to the prevalence of pornography.

**MULTI-PLAYER ONLINE VIDEO GAMES.** These are so addictive that they are likened to drugs. *EverQuest* is called “never rest” and “ever crack,” *World of Warcraft* is called World of War Crack, *Halo 3* is called Halodiction.

**FANTASY ROMANCE NOVELS.** These exploded in popularity in the 1970s. In 1976, sales reached 40 million copies. By 2008, sales were 74 million. Many romance novels have a strong sexual content. A recent example is *Fifty Shades*

of *Grey*, which even delves into sadomasochism. “These novels were written to be titillating, and I really don’t think there’s a huge difference between this and porn. It’s ‘soft porn,’ and indeed many women find themselves far more aroused by reading something like this than they would be watching porn on a computer. So women who devour novel after novel like that aren’t that much different from men who watch porn all night” (“Romance Novels: Dangerous, Harmless, or Just Fun?” Jan. 16, 2012, [tolovehonorandvacuum.com](http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com)). Even G-rated romance novels take the reader into an unrealistic world typically populated by strong, beautiful heroines and handsome, caring men who “fall in love.” They can create addiction to a fantasy world and dissatisfaction with real life. In 2011, the *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health* in Britain reported that romance novels “are a cause of marital breakdown, adulterous affairs and unwanted pregnancies.” As with anything, there is the danger of progression. “I’ve known so many Christian teens who just devoured all the romances in the church library, and then headed to the public library for more, and ended up almost addicted to really steamy stuff” (“Romance Novels: Dangerous, Harmless, or Just Fun?” Jan. 16, 2012, [tolovehonorandvacuum.com](http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com)).

**MYTHOLOGY AND WITCHCRAFT.** There has been an explosion of popularity in things such as Harry Potter, Pokemon, and super heroes. For a youth promotion, the staff members of Coastline Baptist Church in Oceanside, California, dressed as Wolverine, Batman, Spiderman, Wonder Woman, Star Wars, and the Force. This is an incredibly foolish capitulation to the pop culture and a horrible example for the young people.

**FACEBOOK and SOCIAL MEDIA.** It is used to create false lives. Young people pretend to be something they aren’t. It is a massive forum for the seduction of women. It is a forum for vanity: selfies, sharing every moment of your life

with others. One's social media reflects the true state of mind and heart. It is the devil's mixing bowl. It is a forum for mixing the good together with the bad, the godly together with the ungodly. It is breaking down the barriers of separation between God's people and the world. It is weakening the spiritual conviction of many. It is a major element in the destruction of the holy pilgrim character of churches.

**PROFESSIONAL SPORTS.** Professional sports is one of the world's chief gods. Major characteristics of professional sports include pride, covetousness, drinking, blatant neglect of God's house, and pure fantasy. John's description of the world in 1 John 2:16 ("lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life") is a perfect description of professional sports.

### **Conclusion**

God calls His people to a separated, pilgrim life. To not be conformed to the world is not an optional part of God's will.

We urge each individual to surrender to God's will in the matter of separation.

We urge each family to surrender to God's will in this and to take this more seriously than you ever have

We urge grandparents to set the highest standard for the younger generations.

We urge each church to *emphasize* separation as a high priority. It has been said that no position can be maintained without a campaign.

We are thankful that some churches are getting stronger instead of weaker, which is the more typical direction.

# Transformation

“... but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

“Transformed” is the Greek *metamorpho*. It is used for the life cycle of a butterfly. It begins as an egg which hatches a caterpillar. It increases its weight 3,000 times in 20 days, which would be like a human baby increasing from 8 pounds to 24,000 in less than 2 weeks. It spins a silk pad and attaches itself to the pad by a cremaster. It then forms into a soft wet pupa with no head, jaws, legs. The pupa skin hardens, and inside the pupa the creature becomes a biological soup which reorganizes into a butterfly. The caterpillar has 16 short legs, a chewing mouth, six simple eyes that see only in black and white, eats leaves, crawls, and has no sex organs. The butterfly has six long articulated legs, a sucking mouth, antennae, a proboscis, four wings, reproductive organs, two complicated compound eyes that see in color, drinks nectar, and can fly!

At the resurrection, the believer’s transformation will be complete, but in this present life it is gradual and never complete.

Spiritual transformation is the victory over the world. The word of God in the believer must be so strong that the world cannot mold the individual into its own image.

## Transformation Comes by the Renewing of the Mind

Transformation comes by the renewing of the mind (“be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind...”). The mind is the chief battleground.

The new birth brings a spiritual mind that must be fed and strengthened (Ro. 8:5-7).

**The renewing of the mind comes through the Bible.**

It is the Scripture that has mind-renewing, transformational power. The major thing the individual child of God can do to experience spiritual growth and victory and to know the will of God is to become a serious Bible student. Many things are necessary, but this is number one.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Ac. 20:32).

“But HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps. 1:2-3).

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word” (Ps. 119:9).

“Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105).

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Jos. 1:8).

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Joh. 8:31-32).

Scripture is the mind of Christ (1 Co. 2:16). The context of 1 Corinthians 2:16 is Scripture (see verses 6-15, particularly verses 12-13). By Scripture, we see Christ and are changed into His image. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Co. 3:18). The word “changed” here is the Greek *metamorph*, the same word used in Romans 12:2 for “transformed.”

The renewing of the mind comes by a proving mindset (“that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”). “Prove” is *dokimazo*, to test, to distinguish. It is translated “discern” (Lu. 12:56), “approve” (Ro. 2:18), “allow” (Ro. 14:22), “examine” (1 Co. 11:28), “try” (1 Jo. 4:1). As the Word of God is studied and understood and meditated upon, it is to be used as the basis for proving all things to distinguish between right and wrong, true and false, good and bad, acceptable to God and unacceptable. This is the process of spiritual growth; it is the process of non-conformity to the world; and it is the process of proving the will of God. It is not enough to learn Bible facts and to memorize Scripture by rote. It must be understood and applied to every area of life. Whatever is not in conformity to God’s Word is to be disapproved. We see this in Hebrews 5:14, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

The ministry of Scripture in the believer’s mind and life is like a flowing stream. There is pollution in every stream in this present world, but it is kept cleansed when the water flows. As soon as the water stops flowing, the pollution congregates and the stream becomes stagnant. Likewise, there is pollution in the believer’s life because of the world and the flesh, but while the water of God’s Word flows through the mind and life, it has a cleansing, purifying

action. But as soon as the Word of God stops flowing, the pollution congregates and there is backsliding.

As the mind is renewed by God's Word by the process of exercising the spiritual senses, life is seen with ever-increasing clarity and wisdom. The renewed mind fills the whole person with spiritual light as described by Christ in Matthew 6:21-23. The context is the heart and its affections, whether focused on God or focused on the world. This is made clear in verse 24, which says "no man can serve two masters ... ye cannot serve God and mammon." "The light of the body is the eye" (Mt. 6:22). Here, "eye" is used as a metonymy, which is "a related thing that stands for the thing itself." The eye refers to the mind and heart. It refers to how we see things, how we think, what we perceive when we see things. It refers to the condition of the heart and mind. "if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." This means that if the mind and heart is focused on the things of God, the entire person is filled with spiritual light and wisdom. "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (Mt. 6:23). If the heart and mind is focused on the things of self and the world, the whole person is filled with spiritual darkness, there is no true wisdom. In the words of Romans 12, it is the renewing of the mind by the Word of God that fills the person with spiritual light so that he is not conformed to the world. He sees the world for what it is. Instead of seeing it as alluring, he sees it as evil; instead of seeing it as a friend, he sees it as an enemy. Consider the "strange woman" of Proverbs, which refers to the immodest, sensual woman who uses her "attributes" to draw unholy attention to herself (Pr. 2:16-19; 5:1-14, 20; 6:23-35; 7:1-27; 22:14; 23:26-28). She wears "the attire of an harlot" (Pr. 7:10). The unrenewed mind sees her as highly desirable. Multitudes of men have sold their souls for her. Her desirability by the natural heart is why her image is omnipresent in modern advertising. But the renewed mind sees her as morally

dangerous, as something that would draw me out of God's will, as something that would destroy my testimony, my family, my ministry. The renewed mind gives the wisdom to see the "strange woman" in the light of Proverbs 11:22, "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

The major thing we can do to strengthen the churches is to seriously strengthen the biblical depth of the congregation.

"Every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:13-14).

The vast majority of church members are like those to whom Hebrews 5 was addressed. They aren't skillful in God's Word, and they don't have their senses exercised in spiritual discernment. If God's people will become skillful in God's Word, they will be more spiritually minded, more serious in prayer, more faithful to the house of God, more separated from the things of the world, wiser in the use of time, more surrendered to God's perfect will, more diligent in building godly homes and training their children, more zealous for the salvation of souls.

We are doing everything possible in our church to renew the minds of the members with God's Word. We aim for all of the members to be effectual Bible students, beginning with the youth. We use the course *Understanding the Bible for Yourself*. We aim to give all of the members the equivalent of a Bible institute education. We use the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* courses. We have a one-on-one discipleship program using the *One Year Discipleship Course*. We have a Bible memorization and meditation program. We have a church-wide program to read the Bible through each year. We have a weekly men's discipleship meeting and women's discipleship meetings. We have serious youth meetings that focus on

helping the young people become real Bible students. We have a Bible college to train preachers and teachers. We teach the preachers to do the type of expository Bible preaching that builds up the saints in God's Word and enables them to understand the Bible for themselves. (See [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org) for *Advanced Bible Studies Series, Understanding the Bible for Yourself, One Year Discipleship Course, Memory Verse Journal, The Preacher and His Preaching.*)

We teach the people to see the breathtaking beauty of the Bible.

The Bible is a whole **university**. There is more wisdom in the Bible than all the universities of the world. It contains the best theology (this is its first purpose), the best history (the key), the best philosophy (Ecclesiastes, Job), the best anthropology, the best natural philosophy (study of nature), the best social science, the best apologetics, the best prophecy.

The Bible is a **paradise**. Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania is 1077 acres or 1.6 sq. miles. It has indoor and outdoor flowers, ponds, a five acre fountain garden with 1700 fountain jets, an Italian water garden. It has colors, smells, and wildlife. It is delightful, but the Bible is a *much more* delightful paradise.

The Bible is a **treasure mine** filled with silver and gold and jewels. Yea, it is "better than thousands of gold and silver" (Ps. 119:72).

The Bible is a **feast** for the mind and soul. Shady Maple in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has 200 feet of buffet tables, with cheese bar, soups, all sorts of meats (beef, pork, chicken, salmon), flavored breads, southern style vegetables, "cooked to order" breakfast, Amish style cakes and pies. But the Bible is a much greater feast! It is spiritual milk and honey, bread and meat.

God Himself is the greatest treasure, and He is the theme of Scripture. To know Him is the greatest delight; to feed on

Him is the greatest feast; the knowledge of Him is the greatest wisdom.

The treasures of the Bible will open to those who love it more than gold and silver, to whom it is sweeter than honey (Ps. 119:72, 103). After I came to Christ, I didn't care about pursuing general education (whereas before that I had aspired to get a degree in psychology) or money. I just wanted to study the Bible. The ultra-orthodox Jews have a ceremony called Upsherin. At age three, the Jewish boy gets his first haircut and starts learning the Hebrew alphabet. Honey is put on the letters to make the Word of God sweet to him. This is a vain religious tradition, but it points to the reality of what the Bible should be to every child of God.

Learning the Bible takes work. We must be diligent in study and learn to rightly divide Scripture (2 Ti. 2:15). We must seek wisdom as men seek for silver and treasures (Pr. 2:4).

Learning the Bible requires training in such things as how to have an effectual daily Bible study, how to employ principles of interpretation, and how to use Bible study tools. A good start can be obtained with the video course *The Effectual Bible Student*. A more advanced course is *Understanding the Bible for Yourself*.

Being an effectual Bible student requires gaining the equivalent of a Bible Institute education. It is impossible to be "skillful in the word of righteousness" (Heb. 5:13) without a Bible survey, Bible geography, Bible customs, the life of Christ, Bible theology, Bible prophecy, the history of Bible times, Acts, the Pauline Epistles, the General Epistles, etc.

The Bible must get into the believer's heart and life. He must meditate therein day and night (Ps. 1:2). He must look at life through Scripture. He must have a biblical worldview. For example, he must look at life through the lens of Genesis 1 (a six-day creation by an Almighty, all-wise Creator), and through the lens of Romans 3:10-18 (man's fallen condition),

and through the lens of John 14:6 (Christ as only Saviour), and through the lens of Psalm 100:5 (“the Lord is good”), and through the lens of Psalm 119:64 (“the earth is full of thy mercy”), and through the lens of 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (end-time apostasy), and through the lens of 1 Pe. 4:7 (“the end of all things is at hand”). Developing a biblical worldview by the knowledge of God’s Word is the path of renewing of the mind.

The student must take the time to study the Bible thoughtfully, purposefully. He must ask questions such as these: What is the context? Who wrote it and to whom is it written? What is the main lesson of the passage? What are other lessons? What does the passage teach about God? What are lessons for my daily life? What sin does it reprove? He must use a good dictionary and concordance, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, and other Bible tools. He must write down questions and find answers.

This process will not produce sinless perfection, but it will produce spiritual growth and ever-increasing blessing and fruitfulness.

# Ministry

We find God's will by getting busy serving the Lord, not by sitting, waiting, and watching. The will of God is something that is done today.

We give young people many opportunities for service: taking offerings, reading the Bible and leading in public prayer, music, evangelism, teaching and helping with Sunday School, discipling, overseeing the bookstore, serving refreshments after services, operating the sound system.

But they must meet the standards. We require the following: a good testimony of Christian living (including separation from the world and a good attitude toward parental authority), love for Bible study and prayer, spiritual growth, submission to authority, faithfulness to all the services, modest dress, and the gifting and ability to do the assigned ministry.

We minister by right thinking about our calling (Ro. 12:3).

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro. 12:3).

Observe that Paul begins these lessons on ministry with an exhortation and warning.

This is an exhortation to “*every man*.” No one is above committing this error.

This is an exhortation “*not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think*.” In this context, the wrong thinking pertains to spiritual gifts and calling. It refers to thinking that I have a calling and gifts that I don't actually have. To think that I am called to a certain ministry when I am not is self-deception, but it is a common problem. The wrong thinking can be the product of pride, but it can also be sincere as the

product of ignorance, immaturity, lack of spiritual discernment, or other causes.

This is an exhortation to “*think soberly*.” Instead of thinking more highly than he ought, every individual is to think “soberly.” This is *sophroneo*, sober-minded, right-minded. Sober thinking submits to God’s Word and tests one’s calling by Scripture. Sober thinking seeks wise counsel. Sober thinking is the opposite of being led by one’s emotions and experiences. It is the calm deliberation of one’s life in light of God’s Word. Consider the man who thinks he is called to be a pastor. Let him test that calling by the qualifications and evidences of God’s Word, such as the following: compelling desire (1 Ti. 3:1), gifting and ability (*able* to shepherd, disciple, teach, lead, oversee, protect), personal life (1 Ti. 3:2-3; Tit. 1:7-8), family (1 Ti. 3:2, 3-4; Tit. 1:6), wife (1 Ti. 3:11), maturity (1 Ti. 3:6), reputation (1 Ti. 3:7), proving (1 Ti. 3:10), training (“as he hath been taught,” Tit. 1:9), and fruit (Ps. 1:3; 2 Ti. 4:5). (See “Test of a Pastor’s Calling,” [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).) Sober thinking submits to church authority. Note the emphasis on being part of a body (Ro. 12:5). If a member of a body tries to be something it is not, that is confusion, and the body as a whole will understand this. So the member must be subject to the body. If I think I am called to some ministry, and I believe I am gifted for that, I should submit this to the church for approval. In Scripture, callings are recognized by the church (Ac. 13:1-4). Ordination is man’s recognition of God’s call. If a man believes that he is called to be a pastor or an evangelist or a missionary, but his church does not recognize that calling, he should submit to the church as unto Christ, because it is the house of God and the body of Christ, and because God commands us to “obey them that have the rule over you” (Heb. 13:17). We would counsel such a man to put the matter before God and leave it there and not act hastily, asking God either to give him peace that he has made a

mistake about his calling *or* to change the minds of those in authority. Consider the following Scriptures: “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. ... Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Co. 14:33, 40). God’s way is the way of good order, peace, and no confusion. This principle is true for everything in the church, not just the exercise of spiritual gifts. When there is confusion about one’s calling, the individual should wait until there is peace and the confusion is gone. This is a major biblical principle for determining God’s will in any important decision. It is also true that the doctrinal/spiritual condition of the church must be taken into consideration. A church that is not right with God could not be expected to recognize God’s call.

We minister according to “*the measure of faith*” (Ro. 12:3). Faith is something that I exercise by trusting God’s Word (Ro. 10:17), but faith is also something that God gives to each individual for the purpose of carrying out his calling. Every calling is attended by a measure of faith. Some have the faith to start new churches, to go to foreign lands, to pioneer new works. Some have the faith to teach, others to give, others to show mercy.

We minister in the context of the church (“*one body*,” Ro. 12:4-5). The church is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Ti. 3:15). This reminds us of the necessity of sound New Testament churches.

We minister to “*one another*” (Ro. 12:5). No believer is to live only for himself. “As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pe. 4:10). The “one another” ministry is a major theme of the Epistles: “love one another” (Ro. 13:7); “receive one another” (Ro. 15:7); “admonish one another” (Ro. 15:14; Col. 3:16); “salute one another” (Ro. 16:16; 1 Co. 16:20; 2 Co. 13:12); “by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13); “bear ye one another’s

burdens" (Gal. 6:2); "forbearing one another in love" (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13); "love one another" (1 Th. 4:9; 1 Pe. 1:22; 1 Jo. 3:23; 4:7); "comfort one another" (1 Th. 4:18); "edify one another" (1 Th. 5:11); "exhort one another" (Heb. 3:13; 10:25).

We minister "*according to the grace that is given to us*" (Ro. 12:6). There is saving grace, which is the free, unmerited favor of God in Jesus Christ that justifies the believing sinner and grants him all blessings in Christ (Ac. 15:11; Ro. 3:24; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:7). And there is serving grace, which is the gifting and ability that God gives the believer for life and ministry (1 Co. 3:10; 15:10; 2 Co. 1:12; 9:8; 12:9; Heb. 12:28). We cannot serve God in our own strength. No one's shoulders are broad enough for the ministry--only Christ's. There is rest in God's service (Mt. 11:28-30). This is the solution to "burn out." If I am laboring in my own strength and resources, I will burn out, but if I am laboring in Christ, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light, I will be perpetually renewed.

We minister "*in Christ*" (Ro. 12:5). First and foremost, we minister in Christ. To minister to man is secondary to one's relationship with Christ. *To minister in Christ refers, first, to redemption.* Unless I am in Christ, I have no calling, no gift, no ministry before God. *To minister in Christ refers, second, to resource, enablement, strength.* I can do nothing apart from Christ, but I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me (Php. 4:13). "... the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20). I must abide in Christ (Joh. 15:4), hear His Word (Joh. 10:27), be filled with His Spirit (Eph. 5:18). *To minister in Christ refers, third, to ministering to Christ.* My ministry is for His pleasure. I serve a risen Saviour. I must seek His face in all matters. *To minister in Christ refers, fourth, to ministering for Christ.* My ministry must be 100% for Christ's glory. "To him be glory both now and for ever" (2 Pe. 3:18). Every minister

must say with John, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Joh. 3:30).

## The Specific Calling

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:3-8).

There are many gifts, callings, and ministries (Ro. 12:6-8).

Some gifts were temporary (1 Co. 12:8-10). These were revelatory gifts that pertained to the era before the canon of Scripture was completed (prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues). These were associated with the apostolic era, when “the signs of an apostle” were operating (2 Co. 12:12). We believe in healing by prayer according to James 5, but not healing as a sign gift (1 Co. 12:9). We believe in miracles and we witness miracles, but we don’t have the working of miracles as a gift (1 Co. 12:10).

The gifts of Romans 12:6-8 are permanent gifts.

There is a gift of “**prophecy**” for today (Ro. 12:6). This is not the gift of prophesying revelation; it is the gift of preaching God’s Word. Two aspects of Bible prophecy were operative in the New Testament. There was *fore-telling* (Ac. 11:27-28) and *forth-telling*. (“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and

comfort” (1 Co. 14:3). “And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them” (Ac. 15:32). The forth-telling aspect of prophecy refers to preaching God’s Word, and in this sense the gift of prophecy continues throughout the church age. The fore-telling aspect of prophecy, the giving of revelation aspect, came to a conclusion (“whether there be prophecies, they shall fail,” 1 Co. 13:8). This occurred with the completion of the Scriptures, which is the more sure word of prophecy (2 Pe. 1:19).

There is a gift of “**ministry**” (Ro. 12:7). This is a broad, general term that encompasses many types of service. The Greek *diakonia* is also translated “serving” (Lu. 10:40) and “relief” (Ac. 11:29). It is translated “deacon” in 1 Ti. 3:10, 13, where it refers to the office of the deacon. But in Romans 12:7 it refers to the gift of ministering and serving. It is used to describe the ministry trip that Paul and Barnabas made to Jerusalem to carry the offerings for the needy saints (Ac. 12:25; compare Ac. 11:28-30).

There is a gift of “**teaching**” (Ro. 12:7). This is the gift of explaining and expounding the Scriptures, of training the saints in the will of God. While all elders and pastors must be able to teach (“apt to teach,” 1 Ti. 3:2), not all teachers have the office of ruling. A woman can teach women (Tit. 2:3-4) and children, as Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother (2 Ti. 1:5; 2 Ti. 3:15), but she cannot teach men (1 Ti. 2:12). The gift of teaching must be developed by diligent study (2 Ti. 2:15).

There is a gift of “**exhortation**” (Ro. 12:8). This is the Greek *parakaleo*, which means literally “to call alongside of” and refers to encouraging, consoling, imploring, and urging people to fulfill their duties. It is translated “intreat” (Lu. 15:28), “desire” (Ac. 8:31), “comfort” (Ac. 16:40), “call for” (Ac. 28:20). An example of an exhorter is Barnabas (Ac. 11:22-24). “Exhortation” also encompasses reproof. The

epistle of Hebrews is called “the word of exhortation” (Heb. 13:22), and it contains a great deal of warning and reproof (e.g., Heb. 2:1-3; 3:7-8; 4:1; 5:12-14; 10:26-27; 12:5-13). Effectual exhortation requires that the individual be “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge” (Ro. 15:14). If the exhorter does not have good Christian character, people will not hear him. If he does not have knowledge, he will not be able to give wise exhortation.

There is a gift of “**giving**” (Ro. 12:8). Every believer is to be a giver, but there is a gift of giving. The giving is to be done “with simplicity.” This is the Greek *haplotes*, which refers to “singleness, sincerity (without dissimulation or self-seeking), generosity” (Strong). It is also translated “bountifulness” (2 Co. 9:11), “liberal” (2 Co. 9:13), and “singleness” (Eph. 6:5). The gift of giving is an important one in light of the great needs of the work of the ministry.

There is a gift of “**ruling**” (Ro. 12:8). This refers to the office of the pastors and elders who rule over the church (Heb. 13:7, 17). It is a *very important job*. It has been said that everything rises and falls on leadership. Ruling is to be done “*with diligence*.” The pastor must be single-minded about his calling and give himself to it zealously. This is in contrast to the pastor who is half-hearted and lazy. This is a *very difficult job*. It requires great wisdom. It requires much training. It requires continual training. It requires spiritual courage. The preacher must be able to stand alone with God like Jeremiah.

There is a gift of “**showing mercy**” (Ro. 12:8). This is a godly gift, because mercy is a special attribute of God. It is an important, needful gift. It is under-appreciated and under-recognized. When people inquire about what a person does in the church, they are usually thinking of Sunday School teacher or singer or usher, not “showing mercy.” The mercy is to be shown “*with cheerfulness*.” It is not to be exercised grudgingly or from a spirit of necessity or mere duty. One danger for someone who has the gift of showing mercy is to

be too soft and not understand the importance of discipline, reproof, and rebuke. Mercy must be shown according to God's will and character, not according to mere human sympathy.

We minister "*with diligence*" (Ro. 12:8). This is speaking of giving in particular, but it applies to all of the gifts. Christ despises lukewarm, half-hearted, sluggardism.

We minister "*with cheerfulness*" (Ro. 12:8). This is speaking of showing mercy in particular, but it applies to all of the gifts. It is the opposite of grudging or serving as a mere duty. It is a "ready mind."

## The General Calling

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. *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. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 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. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:9-21).

Next Paul describes Christian service and Christian living in general. The Christian's specific or personal calling is found as he dedicates himself zealously to the general calling

of God, which is to an obedient, godly lifestyle. As the believer gets busy doing those things that God wants every believer to do, he is led by the Holy Spirit step by step into his more particular and personal calling.

Consider the example of Eliezer, Abraham's servant, who went to get a wife for Isaac: "I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Ge. 24:27). By obeying God you put yourself "in the way" to be led in God's will.

I think of my early Christian life. I set out to obey the Lord right away. I started looking for the right church in God's will, and as soon as I found it, I was committed, faithful and active. I set about to separate from evil things of the world as the Lord showed me (e.g., worldly music and movies, "abhor that which is evil," Ro 12:9). I set about to be honest and to give restitution for things I had stolen ("provide things honest in the sight of all men," Ro. 12:17). I set about to love people ("let love be without dissimulation," Ro. 12:9). I set about to be diligent and wise in the use of my time, to learn how to order my days, to redeem the time, to set priorities ("not slothful in business," Ro. 12:11). As I walked with the Lord and studied the Bible and sought to obey God, He led me to start writing booklets. He put Way of Life on my heart. (Pr. 6:23, "The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.") Eventually He led me to missionary work.

This passage is similar to Christ's Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). It describes the character of God, and the whole world will be filled with these lovely attributes when Christ's kingdom is established on earth.

***"Let love be without dissimulation"*** (Ro. 12:9).

"Love" here is the Greek *agapeo* or *agape*, which appears 116 times in the New Testament. It is translated "love" 86 times and "charity" 28 times. *Agape* is the very love of God. He is *agape* (1 Jo. 4:8), and He is the God of *agape* (Ro. 5:5; 2

Co. 13:11). *Agape* is self-sacrificial love, giving love, the love that caused God to give His Son and Christ to give Himself for sinners. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Joh. 15:13); "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

*Love is mentioned at the head of this summary of Christian living.* Love of God and love of neighbor are the first two commandments (Mt. 22:37-40), so love is emphasized by being placed first.

*Love is to be "without dissimulation."* This is the Greek *anupokritos*, "from *a* (not, without) and *hupokrinomai* (to pretend), meaning without pretense, genuine, sincere" (*Complete Word Study Bible*). It is translated "unfeigned" (1 Co. 6:6; 1 Ti. 1:5) and "without hypocrisy" (Jas. 3:17). It was used for a person who was not an actor in the Greek plays. Dissimulation refers to dishonesty, insincerity, hypocrisy, pretense, ulterior motives, selfishness clothed in care for others, manipulating others by insincere actions, flattery.

*Love is not a feeling that is worked up, it is action.* It is not emoting, it is doing. The love of verse 9 is described in the rest of the chapter as showing kindness, showing honor, preferring others, distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality, rejoicing with them that rejoice, weeping with them that weep, condescending to men of low estate, recompensing to no man evil for evil, providing things honest. Christian love is to serve one another according to God's Word.

***"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good"*** (Ro. 12:9).

Observe that abhorring evil is one of the first duties of Christian service that Paul mentions. It is not to be despised or neglected or rejected. Abhorring evil is not an optional part of the Christian life. It is not "Phariseeism." It is not "legalistic fundamentalism." "The fear of the LORD is to hate

evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate” (Pr. 8:13). “Hate the evil, and love the good” (Am. 5:15). The fact that abhorring evil is despised and neglected by modern evangelicalism is a major reason why it is filled with heresy and worldliness. This is the fountainhead of its apostasy. In 1948, prominent evangelical leader Harold Ockenga announced the “repudiation of separatism” (foreword to Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible*). He was guaranteeing eventual apostasy. “Separatism” (abhorring sin and error) is at the heart of biblical holiness. It is spiritual/doctrinal/moral protection. John Ashbrook rightly stated, “Separation is God’s prescription for treating the disease of apostasy. It is not ours to repudiate, for it is a divine command, not a human idea” (*New Neutralism II: Exposing the Gray of Compromise*).

Observe, further, that to abhor evil is mentioned BEFORE cleaving to that which is good. It is impossible, biblically, to have a “positive only” approach to truth and righteousness. If I love the good, I will hate the evil. If I love truth, I will hate error. If I truly esteem all of God’s precepts to be right, I will hate every false way (Ps. 119:128). But Harold Ockenga said, “The strategy of the New Evangelicalism is the positive proclamation of the truth in distinction from all errors without delving in personalities which embrace the error. ... Instead of attack upon error, the New-Evangelicals proclaim the great historic doctrines of Christianity” (Fuller Theological Seminary press release, Dec. 8, 1957). A strategy of positivism is disobedience to God’s Word.

Observe that cleaving to the good is just as important as abhorring evil. It is not enough to avoid wrong things, I must fill my life with good things. For example, I must put aside worldly music and replace it with wholesome music.

Observe that abhorring and cleaving are strong commands. The believer’s attitude toward good and evil is to be passionate. There is to be no neutrality, no sitting on the

fence. That which is good is to be my pleasant occupation, and that which is evil is to be renounced and forsaken. “**Abhor**” is *apostugeo*, “denotes ‘to shudder,’ *apo* (from, used intensively), *stugeo* (to hate)” (Vine); “to detest with horror” (*Complete Word Study Bible*). The Psalmist didn’t just reject false things, he abhorred them (Ps. 119:128). It was a passionate, unhesitating, committed rejection. “**Cleave**” is *kollao*, from *kolla*, “to glue together, to adhere to.” It is often translated “joined to,” as Philip joined the Ethiopian eunuch in his chariot (Ac. 8:29) and the believer is joined to the Lord (1 Co. 6:17). The child of God is to cleave to everything that is good, to love it, to engage in it, to pursue it.

Observe that we are to abhor that which is evil, referring to all that is evil, and we are to cleave to that which is good, referring to all that is good. This is the standard of the pilgrim Christian lifestyle in a nutshell. It is a far-reaching standard that encompasses everything in one’s life. We are to test everything by God’s Word to see whether it is evil or good, false or true, and we are to abhor everything that is evil and false and cleave to everything that is true and good. Everything encompasses education, friends, literature, music, dress, entertainment, hobbies, social media, etc.

**“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love”** (Ro. 12:10).

This is love in practice. “Kindly affectioned” is *philostorgos*, from *philos* (friend) and *storge* (a tender affection), a friendly, tender affection. “Brotherly love” is from the beautiful Greek word *philadelphia*, from *philos* (friend, friendliness) and *adelphos* (brother), brotherly friendliness or brotherly affection. It is translated “brotherly kindness” (2 Pe. 1:7). *Philostorgos* and *philadelphia* are nearly the same thing, so there is an emphasis by repetition. Both refer to the affection of a close friend or near relative who is well loved. “Charity suffereth long, and is kind” (1 Co. 13:4). The world has this

affection only for a select few, but God's people are to have this affection for all brethren in Christ.

It means that we are to be kind, gentle, patient, merciful. We seek the benefit of others, not their harm. When kind affection and brotherly love rule in a home and a church, there is a little bit of heaven on earth. Such a home and such a church is not filled with anger, bitterness, offense, divisions, ill-will. There is the building up of one another rather than devouring of one another. In contrast, I think of a husband and wife who have not spoken in years. The husband got offended at the wife's cooking, and he determined that he would never again eat her food. They live in the same house, but they have no interaction. They communicate with one another through the children. I think of churches that are filled with offenses and divisions and ill-will and backbiting rather than kind affection and brotherly love. How this pains the heart of God and grieves the Spirit. See Eph. 4:29-32.

***“in honor preferring one another”*** (Ro. 12:10).

This is the opposite of the way of the natural man, which is self-centered, self-promoting, jealous of others.

The way of Christ is to honor others more than self. Jesus said, “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister” (Mt. 20:26). “Let nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Php. 2:3). “Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pe. 5:5).

***“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”*** (Ro. 12:11).

We see that God's people are to be busy serving the Lord. The redeemed's entire life should be that of service to His heavenly Master.

***“Slothful”*** in Ro. 12:11 is *okneros*, “to be slow, to delay.” God loves diligence and hates sloth. Sloth is condemned

sharply in Proverbs, the book of practical wisdom (Pr. 6:6-11; 10:26; 12:24, 27; 13:4; 18:9; 19:24; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:15-16). "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ec. 9:10). "And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23). Pharaoh of Joseph's day was looking for "men of activity" (Ge. 47:6). How much more is God looking for men and women of activity for His big business!

**"Fervent"** is *zeo*, "to seethe, bubble, boil." God's servants are to be eager, passionate, zealous, hot rather than lukewarm, quick to act, not half-hearted, not lazy, not slow.

We think of Apollos who was "fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord" (Ac. 18:25). We think of Caleb who wanted to "go up at once" and possess the promised land (Nu. 13:30). No messing around; let's go! We think of David who said, "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God ... because I have set my affection to the house of my God" (1 Ch. 29:2-3). We think of Hezekiah of whom it was said, "in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart, and prospered" (2 Ch. 31:21). We think of the Lord's people in the days of Nehemiah who rose up and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. They built "from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared" and completed the great work in 52 days (Neh. 4:21; 6:15). We think of Jesus, who said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (Joh. 4:34). We think of Paul who "laboured more abundantly than they all" (1 Co. 15:10). We think of the house of Stephanas who "addicted themselves to the ministry" (1 Co. 16:15).

**"Rejoicing in hope"** (Ro. 12:12).

God wants His people to have a know-so salvation. "Hope" is confidence in God's promise of salvation. It is "sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6:19) because it is based on Christ's blood

and God's faithfulness. "Rejoice" is the Greek *chairo*, which is also translated "glad" (Ro. 16:19) and "joy" (Php. 2:17). If there were any doubt about the believer's salvation, if salvation depended on "holding out to the end," it would be impossible to rejoice in hope. No matter what is happening in the believer's life, he has cause to be cheerful because of his secure position in Christ and because of God's promises. Again we see passion in Christian living.

**"patient in tribulation"** (Ro. 12:12).

We are reminded that there is tribulation in the Christian life. It cannot be escaped except by denying Christ. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Ti. 3:12). Therefore, there is need of patience. Everything in the believer's life is in God's hand (Ro. 8:28; Ps. 31:15), and the believer's part is to trust God in every situation and patiently endure.

**"continuing instant in prayer"** (Ro. 12:12).

"Continuing instant" is *proskartereo*, "from *pros* (to) and *kartereo* (to endure), to tarry somewhere, to continue steadfastly, to stay close to someone." It is translated "wait on" (Mr. 3:9), "give ourselves continually to" (Ac. 6:4), "attending continually upon" (Ro. 13:6). It refers to persistence, steadfastness, continuing, enduring in.

Persistence is one of the most important elements of prayer. It is spiritual warfare. It must be done without ceasing (1 Th. 5:17), without fainting (Lu. 18:1), always (Eph. 6:18).

Continuing instant in prayer is one of the keys to being patient in tribulation.

**"Distributing to the necessity of saints"** (Ro. 12:13).

Here is Christian love in practice.

To **distribute** is a fundamental element of biblical Christian living. It is a giving life. God is a giving God, and God's people must be giving people. Those who are rich in this world are instructed to "be rich in good works, ready to

distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Ti. 6:17-18). By so doing, they are “laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come” (1 Ti. 6:19). This refers to laying up treasures in heaven (Mt. 6:20). It has been rightly said, “You can’t out-give God.”

Observe that the distribution is to be focused on “*necessity*.” “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened” (2 Co. 8:13).

And the distribution is to be focused on “*saints*.” “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

“*given to hospitality*” (Ro. 12:13).

“Hospitality” is *philoxenia*, from *philo* (friend) and *xenos* (stranger), kindness to strangers. Hospitality is to be given without grudging (1 Pe. 4:9). It is to be shown to strangers (Heb. 13:2). This is a qualification for pastors (1 Ti. 3:2; Tit. 1:8). It should characterize the Christian wife and is a qualification for widows who are assisted by the church (1 Ti. 5:10).

“*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not*” (Ro. 12:14).

This is from the very words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. “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” (Mt. 5:44). No other religion teaches this. Only the God of the Bible loves His enemies and teaches His people to do the same. God loved His very enemies so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for them (Joh. 3:16).

“*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*” (Ro. 12:15).

Again we see the compassion and the passion that is to characterize the Christian life.

We are to look upon others as being brothers and sisters in the household of God. We are one in Christ so that the things that happen to one happen to all. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Heb. 13:3). This is the opposite of the attitude of the flesh, which is to think of self rather than others, to care about trouble only when it happens to me, to look down upon those who are sorrowing as if they are receiving only what they deserve (i.e., Job's friends), to envy those who have joy, because the good fortune is happening to them and not to me. "Of the two, however, it is more easy to sympathize with another's sorrows than his joys, because in the one case he needs us; in the other not. But just for this reason the latter is the more disinterested, and so the nobler" (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown).

***"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"*** (Ro. 12:16).

Again, this is the outworking of the love that is mentioned at the beginning of this passage.

To be "***of the same mind***" is to be united, to be of one mind together. This is explained in Romans 15:5-6, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." To be of the same mind is the opposite of being divided. It is the opposite of a party spirit (1 Co. 3:3-4).

To "***mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate***" is humility and others-mindedness. It is the opposite of self-seeking, self-exaltation. This is a major element of godly love. "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up ... seeketh not her own" (1 Co. 13:4, 5). It is Christ, who said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (Joh. 5:30), and, "I seek not mine own glory" (Joh. 8:50). "Christ pleased not himself" (Ro. 15:3). "For ye know

the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Co. 8:9). Christ came to earth for others, died for others, and lives for others, and this mind is to be in His people, who are predestinated to be conformed to His image (Ro. 8:29). In Christ's kingdom, "whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister" (Mr. 10:43). For a preacher to "mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate" means that he doesn't exalt himself, is not pompous, is not a Diotrefes who loved to have the preeminence (3 Jo. 1:9). The preacher who condescends to men of low estate aims to feed all of the flock, not just the intellectuals; he aims to edify, not merely tickle the intellect; he aims to "put the cookies on the lower shelf"; he ministers to the low as well as the high. For a church, this means to aim to reach all levels of society, rich and poor, educated and ignorant, all are sought and all are welcome. To "mind not high things" does not mean that the man of God should not study the high things of God's Word, it means he should not waste his time with the pursuit of humanistic philosophy that pretends to be high. Martin Luther King, Jr., prepared for the ministry in a Baptist church by studying Paul Tillich, Karl Marx, Henry Wieman, Soren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Georg Hegel, Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, etc., at Crozer Seminary and Boston University. There is zero spiritual value in these men's writings.

***"Be not wise in your own conceits"*** is a needed exhortation in light of our natural vanity. It is so easy to be blinded by one's own conceits. The natural heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9). If I trust in myself, I will be misled. I must humble myself and cast myself upon God's wisdom. "Be not wise in your own conceits" is emphasized by being in the imperative mode; it is a command from the Almighty to reject pride. God hates it (Pr. 8:13). It is the fundamental sin

of the devil, the first rebel, who was “lifted up with pride,” “lifted up because of thy beauty,” and said “I will be like the most High” (1 Ti. 3:6; Isa. 14:13-14; Eze. 26:17). The verbs in Romans 12:16 are present tense, indicating continual action (“mind not ... condescend to ... be not wise”). These are not things that I settle once for all; they are things that I must pursue day by day, throughout my Christian life.

**“Recompense to no man evil for evil”** (Ro. 12:17).

To recompense evil for evil is exactly what the flesh wants to do, but God’s people are to respond to evil in a godly manner. Note that we are to recompense “no man” evil for evil, not even one.

**“Provide things honest in the sight of all men”** (Ro. 12:17).

This is the sound Christian life in a nutshell because it refers to all aspects of right dealing with my fellow man. “Provide” is the Greek *pronoeo*, “from *pro* (before) and *noeo* (to think), to take thought, care for beforehand” (*Complete Word Study Bible*). “Honest” is *kalos*, “expresses beauty as a harmonious completeness, balance, proportion, good as to quality and character” (*Complete Word Study Bible*). It refers to that which is good, right, proper, approved, genuine, excellent, valuable, virtuous. Of the 102 times it appears, it is translated “good” 83 times (Mt. 5:16). Thus, the believer is to consider his entire life so that everything is honest, above board, right, pure, excellent, proper before God and man. We bear the name of Christ and we must be concerned for His testimony in this dark world. There must be no lying, stealing, cheating, mishandling of funds, borrowing and not paying back, etc. It is better to suffer loss than to harm Christ’s testimony (Ps. 15:4; 1 Co. 8:7; 1 Pe. 2:19-23). I think of a Christian lawyer who is often not paid for his work, yet he does not sue the people who owe him money. He leaves it with the Lord, even though it amounts to a large sum of money, because he wants his testimony before a greedy, grabbing society to be without blemish.

***“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”*** (Ro. 12:18).

The Christian is to be a peaceable person. “as much as lieth in you” means as much as it is in your power. Some things are beyond our control, and there are some men who will not be appeased and will not repent, but it should not be the believer who instigates unpeaceful acts.

***“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 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. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good”*** (Ro. 12:19-21).

This life is filled with offenses. There are countless forms of ill treatment. We are slandered, cheated, robbed, persecuted, injured, crippled, kidnapped, raped, bankrupted. I think of a Christian ministry to troubled teens that was shut down by lies. I think of a church whose new property was destroyed by a communist government. I think of a church that was nearly destroyed by vicious lies against the leader. The list is endless. The instruction in Romans 12:19-21 is, therefore, very important, and it is important for every believer. The Christian is not to avenge himself, and this passage explains how this great thing is done. In a mere three verses--60 words in English, 51 in Greek--the Spirit of God gives a wealth of instruction about this matter.

We hasten to note that this instruction pertains only to personal offenses, not to offenses in general. It doesn't pertain to sins in a church that require discipline or to sins in society that require punishment. It does not forbid me to take lawful and biblical action against an offender, or in regard to an offender. It only forbids me to act in angry vengeance. When I am ill-treated, I can use legal means of redress (Ac. 16:37; 25:11). I can practice separation (Ro. 16:17-18; 2 Th. 3:6; 2 Ti. 3:5; Tit. 3:9-11; 2 Jo. 1:8-11). For example, if I am attacked by

a heretic, I can reject him and mark and avoid him and protect anyone under my watch care from him. That is not angry vengeance. I can pursue church discipline (Mt. 18:15-20). I can reprove and rebuke sin and error with the Word of God (2 Ti. 4:2; Tit. 1:10-13; 2 Co. 12:21). I can defend myself and my family and my possessions by lawful means (Ex. 22:2-4).

*First, we put away the spirit of vengeance by considering that we are “dearly beloved.”* God’s people can put away a vengeful spirit when they consider their position in Christ. We are loved by God, accepted, adopted, joint-heirs with Christ. We can put every situation into God’s hands and trust Him. No matter what happens, I can be sure that “I am His and He is mine.” My times are in His hand, not in the hand of my enemies (Ps. 31:14-15). We do not have to fear loss, for we are joint-heirs with Christ. Our undeserved acceptance by God teaches us to seek the benefit of other sinners. We deserve wrath, but God has given us mercy through Christ’s blood. Therefore, we don’t wish wrath upon other poor sinners, even when they are acting out their worst sins; we wish mercy and grace upon them. We want them to come to repentance so that they are not judged. As one who is “dearly beloved,” I can put away the spirit of vengeance.

*Second, we put away the spirit of vengeance by giving place unto wrath.* It is wrath that drives the spirit of vengeance. To have wrath when we are ill treated is natural, but to nurture it is wrong and dangerous. “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:26-27). “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Eph. 4:31). “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil” (Ps. 37:8). “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and *it is* his glory to pass over a transgression” (Pr. 19:11). “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of

fools” (Ec. 7:9). “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas. 1:19). By dealing with anger through confession and prayer, I put away the spirit of vengeance, and I can act in a wise and godly manner in God’s will.

*Third, we put away the spirit of vengeance by leaving vengeance to God.* “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Ro. 12:19; Heb. 10:30). I put away the spirit of vengeance by keeping my eyes on God and by putting every situation into His capable hands and leaving it there. God alone is the Judge. He knows all things; He knows the secrets of every heart; He alone is capable of right judgment. And He will judge. There is no escaping God’s judgment except through repentance and faith in Christ. “God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*” (Na. 1:2-3). For believers, too, who sin against others, there is an accounting with God that cannot be escaped, either in this life or at the judgment seat of Christ. There, “every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Co. 5:10). Oftentimes it seems like men get away with ill treatment of others, but there is no “getting away with it.” “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after” (1 Ti. 5:24). God’s judgment is perfect and His vengeance is great; but His delight is in extending mercy to those who repent.

*Fourth, we put away the spirit of vengeance by loving our enemies and doing good* (“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink,” Ro. 12:20-21). Instead of paying back evil for evil, the believer is to do good to his enemies. Merciful actions create merciful feelings. “It was exactly in this way that Joseph treated his brothers. They

persecuted him, ridiculed him, and sold him into slavery. He provided for them, protected them, pardoned them, and promoted them. This was David's attitude toward Saul and his house. Saul, murder-bent, persistently sought to corner David and assassinate him. David held back his hand from Saul, even when he was in his power, and then he sought out refugees from Saul's fallen house to show 'the kindness of God' to them. Thus, too, Paul himself treated his own people. They sought to slay him, did their best to undermine his work, sowed discord and heresy in the churches he had planted and never ceased to turn even his converts against him. He prayed passionately for their conversion and never ceased trying to win them to Christ" (John Phillips).

*Fifth, we put away the spirit of vengeance by refusing to be overcome of evil* ("be not overcome of evil," Ro. 12:21). We live in a world of evil, and it is the easiest thing to be overcome by it, for it to influence me, lead me, control my life. The unsaved dwell in this evil world as citizens thereof. They dwell in the darkness and they are *of* the darkness. They are overcome with evil. Their philosophy is, "Do unto others before they can do unto you." But the child of God has been translated into Christ's kingdom and is a pilgrim in this world. He is a citizen of light, though dwelling in a dark world. He can walk in the wisdom and power of God. Though the world around him is filled with greed, lies, cheating, lust, envy, every evil thing, the child of God does not have to be overcome by any of it. Before I was saved, I was overcome with evil. Beginning in public school, an evil environment taught me to cheat, to be lazy, to despise authority, to flaunt laws, to drink and drug and rock and roll. Since I have been saved, I have lived in the same evil world, but am no longer overcome with it by God's grace. This is the power of redemption in Christ, but I must actively resist being overcome of evil.

*Sixth, we put away the spirit of vengeance by overcoming evil with good* (Ro. 12:21). Doing good is the path of victory in every circumstance. I must simply keep on obeying God's Word, doing right, doing good, walking in the light, abiding in Christ, loving the truth. "While we do his good will, he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey" ("When We Walk with the Lord," 1887). The verb "overcome" in Ro. 12:21 is present tense. Doing good is to be a continuous thing. And it is imperative mood, a military command! God says, "Do good!" I overcome evil by focusing on doing good, by persisting in doing good, by doing good with zeal and earnestness as unto God, by refusing to slack off from doing good. I can't control what other people do, but I can control what I do and how I react to others. When others sin, I don't have to sin. When other professing Christians act in disobedience to God's Word and do evil things, I can keep on doing good, and I must. If I am slandered by someone who wishes me ill-will and wants to destroy my reputation, I can keep on doing good and leave the matter in God's hands. I can defend myself with truth, because that is in the realm of good, but I must not do anything that is not good. No matter what happens, I just keep on doing good in the eyes of God. Oftentimes this brings evil-doers to repentance, but whether it does or not, eventually everything will be put right and my doing good will be rewarded. Doing good keeps me in the will of God and keeps me in the light of His pleasure and guarantees that I will eventually hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Mt. 25:21, 23). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Co. 15:58). "**Coals of fire**" is a quotation from Proverbs 25:21-22. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his

head, and the LORD shall reward thee.” Coals of fire refers to sharp conviction and ultimately to judgment (Ps. 120:4; 140:10). To have burning coals of fire heaped on your head would get your attention! When we do good to our enemies, their sin is kept before them and it is hard for them to continue to make excuse for it. If they don’t repent, their evil becomes even more evil and they will receive the greater condemnation. For those who do good and do not take their own vengeance, “***the LORD shall reward thee***” (Pr. 25:22).

**Romans 12 describes the type of churches we need in a nutshell. They are churches that train God’s people to pursue that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

*Seeking God’s will is the biblical Christian life.*

*Seeking God’s will is the way of blessing.* Don’t be afraid of God’s will. There are difficulties in God’s will, but in God’s will there are unspeakable blessings. “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11). “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart” (Ps. 37:4). “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps. 1:3). Sometimes I’m almost embarrassed to describe God’s great blessings in my life!

*Seeking God’s will is the way of fruitfulness.* Church members who are fruitful are the church members who are earnestly seeking God’s will.

*Seeking God’s will is the way of spiritual protection.* If you are not going forward, you are going backward and are therefore in danger.

*Seeking God’s will is the way of spiritual revival.* Revival is not something we should experience in a special meeting from time to time. It should be a daily experience, and it can

be for the child of God who walks in God's will as described in Romans 12.

*Seeking God's will is a measure of spiritual health.* This is true for the individual and for the church.

# Application

## Project

Write down as many practical things as possible that you can do to know God's will. How can you surrender to God in a practical way every way? How can you be not conformed to the world in a practical way every day? How can you renew your mind in a practical way every day? How can you exercise your spiritual gifts?

## Review Questions

The following review questions can help the student comprehend the material in this Bible course. We suggest that you go through the course, then try to answer the review questions. This will help you to see how much you have understood. Finally, go back and find the answers to the questions you could not answer correctly.

113 correct answers

.88 points per answer

## Salvation

1. Where in Romans 12 do we see that knowing God's will is only for saved people?
2. In what two verses of the New Testament do we see that church members must be saved and must be true disciples?
3. What two verses of the New Testament contain the gospel in a nutshell?
4. In these verses that contain the gospel in a nutshell, what are six things that must be believed in order to be saved? (5 points)

5. What is the meaning of "Christ" and what is the Hebrew equivalent?
6. Is it possible to be saved by believing in a false christ?  
No
7. To be saved requires believing that I am what kind of sinner?
8. Can someone be saved if they believe they are pretty good?
9. What is the meaning of Christ's vicarious atonement?
10. What Old Testament prophecy says 12 times that Christ died for us?
11. Is it possible to be saved by trusting in Christ plus my baptism?
12. What does it mean that Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture?
13. What Old Testament prophecy said that Christ would be buried in the tomb of a rich man (book and chapter)?
14. This prophecy was written about how many hundred years before Jesus?
15. What book and chapter in the Gospels describes Christ's burial in a rich man's tomb?
16. Is it possible to be saved if I don't believe that Jesus is alive from the dead?
17. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, what are four evidences of salvation? (4 points)

### **Surrender**

18. In what way does the mercies of God motivate the believer to surrender his life to Christ?
19. Hudson Taylor said, "God gives the very best to those who leave the \_\_\_\_\_ to Him."
20. In what way does Romans 12:1 teach us that surrender to God requires full surrender?

21. How does the believer present his body as a holy sacrifice?
22. How is it possible that the believer's life be acceptable to God?
23. Why is it reasonable to surrender one's life to Christ?
24. Where does Romans 12 make reference to the church?
25. What verse says the church is the pillar and ground of the church?
26. What is Christ's Great Commission?
27. What are the five chapters in which it is given in the New Testament? (5 points)
28. Why is this the greatest business on earth?
29. What verse says every believer is an ambassador for Christ?
30. What verse says every believer is to put on gospel shoes?

### **Separation**

31. What are the words that Paul used in Romans 12 as the call to separation?
32. What is the Greek word translated "conformed"?
33. It is the basis for what English word?
34. How is this Greek word translated in 1 Peter 1:14?
35. What verse says we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness?
36. What book and chapter says, "Love not the world"?
37. How is the believer's mind renewed?
38. What verse says the Word of God is quick and powerful?
39. That verse says the Word of God is able to build you up?
40. What Psalm says the individual is blessed who meditates in the law of the Lord day and night?

41. What verse says the young man cleanses his way by taking heed to God's Word?
42. In what two verses did Jesus say that those who continue in His Word will know the truth?
43. What verse says we are changed into Christ's image by looking at Him in Scripture?
44. What is a proving mindset that is necessary for the renewing of the mind?
45. What two verses describe the baby believer as one who is not skillful in Scripture?
46. Those verses teach that the spiritual senses must be exercised in what way?

### **Ministry**

47. Paul begins his study on the ministry of spiritual gifts with what warning?
48. Why is this warning addressed to "every man that is among you"?
49. What does it mean to "think soberly" about one's gift and calling?
50. Ordination is \_\_\_\_\_ recognition of \_\_\_\_\_ call. (2 points)
51. What is the grace that God gives for ministry?
52. What are three of the spiritual gifts that have ceased? (3 points)
53. What verse says there were "signs of an apostle"?
54. Does this mean that miracles have ceased?
55. What are the seven spiritual gifts mentioned in Romans 12? (7 points)
56. In what way is the gift of prophecy operating today?
57. What is a verse that teaches this type of prophesying?

58. In what book and chapter do we see the older women teaching the younger?
59. What preacher in the New Testament was taught God's Word by his mother and grandmother?
60. What verse says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"?
61. What does it mean to rightly divide the word of truth?
62. What is the Greek word translated "exhortation" and what is its literal meaning? (2 points)
63. What is the ministry of "exhortation"?
64. How do we know that exhortation involves reproof?
65. Giving is to be done with "simplicity." What does this mean?
66. Ruling is to be done with what quality?
67. Showing mercy is to be done with what quality?
68. What is the general calling of God?
69. How does the general calling of God help me to find the specific or personal calling?
70. What is the Greek word for "love" in Romans 12:9?
71. What is the meaning of this?
72. What is love without dissimulation?
73. "Abhor" is to detest with \_\_\_\_\_.
74. Why is abhorring evil mentioned before cleaving to that which is good?
75. How does Paul's teaching about abhorring evil contradict popular evangelical teaching?
76. What evil is to be abhorred?
77. "Cleave" is to \_\_\_\_\_ together.
78. The believer is to cleave to what?
79. To whom is the believer to be kindly affectioned?

80. Jesus said, "Whosoever will be \_\_\_\_\_ among you, let him be your \_\_\_\_\_." (2 points)
81. What verse says "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves"?
82. Slothful means "to be \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_." (2 points)
83. What does it mean to be fervent in spirit?
84. What does it mean to rejoice in hope?
85. Why is there a need of being patient in tribulation?
86. What is the meaning of "continuing instant"?
87. "Given to hospitality" literally means what?
88. What does it mean to be wise in your own conceits?
89. To "provide things honest in the sight of all men" is the sound Christian life in a nutshell in what way?
90. How does the fact that the believer is dearly beloved enable him to put away the spirit of vengeance?
91. How does giving place unto wrath put away the spirit of vengeance?

## Review Questions - Answers

113 correct answers  
.88 points per answer

### Salvation

1. Where in Romans 12 do we see that knowing God's will is only for saved people?

Answer: The word "brethren" is used in verse 1

2. In what two verses of the New Testament do we see that church members must be saved and must be true disciples?

Acts 2:41-42

3. What two verses of the New Testament contain the gospel in a nutshell?

1 Cor. 15:3-4

4. In these verses that contain the gospel in a nutshell, what are six things that must be believed in order to be saved? (5 points)

(1) I must believe in Christ. (2) I must believe that I am the sinner that the Bible says I am. (3) I must believe that Jesus died for my sins. (4) I must believe that Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture. (5) I must believe that Christ was buried. (6) I must believe that Christ rose from the dead.

5. What is the meaning of "Christ" and what is the Hebrew equivalent?

Anointed One, Messiah

6. Is it possible to be saved by believing in a false christ?

No

7. To be saved requires believing that I am what kind of sinner?

The kind of sinner the Bible says I am

8. Can someone be saved if they believe they are pretty good?

No

9. What is the meaning of Christ's vicarious atonement?

He died in the place of sinners; He took the sinner's punishment

10. What Old Testament prophecy says 12 times that Christ died for us?

Isaiah 53

11. Is it possible to be saved by trusting in Christ plus my baptism?

No

12. What does it mean that Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture?

The Bible prophesied of His death

13. What Old Testament prophecy said that Christ would be buried in the tomb of a rich man (book and chapter)?

Isaiah 53

14. This prophecy was written about how many hundred years before Jesus?

710

15. What book and chapter in the Gospels describes Christ's burial in a rich man's tomb?

Matthew 27

16. Is it possible to be saved if I don't believe that Jesus is alive from the dead?

No

17. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, what are four evidences of salvation? (4 points)

(1) Turning (2) Rejection of false religion (3) Life-changing conversion (4) Expectation of Christ's return (4)

**Surrender**

18. In what way does the mercies of God motivate the believer to surrender his life to Christ?

Because of God's love and salvation, the believer should surrender his life to Christ

19. Hudson Taylor said, "God gives the very best to those who leave the \_\_\_\_\_ to Him."

choice

20. In what way does Romans 12:1 teach us that surrender to God requires full surrender?

It is a sacrifice

21. How does the believer present his body as a holy sacrifice?

He lives a holy life

22. How is it possible that the believer's life be acceptable to God?

Because of God's salvation in Christ

23. Why is it reasonable to surrender one's life to Christ?

Because that is the purpose of man's life

24. Where does Romans 12 make reference to the church?

The body in verses 4-5

25. What verse says the church is the pillar and ground of the church?

1 Timothy 3:15

26. What is Christ's Great Commission?

The command to go into all the world and preach the gospel and disciple believers

27. What are the five chapters in which it is given in the New Testament? (5 points)

Mat. 28; Mr. 16; Lu. 14; Joh. 20; Acts 1

28. Why is this the greatest business on earth?

Because it is the business of salvation

29. What verse says every believer is an ambassador for Christ?

2 Cor. 5:20

30. What verse says every believer is to put on gospel shoes?

Eph. 6:15

### **Separation**

31. What are the words that Paul used in Romans 12 as the call to separation?

Be not conformed to this world

32. What is the Greek word translated “conformed”?

*suschematizo*

33. It is the basis for what English word?

schematic

34. How is this Greek word translated in 1 Peter 1:14?

fashion

35. What verse says we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness?

Eph. 5:11

36. What book and chapter says, “Love not the world”?

1 John 2

37. How is the believer’s mind renewed?

By God’s Word

38. What verse says the Word of God is quick and powerful?

Heb. 4:12

39. That verse says the Word of God is able to build you up?

Acts 20:32

40. What Psalm says the individual is blessed who meditates in the law of the Lord day and night?

Psalm 1

41. What verse says the young man cleanses his way by taking heed to God’s Word?

Psalm 119:9

42. In what two verses did Jesus say that those who continue in His Word will know the truth?

John 8:31-32

43. What verse says we are changed into Christ's image by looking at Him in Scripture?

2 Cor. 3:18

44. What is a proving mindset that is necessary for the renewing of the mind?

Testing everything by God's Word

45. What two verses describe the baby believer as one who is not skillful in Scripture?

Heb. 5:13-14

46. Those verses teach that the spiritual senses must be exercised in what way?

To discern both good and evil

### Ministry

47. Paul begins his study on the ministry of spiritual gifts with what warning?

not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think

48. Why is this warning addressed to "every man that is among you"?

Every person is in danger of thinking too highly of himself

49. What does it mean to "think soberly" about one's gift and calling?

To know exactly what God has called and equipped me to do

50. Ordination is \_\_\_\_\_ recognition of \_\_\_\_\_ call. (2 points)

man's - God's

51. What is the grace that God gives for ministry?

gifting and ability

52. What are three of the spiritual gifts that have ceased? (3 points)

prophecy, tongues, healing

53. What verse says there were "signs of an apostle"?

2 Cor. 12:12

54. Does this mean that miracles have ceased?

No

55. What are the seven spiritual gifts mentioned in Romans 12? (7 points)

prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, showing mercy

56. In what way is the gift of prophecy operating today?

forth-telling, preaching

57. What is a verse that teaches this type of prophesying?

1 Cor. 14:3

58. In what book and chapter do we see the older women teaching the younger?

Titus 2

59. What preacher in the New Testament was taught God's Word by his mother and grandmother?

Timothy

60. What verse says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"?

2 Tim. 2:15

61. What does it mean to rightly divide the word of truth?

To interpret it properly

62. What is the Greek word translated "exhortation" and what is its literal meaning? (2 points)

*parakaleo*, to call alongside of

63. What is the ministry of "exhortation"?

encouraging, consoling, imploring, and urging people to fulfill their duties

64. How do we know that exhortation involves reproof?

It is used that way in Hebrews 13:22

65. Giving is to be done with “simplicity.” What does this mean?

Sincerity, singleness, liberality

66. Ruling is to be done with what quality?

Diligence

67. Showing mercy is to be done with what quality?

Cheerfulness

68. What is the general calling of God?

Obedient Christian life

69. How does the general calling of God help me to find the specific or personal calling?

As the believer walks in obedience, God leads him into his personal calling

70. What is the Greek word for “love” in Romans 12:9?

Agape

71. What is the meaning of this?

Self-sacrificial love, giving love

72. What is love without dissimulation?

Without hypocrisy

73. “Abhor” is to detest with \_\_\_\_\_.

horror

74. Why is abhorring evil mentioned before cleaving to that which is good?

It emphasizes the importance of abhorring evil

75. How does Paul’s teaching about abhorring evil contradict popular evangelical teaching?

Evangelicalism emphasizes the positive

76. What evil is to be abhorred?

All that is evil

77. "Cleave" is to \_\_\_\_\_ together.

glue

78. The believer is to cleave to what?

that which is good

79. To whom is the believer to be kindly affectioned?

one to another

80. Jesus said, "Whosoever will be \_\_\_\_\_ among you, let him be your \_\_\_\_\_." (2 points)

Great - minister

81. What verse says "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves"?

Php. 2:3

82. Slothful means "to be \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_." (2 points)

slow - delay

83. What does it mean to be fervent in spirit?

To be passionate, zealous, hot

84. What does it mean to rejoice in hope?

To know for sure that you are saved

85. Why is there a need of being patient in tribulation?

There is much tribulation in the Christian life

86. What is the meaning of "continuing instant"?

to continue in, to be persistent

87. "Given to hospitality" literally means what?

kindness to strangers

88. What does it mean to be wise in your own conceits?

To trust in your own thinking

89. To "provide things honest in the sight of all men" is the sound Christian life in a nutshell in what way?

This refers to all aspects of dealing with men in the right way

90. How does the fact that the believer is dearly beloved enable him to put away the spirit of vengeance?

The believer is loved by God and can trust God to take care of him

91. How does giving place unto wrath put away the spirit of vengeance?

When we don't have wrath, we don't want to have vengeance