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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Faith and Transformation Rom 12:3-8

Lesson Background and Introduction

The book of Romans was written by Paul in about AD 58, probably toward the end of his third missionary journey. At that point, Paul had not yet been to Rome, but greatly wished to visit (Romans 1:11-15; 15:23-24). He would do so, but in chains as a prisoner, as Acts 27-28 records. He made it to Rome by about AD 61 but remained under house arrest, unable to move about the city as he might have wished (Acts 28:16, 20, 23, 30). The Roman emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome about AD 49 (Acts 18:2), which would have resulted in believers of Gentile background coming into greater prominence. But by the time that Paul wrote this letter, Claudius had died and the expulsion order was rescinded, allowing Jews to return to Rome. How many believers of Jewish background constituted the Roman church is uncertain, but Paul does spend Romans 9:1-11:12 speaking about the nation of Israel. Even so, that section depicts a direct address to Gentiles in 11:13. The weight of the evidence therefore points to a Gentile majority in the church in Rome. The book of Romans falls into two major sections. The first part, Romans 1-11, features some of the most doctrinally heavy thoughts in all of Scripture. A shift comes with Romans 12-16, which addresses how Christians should then live in light of the truth of those doctrines. Today's lesson comes from this second section.

We understand that all spiritual gifts are important. But at the same time, we know that not all such gifts are equal (see 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1) and that not all believers are equally gifted (see Matthew 25:14-15). As a result, our natural tendency is to pay more attention to the gifts that are more visible, more "out front" to the public. The highly visible preacher of the church usually gets paid more than the less visible custodian who cleans the church. But here's where Paul's illustration of body members working together (unity in diversity) comes in per Romans 12:4-5: I don't think you would want to go to dirty and smelly church any more than you would want to go to a church with a horrible preacher! The functions of one's hands are much more varied, useful, and visible than are the functions of one's elbow. But a nonfunctioning elbow will severely limit how the hand can function (compare 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Pride is a danger to those having the more visible gifts (see Proverbs 16:18). Also a danger is that those who have the less visible gifts won't use them, perhaps figuratively "burying" them (Matthew 25:25). But just as no human body functions to its highest potential unless all of its parts work together, so also the church—the body of Christ—does not function at full potential until all of its members use their spiritual gifts. The cure (or preventative) for both pride of gifts and non-use of gifts is Luke 17:10: "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'" People will need encouragement to use and otherwise develop their spiritual gifts. Sometimes, people need the wisdom and insight of others to help discern which giftings are present. What types of Christian service do your personal experiences tell you that you have been best at? Where have you fallen flat?

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
But it's God who (in His time, not ours) enacts transformation. Prayer is how we participate in the transforming work He's doing

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Dear God, I need Your transforming work. Please change what only You can change

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Then they cry out to the Lord in their trouble, And He brings them out of their distresses
(Ps 107:28 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Jul 16, 2023)

Series: Faith that Pleases God

UNIT 3: The Righteous Live by Faith

NEXT WEEK

Faith in the Power of God (Isaiah 40:12-13, 25-31)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

How to Think (Rom 12:3-5)

About self - Humility (3)

- Humility of spirit (Prov 16:18-19)
- Humility means not being wise in our own eyes (Prov 26:12)
- Humility is good according to God (Mic 6:8)
- Humility like that of an innocent child (Matt 18:2-4)
- Humility that recognizes what we have we received (1 Cor 4:7)
- Humility means knowing who we are (Gal 6:3)

About others - unity (4-5)

- Unity through the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:5-6)
- Unity through being in agreement (1 Cor 1:10)
- Unity through being firm in one spirit (Phil 1:27)
- Unity through being like-mindedness (Phil 2:2)
- Unity through sharing within the assembly (Acts 4:32)
- Unity through being baptized into one Spirit (1 Cor 12:13)

How to Serve (Rom 12:6-8)

Using prophecy (6)

- Prophecy by young men (Acts 2:17)
- Prophecy desired through love (1 Cor 14:1)
- Prophecy that speaks strengthening and encouragement (1 Cor 14:3)

Using ministry (7)

- Service doing the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)
- Service doing the work God has assigned (Heb 6:10)
- Service doing the work God has set for us (Phil 3:14)

Using teaching (7)

- Teaching with wisdom (Col 3:16)
- Teaching with ability from God (1 Tim 3:2)
- Teaching sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)

Using exhortation (8)

- Exhortation through words of encouragement (Acts 20:2)
- Exhortation through assembling and encouraging (Heb 10:25)
- Exhortation through the written word (Heb 13:22)

Using giving (8)

- Giving to meet needs (Acts 2:44-45)
- Giving of oneself first (2 Cor 8:5)
- Giving sacrificially (Luke 21:2-4)

Using leadership (8)

- Leadership that encourages godliness (1 Thess 2:10-12)
- Leadership that has been given a trust (1 Cor 4:2)
- Leadership that has integrity (Titus 2:7-8)

Using mercy (8)

- Mercy that bring happiness (Prov 14:21)
- Mercy is commanded for Christians (Eph 4:32)
- Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)