

Kingdom Perspective: Living out God's Grace in a Divided World

Love Like a Christian

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Romans 12:1–2 (NLT)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

1. Complete surrender to God is the key to finding our purpose and learning how to love.

Romans 12:3–8 (NLT)

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

2. As we love others through our actions, we discover the truth that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Romans 12:9–19 (NLT)

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God's people

are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God.

12 Actions of a Loving Christian

- 1. Don't pretend to love others. Really do it.**
- 2. Hate what is wrong and cling to what is good.**
- 3. Love one another with genuine affection and take delight in honoring one another.**
- 4. Never be lazy, but work hard to serve.**
- 5. Rejoice in hope, being patient in trouble, praying always.**
- 6. Help God's people in need and practice hospitality.**
- 7. Bless those who persecute you.**
- 8. Be happy with those who are happy and weep with those who weep.**
- 9. Live in harmony with people. Don't think you know it all.**
- 10. Never pay evil with evil. Let people see you are honorable.**
- 11. Do all you can to live in peace with everyone.**
- 12. Never take revenge. Leave it to the righteous anger of God.**

Small Group Guide: Love Like a Christian

Opening Question:

When you hear the phrase “be a living sacrifice,” what comes to your mind? Does it feel inspiring, intimidating, or something else?

Living with a Kingdom Mindset

Romans 12:1–2 gives us one of the clearest pictures of what it means to live a surrendered life in Jesus. Paul urges us to offer our bodies—our whole selves—as a *living and holy sacrifice*. This is a daily posture of saying, “God, I’m yours. Use me.”

Paul’s language is bold. He’s not inviting us to dabble in Christianity or add Jesus to our lives like an accessory. He’s calling us to be *all in*. Not just on Sunday mornings, but in our everyday relationships, habits, and thoughts. The phrase “living sacrifice” means our whole lives become worship—not just singing songs but how we think, serve, speak, and treat others.

Then Paul gives a warning: don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world. The world is constantly trying to shape how we think—what’s acceptable, what success looks like, how we treat people, and what we should live for. But as believers, we’re invited to be *transformed*—not by trying harder, but by surrendering to God and allowing His Spirit to renew our minds.

Transformation doesn’t come through striving. It comes through surrender. When we stop trying to control our own growth and allow God to do the deep work in us, that’s when real change begins. Our part is to yield. His part is to transform.

The Moralists’ view of love is about what they can get—about being loved and being happy. The Kingdom perspective turns that thinking on its head. It’s about loving and serving others—and then discovering that’s what truly brings purpose, joy, and satisfaction.

In a divided, hurting world, what sets Christians apart is love - the kind of love that reflects Jesus: sacrificial, holy, and full of truth.

For Discussion

- What's one way the world has tried to "conform" your thinking recently? How do you notice that influence showing up?
- Paul calls us to be "living sacrifices." In what areas do you feel like you're fully surrendered to Jesus? What areas might still be on the altar?
- How have you seen God "renew your mind" in the past year? What's still being transformed?
- What does it practically look like to love others with both truth and grace in today's culture? How do you keep that balance?

Activation: Choosing to Be All In

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one area of your life where you're holding back. Is it your time? Your thought life? Your relationships? Your priorities?

Then, take one intentional step this week to surrender that area to God. Consider:

- Starting each day by offering your day to Jesus in prayer
- Saying "no" to something that pulls your thinking toward the world
- Saying "yes" to something that helps you be transformed—like Scripture, worship, or service
- Sharing encouragement with someone who needs to see love in action