

GOD'S WORD IS LIFE

The Book of Romans

Session 11 Study Outline for Romans 12

Introduction: The Life of Sacrifice Under the Cross

In Romans 12, Paul explores what it means to live under the cross. Life in Christ is not about achieving righteousness or moral perfection, but about trusting in God's grace. In this chapter, Paul calls believers to a way of life that reflects the truth of the cross: we are crucified with Christ and raised to a new life, not by our own doing, but by God's work alone. The Christian life is not one of success and glory, but one of dying and rising, shaped by baptism and God's hidden work in suffering, weakness, and humility.

Purpose:

Paul's exhortation is not about self-improvement or striving to meet a moral standard. He is not returning the Christian to the law. Instead, he calls believers to live in the reality of God's mercy. The life of faith is the baptized life of daily dying to the old self and rising in Christ (remember Romans 6!). This poured out life is marked by humility, love, and service to others, lived out in the shadow of the cross.

Themes:

- Living as "living sacrifices" under the cross
- Baptism's transforming promise through dying and rising with Christ
- Humility and weakness as signs of God's grace
- Serving others as an extension of Christ's love
- The hiddenness of God's work in everyday life

Objective:

To understand that the Christian life is lived under the cross, where baptism has placed us under God's mercy. Our lives are not shaped by the world's standards of success, but by the way of the cross—where God works through suffering, weakness, and humility to bring about His purposes. In this life, we do not seek to make ourselves righteous, but in the freedom of faith we live out the grace we have received in Christ.

I. A Living Sacrifice Under the Cross (Romans 12:1-2)

Paul begins by calling believers to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, a life shaped by baptism's promise where we daily die to ourselves and rise with Christ.

- **Verse 1:** In response to God's mercy, we are called to present our bodies as living sacrifices. This is not about striving for moral perfection but trusting in His work in us through Christ.
 - **Verse 2:** We are not to be conformed to the world's ideas of success, but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds—recognizing that God's will is often hidden in suffering and weakness. True transformation comes from living in the reality of God's grace, not from our own efforts.
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II. Humility and Spiritual Gifts in the Life of Faith (Romans 12:3-8)

Paul urges the church to exercise humility, recognizing that all gifts come from God's grace, not from our own achievement or merit.

- **Verse 3:** We are warned not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. The Christian life is marked by humility because we recognize that everything we have, even our faith, is a gift of God's grace. Faith is God's work in us, not an achievement.
 - **Verses 4-5:** Just as the body has many parts, each believer has a different role within the church. But these roles are not about power or status; they are about serving one another, reflecting the self-giving love of Christ.
 - **Verses 6-8:** The gifts we have been given are not for our own glory, but for the building up of the church. Whether in prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, or acts of mercy, we serve not in our own strength, but as vessels of God's grace.
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III. Living Out the Cross in Love (Romans 12:9-21)

Paul provides a series of exhortations for living out the freedom of faith in our relationships with others. Christian love is cruciform—it reflects the self-sacrificing love of Christ.

- **Verse 9:** Love must be genuine, not self-serving. We are called to hate what is evil—anything that contradicts God's grace—and cling to what is good. All our life's vocations are lived out in the love, forgiveness, and mercy of God revealed on the cross.
- **Verses 10-13:** God's love motivates us to love one another with brotherly affection. This love produces the freedom which enable us to outdo one another in showing honor. This love is not about achieving recognition but serving humbly, trusting that God's grace works through even the smallest acts of kindness.

- **Verses 14-16:** The life under the cross means blessing those who persecute you, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep. We are called to live in harmony, avoiding pride and associating with the lowly, because that is where Christ is found.
- **Verses 17-21:** We do not repay evil for evil, because the cross teaches us that God's victory comes through suffering and forgiveness. In doing good to our enemies, we trust that God's justice, not our own, will prevail. We overcome evil not by force, but by the love and mercy of Christ.