

Romans 12:1-8^{iv}

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

^{iv} **About Romans 12:1-8**

Paul begins the next section of his letter with a “therefore” that depends upon the whole of chapters 1-11. Paul has set forth God’s act of redemption in Jesus Christ and has explained the outworking of salvation history. Now he turns to the Christian response.

As Christians have received new life from God, so now they live a new life for God. In verse 1, he uses the terminology of cultic sacrifice to make his point: Christians are to present, not dead animals, but their own whole selves to God as a “living sacrifice.” “Spiritual” (Greek *logikos*) is a difficult term to translate. It refers to worship that involves not just the external act but the entire internal self-surrender of the worshiper.

Paul exhorts the Romans not to “be conformed,” to the pattern of “this world,” the present age that is slipping away. Rather, by the renewal of their minds, Christians are to live now as if in the age to come. Thus they are being “transformed” from within. No longer bound by the

external law, Christians discover whether their behavior accords with the will of God by proving or testing it in relation to the image of Christ being formed within. They have all received different gifts from God, which are to be used for the various ministries they do. Underlying all these is love, as the next section will show.