

THRIVING PEOPLE THRIVING CHURCH

Mangum, Douglas, ed. 2020. Lexham Context
Commentary: New Testament.

Lexham Context Commentary. Bellingham, WA:
Lexham Press.



ROMANS 12:1 – 8 (NKJV)

¹ I beseech you **therefore**, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.



- 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,
- 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.
- 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;
- 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;
- 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.



Paul has concluded his lengthy and demanding explanations of human sin, the gospel of Christ, the law's role, and ethnic Israel and true Israel in the earlier chapters.

- With the "therefore" of 12:1, Paul begins to develop resulting general applications to the Christian life.
- The motivation for his exhortation is God's mercy in making salvation available to all in Christ. In using "therefore", Paul had not randomly switched topics; he was continuing an argument.
- He focuses first on life in the church (Romans 12) and then moves to life in the world (Romans 13).
- He'll move back to life in the church in the book's final two sections.



Thrive Through Consecration

Romans 12:1 – 2 (NKJV)

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.



In this introduction to his exhortations, Paul declares that the most appropriate response that believers can make to God's grace is

- to give themselves fully to God
- and then use the gifts that God gives them for the benefit of everyone.



Thrive Through Consecration

Hebrews 10:19 – 22 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,

²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God,

²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.



Thrive Through Consecration

ἐγκαινίζω [*egkainizo /eng·kahee·nid·zo/*] v.

It is to renew, to do anew, again, to initiate, consecrate, dedication.

- We are sold out and dedicated to God.
- Our loyalty is to God without question.
- Others may question it, but we know who is first in our lives.



Thrive Through Reasonable Service

In view of God's compassionate actions, which he has described in the first eleven chapters, Paul now urges his audience to respond by giving themselves to God. This act of consecration is the necessary foundation of Christian living.

Paul urges his brothers (and sisters), through the mercies of God, to present their bodies to God as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, (which is) their reasonable worship.



Although the sacrifices prescribed by the law are no longer necessary, since Christ has fulfilled the law, believers should still offer themselves to God.



ROMANS 6:13 (NKJV)

And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.



Thrive Through Reasonable Service

The word “service” can also mean “worship.” Their bodies were formerly the dwelling of sin (Romans 6:12), but they have been liberated from "sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3) by Christ and the Spirit so that they can now be dedicated to God.

λατρεία [latreia /lat·ri·ah/] n f. It is a service rendered for hire or any service or ministration: the service of God. It is the service and worship of God according to the requirements of the Levitical law to perform sacred services.



Thrive With A Renewed Mind

(Vs. 2)

The physical consecration should be accompanied by intellectual and spiritual consecration.

Transformed – μεταμορφόω [metamorphoo /met·am·or·fo·o/] v. It is to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure.

- Christ's appearance was changed and was resplendent with divine brightness on the mount of transfiguration. (Mark 9:2 – 4)



Thrive With A Renewed Mind

(Vs. 2)

The physical consecration should be accompanied by intellectual and spiritual consecration.

Renewing – ἀνακαίνωσις [*anakainosis* /an·ak·ah·ee·no·sis/] *n f.*
It is a renewal, renovation, and complete change for the better.



Thrive With A Renewed Mind

(Vs. 2)

The physical consecration should be accompanied by intellectual and spiritual consecration.

Mind – **voũç** [*nous /nooce/*] *n m.* It is the mind, comprising alike the faculties of perceiving and understanding and those of feeling, judging, and determining. 1a the intellectual faculty, the understanding. 1b reason in the narrower sense, as the capacity for spiritual truth, the higher powers of the soul, the faculty of perceiving divine things, of recognizing goodness, and of hating evil. 1c the power of considering and judging soberly, calmly, and impartially. 2 a particular mode of thinking and judging, i.e. thoughts, feelings, purposes, desires.



Having Been Freed From Sin, Believers Now Have A Choice.

Romans 8:5 – 6 (NKJV)

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.



IF we want to thrive
in the things of God,
we must make the
RIGHT choice.



We can continue to live
according to the old era

OR

open ourselves to the
transforming Spirit to live
according to God's will.



Romans 6:12 – 14 (NKJV)

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.



Thrive With Renewed Minds

Assume we have committed Christians according to the guidelines of Romans 12:1 – 2:

- How do we who are having our minds renewed and our lives transformed think about life as we live it?
- Specifically, how do we who have had our minds renewed think about ourselves?
- About fellow believers?
- About our spiritual gifts?



Paul answers these questions in verses 3–8:

I. Think Rightly About Ourselves (v. 3)



II. Think Rightly About Fellow Believers (vv. 4 - 5)



III. Think Rightly About Our Gifts (vv. 6–8)



Thrive By Serving God With Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:3 – 8

Having described the proper attitude toward God, Paul describes the proper attitude toward oneself and other believers, who together make up the body of Christ.

"Through the grace given to" him — likely a reference to his apostleship — Paul exhorts the Christians not to think too highly of themselves but to think sensibly, "as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith."



Think Rightly About Ourselves

(V. 3)

How are we to think about ourselves? In verse 3a, Paul again advises us negatively and positively.

First, the negative: For by the grace given me, I say to everyone: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought

The language here is alive. If we were very literal, we could render the phrase, "I say to everyone, do not super-think of yourself," or perhaps, "Do not get hyper about yourself!" Perhaps Paul knew of some individuals in Rome who thought they were better than others.



Whatever the case, thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think is a universal tendency of the human race. Our Adamic nature loves to overthink about itself.

Primarily it is that of the self-elevating boaster—the person who tells you how smart he is, how much he has done, how strong he is, how rich he will be when he gets his big break—legends in their own mind.



How, Then, Are We To Think About Ourselves?

Paul gives us positive advice in verse 3b: "but rather think of yourself with sober judgment ..."

Instead of super thought, there is to be sober thought. Paul continues, "in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

This is that sound judgment comes in proportion to the degree of our faith—if we have strong faith, we will think rightly of ourselves. The idea is that God has allotted to each believer a standard of faith by which to measure himself—and that standard is Christ.



Cranfield explains: to estimate oneself according to the standard which consists of one's faith in Christ is really to recognize that Christ Himself in whom God's judgment and mercy are revealed is the One by whom alone one must measure oneself and also one's fellow men.²

Paul is not asking the believer to estimate himself according to changing subjective feelings, but to estimate himself according to his relationship to Christ.

² 2. Ibid., p. 616.



With Sober Judgment

When one sees Christ as the standard of measurement, he will not think of himself more highly than he ought but rather think of himself with sober judgment.

It is impossible to think more highly of ourselves than we ought if we are sound on this point. If we truly make Christ our standard, we will experience the reality of the opening beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). This could be paraphrased, "How happy are those who realize that they have nothing within themselves to commend themselves to God, for theirs is the kingdom of God."



Christ Is Our Standard

Moreover, if Christ is our standard, the tendency to exalt ourselves by comparing ourselves with others will be curbed.

Those who pride themselves because they are more gifted than other believers will cease their foolishness when they make Christ the standard of measurement.

A clear focus on Christ, then, is the key to thinking rightly about ourselves and should be the goal of our spiritual practice. All of this is a call to profound humility.

How are we thinking about ourselves today?



Thrive By Serving God With Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:3 – 8

Paul has warned both Jews and gentiles against arrogance (2:17–24; 11:17–21), which would rebuild the walls that Christ has broken down.

God distributes to believers various gifts, all of which are necessary, so there are no grounds for anyone to feel superior.

Believers should use their gifts to serve, as Paul himself has done.



Paul now specifies some of God's gifts to believers, which differ "according to the grace given to us".

The word for "gifts" in 12:6 is built on the word for "grace," indicating that God's grace is the single source for all callings and abilities in the benevolence of God rather than the merit of the believer.



God Grants To All Believers The Grace Necessary To Fulfill Their Callings:

- prophecy, "according to the proportion of faith";
- ministry, in ministering;
- the teacher, in teaching;
- the encourager, in encouragement;
- the giver, in generosity;
- the leader, in diligence;
- the merciful, in cheerfulness.



THRIVING PEOPLE



THRIVING CHURCH

