

Romans 12 A study in change.

Day 1

Over the next few days I will be reflecting on Romans 12 and will share with you just a few thoughts...

Life has changing at an astounding rate, where, what would have been extra ordinary a few years ago is now just run of the mill normal.

We used to meet up, now we social distance.

We used to embrace, now we bump elbows.

We used to talk, now we text.

we used to sit down to a meal, now we grab a take-away.

We used to meet up, now we Snapchat.

We used to write letters, now we email.

We used to read, now we Facebook.

We used to invest, now we spend.

We used to speak out, now we post.

We used to take time, now we try to make time.

We used to rest, now we try to keep busy.

We used to look at each other, now we gaze downward at phones, tablets, and laptops as we look at each other's lives on Social Media.

When did life get flipped upside down?

I would love to say it was all it was all the viruses fault, but do we realise, we did most of these before the virus. Have we all become so busy, that we have not realised, we have been conformed to so many new ways?

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” ***Romans 12:1-2***

The enemy wants us swept along by the norm but God is asking us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

What If?

When we are tired ----- we wait upon the Lord

When we are broken ----- we rest in His presence

When we are hurting ----- we accept His comfort

When we are lost ----- We seek His guidance

When we are anxious ----- we trust in His word

When we are hopeless ----- we hope in Him

When we have no words ----- we pray to Him

When we are sad ----- we praise Him

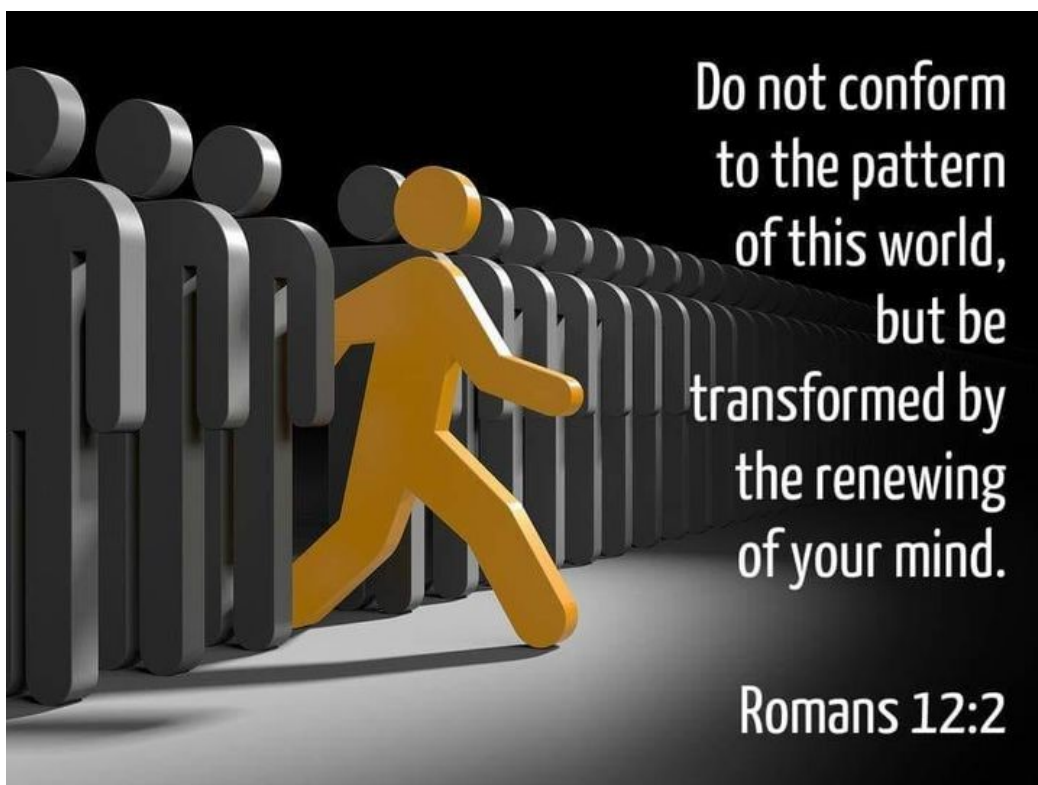
When we are busy ----- we give Him our time

When we are happy ----- we thank Him

When we see a need ----- we share his love

Let us start turning life the Christ like way up and transform our minds to start standing upon the promises of God like, Peace, Joy, Comfort, Goodness, Mercy, Hope, Love, Truth, Plan, Purpose, Future, Worth, Abundant Life and Strong tower, to name just a few.

Let us look up fix our eyes on the Father and love out loud, walk in freedom and show His glory. We were never meant to blend in, we were created to be carriers of His presence and glory.



Day 2

As we continue our look at Romans 12, verse 3 can almost feel like a huge reality check or maybe even a pretty harsh wake-up call...

“For by the grace given to me, I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.” **Romans 12:3**

Wow! There is the truth laid absolutely bare...it is not about us!

It is not about our looks, our job, our family, our abilities, how popular we are or even the likes we get on Facebook or how many followers we have on Twitter. It is about being humble enough to know; it is **all** about God.

We live in a world where the Selfie, of which I am guilty has become a normal. Now I am not saying taking a picture of yourself is an issue, but rather using it to illustrate how much easier it is, thanks to modern day technology, to become more focused on ourselves, rather than looking at or seeking God.

I told you this one was harsh!

We have to think of ourselves with, "sober judgement." Which really means that while looking at ourselves, we remember the whole body of Christ, and that no one is greater. For we have all been given a measure of faith to walk by, grace to live by, and a calling to follow after God's heart.

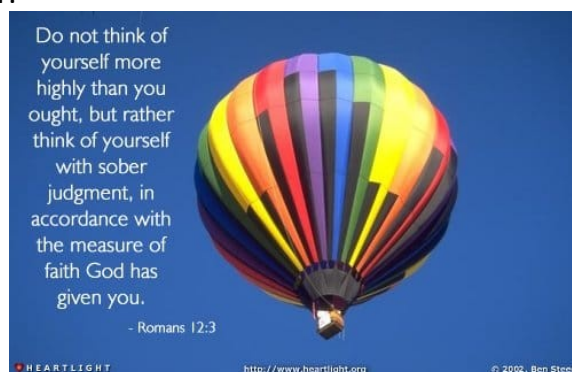
We were all created, knit together by God, created to look different, work and walk different in our family and work lives, but we are all called with one purpose; to see God's kingdom come, and His will done here on earth.

So, may we fix our eyes on God, the author and finisher of our faith. Remember, we live with grace and forgiveness we do not deserve, but Jesus paid the price for our forgiveness.

May we also remember why we were created. We were created to worship, created to serve, and follow Jesus.

Let us finally be reminded that everything we do, all that we are and have is for His Glory to be seen.

It is all about The Father.



Day 3

In today's study our look at Romans 12 will concentrate on verses 4 & 5.

These verses distinctly reminds us we are not walking this faith road alone, but surrounded by and part of one great big loving and interdependent family. The body of Christ.

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” **Romans 12:4-5**

You are not alone!

You are not without function and you have a place of belonging.

When I was thinking about v4 and our own bodies having many members it struck me that if my foot were not connected to my brain, (my brain being as far away from my foot as it can get) my foot would be of no use to me at all. It would just be a disconnect foot that served no purpose. But because these two parts of my body are connected, though far apart, they both function together in unity, serving the same function to help me stand and walk.

In just the same way v5 clearly reminds us, and even states although you and I are not physically joined together - we may even be separated by the farthest distance you can get - we are family. We are one body, we are interconnected through the blood of Jesus.

Now, my calling, purpose and walk may not look anything like yours, and yours may feel greater or smaller than mine, but the truth is that the greatness of our calling, and the purpose in our calling, is all about, and in the one who calls us. It is God who gives us our purpose.

But God does not call us alone. He does not leave us like a foot disconnect from the brain. God has interwoven your life and mine with a whole body of other people.

Not sure you believe that? Well we are connected right now as you read this, yet we are not in the same room... Yet as one we are learning from God. We have a great network of brothers and sisters in Christ around us, that uphold and serve one another.

So if you are feeling discouraged and disconnected then please remember that you are an essential part of the body of Christ. If you need someone please reach out and ask one of your great big, beautiful family to stand with you.

Whether you are a leader, a teacher, a prophet, a server, or a learner; please know you are integral and essential to the work of the body, and, as part of this body I am blessed to be connected to you, and, blessed to have you counted as part of my family.

We are one through Jesus Christ.



Day 4

Today we are taking a look at Romans 12:6-8. Where we look at our different spiritual gifts, given by grace to each of us.

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

Romans 12:6-8 NIV

Straight away we see 4 things.

1. We all have gifts.
2. We all have different gifts.
3. We all have gifts we have not earned.
4. We all have gifts to give and use.

God has placed different spiritual gifts into each of our lives, not because we earned them, and not because we deserve them, but because he loves us, and uses us to edify the whole body. Out of his great love and grace towards us, we are given the gifts to do things beyond our own human ability.

Now we are not talking about the fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Forbearance, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control, that are found in **Galatians 5:22-23**.

We are talking about, Prophesying, Serving, Teaching, Encouraging, Giving, Leading, and showing Mercy.

You see, we are given spiritual gifts by God, that are all about edifying, building up, and strengthening the whole body of the Church. It is also about doing it well, often, and cheerfully.

You see, gifts are meant to be used, and given away, so that others may receive them, be blessed by them, and, then pass the gift along. It is when we use our spiritual gifting's that we start to then see the fruits of the spirit grow in our lives, and the lives of the whole body. So, whatever your spiritual gift is, use it for the glory of God. Use it to edify of the body, and encourage others to give their gift away freely too.



Day 5

As we continue with our look at Romans 12, we come to verses 9-10. Titled in my Bible as "Love in action."

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves." **Romans 12:9-10**

Love is not just a fluffy feeling! It is not just about saying I love you. Love is about doing something, it is an action and it is a choice.

Love must be sincere...free from pretence or deceit; proceeding from a genuine heart. True love is what this scripture is talking about. A love like the love Jesus showed, as he paid it all for us on the cross.

John 15:13 NIV, talks about this. "Greater love has no-one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

I was thinking about this, about how God does not always ask for a literal laying down of life although he may. He *does* ask us to make the decision to daily lay down our lives. To put aside our concerns, lay down all that our daily lives involve, to love others, and, to actively show others His love.

When we cling to love, we cling to all that is good, and we leave behind all that is evil. All that would bring hurt and pain.

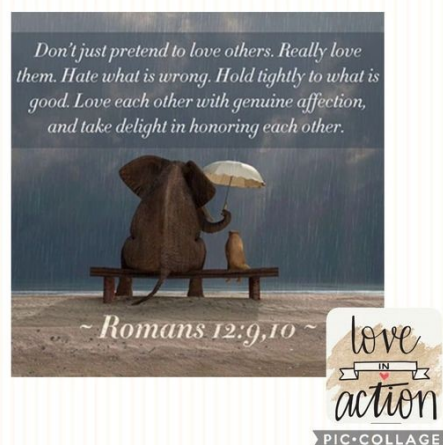
Be Devoted...Very loving, loyal, faithful, and true.

Love has to be faithful and true, or as the scriptures say it serves no purpose at all but is the equivalent of a clanging cymbal, **Corinthians 12:1-3**.

Honour one another above yourself...to show others respect or prestige. This is love in action, this is laying down your life for others, it is about choosing their needs over your own. It is about placing your life at the disposal of God, for Him to use and show his love, compassion, and care, for those he has entrusted to you.

As the picture shows it is about sitting with others in hard times, and, helping shield them from whatever rain may be falling in their lives. But do not worry, God will always send you his love through another too.

Love in action is always about others and how we can share Jesus. So let us, 'Love Out Loud,' just like Jesus did.



Day 6

Today sees us look at Romans 12:12-13, which encourages us to a different kind of living.

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” **Romans 12:12-13**

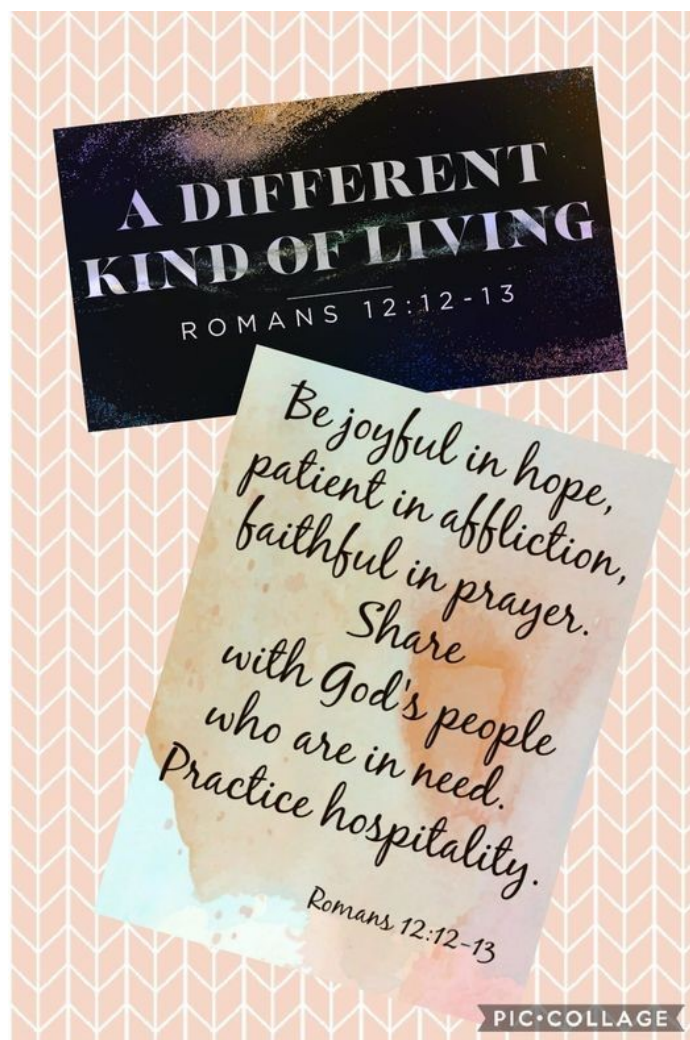
Wow a call to live Joyful, filled with hope, prayerfully, generously and in the care of others regardless of whether life is rosy or we feel afflicted.

I am sure you are reading this thinking it is definitely easier to say than to do. But do you not find, that when we get over ourselves long enough to remember to give thanks to God, for who He is and all He has done, then regardless of your circumstances, the joy starts to flow. Hope rises with in you, your patience seems to grow and develop, as you remember who it is you trust.

Oh that we would learn to live daily in this way!

May we also learn to look beyond ourselves, towards the needs and care of others and to practice hospitality as we remember we are all one body.

We are called to serve just like Jesus.



Day 7

Romans 12: 14-16 calls for us to love others like never before, to love with, what the world would call a crazy kind of love.

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.” **Romans 12:14-16**

Right away we are told to bless, to be a blessing to those who persecute you and not to curse them.

Wow Bless your enemies - speak words of divine favour upon them, and ask God to look favourably on them...now that is definitely a crazy love. It goes against every human instinct to react or get revenge.

It is not easy, but it is possible and it is required.

To love, to bless and to show grace and mercy to those who mistreat you, to deliberately ask God to cause their lives to flourish, this will always bring you peace and in doing so will show God's glory, and the presence of Jesus in your life will cause their lives to be affected in a loving and positive way by your love.

Rejoicing with those who rejoice is easy. It is a joy. But to mourn with those who mourn can be heart wrenching but it is a place of privilege not to be tossed aside.

If God asks us to sit with those who mourn it is ok to mourn with them. It is natural to feel their pain, for it is in that that we show God's compassion and love for them.

This is what living in harmony with one another looks like;

Forgiveness, even when not deserved.

Love, even when not received.

Compassion in grief, and giving of self at any-time.

“Do not be proud, do not be conceited, but be willing to associate with people of low positions.”

Well there is a reality check right there.

I was brought up to always put others first, that is what my parents did and they did it well. I was taught that there was no one greater than the other, for God loved everyone the same. If that was the case, then there were no levels in God. So if you are a cleaner, a postman, a driver, a shop worker, a teacher, a professor, a minister, a nurse, a doctor, a politician, or the leader of a country ...

Do not be proud!

Do not be conceited!

But also do not think less of yourself, we are all God's children, loved the same.

Remember one body.

All necessary.

All interdependent.

All called to love each other unreservedly.

So let us answer the call to live with a crazy love that the world will not understand.... let us love out loud always.

CRAZY LOVE

Bless your enemies;
no cursing under your breath.
Laugh with your happy friends when
they're happy; share tears when
they're down. Get along with each
other; don't be stuck-up.
Make friends with nobodies;
don't be the great somebody.

Romans 12:14-16

PIC•COLLAGE

Day 8

Today is our final look at Romans 12. Let us look at the final few verses.

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” **Romans 12:17-21**

These verses are pretty stark, and it would be hard to misunderstand their meaning. We are called to do good. Regardless of what has been done to us. To forgive, and even bless those who trespass against us.

It even goes as far as to remind us to be hospitable towards them, to feed them and give them a drink.

You see this is what Romans 12 is all about; it is about living a life of good that overcomes evil. Love that overcomes hate, showing hospitality towards everyone, and forgiving like we have been forgiven.

This does not make us weak, it does not lessen our character, it makes us stronger, and deepens our character to be like that of Christ.

Remember while we were yet sinner's, while we were the transgressors, the guilty, Jesus died for us, and gave us a love no one had ever given before.

He brought forgiveness to an undeserving world and overcame evil with good.

It is easy to repay hurt with hurt, but it takes a person of love, strength, and good character to forgive and to overcome hurt with good.

But remember we do it in the strength of the Lord!

We do it supported by the whole body of Christ because what concerns a child of God concerns the whole body.

Romans 12 is a call to live, love, act and think differently. To live like Jesus.

May we all be transformed by the renewing of our minds. May we decrease, that He would increase.

