

Romans Twelve

Jesus > Anything

1/12

Scripture

Romans 12:1

"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." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me to treat my body as a holy temple, dedicated to serving You and doing good works. Please help me take care of my body and use my physical abilities to glorify You. I love You, Lord. Amen. →

There's this extremely unbiblical notion in the world that our bodies belong to us. As such, we see people doing all sorts of terrible things with and to their bodies. If you look at Scripture, Romans 12 begins with an exhortation to give our bodies to God. What does that mean? Well, for starters, let's consider that He made our bodies. Knowing God specifically designed me is incredibly encouraging. No matter what others say about our bodies, no matter what we think about our bodies, God loves us and He created us. He gets the final say. But this verse goes one step further. Since God created our bodies, we should in turn use them to glorify God. Yes, this means not engaging in sinful practices with our bodies. It also means taking care of our bodies and using our physical strength to glorify Him. We can use our bodies in countless ways, from sports to manual labour to serving Him in the community. Our bodies are an awesome gift from the LORD, and I for one want to steward mine and sacrifice it for His glory.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God how He wants to use you for His Kingdom.
2. Confess any insecurity you have about the body God has given you.
3. Thank God that we are so beautifully and wonderfully complex.
4. Pray for a desire to steward what you've been given.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:2

"Don't copy the behaviour 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." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me stay away from the customs of this world. I want You to transform me into a new person so I may learn Your will. Give me a greater desire to study Your Word. I love You, Lord. Amen. →

When we accept Christ into our lives, we shouldn't stay the same. There should be a noticeable change in how we think, act, and interact. In today's verse, Paul gives us the key. God will begin to transform us when we change the way we think. What's that supposed to mean? In my eyes, it looks like fixing my thoughts on things that glorify God. One great way to do that is by memorizing Scripture (such as Romans 12). God doesn't want us to waste our time worrying or thinking about worldly pleasures. Instead, when we think godly thoughts, He will begin to reveal His will to us. This won't happen overnight, but it gets the process going. If you struggle with negative thoughts, worry, or thinking about things that aren't worthy of your time, the best place to begin is with God's Word. Fill your mind with Biblical truth. Read it, study it, put it to memory. Fill your mind with truth and watch God transform you.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God what customs of this world you should give up.
2. Confess dwelling on the things of earth.
3. Thank God that He wants to transform us into new beings.
4. Pray for a longing to seek God's will and His Word.



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Scripture

Romans 12:3

"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."

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me to be honest in my personal evaluation. Help me to see You as my example. Guide me as I seek to grow in humility and surrender my desires to You. I love You, Lord. Amen.

This one stings, because let's be honest, how often have we thought we are better than we really are? I regularly need to catch myself taking worldly pride in my writing, creative skills, abilities, etc. By no means is Paul telling us to undervalue our abilities; please don't let this verse discourage you. No, Paul wants us to be honest in our evaluations. The measuring stick we should all use is God's Word and the faith He has given us. Rather than looking to the world as the mark of our achievements, let's look to Scripture. Let's ask God what His will is for our lives. I can always afford to grow in humility, because I know that I can't become better at anything if I think I'm already great at it. Today, I'd like you to take a minute or two and ask yourself who's defining how good you are. Does your value come from what you think you can do, does it come from the culture, or does it come from God? Going forward, I want to let Him be the judge of what I'm doing. My human pride can hit the sideline.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God if you need to change the way you evaluate yourself.
2. Confess overvaluing or undervaluing your abilities.
3. Thank God that He is the true judge of our talents.
4. Pray that you would release all pride to God.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:4-5

"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." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me do my job in the body of Christ. Please keep me from jealousy. Guide me as I fulfill the calling You've placed on my life. I love You, Lord. Amen.

I regularly hear about being "the body of Christ", but what does that mean? I think the answer lies in looking at an actual body. Our bodies have hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc. Each part is different and serves a different function, yet they all synergize to form one organism. In the church, it's tempting to look at someone else's role and grow jealous of it. I know I've done that. But a body of just hands isn't very effective. To work together as a church, we all need to seek God's will and ask Him what His role is for us. When we do this, we'll begin to see just where we're needed. By playing our part, we can unify as the body of Christ. When you do your job, and I do mine, together we draw others to Him. So ask God, "What role do you have for me in the greater body of believers?" As you discover this plan, look to support others. As we care for our bodies, so we should care for the body of Christ. Together, we are the living representation of what Jesus has done!

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God what your role is in His body.
2. Confess jealousy towards other members.
3. Thank God that His plans are unique and for our best.
4. Pray that you would do your part in being the body of Christ.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:6-8

"In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to... Do it gladly." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please guide me as I seek to use my talents for Your glory. Thank You for the gifts You've blessed me with. I want You to keep showing me ways to glorify You. I love You, Lord. Amen.

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As we covered in the last devotional, we are all members of Christ's body. As such, He's given the 'eyes' one set of skills and the 'ears' another. Due to length, I've had to skim through today's verses. In essence, Paul lists a variety of gifts that you may possess (please read Romans 12 to check them out for yourself). After listing each gift, Paul tells us to utilize it for the Kingdom as best we can. It doesn't matter if you don't think your gifts matter. God has given you talents for a reason. What He asks for is your complete devotion. For me, this looks like directing all my gifts to His glory. Whether it's writing, photography, videography, serving others, etc. I want to dedicate it all to God. I want to be proactive in seeking ways to glorify His Kingdom. What gifts has He given you? How can you use them for His glory?

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God what gifts and abilities He's given you.
2. Confess not stewarding your gifts as well as you should.
3. Thank God for His wonderful grace.
4. Pray for eyes to see new ways to serve Him.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:9

"Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me show genuine love to everyone I meet. Give me the courage to oppose what is wrong and help me hold tightly to You and Your Word. I love You, Lord. Amen.

No one likes fake or manipulative love. I don't. Nobody wants to feel like you only care about what you can get from them. This is where Christians can stand out. We should come into every interaction with genuine love for others (you can read my devotional series on 'Love Is...' if you want more ways to do that). Christians aren't in it for their own profit; they're in it to glorify God. Whenever you speak with someone, remind yourself that this is a way for you to show the love of Christ. The verse continues with two more commands. First, hate what is wrong. Don't turn a blind eye, don't belittle it, hate it. Fight to change it. Second, hold tightly to what is good. I consider the Bible to be very good, which is why I read it multiple times a day. We need to hate evil, but we should also embrace truth. How can you do these things today?

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God how you can better love others.
2. Confess saying yes to what is wrong.
3. Thank God for His goodness.
4. Pray for a filling of His Spirit in your life.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:10-11

"Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honouring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the LORD enthusiastically." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please fill me with a desire to honour those around me. Show me how I can encourage and bless them. And Lord, if I've slacked off in any way, point it out so I may serve You with greater joy. I love You, Lord. Amen. →

I love this verse because serving the LORD and honouring others are so much fun. Sadly, most of the world takes delight in honouring itself. I'm quite certain I've done this too. Today, Paul flips the tables. We aren't meant to seek personal honour. We're meant to seek honour for God. We're also meant to honour one another. What does this look like? For starters, it should impact how we treat people. We should look out for their best interests. We should search for ways to encourage and praise them for the good they're doing. We should be compassionate, merciful, and courteous. The verse continues with a strong condemnation to never be lazy. I've lived the last few years with these words ringing in my head. I've done whatever I can to serve God with my time and talents. More than that, I hope I can say I've done it joyfully and purposefully. Where can you practice honouring others and serving with enthusiasm (even if you don't feel like it)?

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God how you can honour your Christian brothers and sisters.
2. Confess laziness in any area.
3. Thank God that He wants to fill us with enthusiasm for His work.
4. Pray for a filling of God's Spirit to bless and encourage others.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:12-13

**"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."** →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

*Please help me to practice
patience, even when it's
hard. Open my eyes to see
Your people when they're in
need. Please fill me with a
spirit of contagious joy in
our incredible hope.
I love You, Lord. Amen.* →

When life feels hard and troubles come, our response should be to rejoice in the hope Christ brings. Challenges will come, but through them, we're called to keep praying. God wants us to trust Him and persevere. I've found that the best response to hardship is prayer and Scripture. God wants to speak to us if we'll listen. He wants to encourage and help us. Beyond that, God doesn't want me to sit idly by and ignore His people. We're commanded to help the less fortunate, whether that be the poor, widows, orphans, foreigners, persecuted Christians, or any other group. If God's message has truly impacted our lives, we should show that in the way we love others. Is there someone God has placed in your life for just such a reason? Is there someone you can encourage, pray for, or help? Wherever you're at right now, I pray God will continue to enable you to trust His timing. Even more so, I pray He'll give each of us eyes to see who we can help.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God where He wants you to trust Him.
2. Confess prayerlessness and despair.
3. Thank God that He provides for His children.
4. Pray for a willingness to help God's people.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:14

"Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help us to forgive our persecutors. More than that, help us to pray for You to bless them. Thank You that Your mission is for everyone to be saved. Help me be a part of that mission. I love You, Lord. Amen. →

This echoes the Beatitude where Jesus calls us blessed when we are persecuted for doing what is right. Paul goes further by telling us to bless our persecutors. I'm truly not the right person to share about this topic, coming from a wealthy family in the West. If I put myself in the shoes of a persecuted believer, I think I'd get a better picture. I can imagine that it would be easy to curse someone for raiding my village, burning my home, crippling me, or killing my family. I cannot imagine how hard it would be to reverse those feelings and pray that God would bless them. However, God's grand plan includes saving all people. That includes the people we may inwardly hate. It includes our bullies, oppressors, and persecutors. Please join me in praying that our persecuted brothers and sisters would be able to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God to show you how He has blessed you.
2. Confess harbouring hatred towards others.
3. Thank God that He wants everyone to know Him.
4. Pray that you would seek to bless others, no matter what.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:15-16

"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!" →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me show empathy and love towards others, no matter what they're going through. Help me unite with my brothers and sisters, and fill me with humility. I love You, Lord. Amen. →

I want to park on the first portion of today's verses for a moment. At the beginning of WLF, I wrote a blog post on Empathy vs Apathy. I fully understand that both have weaknesses, especially when taken to extremes. Today we see Paul's command to act with godly empathy. However, it's important that we don't get too caught up and allow others' situations to influence us. If we know someone who is struggling, we are called to meet them where they are. That's what Jesus did. It's also important that we don't try to take their burdens upon ourselves. Only Jesus can ultimately relieve the pain someone is experiencing. Our job is to rejoice when others rejoice, and to comfort and support those who face hard times. This is the empathy Paul wants, and it flows right into the next section. Our world is increasingly divided. What will separate the church from the culture is unity. Friends, please unite on the big issues rather than divide over the small ones. Truly, we don't know it all. Only Christ does. Let's seek to glorify Him in all we do.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God how you can show love and compassion.
2. Confess turning yourself into the solution rather than Christ.
3. Thank God that He promises to bear our burdens.
4. Pray that you would be a shining light of encouragement.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:17-19

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

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

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me love my enemies...even when they wrong me. Help me to reflect You in the way I live, act, and speak. Thank You for the mercy You showed on the cross. I love You, Lord. Amen.

God is our avenger. It's very tempting to get back at someone when they wrong me, even if it's just a little thing. But how does this make me any different from the world? When we instead show them love, we "heap burning coals of shame on their heads" (Proverbs 5:21-22). How do we do this? Well, we can start by living honourably. If we believe God's Word, we shouldn't be cheating, lying, or taking advantage of others. By looking at us, non-believers should be able to quickly see that we're different. And when we're wronged, our response should be different. I'm not saying do nothing about it. There are many times when the proper response can involve talking to the person or even utilizing the police or courts. I am saying your goal shouldn't be getting revenge or paying them back. I'm very grateful that wasn't what Jesus thought as He died on the cross. His only thought was to love and rescue His enemies. That's incredible.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God where you can show love to your enemies.
2. Confess harbouring hatred, bitterness, or vengeful thoughts.
3. Thank God that His response to our evil was love.
4. Pray that your actions would reflect Christ.



Romans Twelve

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Scripture

Romans 12:21

"Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Please help me notice areas where I can serve You and bless others. Fill me with a greater desire to engage in the Great Commission. Please keep me from evil and draw me to Your goodness. I love You, Lord. Amen.

One of my favourite films is *The Dark Knight*. In the movie, we see various characters respond to today's verse in different ways. Some characters choose to embrace evil. Some try to fight it but ultimately succumb. And some fight evil using questionable methods. The lesson is that we need to fight evil, but we must do it the right way. Conforming to the culture and tolerating wickedness is not how we show the love of Christ. We show the love of Christ by going against the world's maxims. As a Christian, I can only conquer evil by purging it from my life. I can only do that by the power of Christ. As we finish this series on Romans 12, Paul sums up everything he's said with this exhortation. We don't conquer evil by beating it up or screaming that it's wrong. No, evil is conquered by doing good. So do good. Spread Christ's message, serve others, volunteer, encourage your friends and family, give financially, pray, read Scripture, etc. This is how we do our part as we wait for Christ to conquer evil for good. Maranatha.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God what steps He has for you to fight evil.
2. Confess compromising on sin.
3. Thank God that He alone is good.
4. Pray for a filling of the Holy Spirit in your life.

