

Romans 12

Mark Twain once said that it was not the parts of the Bible he didn't understand that troubled him, but rather the parts of the Bible he did. Paul ends many of his letters by offering very clear and practical advice – no need for much explanation; it's right there in black and white. What we also find is that many of the things Paul tells them to do are the exact things Jesus said to do. In short, if you want to know what God wants you to do (or how God wants you to live), remember the words of Jesus. Yes, Jesus' teachings were controversial in his day, and they remain so in our day, as well. E.g., Love Your Enemies.

[Read Romans 12: 1-2](#) **Our relationship to God:** consecrated bodies and renewed minds

Living sacrifices - both our minds and our bodies (the way we live, our actions, our words) are sacrifices we offer to God.

Worship is more than just Sunday morning – our spiritual worship happens all week long.

[Read Romans 12: 3-8](#) **Our relationship to ourselves:** thinking soberly about our gifts

Our gifts are given by God to us, but are to be used for the good of the whole (the body).

The point is – God has given you a gift. Discover it, and then use it! (Hint: it may take others to discern this gift you have. You may not see it, but others can.)

[Read Romans 12: 9-13](#) **Our relationship to one another:** love in the family of God

Pick any of these short phrases and make it yours. Don't just gloss over the whole list – mull over these verses and see which one God puts on your heart. Then dive deep into what that verse is saying to you.

[Read Romans 12: 14-21](#) **Our relationship to our enemies:** not retaliation but service

We are to win over our enemies through kindness and humility.

It's not an eye for an eye, look deeper than that. What would be the noble thing to do?

Discipline is meant to lead towards reconciliation. It is not meant to be punitive. God will take care of the vengeance part, not us.

Heaping coals on one's head – perhaps to induce shame or remorse. Perhaps in reference to an Egyptian custom of making those accused carry a load of burning coals around on their heads.

The way we overcome evil is not by doing evil back – instead, overcome evil with good. In short, a very different view than that which the world takes. Leave the vengeance to God.

Next Tuesday, January 19, the day before the Inauguration. We will study Romans 13. Please read this chapter beforehand, considering the Christian's role and attitude to the government.
