

Can Someone REALLY Live This Way?

Romans 12

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

“God is no longer pleased with dead sacrifices, but asks for living offerings. He longs for worship in spirit and in truth. Hence we have no altar or ritual, with bleeding victims that never did satisfy God, but we offer our bodies, dead indeed to Him, yet energized by His Spirit, so that they are employed in good deeds, which ascend as a sweet savor to Him.” Concordant Commentary, p 242

2 And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may be testing what is the will of God, good, and well pleasing, and perfect.

“When those who call themselves Christians adopt worldly methods, and engage in worldly schemes, then they dishonor the name of Christ. “The friendship of the world is enmity with God.”

Our conduct is not to look like that of the world. There is to be a transformation wrought by means of our minds, through the influence of God’s revelation. We can never be like the world at heart, so we are not to appear to be like it. We re to become more and more unlike it by contact with the mind of God.” Ibid.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to be of a sane disposition (think soberly), according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The Bible tells us:

“Put NOT your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.” Ps 146:3

“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?” Isa 2:22

“The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

“The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.”
1 Cor :19,20

“What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” James 4:14

“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isa 64:6

“In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”
Phil 2:3

“Pride is the enemy of faith. The two cannot live together. A man can think soberly and humbly only as the result of the faith that God gives. **The man who has confidence in his own strength and wisdom, will not depend upon God.** Trust in the wisdom and power of God comes only when we recognize and acknowledge our own weakness and ignorance.

“Many people have a notion that they are so constituted that it is impossible for them to believe. That is a grave error. Faith is just as easy, and just as natural, as breathing. It is the common inheritance of all men, and the one thing wherein all are equal. It is as natural for the child of the infidel to believe as it is for the child of the saint. It is only when men build up a barrier of pride about themselves that they find it difficult to believe. And even then they will believe; **for when men disbelieve God, they believe Satan; when they disbelieve the truth, they greedily swallow the most egregious lies.**” Waggoner on Romans, by Ellet Waggoner, p 12.178, 12.179

4 For even as, in one body, we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function,

Our behavior toward one another is based on the marvelous figure of the human body. We all have distinct functions, designed not merely for our own use, but for the edification of all. This is the key to conduct among our fellow-saints. As the body is a vital unity, so the saints are one in Christ.

5 Thus we, who are many, are one body in Christ, yet individually members of one another.

6 Now, having graces (NOT “gifts”) excelling, in accord with the grace which is given to us, whether prophecy, exercising it in accord with the analogy of the faith;

7 Or dispensing (NOT ministry), in the dispensation; or the teacher, in teaching;

8 Or the entreater, in entreaty; the sharer, with generosity; the presider (NOT the “ruler”), with diligence; the merciful one, with glee.

A prophet is not necessarily a foreteller of the future, it is a person who speaks for God. A “dispenser” can dispense physical food and clothing – or spiritual kindness and caring. A teacher teaches, an entreater entreats, others share, or organize (preside), and those who give charity (show mercy) do it with cheerfulness.

None of these “graces” is more important than another. Each person has his or her special “grace” just as each has a different personality and disposition. None is better than another.

9 Let love be unfeigned (without hypocrisy), abhorring that which is wicked, clinging to good

10 Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor deeming one another first,

This can be done only when one is able “in lowliness of mind” to esteem others better than himself. Phil 2:3. And this can be done only when one knows his own worthlessness. The man who “knows the plague of his own heart” can not think that others are as bad as himself. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who . . . made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant.”

11 In diligence not slothful, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord

12 Rejoicing in expectation (mistranslated “hope”), enduring affliction, persevering in prayer,

13 Contributing to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality.

14 Bless them who persecute you; bless, and curse not.

One cannot do this without the Spirit of Christ, who prayed for His betrayers and murderers, and who did not venture to bring railing accusation even against Satan, Jude 9.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

“To rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with them that weep, is not an easy thing for the natural man. Only the grace of God can work such sympathy in men. It is not so difficult to weep with those who are afflicted, but it is often very difficult to rejoice with those who rejoice. For instance, suppose another has received something that we very much desired, and is rejoicing over his gain; it requires much grace to rejoice with him.” Waggoner on Romans, p 12.181

God’s grace is the model after which we may pattern our conduct. As He never curses now, we may not curse, but bless even those who are persecuting us.

16 Be mutually disposed to one another, not being disposed to that which is high, but being led away to the humble. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17 To no man render evil for evil, have regard for good things in the sight of all men,

18 If it be possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

“We are to live peaceably with all men if it be possible. But what is the limit of possibility? Some will say that they tried to keep peace until “forbearance ceased to be a virtue,” and then they paid the troublesome one in his own coin. Many think that this verse exhorts them to hold out as long as they can, and not to take part in any disturbance until they have had great provocation. But this verse says, ‘as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.’

“That is, there is to be no trouble so far as we are concerned. We cannot always keep other people from warring, but we can be at peace ourselves.” Ibid.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusts in Thee.” Isa 26:3

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom 5:1

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Col 3:15

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil 4:7

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will Repay, saith the Lord.

The Lord will, indeed, repay. But His repayment is much different from ours. Also, God’s “vengeance” is very different from ours. He allows us to “reap what we have sown” and **all our “reaping” is remedial** – NOT punitive; it will eventually turn us back to Jesus Christ. It may take a **lot** of “reaping,” but eventually everyone will understand how much he needs Jesus to run his life.

20 Therefore, If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head.

“An enemy in distress, instead of calling for hate and vengeance, is a special opportunity for the display of God’s grace. Mercy might provide an enemy with food, but grace accompanies the gift with every mark of love and honor. This is the way in which God vanquished our enmity, hence we should do likewise.”
Concordant Commentary, p 243

Please also note that here is yet another instance where the Bible uses the word “fire” (coals of fire) symbolically – **not literally**. There are many other Biblical instances as well, including the “fiery” trials of 1 Peter 4:1, the “fiery” law described in Deut 33:2, and the “lake of fire” in Revelation 20:10,14,15. These are **ALL** symbolic – **NOT literal** – uses of the word “fire!”

21 Be not conquered by evil; but conquer evil with good.

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. Proverbs 15:1