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## Romans 12

Transformed into Love

When Moses was sent to Pharaoh to request that he let Israel go, the Lord also told Moses that He would harden Pharaoh's heart (Ex 4:21). Pharaoh is a type for a person who will not consider the message sent by the Lord. They shut their spiritual ears (cf Zech 7:11-12+) and will not consider what the Lord speaks through another. There is an example of those with ears to hear: **Acts 17:10-12**: *10. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonika, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12. Therefore many of them believed...* This should be the position of everyone who hears spiritual concepts they have not considered.

**Romans 12:1-3**: *1. I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing 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, in order to prove by you what (is) that good and pleasing and perfect will of God. 3. For I say, through the grace given to me, to every one who is among you, not to think (of himself) more highly than he ought to think. But set your mind to be right-minded, even as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith (MKJV).* The phrase set your mind to be right-minded is literally "exercise the mind toward a sound mind", or set your thoughts toward a sound mind. A transformation takes place in a person's thinking when they replace with truth, the error which everyone carries about God, salvation, etc. This requires a person to search things out for themselves. You will be challenged by those around you who disagree. **Acts 17:13**: *But when the Jews of Thessalonika had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Berea also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes.* If you study and make the truth your own, it is much less likely others will persuade you away from the truth.

How has God dealt a measure of faith to everyone? The people of every nation observe, at least some of the ten commandments. Example: Everyone knows that it is wrong to steal, or, else they would not try to hide their actions. They are pricked in the conscience when they go against the principles of the laws of God and their own country. When a person goes against their conscience, they are shutting their ears to the voice of God.

**Romans 12:1, 4-5**: *1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.... 4. For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office (function): 5. so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.* A body is used to mean the physical person, a body of believer or spiritually to represent spiritual actions. As the physical body has many members, they are used figuratively to represent works (hands), understanding (eyes), direction of the thoughts of the heart (feet), to smell, or perceive things (nose) etc., as well as to represent different gifts of the body of believers.

**Romans 12:6-8**: *6. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether **prophecy**, (let us prophesy) according to the proportion of [the] faith; 7. Or **ministry**, let us wait on our ministering: or he that **teaches**, on teaching; 8. Or he that **exhorts** (encourages), on exhortation: he that **gives**, let him do it with*

*simplicity; he that **rules**, with diligence; he that shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness.* There are seven gifts mention, of which all but one is easy to understand. *Prophecy* is not well understood, nor a *prophet*. Using the Hebrew concept of prophesying, here is an example: **Numbers 11:24-26**: 24. *And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.* 25. *And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.* 26. *But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp.* When the spirit of the Lord rested upon the 70 elders, plus two other men in the camp, none of which were official prophets, they all prophesied. The O.T. is full of references to false prophets (cf Jer 23:13). People who teach things not divinely inspired are false prophets who lead people astray. A divinely inspired person speaks the understanding God has given.

The Hebrew word *naba* <sup>(H5012)</sup> means *to speak or sing by divine inspiration*. Foretelling is only a small part of prophesying, yet this is where people tend to focus. The book of Revelation is a good example: The book primarily reveals the experiences of the righteous and wicked, some of which could be considered foretelling. In verse 6, above, Paul was admonishing anyone, or everyone to *prophesy according to the proportion of the faith they have*, i.e. share what you know along with your personal experience.

**Romans 12:9-20**: 9. *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.* 10. *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;* 11. *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;* 12. *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;* 13. *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.* 14. *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.* 15. *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* 16. *Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.* 17. *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.* 18. *If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.* 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.* 20. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

*Let love be without dissimulation.* Or, let love be sincere. The verses are stating things that describe the principle of the *agape* love. Most are straight forward, some require some thought. Do not be *slothful*, or lazy in business, whether your own, or as an employee. Be *patient in tribulation*. The word *tribulation* is very often associated with the end times, just before the return of the Savior. But tribulation can be anything, anywhere and anytime. After leaving full time employment to serve the Lord, I associated with a ministry. It took about a year to figure out the pastor's treatment of people was intentional, not to mention the lies he circulated. However, the trials did not cease after I left, lasting another three years. While my behavior was not perfect during that time, I knew it was wrong to *recompense* (give back) *evil for evil*. Patience paid off, and eventually the Lord stopped all the harassment. *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things* (Php 4:8). **Romans 12:21**: *Be not overcome [by] evil, but overcome evil with good.* The major evil we are to overcome resides in our own hearts. It is possible by living a righteous life that we may influence another to do the same. Verse 20 above is quoted from **Proverbs 25:21-22**: 21. *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:* 22. *For thou shalt heap coals of fire* (truths from God - Jer 23:29) *upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.*