



Whole and Broken: Romans 12:1-13

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Group Leader Notes

For the past five weeks, we've been walking through Paul's Letter to the Romans, learning about the grit and the grace it takes to be a follower of Jesus. Grit is perseverance. Grace is a gift from God. Pastor Joshua has been helping us see how we need both grit and grace to walk into the good future God is inviting us into. Most scholars consider Romans to be Paul's masterpiece the pinnacle of his life's work, the most complete and systematic statement of his theology. If we can boil it down to its simplest terms, the question Paul is trying to answer is: *Our lives can be messy, but the good news is that God is always at work through the Holy Spirit and the beauty found in the Christian community.*

Question: What does God want us to do with our brokenness?

Bottom Line: God wants us to use our brokenness and our gifts to transform our community and to bless the world.

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1

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.

Take Home Message:

When we are willing to be vulnerable, to bring our whole lives and our whole selves – which includes our unique gifts and passions and story, but also includes our brokenness and our mess, then by God's grace we become a transformed and transformative community, "a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God."

Main Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-13

12 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. ² 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.

³ For by the grace given 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. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one

body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Other Scripture References

1Corinthians 11:23b-25

Teaching Points:

Justification by faith: God fixes problems through his son, Jesus

Impact of God's salvation: Since Jesus has come and cleaned up our mess, we are off the hook

Group Discussion

Begin in prayer before reading and discussing the text.

1. Pastor Rachel began the sermon with a photo of her basement. Share with your group what your basement looks like, or better yet share a photo.
2. Read Romans 12:1 from *The Message Translation*:
So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.

What does this mean to you? Discuss some examples of things that you can do every day to offer it back to God as a gift.

3. Read Romans 12:2a
Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

Pastor Rachel points out that transformation is rarely a DIY process but that God transforms us most often through community. We need each other and the unique faith perspectives that our brothers and sisters bring to the table. Take a few minutes to consider transformation in yourself or others close to you. What was the beginning of the transformation?

4. Read Romans 12:3
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.

It's just about impossible to think of yourself with sober judgment. Pastor Rachel points out that we all have blind spots and that we need others to help us see what we can't. Think about a time that someone gave you advice about a blind spot, or you had given someone else advice about a blind spot. How was the message delivered or received? Do you feel that you have the level of closeness and intimacy with your small group to discuss these sensitive and personal issues?

5. Vulnerability is a critical ingredient for an authentic Christian community. With Instagram and other social media, we are flooded daily with images of perfect lives. This makes sharing our sins, failure and mistakes even more challenging. Pastor Rachel provided several examples of how our own brokenness can actually become an instrument in someone else's healing. Share with your group how someone's brokenness contributed to your healing.

6. Read Romans 12:6-8

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Discuss with your group the gifts that God has blessed you with. These were gifted to you so you could use them to bless the community uniquely. If you are not currently using your gifts to serve the community, consider the various ministries at Grace Chapel and where your talent would be best utilized.

Let's Pray

Lord our God,

Thank you for your amazing love for us, for sending your Son Jesus to rescue us from our mess. Thank you for your ongoing work of transformation in our lives, and for the privilege we have of being instruments of transformation in other people's lives. Open our eyes to the way you would have us use our gifts and our brokenness to serve the church and the world around us, in Jesus' name.