



Part 4: Build Up the Body Romans 12:1-8

Use our gifts and resources for the building up of the body of Christ.

I. The Call to Follow King Jesus

“The greatest issue facing the world today with all its heartbreaking needs is whether those who are identified as Christians will become disciples – students, apprentices, practitioners of Jesus Christ steadily learning from him how to live the life of the kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence. That’s it. Jesus is not looking for converts to Christianity. He is looking for apprentices to the Kingdom of God.” – Dallas Willard

Forming disciples who love Jesus and follow His Way.

Recommended: The Life with Jesus Guide.

Jesus calls us into the community of his disciples to belong to one another and to serve one another. The very definition of ministry is to serve like our Lord (John 13:12-17).

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. ”
Romans 12:4-6



Note Paul's use of the metaphor "body of Christ" to describe the local church (used over 30X in NT).

II. Our New Identity & Calling

A. Motivated by God's Mercy & Grace in King Jesus.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship." Romans 12:1

Everything Paul is saying about our new identity and calling is connected to what he has said before in this letter (therefore).

As a response to God's radical mercy and grace in his Son Jesus, we offer all of ourselves and our lives as an act of worship. Of course, "living sacrifices" is a paradox like "take up your cross and follow me ... lose your life to find your life" (Matthew 16:24-25).

B. Guided by a Renewed Mind.

"Do not conform any longer 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." Romans 12:2

Contra our radical individualism, Jesus lived in community; he called his disciples to live in community under his rule; he calls every Christian/disciple to live with him in community.

"The gospel pulls us into community. One of the immediate changes the gospel makes is grammatical: we instead of I; our instead of my; us instead of me...The same salvation that restores our relation with God reinstates us in the community of persons who live by

faith. A believing community is the context for the life of faith.” – Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*

Note: See last week’s sermon by Katie and the Greenwood practice of spiritual friendship (<https://greenwoodcc.com/friendship/>).

Jesus has given us a new identity – beloved son or daughter, friend, and ally, but also a member of his body = the local church.

Note: Global Church vs. local church ... In our culture of radical individualism, we can be tempted to think of ourselves as a part of the global church through online connectivity (podcasts, online services etc). This is really a new phenomenon given our ability to be connected online. We must not let this substitute for a belonging to a local church as a particular expression of the body of Christ (love and service require relationship).

C. Serving the local body through our gifts.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We each have different gifts, according to the grace given us.”
Romans 12:4-6

Recommend the Greenwood practice: Discover Your Gifts (<https://greenwoodcc.com/discover-your-gifts/>).

Action step: Commit to finding a place at GCC to begin to serve as an experiment. Take some time to look over our website for places to serve.

D. Give generously to the local church (2 Corinthians 8-9).

“But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you excel in this grace of giving.”
2 Corinthians 8:7

Recommended: “A Theology of Kingdom Generosity” (greenwoodcc.com/resources/articles).

III. In View of God’s mercy

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.” Romans 12:1

Love Jesus. Follow His Way.

Recommended Resources:

1. [The Life with Jesus Guide](#) (available as a PDF and in Greenwood's App).
2. [The Practice: of Spiritual Friendship](#)
3. [The Practice: Discover Your Gifts](#)
4. ["A Theology of Kingdom Generosity"](#)