

Week Three: Discussion Questions

UPSIDE-DOWN GIFTINGS – BY GOD’S GRACE - FOR GOD’S GLORY

ROMANS 12:3-8



1. What impacted you from last week’s message.
2. Record any questions that you have about these verses.
3. In verse two we are challenged to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. What are the two contrasting instructions given in verse three that contribute to our renewed thinking?
4. In what ways is this type of thinking (from verse three) different from the current idea of “self-esteem”?
5. Read I Corinthians 12:12-26.
 - a. How do these verses challenge your thinking of what “church” is?
 - b. According to these verses, why is there no room for personal pride in the body of Christ?
 - c. From these verses why has God created the church as a body with individual parts that all work together?
6. How could the verses you have read today help renew your thinking when you are tempted by feelings of jealousy or envy in regards to the gifting someone else may have been given that seems more desirable to you?
7. Based upon the two passages you read today, what conclusions can you draw about spiritual gifts?
8. In what ways have you been called to speak to and/or serve others in the body of Christ? Spend a few minutes thinking “outside the box” about how you could use the spiritual giftings God has given you. Record any thoughts you have below.
9. Think of some practical ways each of these could be used to build up the body of Christ and encourage other believers. This may be as part of the physical organization of the local church or in other interactions with fellow Christians.
10. How does what you have learned about spiritual giftings relate to what you learned in Romans 12:1-2?

ROMANS 12:9-12

II. Keep the flame of love lit for God and others by cultivating a _____, (11-12)

Week Three: Homework

UPSIDE DOWN LOVE: LIVING LOVE

ROMANS 12:9-12



DAY ONE

PRAY: As you begin studying today, pray that you would gain a deeper understanding of God's love for you so that you can demonstrate that same love to others.

MEMORIZE: Our memory verse this week is the first part of Romans 12:2. Write the verse on a notecard or on the lines below. If you use a notecard, place the notecard where you can read over it at least once a day this week. Romans 12:2a: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,".

STUDY: Paul moves into a section of commands in Romans 12:9-21 that help us understand how we can practically offer our bodies as living sacrifices to the Lord in our daily lives. And how would we first and foremost offer our bodies in worship to the Lord? We love others well because of how God loves us. Begin by reading our passage for the week, Romans 12:9-12. Then answer the questions below.

1. List the characteristics of the love God calls us to show to others in Romans 12:9-10.

2. Which of these characteristics comes more easily to you? Which do you find harder to demonstrate?

3. From verses 11-12, what do you think it means to be fervent in spirit?

4. How would thankfulness, patience, and prayer help to increase fervency?

5. *How do you think that love and zeal relate to each other? How do these commands connect?

Wrap up your study time today by using John 13:34-35 as a prayer to the Lord. Put your name in the blanks and personalize the call to love that comes from Jesus Christ himself. After personalizing these verses, use them as a guide to cry out to the Lord for help to grow in love for Him and others.

“A new commandment I give to you, _____, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, _____, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you, _____, have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

DAY TWO

PRAY: Begin with prayer, asking the Lord to reveal any selfishness that would taint love for Him and others. Ask Him to give you new insight into how to love those around you with genuine purity.

MEMORIZE: Refer to your notecard or to yesterday’s homework. Read Romans 12:2a. Say the verse out loud a few times, emphasizing a different word each time.

STUDY: Today we will take a deeper look into how to love others with sincerity and purity, as Romans 12:9 describes. Sincere love means that I love others without selfish motives and without hypocrisy. Pure love means that I seek God’s best for others, as I run from evil and cling to what God says is good. Is this the way that you love others around you? Begin by reading Romans 12:9, keeping this question in your mind and heart as you study today.

1. The Greek word for love found in verse 9 is the word *agape*. This word describes love as a choice, a commitment that I make to love that is not based on my feelings. Why is it important that the love we are called to is not just a feeling but a choice?

2. *If we obey the command to love without the feelings of love, are we being hypocritical or insincere? Why or why not?

3. *Notice in verse 9 we are told to abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. How does not tolerating evil while being glued to good help me to love others?

4. Also notice that we are told to abhor *what* is evil, not *who* is evil. How can this differentiation help you to love others with kingdom love?

5. *How can you develop a Godly hatred for evil? How can you develop a love for what God loves? Try to list one or two tangible actions you could take to help you to hate evil and love good.

Close in prayer, telling the Lord one step you will take to grow in genuine, pure love for others from what you studied today.

DAY THREE

PRAY: Pray that the Lord would show you one specific way to love others affectionately and humbly as you study today.

MEMORIZE: Refer to your memory verse. Turn Romans 12:2a into a prayer to the Lord. Then try to say it from memory.

STUDY: Yesterday we saw that the love that God calls us to is a love of choice, that seeks what's best for the other person according to God's standards. Today we will look at how to love others in the upside down kingdom with affection and humility. Paul uses a different Greek term for love in verse 10. This word indicates that we are to love others with a devoted, brotherly love, like the love we would find between family members. Read Romans 12:10 and then answer the questions.

1. What characteristics would you see in a family that is loving, close-knit, and mutually supportive? List all that you can think of.

2. How could these characteristics translate into the family of God, the church?

3. One nuance to the meaning of showing honor to others is that we look for ways to honor others *first*, before we would be honored. What could you do to honor those around you in this way? Think about your family (spouse, kids, etc), your coworkers, your friends, and your church family.

4. *Read Philippians 2:3-4. How do these verses help in your understanding of Romans 12:10?

5. *How would your relationships change if you truly loved with the affection and humility that Paul describes here?

Close in prayer, asking the Lord to help you to love with the affection and honor that he calls you to.

DAY FOUR

PRAY: Before you study, pray that the Lord would show you any areas of your heart that need to be stirred up with zeal for Him.

MEMORIZE: Refer to your memory verse. Try to say Romans 12:2a from memory. Review any portion of the verse that trips you up.

STUDY: The fact is that we have a tendency to lose heat as time goes on. Paul describes this phenomenon in Romans 12 as a loss of zeal. Our enthusiasm wanes. Our fervency is less ardent. Our love grows cold. These verses directly address this issue. Today we will use some definitions to help us examine our own hearts. Begin by reading Romans 12:11 and then answer the questions.

1. *The word zeal can be translated as diligence. Diligence means to have steady, energetic effort. Does a steady, energetic effort describe your relationship with the Lord right now? Why or why not?

2. Another word that can be used in place of zeal is enthusiasm. Enthusiasm refers to what controls your mind, where you give your thoughts in lively interest. Do the things of the Lord take first place in your thoughts? Think about what your thoughts shift to when you have free time, and what stirs you up in your thinking and heart. Is it the things of the Lord or something else?

3. Another word that can take the place of zeal is earnestness. To be earnest means to be fully serious in intent and purpose, not hesitating, reluctant, or unwilling. Do you willingly go after the Lord with all your heart and mind, not hesitating or resisting his Word and Spirit?

4. Another word that can be used in place of zeal is swiftness. In relationship to the Lord, to be swift means to quickly obey what the Lord reveals is His priority. Are you quick to obey the Lord, in all that is revealed by His Word and Spirit? What keeps you from swiftly obeying?

5. *The word fervent means to be “on the boil”. Think about what it takes for water to come to a boil: a heat source and time. In our own lives, to stir up fervency for the Lord, we also need a heat source and time. What are some things that would act as a heat source for your relationship with the Lord? What does the need for time to develop fervency indicate to you?

Close in prayer. Talk to the Lord about where your zeal for Him is right now. Tell Him about what you will do to stir up zeal for Him.

DAY FIVE

PRAY: Ask the Lord to open your heart and mind to his Word today. Pray that He would reveal any new ways that you can apply the truths of scripture found in Romans 12.

MEMORIZE: Write your memory verse, Romans 12:2a, on the lines below. Try to write it from memory.

STUDY: Like the steam on a steamboat powers the engine, the fervency that we have for the Lord needs to be directed so that it can accomplish a purpose. Fervency without direction will quickly fizzle out. Where should the boiling up, the fervency of spirit that we learned about yesterday, be directed? Today we will look at Romans 12:11b-12. Be thinking about how fervent you are in the areas that Paul points out. Begin by reading Romans 12:11-12 and then answer the questions.

1. Where is the outlet for our boiling up and fervency to be according to verse 11b? What could this look like in your life?

2. *The word used for *serve* in verse 11 comes from the Greek “doulos”. One who lives as a doulos to His Lord is a bondservant who is surrendered fully to His Master’s will and devoted to Him to the disregard of his own interest. How does this definition of serving shape your understanding of zeal?

3. In verse 12, Paul lists 3 commands that will help to stir up our fervency and service to the Lord. Put each command in your own words.

a. Rejoice in hope:

b. Be patient in tribulation:

c. Be constant in prayer:

4. *How could doing these three things help to stir up fervency as you serve the Lord?

5. Which of these three commands do you need to apply to your life today to stir up your own fervency in serving the Lord? How can you apply it?

Close in prayer, telling the Lord how you want to apply what you have learned this week as we have studied the love and fervency of His kingdom.