

## SERVANTHOOD

Open your Bibles to **Romans 12**. I'll be reading the whole chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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 measure of faith God has given you. <sup>4</sup> Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. <sup>7</sup> If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. <sup>9</sup> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. <sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. <sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

If I were to give this chapter a title, I'd call it "**Servant-hood**." Why? The first verse calls for us to be "living sacrifices." If that's not living a life of servanthood, than I don't know what is. Our text also says this is our "spiritual act of worship." The Greek phrase is "λογικός Ιατρευο" which literally means "logical mental service." That's likely why the KJV renders the phrase, as "our reasonable service." When we consider all that God has done for us, the only thing that makes sense is for us to dedicate ourselves to serve God and others.

Verse 11 says we are to be fervent in "serving" the Lord. Here the Greek word (δουλεύω) for slave labor is used. Not only should we be willing to serve, we ought to have a passion for it. I confess that not all of my service and sacrifice for God has been as enthusiastic as it should be. Some times, I have even treated some of my responsibilities as drudgery, rather than a privilege. May God forgive me for those times\_ and change my heart.

We may be considered a small church by the world's standards, but we have great potential. After services today, we will have our annual congregational meeting. We'll be presenting our proposed budget and recommending candidates to serve as either a deacon or an elder here at Calvary. We will be challenging all of our members to step out in faith in their giving and to step up in their level of volunteerism. We have some very generous givers who support the bulk of the work at the church here\_ and some others who need to learn to contribute more liberally to the cause.

We also have some wonderful servants who pour themselves out in service to the king\_ and others who need to learn to do the same. There are those who suggest that servanthood need not ever go *beyond the limits of our personal comfort zones*. Yet, that proposal will not hold up to any real scrutiny. *Servanthood requires sacrifice. It requires time\_ and energy\_ it requires giving of self* and worldly goods. If you doubt that, consider Jesus\_

**Mark 10:45 "For even (Jesus) the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."**

Dr. James Robert White, the director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, an evangelical Christian apologetics organization based in Phoenix, Arizona predicts that with 5-10 years the local church will lose many of the civil liberties and protections she has enjoyed\_ such as her tax exempt status. Why? Our stance on traditional marriage, for one.

*Our Colossians* study on Wednesdays has impressed upon me once more that the key to transformation is a clearer picture of who Jesus is and what he did for us. The creator and controller of the universe came to earth in human form, then suffered and died on a cross so that we might be redeemed. In a similar way, the motivation for service in the kingdom is a better understanding of the debt we owe, but could never pay.

*In view of God's mercy*, present your bodies as living sacrifices.