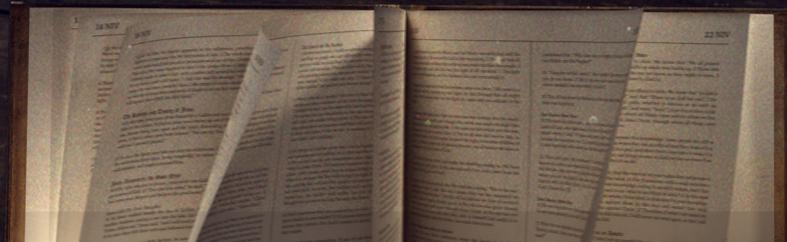

XII



XII

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CHRIST'S MISSION FOR THE CHURCH

*All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
Matthew 28:18 - 20*

In the XII series, we'll be diving into the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans to the struggling church in the city of Rome to encourage them in their faith and remind them of the hope that they held in Jesus Christ. What we find in the book is considered to be the premier theological masterpiece of the New Testament.

But in this series, we'll be focusing on just one of its sixteen chapters - Romans 12. Romans 12 is packed with deep spiritual truths that can reshape your relationship with God, your relationship with yourself, and your relationship with others. Living these words will utterly transform your life.

This study guide follows the Sunday morning sermons (starting on May 3rd). Each week, it will guide you through a truth found in Romans 12 and then take a deeper look at how this spiritual truth is conveyed in Paul's other letters to the Church. For more on Romans 12, check out the additional resources on page twenty.

So join us in unpacking Romans 12 and discover how to serve, love, and live in a new way.

SERIES INTRODUCTION

GROUP GUIDELINES

Ground Rules

Here are some guidelines for your gatherings.

- **Growing real relationships.** One of the central purposes of CCW groups is to help in the growth of real relationships. These relationships are formed through common mission, application of God's Word, authentic conversation, and time together. Don't get overly focused on one area to the detriment of the others!
- **Confidentiality.** For authenticity to thrive, what is shared during group time should be kept confidential.
- **Start on time - and end on time.** We want to respect the time of everyone involved. For that reason, our group will start on time and end on time.
- **Be a part of the discussion.** If you want to grow, get involved in the discussion. Your perspective is valuable!
- **Be real.** Authenticity and transparency are two keys to authentic life change. We ask that those participating in our group are real with who they are and their walk with God.
- **It's alright to disagree.** We're not always going to see eye-to-eye in all situations. That's alright! God created us uniquely and so we all bring different opinions, experiences and perspectives to the conversation.
- **Love, love, love.** Even if we disagree, we do so in love. Love is the binding force in all Christ-centered relationships, so we will not let our differences divide us.
- **Minimize distractions.** We recognize that emergencies may arise, but we will do our best to minimize what distractions we are able to (yeah, we're talking about cell phones here - put them away!).

Leader Guidelines

Thank you for taking the time to invest in others by leading a group. As a leader, your task is to create an environment where real relationships can thrive. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do that:

- **Multiply.** The mission of the church is to multiply disciples. Groups are one of the environments where this occurs. You are involved in the discipleship of each person in your group. We ask that each of our group leaders has someone who they are equipping to be a disciple-maker.
- **Create a safe environment.** When we say 'safe', we mean an environment where participants can freely share without feeling belittled or that what they share will get spread beyond the group.

When we say 'safe', we also mean a group where participants can encounter Jesus and His plan for their life.

- **Recognize that your group is unique.** This booklet is designed to be a general guide, but every group is unique. So when you're planning, take into account what does and doesn't work for your group and shape the session to their personalities and needs.
- **Review the ground rules.** Periodically, remind your group about the ground rules for the group.
- **Ask lots of questions.** Engaging leaders draw participants into the discussion. Ask many questions and lead your group into self-discovery.
- **Get feedback.** Improve your group by asking others for feedback.
- **Seek wise council.** There are some questions you won't be able to answer and some situations you aren't trained to handle. That's OK! Know who your wise council is (whether a coach, minister, or another disciple-maker) and turn to them in your time of need.

Before the Session

Prepare for the Session: As a group leader, it's essential to be prepared. Before the group session:

1. **Pray.** These are God's Words and it is His Spirit that provides authentic transformation. So take time to turn the group over to Him.
2. **Take time to read over the Bible passage.** While reading, write down any questions that you have about the text.
3. **Preview the session guide.** Read through the session guide. Shape the session for your group by highlighting important questions to ask and adding your own.
4. **Tap into study resources.** Broaden your understanding of the biblical text by tapping into additional study resources. Discover the answers to your questions and increase your knowledge of the Biblical content. These study resources can be found in the Resource Center at CCW, the back of this guide, and in a variety of other places.

During the Session

- **Icebreaker:** Get the discussion rolling with an icebreaker activity or question. We've provided one for you, but you know your group better than us! The goal is to get them talking.
- **Share:** Take time to review the content from last week. Two important things to ask group participants about during this time are:
 - **Prayer Requests:** If a group participant made a prayer request the previous week, make sure to take this opportunity to follow up on what God is doing in their life.
 - **Application and Challenges:** Some weeks give specific challenges for groups to attempt throughout the week. Other times, a group participant will take on a challenge as a result of application discussion (e.g. 'This week, I would like to...'). Either way, take time to ask about these.
- **Transition:** In the Transition, we give you a way to shift gears into the Bible reading and focus of the night. Usually this comes in the form of something simple that can be said (stated in italics).
- **Read It:** Read through the Scripture passage. If it's a larger section of scripture, break it into smaller sections and ask questions throughout.
- **Talk About It:** After reading, the next step is to make sure that the Bible passage is understood in its context. The main ways to do this are:
 1. As a group, *retell* the story in your own words.
 2. Ask *review questions*, which are provided in each small group session.
 3. Take some time to *ask the key questions*. These questions are the same in each session and they help to bridge the gap between understanding and application.
- **Apply It:** Ultimately, the Bible should shape who we are and how we live our lives. So once we have

read over the text and reviewed the text, it's essential that we personalize it through application. The apply it section may have both (a) application questions and (b) challenges. Challenges are real-life ways to put Biblical Truth into effect this week.

- **Pray Together:** As a group, share prayer requests and write these requests down. Afterwards, take time to turn those requests over to God. Make sure to center some of this prayer time specifically on the application/challenges discussed in the session.

After the Session

- **Follow Up:** Real relationships aren't formed in a single weekly session. They are formed as a result of ongoing presence in the lives of one another. Follow up with group members throughout the week to (a) remind them of their application/challenge commitments, (b) check in on prayer requests, and (c) to simply do life together.
- **Input Group Attendance:** As a CCW group, you should receive an e-mail asking for your group's attendance. Filling in this form is incredibly important to the continued spiritual development for those connected to CCW. The point: please take time to use this valuable resource!

NOTES

SURRENDER

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- *When was a time in your life that 'losing' ended up being a good thing?*

Share

Review the week. Things to share:

- Prayer Requests
- Application and Challenges

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

In the XII series, we're looking at the writing of Paul in Romans 12. Each week, we'll look at more of Paul's writings that reinforce the lesson being taught in Romans 12. This week, we're going to take a look at the idea of 'surrender' in the life of a believer.

Read It

Scripture reference: Romans 12:1 - 2

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.

Review It

- What is the most reasonable response to God's great mercy? (12:1-2)
- How should the mind of a Christian be changed? (12:2)
- What makes offering our bodies as living sacrifices an act of worship?

Read It

Scripture reference: Ephesians 2:1 - 10

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Review It

- What three characteristics mark the condition of a person without Christ? (2:2-3)

- What were you like before you became a Christian?
- Why was your position hopeless before becoming a Christian?
- Why did God make those who were dead alive with Christ? (2:4-5)
- What position has God given Christians in Christ by His divine power? (2:6)
- Where does salvation come from? (2:8)
- Why can no one boast in his own salvation? (2:8-9)
- What is the purpose of God's workmanship? (2:10)

Apply It

- How would you describe God's grace to you?
- How do you see God's creative workmanship operating in your life?
- What is one step you can take this week toward eliminating habits that merely conform to the world's pattern?
- How will you choose to live in surrender to the working of God within you?

Pray Together

Notes

Don't forget to plug in your group attendance and follow up with the people in your group this week!

SERVE

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- *What is a meaningful act of service that someone else has done for you?*

Share

Review the week. Things to share:

- Prayer Requests
- Application and Challenges

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

In Romans 12, Paul describes how we have been designed to be the community of God by serving one another. In Philippians 2, Paul describes the attitude that should shape how and why we serve. Let's read about it.

Read It

Scripture reference: 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 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, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Review It

- What are the gifts of God? (12:6-8)
- How should each person use his or her gifts? (12:6-8)

Read It

Scripture reference: Philippians 2:1 - 16

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[c] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

Review It

- How can Christians show their unity in Christ in practical ways? (2:2)
- What did Paul say about self-centeredness? (2:3-4)
- What did Christ set aside when He became a man? (2:6-8)
- How was Christ fully God and fully man at the same time? (2:6-8)
- How is Christ the best example of humility and unselfishness for us? (2:6-8)
- How does Christ’s example of humility challenge our natural self-centeredness?

Notes

- What does it mean “to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”?
- What godly qualities make Christians “shine like stars”?
- How does shining for Christ encourage others to be drawn to Him?

Apply It

- How can you put a spiritual gift to work for others this week?
- What practical steps can you take this week to demonstrate humility in your relationships?
- Before whom do you want to shine in your place of work or neighborhood? In what ways can you do so?

Pray Together

Don't forget to plug in your group attendance and follow up with the people in your group this week!

SESSION THREE

LOVE

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- *When was the first time you 'fell in love'? What happened?*

Share

Review the week. Things to share:

- Prayer Requests
- Application and Challenges

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

Love is a complicated topic and many of us have stories about love leading to amazing (and sometimes foolish) moments in our lives. Today, we'll be taking a look at what Paul says about love in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 13.

Read It

Scripture reference: Romans 12:9 - 13

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.

Review It

- What is genuine love like? (12:9)
- In what ways ought we to treat others as more important than ourselves? (12:10)

Read It

Scripture reference: 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Review It

- What makes speaking in tongues, faith, generosity, and even martyrdom worthless? (13:1-3)
- What do we gain if we don't have love? (13:3)
- What qualities does love have? (13:4-8)
- How did Jesus exemplify love?
- Why will prophecy, tongues, and knowledge pass away? (13:8-9)
- How will we be different when we see Christ? (13:10-12)
- What is our spiritual imperfection like? (13:11)
- How will our knowledge of God change when we see Christ? (13:12)
- What is the greatest of all gifts? (13:13)

Pray Together

Apply It

- How can a Christian learn to love others as God loves them?
- In what practical ways can you show a love that never fails?
- What is difficult about loving?
- Which of these qualities are you going to attempt to add to your love this week? How will you go about it adding that quality?

Notes

Don't forget to plug in your group attendance and follow up with the people in your group this week!

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- *What is the craziest outfit that you have ever owned?*

Share

Review the week. Things to share:

- Prayer Requests
- Application and Challenges

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

We often talk about having a 'new life' in Jesus Christ; but what does this life look like? Today, we'll be taking a look at what Paul has to say about this new life in Romans 12 and Colossians 3.

Read It

Scripture reference: Romans 12:16 - 18

16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Review It

- What instructions does God want us to observe in our relationships?
- What does it mean to live in 'harmony' with one another?

Read It

Scripture reference: Colossians 3:1 - 17

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among

you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Review It

- Where did Paul tell the believers to focus their concern? (3:2)
- Why should believers look forward to Christ's return? (3:4)
- What must die? (3:5)
- Why is God's wrath coming? (3:5-6)
- What had the Colossians taken off? (3:7-9)
- What had the Colossians put on? (3:10)
- What spiritual process is involved in "putting off" and "putting on"?
- What distinctions are removed in Christ? (3:11)
- How were the Colossian believers called to clothe themselves? (3:12-17) As a group, make a list of what this new 'set of clothes' includes.
- What does it mean to do these 'in the name of the Lord Jesus'?

Apply It

Notes

- If you consistently set your sights on Christ and heaven, how would your life be different?
- What old, "earthly" clothing do you need to get rid of?
- How does wearing "Christ's clothing" affect the way you live your daily life?
- How might this 'change of clothes' effect your relationship with others?

Pray Together

Don't forget to plug in your group attendance and follow up with the people in your group this week!

OVERCOME

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- *What are some of the greatest sources for discouragement in your life?*

Share

Review the week. Things to share:

- Prayer Requests
- Application and Challenges

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

In this world, we're going to face trouble. That's a promise from Jesus Himself. But as Christ-followers, we're called to face the difficulties of life in an entirely new way. We are called to overcome!

Read It

Scripture reference: Romans 12:19 - 21

19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 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."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Review It

- Why should we not take revenge? (12:19)
- Why is it wrong to repay evil with evil?
- How does doing good to an enemy overcome evil?

Read It

Scripture reference: 2 Corinthians 4:8 - 18

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

13 It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is

temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Review It

- What kind of jars contained Paul's treasure? (4:7)
- How did Paul contrast his own weakness with God's power? (4:8-9)
- What did Paul call his sufferings? (4:10)
- What value did Paul see in his sufferings? (4:10-12)
- How is death at work in us? How is life at work in us? (4:12)
- What motivated Paul to preach the gospel in spite of hardship? (4:13-14)
- How did Paul encourage the Corinthians to carry on despite difficulty? (4:16-18)
- What makes it difficult for us to fix our attention and hope on God?
- How can God help us through difficult times?

Apply It

- When have you been discouraged or perplexed in your Christian life?
- When have you felt inner peace in spite of trying circumstances?

Notes

- What do you want to remember the next time you feel discouraged?
- Whom do you need to love and bless this week even though he or she hurts you?

Pray Together

Don't forget to plug in your group attendance and follow up with the people in your group this week!

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RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **RightNow Media:**

Get a free RightNow Media account to get access to thousands of study resources. Some potential resources include:

- XII: Experiencing Your Best Relationship with God and Others (J. P. Jones) - Includes a great daily devotion.
- True Spirituality (Chip Ingram)
- Transformation (Ed Young)
- Romans (Michael DeFazio)

If you're not yet connected to RNM, please contact the CCW Offices or go to ccw.church/rightnow-media/ to sign up.

- **The Bible Project (www.thebibleproject.com)**

The Bible Project offers a variety of amazing resources. These videos expand on many of the ideas that we have touched on in this series.