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Introduction

If you were to visit a lot of churches this upcoming Sunday, a lot of churches this Sunday, you would find a lot of topical messages out there that are all about doing. A lot of doing. Five steps to living a victorious life -- someone's probably going to preach that this Sunday. Three helpful hints for mastering anxiety -- someone will probably preach that. Four ways you can be more loving -- and every message all of these topical messages are all going to be about what you can do what you are to do.

Well, this evening as we come to chapter 12, I want you to notice that for 11 chapters we have studied nothing but doctrine, doctrine, teaching. Before Paul gets to the "doing" aspect of Christianity -- of the Christian life -- he's been teaching us all about doctrine -- about doctrinal truths. That's how you can break up the book of Romans, if you wanted to break it up. A lot of scholars do it this way, chapters 1 through 11 is all about doctrine, teaching truths about God, and the truth of His Word. Who He is, sin, salvation, man, lot of doctrinal truths. And then chapters 12 through 16 are all about duty -- then how the Christian is to live then in light of these doctrinal truths.

You see, a lot of Christians struggle in life, because they never learn about God. They don't learn about Him. They never learn doctrine. They don't learn truth. All they are taught is to do. Do this, and do that - - do this, and do that. But their heart is never motivated to obey God. Because they don't know Him. They don't know truths about Him. They don't think deeply about God. And so, all the things they do are for shallow and superficial reasons. And usually, it's to make "me" feel better about myself, or to make "me" feel more spiritual.

But notice that Paul doesn't start his letter to the Romans telling them all of the things that they must "do". He starts first of all, by telling them all of the things that they should "know." Things that they should know. Why? Well, because as we're going to see in our passage here tonight, Paul knows that transformation in the Christian life, it starts in the mind. It starts in the mind.

Look at the middle of verse 2 and notice what he says there, "[but be transformed by the renewing of your](#)" what? [Mind. \(Rom 12:2\)](#) Paul knows that he could give them five steps to living a victorious Christian life. But right after they read those five steps, these believing Romans would go out and fail. And they'll fail again, and they'll continue to fail. Why? Because as one commentator says, "*The outward transformation is affected by an inner change in the mind. And the spirits means of transforming our mind is...*" listen "*the Word.*" The Word of God. So, although we've just learned 11 chapters of doctrine...now in chapter 12 we come to the "duty" in the Christian life.

But listen, listen, we need to be careful with this. We need to be careful that we don't separate the two. We don't separate doctrine and duty. We need to be careful that we don't put the intellect or academics over practical living. Or putting practical living over doctrine. Someone might say, "doctrine is boring. That's why we don't teach it." But listen, these two go hand in hand -- Doctrine and Duty. Doctrine and practical living -- they go hand in hand as we're going to see.

And so, as we come here now to chapter 12, tonight, we're going to be in verses 1-8 and we're going to break it down into two simple points here.

1. Point number one is The Act of Spiritual Worship, found in verses 1 and 2. The Act of Spiritual Worship.
2. And then our second point we'll call The Use of Spiritual Gifts. The Use of Spiritual Gifts -- found in verses 3-8.

1. The Act of Spiritual Worship

So let's look at our first point here tonight -- The Act of Spiritual Worship. Notice there in verse 1, the first word that Paul uses there. The word is "therefore." And as good Bible students, we ask the question, What? What is the "therefore" there for? Right? We want to know.

Well, as we look back at verse 39, in chapter 11 we read, "[For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.](#)" (Rom 11:39)

Don't we want to live for God's glory? Of course, we do. So how do we do that? Well, Paul's going to give us some practical instructions on how this is done in the Christian life. However, the "Therefore" doesn't stop at verse 39. It doesn't just go back and stop right there at verse 39. In fact, it reaches all the way back to chapter 1 and verse 1. It goes all the way back to the beginning of the book. What Paul is saying here is, I just taught you all of these amazing truths about God...now go and live these truths out in your life, and here is what it looks like.

Remember, I said be careful not to separate doctrine and duty from each other. Paul shows us right here in this word "Therefore." He shows us that we cannot separate doctrine and duty with this one word "Therefore." What he does with that word "Therefore" is he's linking the two together. He's linking doctrine and duty with that word, "Therefore." You can't separate the two out. This isn't seminary class of learning and learning, but then you get to go out and live however you want. But it's also not five

steps for Christian living, but don't worry about knowing and learning the tools of God, because all of that stuff is just for seminary students. No, we need both. We need both of them. That is what Paul does here. He connects both doctrine and duty with the word "Therefore." They are inseparable in the Christian life.

You should, as Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:18, "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." As you do, you must then live in obedience to Him as you're growing in the knowledge of Christ. Just as Jesus says in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:20) "teach them to observe all that I have commanded you." It's knowledge and obedience together that grows the believer. We need both of them. That is what Paul calls on the Roman believers to do.

Look at the command that he gives there in verse 1. He says, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." (Rom 12:1)

Paul urges them -- notice that -- he urges them towards spiritual worship. He appeals to them as believers. Notice who he is addressing here, he addresses them as what, brethren. Brethren. That is, in order for someone to obey this, they first have to be a child of God. That's who this is for. This is for believers. Listen, unbelievers are not offering acceptable sacrifices to God. Because they can't. They can't.

He doesn't accept anything that they offer, because they don't have a saving relationship with Him. There is no relationship there. The first thing that you must offer to God is your very life, your soul. And when that happens, you're born again. And then you are able to offer your bodies and your mind and your will to Him. Then you are able to have spiritual worship, true spiritual worship.

But first you must be born again, and you must receive the mercy of God, which is what Paul makes his appeal upon. Notice that -- by the mercies of God. And what are those mercies? Well, he just spent 11 chapters telling us all about the mercies of God, right? His love and His grace and His compassion, His righteousness that's imputed to us, His forgiveness. And on and on, we could go of all these doctrinal truths that Paul has just given us for 11 chapters. The mercies of God, those are all the mercies of God.

And when you think about the mercies of God, that should motivate you then to do what? Well, Paul says "to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice." (Rom 12:1) That should drive you to do that. To live a life of spiritual worship to God. When you do that, not only are you offering your very life to God, but notice -- you also offer your body. That's what he says there -- "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice." Look, does God care about your body? Yes, He does. He created it. Of course, He does. He created it. But what is encompassed here in the body is more than just the physical shell. It's more than just the flesh. It is all that encompasses in our bodies, which is our our mind, and our emotions, and our will, all that makes us up.

And even the sinful aspects that Paul calls in Romans 7 "the flesh." Remember he talked about the battle? We went through that in Romans 7. The battle with the flesh that's all encompassed there in the body. It's what we battle.

God says you must present your body as a what? As a sacrifice, as a sacrifice. But sadly, many people are controlled by their body, and they give in to the sinful lusts of the flesh. They let their body control their actions, instead of presenting their bodies to God so that He can control them. They allow their body to control them.

As one commentator says, *"The body is a good servant, but it's a terrible master."* Your body is a terrible master. When you let your body control your life, it's upside down. Your body must be presented to God and controlled by Him. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:13, *"Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body."* (1 Cor 6:13) We must present our bodies, all that we are to the Lord.

Now, the Jews would be reading this, and the Jews would understand and grasp this picture here that Paul uses. When they think of sacrifice, as he says, "to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice" they think about sacrifice, and they understand sacrifice. And they think about bringing the lamb to the altar, and then having the priest slit its throat, as they put their hand on that lamb. And then the life of that lamb would then drain out of its body. And then that lamb would be cast upon the altar and burned. That's the picture that's going through their mind.

And as the animal was burning, the aroma would go up, and it would be a soothing aroma to the Lord. Listen to [Leviticus 1:9](#), *"And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering."* That means burn it all. All of it, nobody gets to eat of the burnt offering, it all gets burnt. You burn it all, *"an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD."* (Lev 1:9) As they come and sacrifice that lamb.

Now as they gave that sacrifice, what would happen then to that animal, it would what? It would die. It would die. But notice Paul is not telling us to die physically, what is he telling us to do? To live to live sacrificially. *"Present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice."* So that our lives would then be a soothing aroma to the Lord, as we live it out as a sacrifice unto Him. We're to present all that we are to God, every part of us.

And not only is our body to be a living sacrifice, but also notice what he says there a what? A [holy sacrifice](#). A holy sacrifice. Holy means to be set apart for a special purpose. And as the Jews brought their sacrifice to the altar, it was to be a sacrifice without spot or blemish. That was the Lamb that they were to bring to that altar -- it was to be a lamb without spot and blemish -- a holy one. They were to bring their best, not their second best, not their leftovers. No, they were to bring the best lamb that they had to come and present to God and give it over to Him as a sacrifice.

That's what we are to give to God. We're to give Him our best. Because when we do this, that is what is acceptable to God. And that is how we give Him then our spiritual service of worship. But it doesn't stop there.

Look at verse 2. He says, *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."* (Rom 12:2)

In spiritual worship, we not only give God our life, and our body, but we also give Him our mind. We give Him our mind. And that starts with not being conformed to this world. We cannot be conformed to this world. Stop looking to the world for answers. Listen, church, the world doesn't have the answers. They don't. Stop looking there. Stop looking to the world to be shaped and molded. Sadly, there are many Christians who do this. They look to the world to solve their problems. And when they do that, they're being conformed to the world. They're allowing the world to shape them.

I see this a lot in counseling. Christians look to secular psychology for answers instead of God's Word. They go to the world. Let's see what man has to say about men. No, let's see what God has to say about man. He has all the answers. Why would we go and trust a secular psychologist? They don't know. But God does. God has all of the answers. Don't go to the world to look for answers. All of the answers are right here found in His Word. That's where we need to turn. That's what how our mind needs to be shaped and formed and fashioned -- by His Word.

So, if we're not to be conformed to this world, what are we to do? Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That word "transformed" there is the word "metamorphou" in the Greek. Which is where we get our English word metamorphosis from. It has to do with the outward change, the outward change. And how does this outward change happen? How does it happen church? By the renewing of your what? Mind. By the renewing of your mind, by right thinking, by biblical thinking. That's how your outward actions are going to change when your mind is renewed. When you think right about life. When you think right about man, when you think right about the world, and you understand from a biblical perspective of why things are the way that they are. Then your outward being changes. It starts in the mind.

Christian, are you a biblical thinker? Do you think Bible? Do you fill your mind with God's Word? That's what we are to do. Do you fill your mind with God's Word so that every thought runs through a biblical filter? It should. And when that happens, then your outward living will change. I promise you... because God's Word promises that. Your outward living will change when your mind changes when you think biblically.

Sadly, there are many Christians today who are controlled by their -- listen to this church -- emotions. They're controlled by their emotions. And listen, the Christian world is filled with emotionalism, it's filled with it. "Positive, uplifting, encouragement. We are just all about emotions..." Tell me how to think. Tell me the truth. That's what I want to know. I want to know God's Word. Give that to me. That's going to change me. Because my emotions go up and down. They're like a roller coaster, right? All of ours are. They are a roller coaster! No, I want to be able to think rightly, so that whatever situation I am in, I'm not controlled by emotions, but my mind is in control and I'm able to think rightly about whatever situation I'm in.

A lot of people think that they're growing as Christians by becoming more emotional. But that's not how God says you grow. You grow by having your mind, by having your thinking renewed. That is why Paul says in Colossians 3:2, "[set your mind on the things above](#)" (Col 3:2) not on the things that are on the earth.

Many Christians don't grow because they set their mind on the world. They think worldly instead of biblically, but we need to be biblically-minded people. And when you become that, watch and see how you grow, you will grow. And when that happens, you will know what God's will is. And then you will be able to live in that will. Which is what Paul says in the last part of verse 2, "so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Rom 12:2)

Don't you want to know what God's will is? I do. But listen, you're not going to find that listening to the world. The world's not going to tell you what God's will is. The only way you will know God's will is by filling your mind with His Word. And then you will know what is good, and acceptable and perfect. And all of this happens because you are being transformed in your mind, by The Word of God.

And as you live, then the sacrificial life in spiritual service of worship to God, then you'll discover which were places in the body of Christ, so that you can be used by Him to build up His church. Which leads into our second point here tonight, the use of spiritual gifts.

2. The Use of Spiritual Gifts

Paul now has a transition here. And he transitions to talking about spiritual gifts in this section. And he's first starts off with the spiritual attitude. Notice what he says in verse 3, "For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." (Rom 12:3)

He just said that we need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. And now with that transformed mind, we need to think low thoughts of ourselves. That's what he says there.

You know, we live in a culture, and allowed the culture to creep into the church, where we're told that we need to have a high self-esteem. It's in the church walls, trust me -- it is, I've heard it. You need to have a high self-esteem. You know what that lie is telling you? Think great thoughts about you. You're great. You're awesome.

And what happens with this type of thinking is that life then becomes all about who? You, me. And then you think the church is all about you. And so, people show up to church, and they ask questions like this, "What is this church going to do for me?" "What is this church going to give to me?" But instead, we should be asking, "What can I do for this church? How can I serve this church? What are ways that I can serve here at Faith Bible Church?" Those are the questions we need to be asking. That's the attitude that we're to have. A humble servant's attitude.

And notice all of us are to have this attitude. That's why Paul says, "everyone among you." (Rom 12:3) Pastors, elders, deacons, and lay people alike -- everyone -- you are all to have this attitude of humility. Even Paul knew that what he had as an apostle, he didn't deserve. That's why he says, "through the grace given to me, I say this to you." It's all by God's grace. Paul didn't earn this gift of apostleship.

And no one else earns the spiritual gifts that are given to them. We need to humble ourselves before the Lord and realize and recognize that it's all by God's grace.

And Paul recognizes that he says, even the gift of apostleship that I've been given that I've been called by Christ Himself, I deserve none of that. It's all by God's grace. The context here that Paul begins to talk about is about spiritual gifts, that no one earns their spiritual gifts. But notice what he says at the end of verse 3 there, ["God has allotted to each a measure of faith."](#) (Rom 12:3)

And what Paul is saying here is that God gives the correct measure of spiritual gifts to each believer. It is all up to God. It's up to Him. So, no one can boast about their spiritual gifts. Or -- listen church -- be jealous of gifts that other people have. Because it's all given by God.

Look at verse 4. ["For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."](#) (Rom 12:4-5)

There are many members in the church, and we all have different gifts that God has given to us. But notice, when Paul says in verse five, "we are one body in Christ." We don't have the same function, just as the eye cannot taste and the ear cannot speak. Each part has a different function, right? But listen, when they are functioning the right way, and united together, they do amazing things, don't they? Think about the functions of your body, your eye, and your ears, and your mouth. And how each one of those members when they do what they are to do, how amazing that is.

And when we in the church all do what God has gifted us to do. Think about how amazing it is. We'll do amazing things. And every person who is born again in the church has a spiritual gift that God has given them for the edification of the church. In verse 6, he says, ["Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly:"](#) (Rom 12:6) Notice that word "gifts" there in verse 6. That word in the Greek is the word "charisma", which is from the Greek word "charis," which means grace. And so, we can say that spiritual gifts are a grace gift. Every spiritual gift that is here tonight, that you have, is a grace gift. That is, they are given to us by God, but we don't deserve them. None of us deserves the spiritual gift that we've been given. They are grace gifts. And therefore, each of us has to take that gift that God has so graciously given to us, and use them for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Spiritual gifts are not to be used for ourselves. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says, ["but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."](#) (1 Cor 12:7) It's talking about spiritual gifts there. And they're to be used for the common good, not for self, but for the common good of others, for the church. That's what Paul reiterates again, in [1 Corinthians 14](#). The believers in the church at Corinth, they became prideful because of the gifts that they had. And then they begin to fight amongst themselves, saying, My gift is better than your gift. I can't believe so and so has that gift, and I have this gift. And they're fighting amongst themselves over spiritual gifts. But Paul tells them that gifts are to be used for the edification of what? The church! Not themselves. It's for the church. And so, we then exercise those gifts accordingly in the church.

Now, what are those gifts? Well, Paul doesn't give us an exhaustive list here. But Peter gives us two broad categories of spiritual gifts in [1 Peter 4](#). Basically, here's the two broad categories of spiritual gifts: You have speaking gifts, and you have serving gifts. Two broad categories -- **speaking gifts and serving gifts**. You are either edifying through speaking, which can be teaching wisdom, knowledge, discernment, evangelism leadership, exhortation. Or you're edifying through serving, which can be administration, prayer, mercy, giving or service.

But again, every person serves with the gift that they have been given, and by the measure that it has been given to them. And only God gives that measure. Now as you look at the gifts that Paul lists here in verses 6-8, notice that none of these gifts are what we call "sign" gifts. None of them are. Sign gifts: the gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing. Those are the sign gifts. None of them are listed here in Romans 12.

We see those in the list in [1 Corinthians 12](#), but Paul wrote, listen, Paul wrote Romans four years later than he wrote 1 Corinthians. Four years later. And so already, you can see how those sign gifts in the church were coming to an end. You have gifts in [Ephesians 4](#), and you have the broad categories in 1 Peter 4, and none of them mentions sign gifts. Why? As one commentator says, *"They belong to a unique era in the church's life and would have no permanent place in its ongoing ministry."* There were unique to the early church. But as the church continued to grow, then they died off. You no longer have the sign gifts.

And so, none of the sign gifts are listed here. That's why speaking in tongues is no longer in operation and therefore no interpretation of tongues. No gift of healing. Does God still heal? Yes, He does. Does anyone have the gift of healing? No, they don't. Those are sign gifts. Miracles -- those are sign gifts. But none of those gifts are listed here.

But there are other spiritual gifts that are listed here. What are they? First, he says prophecy. This was a gift-giving new revelation in the early church. Listen, in the early church. Because they didn't have the New Testament Scriptures written yet. They didn't have the closed canon of Scripture. And so, there were prophets who were giving new revelation at times. But that gift of prophecy was not limited just to new revelation, it was also declaring what has already been written.

In fact the Greek word there "prophēteian" means "the gift of interpreting divine will or purpose." Which does not mean that it is getting new divine revelation, it is just interpreting and teaching and proclaiming what is already there. What has already been revealed. This gift is simply the gift of preaching The Word of God, that's already been revealed to us, in the pages of Scripture.

And notice, he has to do it according to the proportion of his faith. In the Greek the pronoun "his" is not in there. But the definite article "the" is. So instead of "his" faith, we can say "the" faith -- or is the legacy Standard Bible says, in agreement with the faith. In agreement with the faith -- which means that he needs to preach in agreement to -- or in accordance with -- the true gospel. That whatever a prophet preaches, and proclaims, it must be in agreement with this. He can't just make up his own stuff. And just say, I got some new revelation for you today. If anybody ever says that to you ... Run! Get out of there! They are false teachers.

No one is getting new revelation today. It's all here. It's already been revealed to us. The prophet's job is just to take what's already been revealed there, and to preach it and to proclaim it, but it all must line up with exactly what God's Word has already declared. So, he must preach or prophesy according to the proportion of his faith.

In verse seven, he says, there's another gift there ... the gift of service. This is pretty simple and straightforward. The gift that has many applications -- the gift of serving. There are many ways that you can serve. The Greek word there is the word from which we get our word "deacon" from, but it applies to any servant in the body.

The next gift there is the gift of teaching. Pretty simple to understand...one who teaches and one who has the gift is given a special ability by the Spirit to interpret and present God's truth -- listen -- in an understandable way. Presented in an understandable way. That's the gift of teaching.

Next is the gift of exhortation. This is the Greek word "parakaleó", and it's closely related to parakletos, which is the title that Jesus gives of Himself and of the Holy Spirit, who is our what? Helper! He is our helper. Exhortation means to advise, or to plead, or to encourage, or to warn, or strengthen, or comfort. It encompasses all of that in it. And one who exhorts is one who pleads with another, or warns, or even encourages another person.

Next is the gift of giving. This can be both monetary giving, or giving of oneself sacrificially. This is someone who just always wants to give away -- either his time or his resources. Paul says that when you do this, you're to do this with liberality. Ananias and Sapphira did not give with liberality, did they? ([Acts 5:1-5](#)) They held some back for themselves and what happened? Dead. God struck them dead. But as we studied this last Sunday, the church at Philippi, what did they do? They gave beyond their ability. They were a giving church. There were people there that clearly had the gift of giving.

Next is, is the gift of leadership. This is the idea of standing before others, it's someone who steers or leads a ship. And notice the one who has the gift of leadership is to do it with what? With diligence. Not being lazy or idle in their leadership role, but actively leading.

And then finally, we see the gift of mercy. This is one who shows compassion, or sympathy, or comfort toward others. This person might find their gift being used in in hospital visitations, or maybe a jail ministry, or service to the handicapped, or to the poor. They are those who weep with those who weep and sympathize with the suffering and the hurting. And as they use that gift, Paul says that it is to be done with -- notice -- cheerfulness, with cheerfulness. We all, I'm sure, know of someone who has cheered us up in times of hardship and suffering, right? I know I have. I've experienced those. Those people who have the gift of mercy. They cheer us up. They help us to get through those hard times, they have the gift of mercy.

And so, Paul wraps it up with that gift there. And how are all of these gifts then to be used? They're to be used with self-sacrificial love toward brothers and sisters, so that the church is edified, and

ultimately, so that God is glorified through it all. And we'll look more at what this self-sacrificial love is next time.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Romans chapter 12. Lord, thank You that You have given us Your Word to know, to be planted in our minds, so that we can live accordingly. Lord, we thank You for Your word that is understandable that we don't have to, to search the heavens or go down below the earth to try and find the meaning of Your Word. But Lord, we can just open it up and study it. And Lord, You reveal it so clearly to us. Help us to be those who would have our minds fixed upon the things above that we would not be molded and shaped by this world, but that we would be molded and shaped by Your Word. And then as we use the gifts that you've given to us, Lord may we use those to edify and encourage one another, and may it be all for Your glory. We pray in Christ's name