

## **Patterns**

### **Romans 12**

*1 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.*

*3 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 faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 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.*

*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.*

*14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 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. 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.*

### **General Notes About Romans**

Paul's Epistles are not listed Chronologically.

Paul never met the Romans when he wrote this letter.

He is with Timothy and Tertius is the actual scribe of the letter. 16:21-23

Many other romanized names are appended in the greeting as well.

So he takes the time to identify himself.

He also writes in a way to clarify what he believes.

This is the clearest articulation of the Christian faith and theology.

Chapters 1-11 are theological in nature while chapters 12-16 are practical.

These bind together the faith and deeds of the Christian life.

If I had time I would love to preach expositively through Romans.

In fact a famous preacher by the name of Barnhouse preached Romans.

He spent the first sermon on the book on Chapter 1 verse 1.

He spent the second sermon on Chapter 1 verse 2 but didn't finish so he had to finish the following week.

Martin Lloyd Jones took 13 years to preach Romans but only got to chapter 14 because he died!

Martin Luther, through the book of Romans recognized the importance of faith and planted the seed of the Reformation.

### **Romans 12 Intro**

I don't have a favourite text of Scripture because I like all of it and like some of my teachers,  
my favourite part is usually the part I am studying.

But is pressed, Romans 12 would be among what I personally consider the most vital.

If I would read Romans 12 every day and strive to live it out for the rest of my life, I would be a

transformed person.

In it is the embodiment of the entire gospel in action, the kingdom of God revealed.

This chapter will not only transform your life but transform the world.

But today I will only preach on one verse as a start.

## List of illustrations: MvP, Reverse Bike, Powerwall, Nepal, Baltimore, Avengers 2

### The Patterns of Conformity

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

The Backwards Bicycle - we are stuck in our ways of thinking.

Media – Garbage in, Garbage out. – Synergy of darkness

What we listen to, watch, learn, read, our friends & relationships.

We find solace in our wealth.

We pray for Nepal or Baltimore

while lining up to watch Avengers: Age of Ultron or Mayfield v. Pacquiao

This is our age – our world, our context.

Locked in a cage.

We are products and constructs of our education, culture, society.

We have never known any other way of living – this is our norm.

Even our religion can become a part of the insidious chaining of the soul.

Our systems of belief.

What are we conforming to? An actual worldview.

Materialism, Individualism, Humanism, Deism, Religion

We must learn to ride Jesus' reverse bicycle.

Our faith in Christ, the Kingdom of God,

Give us a another way of living, thinking and being.

We either conform to the patterns of this world or we conform to Christ.

This is not to say all world culture is evil - in fact there is great beauty and value

But what is your baseline in evaluating, embracing, resisting it?

We conform to the likeness of Christ, not to culture.

And thus the danger of endorsing one of the narrow streams of Christianized culture.

The error we can make is to assume that the popular Christian culture is in line with Jesus.

We look soberly upon our own selves.

### Breaking the Chains

So how do you break the patterns of conformity?

#### 1. Recognize your prison

a. confession of sin and personal need for God. - accept his grace & forgiveness & kingship

b. recognise systemic sin in your society and culture  
this includes family systems, ethnic subcultures,  
dominant societal narratives of who we are.

#### 2. Join The Resistance

We are not talking terrorism with guns and bombs and bullets.

We are talking about guerrillas of grace, to borrow the title of Ted Loder's book on prayer.

This rebel alliance is known as the gathered, the *ekklesia* in Greek, the Church.

It's a scattered bunch existing in local pockets, but every true church stays upon the path,  
the way of following Jesus.

The weapons of the church are prayer, love, service, grace, forgiveness, sacrifice, joy,  
worship, hospitality...

#### 3. Renewing the Mind

Instead of TV, Blogs, books, movies, tweets and posts

there are two avenues to which a Jesus follower changes their mind.

##### a. Prayer - Talk to God.

It is in learning to connect with God - relate with him, Father Son & Holy Spirit  
that we are transformed.

How can you conform to the likeness of Jesus if you don't talk to him?

How can you resist or critique the culture of the world without knowing him?

We pray, "Show me who you truly are, not who I merely want,  
imagine or have been told you are."

We listen, we see, we know.

b. Scripture

We are talking, reading, discussing, thinking, studying, listening...

The Christian mind is one that is soaked in the understanding of the word of God.

Not just saccharine simple quotes, but real curiosity and testing and exploration.

The inquisitive mind fights the mind of conformity, apathy and complacency.

The Holy Scriptures – 2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped to do every Good work.

Lectio Divina is about understanding and listening.

All this we do together and not in individualistic isolation.

4. Live it Out.

When you are here, you are being trained not for resistance but to be a part of the kingdom's plan of transformation.

You are given a purpose and a mission as a disciple of Jesus to infiltrate and change your family, your workplace, your society.

Starting with yourself.

Grace, mercy, love, hospitality, peace, affection, helping, sacrifice, truth, gentleness, compassion.

Is it tiring? Yes.

Does it happen overnight? No.

But every morning we pray - your will be done in me and through me.

every evening - forgive me my sins and renew my strength.

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

**Off the Chain**

*Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

"What is God's Will for Me?"

Until you give yourself to God and pursue the transformation he offers you will never live in it.

Good –not spectacular acts but a way of life – character & action

Pleasing/Acceptable - God's standard, not ours.

Perfect/Complete/Whole – In Christ, not in us. Not about achievement but faith.

A Person who cannot change, who cannot be resurrected, who cannot be transformed, who cannot but live within the cage of their patterns cannot be a disciple of Jesus.

Elon Musk announced a new product for his company, Tesla this past week.

He wants to save the world.

Well, primary from carbon emissions and in the area of energy usage.

We know that if we keep on this track of oil dependency we will deplete the earth and wreck it.

He has his detractors, some believe in his work and others don't.

It's about the money, or the fame, or the hype.

If this works, we can save the planet, and Elon will make a bit of profit.

Jesus announced something even bigger 2000 years ago.

The triune God wants to save the world.

Not from climate change.

But every soul and every person from both present and eternal darkness.

And he is raising up a people who not only his messengers but those who he has saved.

Jesus has his detractors, those who believe in him and those who do not.

But it's never about the money, or the fame or the hype.

If this works, the souls of many will be saved, but Jesus already paid for all of this.