

Bible Study Romans 12:3-8

1. Think of the first word that comes to your mind when you hear the word ‘worship’. Why does that word come to mind?
2. **Read Rom 12:1-2.** Romans 1-11 is all about God’s mercy shown to Jew and Gentile in Christ. Rom 12-16 are the application, our response to God’s mercy, our ‘worship’ according to what God wants.

3. **Read Rom 12:3.** What has the way we think of ourselves to do with what Paul has just said in vv1-2?

*The word “For” at the start of the verse suggests a direct connection; that thinking of yourself too highly is part of the “pattern of this world”, a ‘natural’ way to think (ie without our minds being renewed) and that which will prevent us testing and approving what God’s will is. The reason for this must be that we are, in effect, thinking of ourselves as God’s equal, and so we are more interested in what **our** will is than what **God’s** will is.*

4. Is Paul suggesting that we think of ourselves as worthless and miserable sinners in relation to God? What is it to think “in accordance with the measure of faith God has given” us?

No – he only says don’t think of yourself too highly, not think of yourself as lowly as possible! Our value before God has been explained in chapters 1-11 eg 8:15-17. A Christian thinks of themselves neither too highly nor too lowly. The “measure” of faith is not “how much” we have – all faith is saving faith! It’s “measure” in the sense of standard – we think of ourselves from the perspective of faith – forgiven sinners, saved by grace through Christ, now God’s adopted children.

5. **Read Rom 12:4-8.** Why does the discussion about the body and gifts follow straight after the exhortation of v.3?

*The word “For”, not translated in the NIV, begins this verse too. Paul is expanding on what he’s just said. Thinking of ourselves too highly leads us away from others – isolation and individualism are also hallmarks of the ‘pattern of this world’. But Christians are saved **into** the body of Christ, connected to and belonging to the other members.*

6. Why can Christians never boast about the abilities they have?

Because they are underserved gifts. The word Paul uses is something like “grace-things” or even “grace-gifts”. And grace is underserved kindness. So what we have, and the fact that we have it, is by God’s kindness, not our deserving or effort.

7. The emphasis in the passage is on the differentness of the gifts within the body of Christ. Why has God gone to such trouble to ensure we are so different – even though we are all equal in his sight, equally loved, equally saved, equal in status as his children?

*So that no Christian will think they can live in isolation from other Christians, and that the body of Christ will only grow as Christians live, worship and serve their God **together**.*

A short note on “prophecy” here: It is not like OT Prophecy, where the prophet was God’s spokesperson – what they said was God’s word and was binding on the conscience. NT prophecy is more of an immediate application of the *already revealed* Word of God to a specific situation. It needed to be ‘weighed’ (so 1 Cor 14:29) and in some cases, the given interpretation could be rejected or ignored (so Acts 21:10-14). This is why Paul says prophecy is to be ‘in proportion’ lit “according to the analogy” or “standard” of faith ie it must be in keeping with the faith that has been handed down once for all (Jude 3).

8. vv6b-8 lists not only the ability but the situation in which it is needed to be used. Literally; “having different grace-gifts according to the grace given us; if prophecy, according to the standard of faith; if ministry, in ministry; if teaching, in teaching; if encouraging, in encouragement; the sharing, in generosity; the leading, in diligence; showing mercy, in cheerfulness.” A literal translation sounds a little odd, but it shows that the emphasis is not just on the person with the ability. How does the context of this passage help us to understand the importance of this?

*So that we don’t give too much emphasis to one person with one particular gift that we might value more than other gifts and so ‘think more highly’ of them than we ought. The importance of this section is that believers belong to **each other**, we are not lone riders.*

9. This whole section is filling out what our worship of God is to be. What words best describe the worship God wants from us? Are these different to the words we came up with in Q.1?