



SENT: with Grace to Bless the World

Day 1 —Sent with Grace to Bless the World

Paul reminds Roman Christians of the seriousness of sin and of the great, relentless love of God, about law and grace, about God's faithfulness and our call to faith; he speaks of life in the Spirit and of the body of Christ. He tells us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, and he challenges us to not allow the world's standards and thinking to mold us, but to allow God to transform us. Then Paul gives very practical suggestions as to how we can bless the world by reflecting God's grace and sharing God's love. Consider how the precepts in Romans 12:9-21 might change all our relationships. Pray the Spirit will transform your thinking as you study this text.

Day 2—Counter-cultural Christians

The world tells us to look out for ourselves; Scripture tells us to worship God alone and to love others through the power of the Spirit. The world tells us to strive for personal happiness above all else. Scripture tells us true joy is found in our relationship with Jesus. The world teaches us to be proud; Scripture instructs about the blessedness of true humility (*Mark 12:29-31; John 15:9-12; Colossians 3:12*). Thoughtfully and prayerfully, read Romans 12:9-21. Notice how counter-cultural many of the directives are. Ask the Spirit to help you select the one with which you most struggle; now pray the Spirit will grow you in your application of it this week.

Day 3—Joyful, Patient, Faithful

Read Romans 12:12. Paul reminds us that living our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ isn't all about having it all (or "all together") today. God offers us strength for today and hope for tomorrow. Through Jesus, we have the promise of eternal hope and joy, and that makes all the difference. Read John 16:33, Romans 8:23-25, Philippians 4:4, and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Consider that Paul himself endured great hardships and much suffering; he was faithful in prayer, and God enabled him to be joyful in hope and patient in affliction. Is this your experience too? If not, spend time talking to God, asking God to help you be joyful, patient, and faithful.

Day 4—Love Must Be Sincere

Read John 13:34-35. What is to be the measure of our love for others? How is this possible? Read John 15:4-5 and Philippians 4:13. In Romans 12:9, Paul says our love must be sincere and genuine. We can manifest this kind of love only through the power of the Holy Spirit, only as we stay connected to Jesus. In Romans 12:9-21, we discover aspects of the sincere love of which Paul speaks in verse 9. According to Paul, how do we show genuine love for others? Ask the Spirit to help you show some reflections of sincere love to others today.

Day 5—Hate Evil; Cling to Good

Read Romans 12:9. Notice that Paul teaches about sincere love in the same breath as he speaks of hating evil and clinging to good. Never are we to hate others; we are to love as Jesus loves. Jesus' relentless, sacrificial love took him to the cross. Our sin and the sin of the world (evil) so offend the holiness of God that, in perfect love, God sent Jesus to die that we might live. So we are told to love with God's love, cling to that which pleases God (good), and hate that which grieves God's heart (sin and evil). Do you delight in what delights God; do you grieve over what brings sorrow to God? Pray that you will see all things through the eyes of Jesus.

Day 6—Rejoice and Weep

Have you ever been so excited and happy that you really needed others to celebrate with you? Have you experienced heartaches and sadness and been touched by the true empathy of others? Are you able to rejoice in the blessings and honors others receive? Are you able to comfort others with sincere compassion? Paul speaks of this in Romans 12:15. We show our love for others as we rejoice and weep with them. What other directives from Romans 12:9-21 relate to this command? It is when we look to the needs of others and

forget ourselves that we can truly rejoice and weep with others. Pray God will lead you to embrace others with this selfless love.

Day 7—Bless Those Who Persecute You

Read Revelation 3:15-16. How does Jesus want us to live our Christian lives? We are to be filled with zeal for him and for living as his disciples! One of the more difficult challenges for many is to trust God to be the one who will make all things right. Read Romans 12:9-21 and note the references to living at peace with others and actually blessing those who have hurt you. This does not mean we wink at sin and allow evil, but it does mean we are to forgive and trust God's justice. Read Matthew 5:1-12. Do Paul and Jesus express many of the same truths? Ask God to help you do something good (perhaps pray for blessing) for someone who has hurt you.