

exemplifying the qualities of compassion, grace, empathy, serving, and humility described here by Paul.

Where do you see examples of grace, empathy, serving, and humility demonstrated in the church? Have you been part of any ministry that exemplifies these qualities?

Romans 12:18-20 NLT - 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. 20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."

Paul does not conclude this section by telling the church in Rome to take a stand and forcefully advance God's kingdom against their oppressors the Romans. Surprisingly he says live in peace with everyone.

How does Paul explain that justice will ultimately be served? What are we to do instead?

WRAP-UP

When the church is at its best, we reflect Jesus. The way we live our lives, especially how we treat one another, should be so different from the customs and practices of this world that people will take notice. They should see the love, grace, empathy, service and humility of Jesus in the Body of Christ. It is not up to us to exact justice; God will do that. But we are to be shaped by Jesus so that the church is Tov.

MEMORY VERSE

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. - Romans 12:9 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life

Challenge- Use a Bible dictionary to find out the definition of some of the sins listed in Gal 5:18-21. Once you find their meaning, consider what you must do to avoid them.

“A Tov Church isn't a Perfect Church”

Tov 3

INTRODUCTION

The life of faith is sometimes referred to as a journey because we don't stand still, we are moving, changing, growing as we go. We will not be “perfect” this side of heaven, but we want to keep moving in the right direction, and that means becoming more like Jesus. In his letter to the Roman church, Paul talks about what it means to be transformed by God in this journey of faith. That involves being part of Christ's body, the church. Paul encourages the Roman church to resist being conformed to the world's standards and instead be shaped by Jesus. We might not be perfect, but we can be Tov (good).

Ice Breaker

Is there something you've worked at for a long time to develop proficiency, like a sport, skill, or hobby? What did it take to become good at it?

Key Passage

Romans 12:2 NLT - 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The Tov Church Looks Like Jesus

Romans 12:21 NLT - 21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

In our key verse, Romans 12:2, Paul tells us not to copy the world but let God transform us, change how we think, so we can understand His

will for us. As this chapter of Romans concludes in v. 21, we see this involves both what we do and what we don't do.

What are some customs of the world you once found acceptable but now God has changed your mind about? Is there anything you find yourself doing differently because you realize it is pleasing to God to do so (how you treat others, or how you spend your time or money for example?)

2. The Tov Church Resists

As Paul expresses his concern for the church, he begins with a warning.

Romans 12:3-5 NLT - 3 Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. 4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

What is the first thing Paul reveals which will undermine a healthy, Christlike body of believers? What are some ways this attitude might be seen in a church setting?

Romans 12:9, 17-18 NLT - 9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.... 17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

We are to hate what is evil and join ourselves to what is good.

Why do you think loving others is part of the admonition to hate what is evil and cling to what is good? Open your Bible and read Galatians 5:18-21. Here Paul lists the results of following our sinful nature rather than clinging to the good fruit produced by the Holy Spirit in verses 22-23. It is easy to glance at this long list and dismiss the sins as some things we don't do. But look closely and you might find that outbursts of anger, division, quarreling and other sins on

this list show up more often that we want to admit. These sins address the way we act towards one another. What makes it difficult to resist these sins and what can you do to live in peace with everyone (v.18)?

If we want the church to look like Jesus, we need to stop conforming to the pressure of the world and allow God to change our minds so that we are genuinely transformed into the image of Christ.

3. The Tov Church is Known For ...

*Romans 12:10 NLT - 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.
John 13:35 NLT - 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."*

If you've ever moved to a new town, you probably asked some questions to decide what church you would attend. You might have asked about what they teach, what type of music they have, what children's programming is like. But did you think to ask, "Do they love one another?" Jesus said it is our love for one another that distinguishes us as His disciples. In verse 10 Paul tells us to be genuine in our affection.

You can probably think of some people who you find "unlovable". The only way for you to genuinely love them is for you see them through God's eyes and with His heart. Take a moment now to pray for God to transform your heart towards the people you find "unlovable" so that you can genuinely love them.

Romans 12:13-17 NLT - 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! 17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

When the church is reflecting Jesus we treat one another differently. As you read through this passage, you should be able to recall Jesus