



Principles of Christian Growth

Romans 12:9-21 Handout

Paul provides 25 quick, tweetable suggestions on how to be a righteous man or woman of God, guiding believers on how they are to live out their Christian lives. People are made in the image of God and the way we respond to God and treat others in daily events are important.

Below each of the following exhortations is a common objection to carrying out that certain exhortation, revealing our 'counter' thoughts and values. Evaluate your own attitudes in light of God's greater purposes for our lives.

- Let love be without hypocrisy. (Romans 12:9)
Objection: "But what if I don't really love them?"
- Abhor what is evil. (Romans 12:9)
Objection: "But then I can't watch my programs!"
- Cling to what is good. (Romans 12:9)
Objection: "But I only sometimes meet with God and have devotions."
- Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. (Romans 12:10)
Objection: "But can't I just be nice?"
- Give preference to one another in honor. (Romans 12:10)
Objection: "But I like to be noticed."
- Not lagging behind in diligence. (Romans 12:11)
Objection: "But I am used to just getting by."
- Fervent in spirit. (Romans 12:11)
Objection: "But I must not get carried away!"
- Serving the Lord. (Romans 12:11)
Objection: "But I am very busy."
- Rejoicing in hope. (Romans 12:12)
Objection: "But you don't know what I'm facing!"
- Persevering in tribulation. (Romans 12:12)
Objection: "But it's my nature to give up."
- Devoted to prayer. (Romans 12:12)
Objection: "But I'm just a new Christian!"
- Contributing to the needs of the saints. (Romans 12:13)
Objection: "But I got my own needs to take care of."

Romans 12
12:1-2: Dedication to God
12:3-8: Spiritual gifts
12:1-2: 26 exhortations

EXHORTATIONS

Each instruction reveals weaknesses we need to stand guard against.

The truth is a restatement of what ought to be true in our lives.

The exhortation challenges us to extend our faith further in God to carry out what He deems to be important.

Our resolve to obey helps us to target the changes that we need to make in our lives, often including a change in our attitudes and values.

- Practicing hospitality. (Romans 12:13)
Objection: "But my place isn't good enough."
- Bless those who persecute you. Bless and curse not. (Romans 12:14)
Objection: "But I can't stand them."
- Rejoice with those who rejoice. (Romans 12:15)
Objection: "But why should he or she get all the breaks?"
- Weep with those who weep. (Romans 12:15)
Objection: "But I have enough of my own problems."
- Be of the same mind toward one another. (Romans 12:16)
Objection: "But I just get along with that person."
- Do not be haughty in mind but associate with the lowly. (Romans 12:16)
Objection: "But I am better than him."
- Do not be wise in your estimation. (Romans 12:16)
Objection: "But I think I can do it."
- Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. (Romans 12:17)
Objection: "But I am just giving back what he deserves."
- Respect what is right in the sight of all men. (Romans 12:17)
Objection: "But I don't have to bother with what others think, do I?"
- As far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (Romans 12:18)
Objection: "But I can't forgive him."
- Never take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God... (Romans 12:19)
Objection: "But someone has to teach him a lesson or two."
- If your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink... (Romans 12:20)
Objection: "But I am only treating him as he treated me."
- Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)
Objection: "But I am just so upset with her."

Summary

By touching on many aspects of our lives, Paul provides a powerful portrait of the Christian's life. At the beginning of Romans 5, Paul started to relate what it means for Christ to live through His people right now on earth. He continues that here by showing how God's people live above the world by caring for others more than themselves.

Discussion questions

- 1) Would you consider the above exhortations laws? Why or why not?
- 2) If a person could do all these things, does it make a person a Christian. Explain.
- 3) Share one or more items from above and share how you need to improve the way you live out your life.
- 4) How does the way believers live affect the community of God's people? How does it affect people's concept of the church?