

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

Part VI: God's Righteousness Applied To Practical Living, Romans 12:1-15:13

B. God's Righteousness Applied To Living In Proper Relation To The Local Church (Romans 12:3-8)

I. Introduction

- A. Having established the rich doctrines of how the righteousness of God is made available and workable both to save the believer from hell and to equip him to function as God's beloved child, Paul shifted to the important practical application of that impartation of God's righteousness to the Christian life.
- B. After a believer applies God's righteousness in his position in Christ to a right relation to himself (Romans 12:1-2), Romans 12:3-8 directs him to apply that righteousness to his right relation to the local church:

II. God's Righteousness Applied To Living In Proper Relation To The Local Church, Romans 12:3-8.

- A. Paul had just written about the believer's proving by his experience the good, pleasing and perfect will of God in his life (Rom. 12:2b), and in Romans 12:3a, he began to clarify what that will comprised in specific terms.
- B. Thus, he introduced Romans 12:3a with the conjunction "For" (*gar*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 563), explaining God's will for the believer in relation to the local church he attended, Romans 12:3-8 (as follows):
 1. Paul based the command he was about to give on the "grace given" to him, what is explained in Romans 1:5 and 15:15-16 as his office as an apostle of Christ with apostolic authority that all believers must obey!
 2. Specifically, God by Paul's directive wants every believer not to think of himself too highly (*huperphroneo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 850), but to think sensibly (*sophroneo*, *Ibid.*, p. 809) in accord with the "measure of faith" (spiritual gift) God gave him, Rom. 12:3.
 3. Namely, though the Church has many members, and all the members have different offices, so each believer must realize that he is **part** of Christ's body, that he has a **partial** role in the whole local church's ministry, **NOT** that **he** is something **more** than that in his **local church** (implied), Romans 12:4-5.
 4. Accordingly, having spiritual gifts that **differ** from the gifts of **others** in the same body, each believer must focus on using the gift God has assigned him in God's way, **not for selfish interests**, Rom. 12:6-8:
 - a. In Paul's era, God had assigned the spiritual gift of prophecy to various believers, and they were to prophesy "according to the proportion of faith," Rom. 12:6a,b KJV. A better translation is "according to the right relationship to, in agreement with (*analogia*, *Ibid.*, p. 56) the faith," that is, "the body of truth already revealed," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 488. Believers with the gift of prophecy were to minister their gift so that what they predicted agreed with Scripture and former certified prophecies versus their own ideas that violated this standard!
 - b. Those with the gift of serving as deacons (*diakonia*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 183) were to serve the needs of the body versus meeting their own interests like the first deacons in Acts 6:1-7. (Romans 12:7a)
 - c. Those with the spiritual gift of teaching were to teach Scripture, not their own ideas, Romans 12:7b.
 - d. Those with the gift of exhortation, what involved requesting, imploring or appealing usually in "preaching" (*parakaleo*, *Ibid.*, p. 622-623; *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 564, p. 725; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Timothy 4:13), were to preach God's Word and not their own ideas, Romans 12:8a.
 - e. Those with the gift of giving were to give with "generosity, liberality" (*haplotes*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 85) instead of hoarding their possessions for their own selfish interests, Romans 12:8b.
 - f. Those with the gift of ruling, managing others (*proistemi*, *Ibid.*, p. 713-714) were to rule, manage with diligence, attentiveness (*spoude*, *Ibid.*, p. 771) versus slackness due to self-centeredness, Romans 12:8c.
 - g. Those with the gift of showing mercy were to exercise their gift toward others cheerfully, gladly, graciously (*hilarotes*, *Ibid.*, p. 376) versus grudgingly in self-centeredness, Romans 12:8d.

Lesson: Based on the vast provisions the believer has in Christ by the extensive expressions of God's grace toward him to save and position him in Christ for life and service, once a believer presents his body as a living sacrifice to God, he is to accept his calling from God to use the spiritual gift God gave him at salvation to minister that gift the way God wants him to do so to meet the needs of other believers in the local church, not to serve his own interests.

Application: (1) Based on the massive expression of God's grace toward each of us, after we present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, may we use the spiritual gift God gave us to minister to others in the local church as God directs. (2) May we not serve our own interests or perform a ministry of our own choosing in our own selfish initiative, but serve in God's calling God's way under His spiritual motivation! Only then can we find blessing!