



## **“Renewed Minds”**

(Romans 12:1-8)

Study Guide for the week of  
February 19, 2023

### **Some questions to answer and discuss:**

1. What influences have significantly shaped your life?
2. What is the most reasonable response to God’s great mercy? ([12:1-2](#))
3. How is the Christian to be different from unbelieving people? ([12:2](#))
4. How should the mind of a Christian be changed and renewed? ([12:2](#))
5. What must happen in order for a person to discern and agree with the will of God? ([12:2](#))
6. What did Paul use the human body to illustrate? ([12:4-5](#))
7. How should each person use his or her gifts? ([12:6-8](#))
8. What makes offering our bodies as living sacrifices an act of worship?
9. How can the gifts God bestows on Christians help others in the church or community?

### **Life Application Bible Notes**

[12:1](#) When sacrificing an animal according to God's law, a priest would kill the animal, cut it in pieces, and place it on the altar. Sacrifice was important, but even in the Old Testament God made it clear that obedience from the heart was much more important (see [1 Samuel 15:22](#); [Psalm 40:6](#); [Amos 5:21-24](#)). God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as *living sacrifices*—daily laying aside our own desires to follow him, putting all our energy and resources at his disposal and trusting him to guide us. We do this out of gratitude that our sins have been forgiven.

[12:1, 2](#) God has good, pleasing, and perfect plans for his children. He wants us to be transformed people with renewed minds, living to honor and obey him. Because he wants only what is best for us, and because he gave his Son to make our new life possible, we should joyfully give ourselves as living sacrifices for his service.

[12:2](#) Paul warned Christians: "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world" that are usually selfish and often corrupting. Wise Christians decide that much worldly behavior is off-limits for them. Our refusal to conform to this world's values, however, must go even deeper than just behavior and customs; it must be firmly planted in our mind: "Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." It is possible to avoid most worldly customs and still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn, and arrogant. Only when the Holy Spirit renews, reeducates, and redirects our mind are we truly transformed (see [8:5](#)).

**12:3** Healthy self-esteem is important because some of us think too little of ourselves; on the other hand, some of us overestimate ourselves. The key to an honest and accurate self-evaluation is knowing the basis of our self-worth—our identity in Christ. Apart from him, we aren't capable of very much by eternal standards; in him, we are valuable and capable of worthy service. Evaluating yourself by the worldly standards of success and achievement can cause you to think too much about your worth in the eyes of others and thus miss your true value in God's eyes.

**12:4, 5** Paul uses the concept of the human body to teach how Christians should live and work together. Just as the parts of the body function under the direction of the brain, so Christians are to work together under the command and authority of Jesus Christ (see [1 Corinthians 12:12-31](#); [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)).

**12:6** God gives us gifts so we can build up his church. To use them effectively, we must (1) realize that all gifts and abilities come from God; (2) understand that not everyone has the same gifts; (3) know who we are and what we do best; (4) dedicate our gifts to God's service and not to our personal success; (5) be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God's service. God's gifts differ in nature, power, and effectiveness according to his wisdom and graciousness, not according to our faith. Our role is to be faithful and to seek ways to serve others with what Christ has given us.

**12:6** "Prophesying" in Scripture is not always predicting the future. Often it means preaching God's messages ([1 Corinthians 14:1-3](#)).

**12:6-8** Look at this list of gifts and imagine the kinds of people who would have each gift. Prophets are often bold and articulate. Servers (those in ministry) are faithful and loyal. Teachers are clear thinkers. Encouragers know how to motivate others. Givers are generous and trusting. Leaders are good organizers and managers. Those who show kindness are caring people who are happy to give their time to others. It would be difficult for one person to embody all these gifts. An assertive prophet would not usually make a good counselor, and a generous giver might fail as a leader. When you identify your own gifts (and this list is far from complete), ask how you can use them to build up God's family. At the same time, realize that your gifts can't do the work of the church all alone. Be thankful for people whose gifts are completely different from yours. Let your strengths balance their weaknesses, and be grateful that their abilities make up for your deficiencies. Together you can build Christ's church.

**Study Guide questions and notes are from**

