



## Part 7

### 2 more studies in Romans

**Please Note the following:**

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL** and **NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP**

## Study 1 – In View of God’s Mercy...

Romans 12:1-21

*(Sermon on 23-June-2024)*

### Read Romans 12:1-2

1. In verse 1, the Apostle Paul uses the phrase “**in view of God’s mercy**”; what is Paul referring to? What is this saying about our motivation as a Christian?

*The Greek Word for mercy here literally means “the bowels in which compassion resides – a heart of compassion”.*

*Mercy by definition is “undeserved”.*

*Paul stated way back in chapter 1 that we all are sinful people who deserve God’s wrath (anger) and in chapter 3, he told us that we all fall short of God’s standards because we are sinful and can’t stop sinning.*

*So, God in His “mercy” – sent His Son to become sin for us – and to take our punishment for our sin – and allow us to go free from punishment and gain eternal life.*

*We gain this mercy not by who we are or what we do – but by believing in what Jesus has done for us – in His grace and mercy.*

*Paul went on to say that we are justified (made right with God and declared not guilty of our sins) by our faith in what Jesus has done.*

*In view of this “mercy” – that is “in view of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which gives us mercy” – a Christian should be motivated into a life of thanksgiving to God and His Son. Our motivation as a Christian should be a life of thanksgiving to Jesus because we were destined to Hell but in God’s grace found in Jesus we are now destined for Heaven; something we should be forever grateful for! This life of thanksgiving – boils down to a life of love...*

2. In verse 1, Paul urges us “**to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God**”; what do you think that would look like in your life?

*Unlike the Old Testament sacrifices – our sacrifice is not offered at a temple or an altar or at church. But rather we are to offer our “whole being” to God whether that is in our home-life or in our public life. It is the presentation of our whole being to God to love and serve Him and to love and serve others!*

*As it is our whole bodies:*

- *Our feet will walk in God’s paths/ways. Our feet will be like those beautiful feet that bring the Good News of Jesus (Romans 10:15)*
- *Our tongues will speak God’s truth; encourage; correct; pray for others and ourselves; and proclaim the Gospel*

- Our hands will lift up those who have fallen and perform mundane tasks of service, like cooking, cleaning, typing, mending, administration. Our hands will be prayerful hands!
- Our arms will embrace the lonely, the unloved
- Our ears will listen to quiet gentle voice of God through the Holy Spirit. Our ears will listen to the cries of the distressed
- Our eyes will see and read God's Word. Our eyes will see the need around us – will see those lost from God – and our eyes will look humbly and patiently towards God

***The Apostle Paul is a good example of putting this idea of offering our bodies as a living sacrifice!***

3. In verse 2, Paul uses the phrase “**do not be conformed to the pattern of this world**”; what do you think he means and why is he telling us this?

*This is Paul's version of the call to non-conformity and instead the call is to holiness. The Bible talks about this idea of non-conformity a lot.*

*God's Word came to Israel through Moses: The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God.’” (Leviticus 18:1-4)*

*Similarly, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount; surrounded by the false devotion of the Pharisees and Pagans, said to His disciples: “Do not be like them!” (Matthew 6:8)*

*So, Paul is saying to the Romans (and us) do not be conformed to the prevailing culture but rather be transformed.*

*For us **we shouldn't be conforming to patterns or influences in the world** like: Immoral behaviour (lying, stealing, cheating and other forms of dishonesty); the excessive pursuit of materialism, wealth, success, status which distract from our spiritual life; self-centeredness; succumbing to peer pressure on things that conflict with Christian values; adopting social norm behaviour that go against Christian teaching such as entertainment choices, language and attitudes to sexuality and relationships; also apathy and greed.*

High schoolers are tempted by their peers to be “cool”: vaping; alcohol; marijuana, drugs or tempted by eshays (groups associated with anti-social and violent behaviour and characterized by wearing certain brand of clothing).

The pattern in Australia is that 80% of the population have better things to do than follow God and go to church on Sunday. But just because the majority are doing the wrong thing, doesn't make it right!

**Sometimes people are tempted to please humans rather than pleasing God!**

**Following the patterns of the world leads to Hell. Paul is telling us not to follow the world because it will lead to us missing out on Heaven!**

4. Also in verse 2, Paul uses the phrase “**be transformed by the renewal of your mind**”; what do you think he means and why is he telling us this?

The Greek word for “transformed” is where we get **metamorphosis** (going to a higher form) from! What Paul is thinking of here is a fundamental transformation of character and conduct, away from the pattern or standards of this world and into the image of Christ Himself (a higher form). As 2 Corinthians 3:18 puts it: *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

What Paul is saying is the **two systems** – this **World** and **God's will** – are totally incompatible. Whether we are thinking about the purpose of life or the meaning of life, about how to measure greatness or how to respond to evil, about ambition, sex, honesty, money, community, religion or anything else, the two sets of standards in these **two systems are so completely divergent that there is no possibility of compromise!**

This transformation takes place by the “**renewal of our mind**”. A renewed mind is the only way we can accomplish the rest of verse 2 – that is to - “be able to test and approve what God's will is”. Basically, a renewed mind wants what God wants!

Although Paul does not tell us here how our mind becomes renewed, we know from his other writings that it is a combination of the Holy Spirit and God's Word.

*See 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:20; Colossians 3:9; Titus 3:5 and Ephesians 6:17.*

*To renew our mind, we must both **read the Bible** and **apply the Bible** to our lives!*

### **Read Romans 12:3-8**

5. How are we to think of ourselves? Why?

*We are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. As Aussies would say “don’t have tickets on yourself!”.*

*Instead, we are to evaluate ourselves with sober judgement. In other words, we are to think of ourselves in terms of what God is and what He’s done for us and the faith He’s given us – and not think of ourselves in terms of what we are and what we do for Him.*

*This is only possible because we now have a renewed mind (from verse 2). A renewed mind is **a humble mind like Christ’s**. See Phil 2:5 - *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:**

6. How are we to view our relationships with other Christians?

*As we look at ourselves, we need to understand we are part of one body (the body of Christ) and we are one member of that body, which has many members.*

*And there are different members of the body with different functions in the body. We get our meaning and purpose from being part of the body and not from just going it alone. In this way, we shouldn’t be comparing ourselves with the other members of the body; but instead, humbly accepting we have a role, and others have a different role; and all roles are important, and we all work together as a team!*

7. How do we receive the gifts that Paul describes here? And how are these gifts to be used in and for the church?

*We receive the different gifts **by God’s grace**.*

**God chooses** what gifts we have and how much!

*Paul tells us if God’s given us a gift – then we are to use it! And use it diligently! In the context of Paul having just told us we are all different members of the one body; whatever gifts we have been given by God’s grace, should be used for the **benefit of the whole body** (the body of believers in Jesus) which means for the **benefit of Jesus’ church**.*



*The working together of these gifts for the benefit of the church brings **unity**!*

*The gifts God has given us are:*

- *Prophecy - We are reminded that prophecy, in the Biblical understanding, isn't necessarily "fore-telling" in a strictly predictive sense. It is more accurately "forth telling" the heart and mind of God, which may or may not include a predictive aspect. The ancient Greek text actually has "the" before faith. Paul may be cautioning that prophecy must be according to the faith, in accord with the accepted body of doctrine held among believers.  
Tim Keller says: If Paul is saying that a prophet is not to prophesy in a way that contradicts Christian doctrine, then prophecy here can't mean receiving a divine word from God (like an Old Testament prophet) otherwise why would Paul need to specify such a rule? It could be that the word "prophecy" in this verse means "preaching" or "anointed utterance"*
- *Serving – literally ministry – and can include many things. This has in view the broader picture of **simply serving in practical ways**. Paul sees this as important ministry from the Holy Spirit as well.*
- *Teaching – teaching people (adults and children) from God's Word*
- *Encouraging – things like words of encourage, cards, letters, emails*
- *Giving – financially to the work of the parish or to the work of specific ministry or to the work of mission partners. Also, giving of our time and giving of our presence with people!*
- *Leading – could be leading worship services or leading a growth group or specific ministry. It can also be leading the church spiritually as the Elders do or leading the church in temporal matters (finance/property) which Committee of Management do!*
- *Showing mercy – showing love to the community like P.A.T. or it could be counselling people*

*The use of these God-given gifts brings glory to God!*

8. **Optional exercise.** Complete the **Spiritual Gifts/Skills Survey** in Appendix 1 and give a copy to the minister. This will help you to have an inventory of the gifts God has blessed you with. Ask a close friend if you are unsure what your gifts are.

**Read Romans 12:9-16**

9. What does true love look like towards others and towards God in verses 9 to 16?

*V9 – true love is to be sincere – not hypocritical – not fake – not false. The sort of love that extends from a renewed heart and mind.*

*V9– true love will hate what is evil (opposite of love) and cling to what is good!*

*V10-true love shows devotion to one another – and considers others better than ourselves (see Philippians 2:3b)*

*V11-true love will demonstrate a zeal for God and the things of God – just like Jesus did (see John 2:17). “Keep your spiritual fervour” is another way of saying “allow yourself to be set on fire by the Holy Spirit”*

*V12-true love will persevere even during trials – because if we truly love God – we know He sends trials to test our faith and to make us stronger. So, as we face trials and tribulations; we can be joyful knowing we have the certain hope of Heaven; we can be patient with affliction knowing God is in control and will not forsake us; and we can be faithful in prayer knowing God is always faithful. **It’s generally in the tough times (not the good/easy times) that we grow spiritually!***

*V13-true love sees what we possess belongs to everyone in the God’s family. As we said last week, we only have anything because God gave it to us; so, we should share what we have with the Lord’s people; that’s a loving thing to do!*

*We can also show love by practicing hospitality – providing food for church; meals for those who are sick; and also inviting people to our home for lunch/dinner and fellowship.*

*It's easy to love those who are nice and those who love us.*

*Paul extends our true love for others who even persecute us.*

*V14 – Blessing **those who persecute us**; bless them and do not curse them. Jesus says the same thing in the Sermon on the Mount: **But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you! (Matthew 5:44)***

*The loving thing to do for someone who is persecuting us, is to pray and hope and help them to change. They are not going to change by us retaliating; they are going to change by taking the positive action of praying for them.*

*Then there are some as in verse 15 who are rejoicing. Let’s say someone is rejoicing over a new job or a new house; we can show we love them by rejoicing with them over their blessing!*

*Others, still in verse 15 might be mourning the death of a loved one; we can show we love them by consoling them and mourning with them. If they shed a tear when may genuinely shed a tear too because with empathize with them in their grief!*

*It's also showing true love if we genuinely desire to leave in harmony with one another as Paul says in verse 16. How much better would our world be, if everyone lived in harmony. As Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder sang "Ebony and Ivory live together in perfect harmony, side by side on my piano keyboard, oh Lord why don't we?"*

*Following on from that, still in verse 16; we shouldn't think we are so great that we can't associate with people who might not be as wealthy as us or have as good a job as us or who are not as educated as us or as healthy as us; and we shouldn't think we're too good to associate with them. That's just being proud and arrogant. Remember who Jesus hung out with lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors, sinners and the outcasts of the society. By showing love to people that everyone else writes off – we may win them to follow Jesus – because they feel loved and valued for the first time in their lives!*

***In summary, our love should be other person centred; not self-centred!***

10. **Ponder:** Which areas of Paul's description of true love do you find easy and which areas to you find difficult?

*In general terms*

*Easy to do*

- *It's easy to cling to what is good – because we feel good about that choice*
- *It's easy to be devoted to someone and honour them above ourselves when they are nice and loving*
- *It's easy to share with the Lord's people who are in need because we have the common bond of Jesus and are on the same page spiritually*
- *It's easy to practice hospitality when we enjoy the company of those people*
- *It's easy to rejoice and be happy for someone when they are rejoicing over a blessing*

*Difficult to do*

- *It's difficult to be joyful in hope when undergoing a huge trial*
- *It's difficult to be patient when undergoing afflictions*
- *It's difficult to feel like blessing and praying for someone who is persecuting you*



- *It's difficult to mourn with someone who is mourning if this brings up past memories of the grief we have had to face when we have lost a loved one*
- *It's difficult sometime to ditch our pride and see everyone as equal – especially if you've worked hard and made good choices – and others in 'lowly' positions appear not to have worked so hard and made bad choices.*

### **Read Romans 12:17-21**

11. How do these verses help us to handle challenging, difficult and even evil people?

*We are basically not to take the matter into our own hands -we “don't repay anyone evil for evil” (v17)*

*It's not a matter of tit for tat – an eye for an eye*

*As Christians – we are not to conform to the pattern of the world – we've been transformed with a new mind – Christ's mindset. Remember on the Cross Jesus said, “**Forgive them Father, for they do not know what they are doing**” (Luke 23:34)*

*Paul says – still in verse 17 – we are to “be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone”. Non-Christians [and other Christians] are watching our behaviour as Christians. If our behaviour is the same as the pattern of the world – how will that attract non-Christians to follow Jesus – if there's no clear distinguishable difference!*

*Rather, as Paul says in verse 18 – if it depends on us, we must try to live at peace with everyone. We are to be peacemakers – genuinely seeking peace and harmony – not peacebreakers or peace fakers!*

12. What does Paul have to say about revenge?

*We are not to take revenge!*

*God knows what is going on in each situation.*

*God will show His wrath when it is warranted – and it's His prerogative to take revenge and repay where He sees fit!*

13. What Old Testament passages does Paul quote from?

*Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22*

*If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.*

*What Paul is teaching is that when we are kind to someone who has been “mean” or “nasty” to us – they feel ashamed – because we’re not retaliating or treating them the way they treated us. The burning coals that are heaped on their head could be a reference to the ‘burning shame’ they feel as their conscience works on them. Also “burning coals” also symbolize judgment (Psalm 140:10) and spiritual purification (Isaiah 6:6; Leviticus 16:12) – so as we treat an enemy with love – God’s judgment and purification get to work on them!*

*And from Exodus 23:4*

*“If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it” Paul again is teaching to show love and kindness even to our enemies!*

**14. Read Psalm 133.** How does it relate to Romans 12:1-21?

*Both passages emphasize the importance of unity, love and harmony among believers.*

*Psalm 133 poetically illustrates the beauty and blessing of unity; and Romans 12 provides practical advice and guidance on how to achieve and maintain that unity through love, humility and peace.*

*Together, they offer a comprehensive vision of a united community living in accordance with God’s will.*

*Note: The poetical symbolism of Psalm 133*

*The writer of Psalm 133 – King David – gives two pictures of what it’s like when God’s people live together in unity*

- 1. Aaron was the first High Priest of Israel – the picture is of his ordination. At his ordination, he is anointed with oil on his head; it runs down his beard; onto the robe of the collar. It’s a joyous occasion for all the people of Israel who are gathered together in unity. It’s just like when a new minister is ordained – it’s a joyous occasion and the whole family of God’s people come together in harmony and unity. David’s saying – it’s great when God’s people are gathered together like that in unity!*
- 2. Mount Hermon, located in the northern part of Israel is known for its abundant dew, which sustains vegetation even in dry seasons. In his picture it’s like David imagines that the dew of Mount Hermon has made its way down south to water*

*Mount Zion in Jerusalem. It's another picture of David visualizing the whole of Israel joined together in unity. Again, David's saying - it's great when God's people can live together in unity!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Romans 12:1-21**?

*In view of God's mercy – we are called to live transformed lives that reflect the love of Jesus*



What **light globe moment** did you have in this study?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

*V2 - Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

**Finish in prayer:** Thank God for His grace and mercy in sending His Son Jesus to rescue us. Ask God to help us not to conform to the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewal of our minds.

## Study 2 – Submitting to Governing Authorities

Romans 13:1-7

*(Sermon on 30-June-2024)*

**Before we begin:** Read Mark 12:13-17. What is the story about and what did Jesus mean by His statement in verse 17?

*The Pharisees and Herodians<sup>1</sup> try to catch Jesus out by asking him a question that will force him to agree with the Romans against His own people, the Jews. The Pharisees and Herodians were usually enemies, but they work together to question Jesus.*

*They think that they can flatter Jesus and manipulate Him into answering their question the way they want.*

*Jesus saw right through them and their hypocrisy and asked, “Why are you trying to trap me?”*

*He asked them to bring Him a coin and asked whose image and inscription was on the coin. When they replied ‘Caesar’s’ – Jesus famously said: “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”*

*If we take advantage of the benefits of governmental rule, we are obliged to submit to government, as long as it does not infringe on our service to God. Simply said, Jesus told us to pay our taxes. The Apostle Paul repeated the same idea in Romans 13:6-7.*

*i. “Jesus is saying that we are citizens of heaven and earth at the same time.” (Morris)*

*ii. Given the promises of blessing and cursing under the Old Covenant, had the Jews rendered God His due, they would have never had to render Caesar anything. The fact that they were under Roman domination was due to their own departure from the Lord.*

*iii. Worldly things belong to the world; spiritual things belong to the Kingdom of Heaven.*

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<sup>1</sup> **Pharisees:** Religious party focused on purifying the Jewish nation through intensified observance of the Jewish Law or Torah.

**Herodians:** Political party aligned with the Roman government, seeking political independence for the Jewish people. Unlike the Pharisees, they aimed to restore a member of the Herodian dynasty to the throne in Judea.

## Read Romans 13:1-2

1. Why does Paul emphasize that all authority is established by God in verse 1?

What implications does this have for Christians' attitudes toward government?

*By stating that all authority is established by God, Paul emphasizes God's order [God is a God of order] and sovereignty over human affairs. This implies that even earthly authorities derive their legitimacy ultimately from God's sovereign will. This understanding helps Christians to see government not merely as a human construct, but as part of God's overarching plan for order in society.*

*Knowing that God has ordained governing authorities means a Christian's attitude should be:*

- a. Submission and obedience to the authority knowing God has ultimate authority.*
- b. Respect for those in authority.*
- c. Called to uphold their conscience and justice when the governing authorities act contrary to God's Word*
- d. Conduct themselves in such a way that they are witness to broader society in being obedient and respectful citizens.*

2. What does Paul say is really happening when we rebel against the governing authorities?

*When we rebel against the governing authorities, we are actually rebelling against God who instituted that authority! Unless, of course, the governing authorities order us to do something in contradiction to God's law. Then, we are commanded to obey God before people (as in Acts 4:19).*

## Read Romans 13:3-4

3. What does Paul say is the **job** of the government in verses 3 and 4?

*Paul's idea is that Christians should be the best citizens of all. Even though they are loyal to God before they are loyal to the state, Christians are good citizens because they are honest, give no trouble to the state, pay their taxes, and — most importantly — pray for the state and the rulers.*

*Paul describes government officials as God's servants. They have a ministry (service) in the plan and administration of God, just as much as church leaders do.*



*If the governing authorities are God's minister (servant), they should remember that they are only servants, and not gods themselves.*

*Their job is: They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*

*The governing authorities do not bear the sword in vain: The sword is a reference to capital punishment. In the Roman Empire, criminals were typically executed by beheading with a sword (crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals of the lowest classes). Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has no doubt that the state has the legitimate authority to execute criminals.*

### **Read Romans 13:5-7**

4. What does Paul say is a Christian's **responsibility** towards the government in verses 5 to 7?

*A Christian's responsibility towards the government is to:*

- a. Submit to their authority to avoid possible punishment (fines, prison, death)*
- b. Submit to their authority as a matter of good conscience.*
- c. Pay taxes so that the governing authorities can fulfill the duties they have been ordained by God to do. By implication, Romans 13:6 also says that the taxes collected are to be used by government to get the job done of restraining evil and keeping an orderly society — not to enrich the government officials themselves!*
- d. We are to give to the government the revenue [tax, rates, bills], honor, and proper reverence which are due to the government, all the while reserving our right to give to God that which is due to God alone (Mark 12:17; Matthew 22:21).*

5. What might a Christian do if the government is not doing its job as “**God's servants**” (v4)? Or do Christians just “suck it up”? How might Mark 12:17 (cf. Matthew 22:21; Luke 20:25) help?

*If a citizen has a choice between two governments, it is right to choose and to promote the one that is most legitimate in God's eyes — the one which will best fulfill God's purpose for governments.*

*In a democracy we understand that there is a sense in which we are the government and should not hesitate to help “govern” our democracy through our participation in the democratic process.*

*Mark 12:17: Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him.*

*Matthew 22:21: “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”*

*Luke 20:25: He said to them, “Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”*

*These verses are saying that Christians do not have to suck it up if governing authorities are not doing their job as God’s servants. In our society in Australia, we can vote out incompetent and ungodly governments and/or lobby the government to implement policies that align with God’s Word and not to implement policies that don’t align with God’s Word! For example, the **Presbyterian Church as a whole, constantly lobbies the government where their policies are contrary to God’s Word.***

*Two fine examples of God’s people not submitting to the rulers/authorities are when Daniel’s friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s statue in Daniel 3:4-6, 16-18 and Daniel who continued to pray to God when forbidden (Daniel 6:7-10)*

*Another example, when Israel was in slavery in Egypt, the Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh’s order to kill infant boys (Exodus 1:17); reminding us of those who hid Jews in defiance of the Nazi government during WWII.*

6. **Ponder:** Think it through. What if the government said we couldn’t read our Bibles or pray or even worship? Do we “**submit to the authorities**” as in verse 5? Remember what happened in COVID – we weren’t able to worship?  
*If the government told us not to read our Bibles or pray or even worship; we do not have to obey these rules/laws – though we might run the risk of being imprisoned. We could choose to disobey publicly or just choose to read our bibles, pray and worship in private!*

*During COVID we were not told we couldn't worship but only that we couldn't do so face to face. Some Christians at the time argued that the government were controlling how we worship, which to some extent they were. However, the government never went as far as saying we couldn't worship at all! We do not have to submit to the authorities when they blatantly break God's Law. See Acts 4 for example, what Peter and John did when faced with this situation:*

*<sup>18</sup> Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, "**Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!** <sup>20</sup> As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

### **Read Daniel 2:1-23.**

7. What was the dilemma that Daniel and the wise men of Babylon faced?

*King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and told his wise men and astrologers that if they did not give him an interpretation of this dream, they would be "cut into unreasonable request. When nobody could give him an interpretation, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon, including Daniel and his friends!*

8. How did Daniel handle this dilemma?

*V14 – Daniel spoke to the commander, Arioch, with **wisdom and tact**.*

*V16 – Daniel went into the King and **asked for time**, so that he might interpret the dream for him.*

*VV17-19 – Daniel returned to his house and **explained the problem to his friends** and urged them to **pray and plead for mercy from the God of Heaven** so that he, his friends and the wise men of Babylon might not be executed.*

*God answered Daniel's prayer and God revealed the answer to this mystery to Daniel in a vision!*

*This should encourage us to pray for answers to unreasonable and ungodly policies of our governments!*

9. How does Daniel describe God in verses 20-22?

*Wisdom and power are His!*

*God can change times and seasons; depose and raise up Kings!*

*God gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning!*

*God reveals deep and hidden things.  
He knows what lies in darkness and light dwells in Him!  
He answers prayers! He answered Daniel's prayer!*

10. How does Daniel 2:1-23 relate to Romans 13:1-7?

*Daniel respected the authority of King Nebuchadnezzar as Paul says we are to do; but he also did not accept the ungodly plan of the King and went in and asked for time; and then sought God's help. A great model for us.  
As Jesus said, Daniel did "He gave to Nebuchadnezzar what was Nebuchadnezzar but also gave to God what was God's"*

11. Does Daniel 2:21 give you comfort?

*Yes, God is in control of the times and seasons. We may have a time or season of a poor ungodly government; or challenging time and season like COVID. We also can draw comfort in knowing that God controls who is King, President or PM. He deposes them and raises up new ones!*

**Read Daniel 4:1-18.**

12. How does Daniel 4:1-18 relate to Romans 13:1-7?

*Daniel 4:1-18 describes King Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation by Daniel. In this passage, Nebuchadnezzar receives a vision about his future downfall and restoration, which **emphasizes God's ultimate authority over earthly kings and kingdoms. It teaches about humility before God's sovereignty and the consequences of pride.***

*Both passages emphasize the sovereignty of God over earthly authorities. Daniel 4:1-18 shows that even the most powerful earthly rulers are subject to God's will and authority. Nebuchadnezzar's pride and subsequent humbling demonstrate God's power to exalt and humble kings according to His purposes.*

*The humility and recognition of God's sovereignty seen in Daniel 4 can serve as a practical example for rulers and authorities mentioned in Romans 13. **Both passages encourage a proper perspective on authority: rulers are accountable to God and should exercise their authority in accordance with His will; when they don't, there will be consequences even for them!***

13. Does Daniel 4:17 give you comfort?

Verse 17 says: 'The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that **the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth** and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.'

*It's comforting to know that God, the Most-High is sovereign all rules of the Earth!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Romans 13:1-7**?

**The Divine establishment of governmental authority and the Christian's obligation to submit to it.**



What **light globe moment** did you have in this study?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**Daniel 2:21-** *He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.*

**Finish in prayer:** Thank God that He establishes (and dismantles) all governing authorities. Ask God to help us submit to the governing authorities where appropriate and stand up for His Word and His Son when governing authorities don't!



**Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke**  
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**Resources:**

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

Romans 8 to 16 for you (Timothy Keller)

The Message of Romans (John Stott)

Romans (Geoffrey B. Wilson)

Romans 1 to 8 (William Hendrikson)

The Epistle to the Romans (Floyd E. Hamilton)

The Epistle to the Romans (John Murray)

## Appendix 1 - Spiritual Gifts/Skills Survey

Feet Go!



Hands Do!

During our discussions on Vision Sunday, we agreed that we would conduct a Spiritual Gifts/Skills Survey, to determine how best our church family can serve the Lord in various ministries here at St. David's. From Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4 and various other Bible passages, it is clear that God has blessed us with spiritual gifts and skills for the mutual benefit of one another.

**PLEASE TAKE TIME OUT, TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SURVEY**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

Read each statement below and mark one of the following letters:

**Y = Definitely true of me**

**N or Blank = Not true of me**

**S = Sometimes true of me**

**? = I'm not sure**

- \_\_\_ Administration: I have computer skills in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- \_\_\_ Administration: I have secretarial skills and manage details well
- \_\_\_ Administration: I have accountancy or book-keeping experience
- \_\_\_ Discernment: The gift of discerning truth and error according to God's Word
- \_\_\_ Evangelism: I have a great desire to engage with non-Christians and effectively communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- \_\_\_ Encouragement: I have the gift of comforting, challenging and affirming those who are having difficulty with their lives and their faith
- \_\_\_ Faith: I have the ability to trust God's faithfulness to provide a way in all circumstances
- \_\_\_ Giving: I have the Spirit given ability to contribute significant personal and material resources to the Lord's work freely, cheerfully and sacrificially
- \_\_\_ Healing: I have the Spirit given gift to serve as a human intermediary through whom it pleases God to heal a person spiritually, emotionally or physically
- \_\_\_ Serving: I am able to serve in various ministries in such a way that it increases the effectiveness of others – without the need for recognition or human praise
- \_\_\_ Hospitality: I like preparing meals for people and delivering meals to their home
- \_\_\_ Hospitality: I like working/helping in the kitchen
- \_\_\_ Hospitality: I like preparing morning and/or afternoon tea
- \_\_\_ Hospitality: I am comfortable offering accommodation, safety & security to those in need
- \_\_\_ Welcoming: I like welcoming and talking to new people

- \_\_\_ Prayer: I am able to pray from the heart with intensity, fervency and perseverance on behalf of the needs of others, on a regular basis
- \_\_\_ Leadership: God has gifted me with leadership skills and I have led successfully led various ministries or groups
- \_\_\_ Leadership: I am competent at leading Sunday Services
- \_\_\_ Mercy: I have the ability to feel genuine empathy and compassion
- \_\_\_ Shepherding: I have the special ability to assume a shepherding responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers and to equip them for ministry
- \_\_\_ Teaching: God has gifted me with the ability to communicate God's truth to others in such a way that it brings understanding and application
- \_\_\_ Teaching: God has gifted me with the ability to teach and disciple children
- \_\_\_ Preaching: God has gifted me with the ability to expound and exhort God's Word
- \_\_\_ Pastoral Care: I like to phone people to chat, encourage & listen to them
- \_\_\_ Pastoral Care: I have a heart for people and get joy in visiting them in their home
- \_\_\_ Pastoral Care: I have a gift of compassion and like to visit people in hospital and age care facilities
- \_\_\_ Practical: If you need something built or fixed, bring it to me
- \_\_\_ Practical: I have experience in gardening and building maintenance
- \_\_\_ Music: I am able to play a musical instrument; please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Music: People say that God has blessed me with a wonderful singing voice
- \_\_\_ Creative Communication: I have been gifted with the ability to communicate God's truths through visual, written or performing arts; specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Discipleship: I am good at inspiring and motivating people
- \_\_\_ Discipleship: I enjoy helping people to grow in love for Jesus and His Word
- \_\_\_ Missions: I have a heart for Missions and Missionaries
- \_\_\_ Counselling: I have the ability to listen to people and guide them with wisdom from God's Word
- I have formal qualifications in the following areas: \_\_\_\_\_
- God has blessed me with the following talent(s) not already mentioned above: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for completing the survey**