

STUDY NOTES

A LETTER TO THE ROMANS *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “Life 180: Living the Christian Life” on 6/18/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 12:9-21

THE “CITY OF GOD”

As we noted last week, Romans chapter 12 brings a shift in Paul’s letter. He moves from a theological approach to a practical approach. Paul tells the church that each has a specific role in this new family that God is creating through His Son, Jesus. This new family, or, City of God, as St. Augustine called it, has new people who not only believe a certain way but also ACT a certain way.

We learn that the things God calls us to in Romans 12 are continuing acts. They aren’t things we do “once”

What God seeks in the believer is not a single worthy act, but a continuing obedience and way of life.

- *Why is it so hard to continually follow the ways of God?*
- *How can we help each other in this pursuit?*

THE GIFTS FROM GOD

God is generous in giving us spiritual gifts for the benefit of the Body of Christ. These gifts are different and vary from person to person, but they are all given so that the church might become all that God hopes it (she) will become. The body, when properly functioning, brings glory to God and service to each other. So, when we

“Envy” each other’s gifts, “Confuse” our gifts with others, or “Project” our gifts on others it damages the Body.

- *Do you know your Spiritual gifts? If not, have you considered serving the Body to determine your gifts?*
- *How can we stop from envying others or confusing or projecting our gifts?*

THE FAMILY

As a family, we are called to love each other with what the Greeks knew as “storge love.” This is a family love. Just like with the family you were born into, the church is a group of people that you don’t get to chose. You get “stuck” with lots of people you wouldn’t chose to be around. As C.S. Lewis says:

“Storge is NOT discriminating. Friends and lovers will say that they were “made for each other.” The glory of storge is that it unites those who almost comically or emphatically are not. Storge exists between those that if they had not found themselves in the same household or community would have had nothing to do with each other.... There’s a wonder about loving someone with whom you are simply thrown together with. You are beginning to appreciate goodness and intelligence in them, not merely goodness or intelligence that is flavored to suit your own tastes and views, your own palate.... Dogs and cats should always be brought up together. It broadens their minds so.”

- *How do most people “chose” a church?*
- *How can a better understanding as the church as a body and as a family help you see God’s purposes for the church?*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Romans 9-21 tells us how Christians are supposed to act and behave. God calls us to do things like “bless those who curse us.” This is the opposite of what our sin nature wants to do. We want to curse those who curse us! God calls us to leave vengeance to Him, but we want it for ourselves.

- *As a group, re-read all the things that God commands us to do? What are the most difficult for you?*
- *How can we strive for justice and yet at the same time rest and have hope that God will ultimately settle ALL injustice even though it may not happen in our lifetime?*
- *Pray with each other that we, as a Church, would help each other as members of God’s family.*