

Authentic Christianity Romans 12

There 5 relationships that we are going to look in Romans 12 that gives us a clear picture and description of authentic Christianity:

- I. Your relationship with God ... Surrendered to God. Vs 1
- II. Your relationship with the world's value system... Separate from the world. Vs. 2
- III. Your relationship with yourself...Sober in self assessment. Vs. 3-8
- IV. Your relationship with other believers...Serving in love. Vs 9-13
- V. Your relationship to unbelievers...Supernaturally responding to evil with good. Vs. 14-21

Questions to ponder:

- 1. How would you define the term Christianity?

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(Food for thought: The first time they were called Christians was at a place called Antioch (Acts 11:26). In the earliest days of the church, "Christian" was a derisive term given to those followers of Christ. Eventually, followers of Christ came to love and adopt this name.)

- 2. Do you think that God has any expectations and dreams for you, if so, what are they?

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- 3. In your opinion, why do you think so many Christians are stuck and not growing in their faith?

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- 4. How would you define spiritual maturity?

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- 5. What has had the greatest impact on your spiritual maturity over the last few years?

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Relationship # 1: Your relationship with God...Surrendered to God. Vs. 1

**What do you think God wants from you?**

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**God wants total commitment which has been defined by Webster's Dictionary as the alignment of one's motives, resources, priorities and goals to fulfill a specific mission, accomplish a specific task, or follow a specific person.**

- I. The reason for the commitment. (therefore)
  - Therefore refers back to the first 11 chapters of Romans.
    - A. **Chapters 1-3** deals with condemnation which reveals the need of God's righteousness
    - B. **Chapters 4-5** deals with Justification which reveals the provisions of God's righteousness.
    - C. **Chapters 6-8** deals with Sanctification which reveals the demonstration of God's righteousness
    - D. **Chapters 9-11** deals with restoration which reveals how God is sovereignly in control in Israel's restoration.

- II. The recommendation for the commitment. (I beseech you... brethren)
  - Beseech comes from a Greek word that means to call alongside to help. Jesus used a similar word when He talked about the Holy Spirit. This word came to connote exhorting, counseling or encouraging and that is how Paul uses it here.

**Notice who is urging them. It is the Apostle Paul so you know that his words carried a lot of weight. He was not asking them to do something that he had not already done. He had exemplified this request that he is making so you can imagine the impact that this would have on the recipients of this letter.**

- III. The rationale for the commitment. (by the mercies of God)
  - "Mercies of God" refers to the extravagant, divine graces that Paul has expounded upon in the first 11 chapters. Because of these mercies we should be motivated to serve Him.

**What are some of these mercies?**

1. There is affection.
2. There is justification.
3. There is sanctification.
4. There is glorification.

- IV. The resource for the commitment. (present ...God)

This is not about salvation but surrender (Lordship). In other words God wants us to completely surrender our all to Him so that He can work through us. God has created us for a purpose and only through Him can we know what that is. It only makes sense for us to surrender to Him because we really don't have a clue about what we are doing anyway.

**3 Passages that we need to consider:**

1. **John 15:1-8**
2. **Hebrews 12:1-2**
3. **Jeremiah 29:11-13**

**A living sacrifice doesn't mean that we are robots. Instead we become intimate with Him and He begins to transform us from the inside out thus causing us to process information in a godly way. When we present ourselves as living sacrifices we will then be able to think biblically and reason theologically. Those are 2 components that are missing in our society today.**

- V. The reality of the commitment. (reasonable service)

Because of what He has done for us, it is logical for us to offer God our highest service. He deserves our best not our leftovers.

**Relationship #2: Your relationship with the world's value system... Separate from the world. Vs. 2**

Why are there so many decisions for Christ but so few Disciples of Christ?

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**We must keep in the mind that the world offers us something that it can't produce. It offers significance, security, fulfillment and happiness but unfortunately it cannot deliver on that promise.**

I. Must stop being conformed.

- “Conformed” means to be molded or shaped. Paul is saying do not be squeezed into the world's mold or value system.

**Some things to know about the phrase “do not be conformed to this world”**

1. It is an aorist imperative command which is a command to do something that must be done right now. In other words if you have not been doing this then you must start obeying this right now. You don't need to pray about it or think about it. You must do it right now.
2. It is written in the passive voice which means that you receive the action. In other words this is something that happens to you. The point that Paul is making is that whether you realize it or not, the world is impacting you.

**Therefore what Paul is commanding us to do is stop allowing ourselves to be molded by the influences and pressures of this present world system.**

A. Must understand the world's system.

1. It is orchestrated by Satan. **Ephesians 2:1-2**

**Don't forget that the only power that Satan has is what God has given him which means that he can only do what God allows or instructs him to do. He may be the devil but he is God's devil. (Job 1-2)**

2. It is fueled by lust. **1 John 2:15-17**

- Lust is a strong desire for evil things.
  - a. Lust of the flesh i.e. the passion to feel. (pleasure, sex)
- The term flesh refers to the sin nature of man, the rebellious self dominated by sin and in opposition to God.
  - b. Lust of the eyes i.e. the passion to have. (possession, salary)
- Satan uses the eyes as a strategic avenue to incite wrong desires.
  - c. Boastful pride of the life i.e. passion to be. (position, status)
- This phrase has the idea of arrogance over one's circumstances, which produces haughtiness or exaggeration, parading what one possessed to impress other people.

**These are the only three ways that Satan will ever tempt us and he uses the world's system to entice us in these areas. These are the only 3 plays that he has in his playbook but he runs them extremely well and he also disguises them well. To see these in actions Read Genesis 3:1-6 and Matthew 4:1-11.**

- B. By using the resources God has provided.
  1. He has given us the scriptures. **Hebrew 4:12**
  2. He has given us the Spirit. **John 14:16**
  3. He has given us the saints. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**
  4. He has given us situations. **Romans 8:28**
- C. By upholding a proper diet.

**You are what you eat. The problem that we are facing is because our diet is the world rather than the word. If we change our diet our spiritual health will be better. If we continue with what we have been getting then we will continue to live below the level of mediocrity. +**

II. Must start being transformed.

A. The process of transformation.

- Transformation means to be changed from the inside out.

**A couple of things to know about the phrased “be transformed”:**

1. It is spoken in the passive voice which means you receive the action or it is something that happens to you. God is the one that does the transforming.\
2. It is a present imperative which is a command to do something that requires continuous and repeated action. When we do our part it will result in our being transformed.

**Transformation begins when you start putting the word of God in your mind.**

**3 keys to renewing your mind:**

1. Refocus on Romans 12:1
2. Recognize that the mind is a battle ground.

**3 Key questions that you need to answer:**

- a. What are you putting in your mind?
- b. How long do you watch it?
- c. What do you do with it when it gets in there?
3. Renewal of the mind is a supernatural work of the Spirit.

B. The practical steps of transformation.

1. Hearing God’s Word. Romans 10:17
2. Reading God’s word. Revelation 1:3

**Cultivate daily time with God making sure that you have a time, place and method of reading.**

3. Studying God’s word. 2 Timothy 2:15
4. Memorizing God’s word. Psalm 119:9-11
5. Meditating on God’s word. Joshua 1:8

C. The purpose of transformation.

**To get God’s best so that you may test, by experience, what God’s will is.**

- Good: winsome, attractive, beautiful, richly satisfying.
- Acceptable: pleasing to God and pleasing to us.
- Perfect: according to design, maximizing our fullest potential in fulfilling God’s purpose for our lives

Read John 17:13-18, what does it mean to be in the world but not of the world?

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What are some things that we readily accept today that would have been unthinkable 25 years ago?

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What one practical change could you make in the next couple of weeks that would help you say no to the world system?

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What specific practices have been most helpful in renewing your mind?

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What is the biggest hindrance to you spending time in God's word on a regular basis?

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## **Your relationship with yourself...Sober in self assessment. Vs. 3-8**

### **How to come to grips with the real you**

One of your most significant relationships is the one that you have with yourself.

3 Questions that we all ask ourselves:

1. Who am I? This is an identity question.
2. Where do I belong? This is a security question.
3. What am I suppose to do? This is a significance question.

Why is it so hard for us to answer these three questions? Genesis 3:8-13 provides us with some insight into this dilemma.

#### **In verse 8, why did Adam and Eve hide themselves?**

Because of the fall their eyes had been opened. When sin enters the picture it brings about shame and disgrace and causes us to want to hide. When the fall took place our relationship with God, our relationship with others and our relationship with self were marred.

#### **In verse 9, what is God really asking Adam?**

He is not asking an informational question because He knows where Adam is, instead He is asking a diagnostic question because He wants Adam to discover what he has done. Adam ate the fruit with full knowledge of what he had done whereas Eve was deceived. God gives him a chance to fess up.

#### **In verse 10, what does Adam reveal and how does that relate to our identity crisis?**

Because of sin, Adam hides because there are some things about himself that he does not like and tries to hide them from God. This is why we try to keep people away from getting to know us. All of us are really insecure and as a result we are very afraid to allow people to get to know who we really are because we are afraid that if people really knew all about me, then they would not like me or want to be around me.

#### **In verse 11, what kind of question is God asking, informational or diagnostic?**

Diagnostic, he is given a second chance to come clean and tell the truth

#### **In verse 12, how did Adam respond?**

He rejected responsibility and assigned blame to God and the woman. It is amazing how much his attitude changed towards Eve as a result of sin. Sin has an impact on our perspective and perception.

#### **In verse 13, how did Eve respond?**

She followed the lead of her husband by assigned blame to God and the serpent.

**Since the fall humanity has been suffering an identity crisis. Before the fall, humanity was open about everything. They felt no shame and did not need to hide anything but once sin entered the picture shame became prominent and humanity felt the need to hide and have been hiding every since. Why because they don't know who they are, where they belong and what they are suppose to do. Until we are able to answer those three questions, we will never be free. Every since the garden we have been hiding from God and from others and it is time for that to stop.**

#### **3 Implications for How We See Ourselves:**

1. Fear rooted in shame. (I'm afraid)
2. Hiding rooted in insecurity. (I don't want to be seen)

- We **ALL** struggle with insecurity.
  - We cover our insecurities with strong reactions or weak reactions.
3. Blaming rooted in denial. (I'm a victim)  
 The key is learning to accept who God made you to be.

Let's talk about it:

1. Growing up, what did you do to overcome your insecurity and get others' approval?

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2. What were the primary messages you received from your parents that have shaped your view of yourself?

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3. When did you have the greatest sense of belonging in your life?

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4. How well do you accept how God made you and who He made you to be? Psalm (See Psalm 139:1-18)

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Answering life Most Important Questions:

- I. Who am I? vs. 3

A. Must reconcile who Jesus is. **Colossians 1:13-18**

**As you read those verses it seems like it is telling us all about who He is rather than who we are. This establishes a fundamental truth that we need to understand. We can't know who we are until we know and understand who He is.**

B. We must reason properly about our gifts. (think)

**We need to remember that all of the things that we have we received by the grace of God. No one ever received anything on their own.**

- To think means just that to think.
- To think more highly means to over think, to think above, thus to think proudly.
- To think soberly means to be in one's right mind.

**The point that Paul is making is that the believer should appraise his gifts rightfully but not be proud of them because they have been given to them by the gracious hand of God to carry out His purposes.**

**How should we think?**

1. Not to high. (pride)
2. Not to low. (inferiority)

**Genuine humility is not thinking of yourself at all.**

C. We must rest in the wisdom of God's gifting. (measure of faith)

- Measure of faith refers to the correct proportion of giftedness that is necessary to carry out your role in the body.

**You were created for a very unique purpose and God has given you all the resources that are necessary for the task.**

- Faith is not referring to saving faith but faithful stewardship, the kind the kind and quantity required to use one's own particular gift.

II. Where do I belong?

**You belong in the body of Christ because you have a role to fulfill.**

**3 things that we need to remember.**

- A. The construction of the body. (one body many parts)
- B. The function of the body parts. (do not all have the same functions)
- C. The cooperation of the body parts. (each belong to all the others)

III. What am I suppose to do? Vs. 6-8

**Discover, develop and deploy your spiritual gift.**

**The main point that Paul is making in these verses is not about the actual gifts. Instead he is calling for us to get focused what you are made to do and start doing it. That is why you were created. You were created to bring Him glory and you do this by fulfilling the purpose of which you have been created. See 2 Timothy 4:7-8**

**3 Things that you never need to forget?**

- 1. God created you to be completely unique. You are eternally valuable. **Psalm 139:13-14**
- 2. God placed you in His family. You are unconditionally accepted. **Ephesians 3:19-21**
- 3. God gave you certain gifts to fulfill His purpose. You are uniquely significant.

**Ephesians 2:10**

**The next time you look in the mirror tell the person that is looking back at you that “I like you because you are fearfully and wonderfully made.”**

**Food for Thought:**

Write down three things that you are good at:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Write down three things that you are not good at:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

What is the most significant thing that you have learned about yourself over the last five years?

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Where do you fit in the body of Christ? How connected do you feel in the body of Christ? What could help you feel more connected?

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What is your primary spiritual gift? Where do you love to serve? Where do you feel effective and fulfilled when you serve?

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Do you feel like you are using your spiritual gift(s)? If not what is standing in your way?

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If time and money were not an issue, what would you attempt for God?

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Which of the following 3 statements do you find the most difficult to believe and accept about your self and why?

- You are eternally valuable.
- You are unconditionally accepted.
- You are uniquely significant.

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## **Your relationship with other believers...Serving in love. Vs 9-13**

### **How to Experience Authentic Community**

**Have you ever spoken with someone that is on their deathbed? The things that they want to talk with you about the most are those things that are most important. The night before Jesus went to the cross He prays for the disciples. Turn to John 17:20-24, here you see Jesus is praying for authentic community. Notice how many times unity is referenced.**

#### I. The command for community. **John 13:34-35**

##### A. The command. (love one another)

1. It had a new standard. (as I have loved you)

**The command to love was not a new command because we were given that command in Deuteronomy 6:5. It was new in the sense that now we had a model because what He asked them to do is what He demonstrated to them in how He loved them.**

2. It had a new source.

**The only way a person can love like this is through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Without His help we are incapable of exhibiting this kind of love. Love is a fruit of the Spirit.**

##### B. The clue. (by this all will know that you are my disciples)

**The greatest apologetic in the world is Christians loving Christian**

#### II. The creation of community. Romans 12:9-13

##### **Authentic Community Occurs When the Following Four Things Occur:**

##### A. When the real you. (vs. 9)

**The first step is the real you must show up and it is characterized by two things:**

1. Authenticity i.e. your love must be sincere. (love...hypocrisy)

- Hypocrisy means to be an actor on a stage, to impersonate someone else, to pretend or play a part.

**Paul is calling for your love to like this. It must be a genuine love. (Look at Acts 5:1-11)**

2. Purity i.e. hate what is evil and cling to what is good.

- Abhor means to dislike or have a horror for.

**It refers to the believer expressing their hatred for evil by staying away from it and loathing it. It describes a person that stays as far away from evil as possible rather than trying to get as close to it as they can without yielding.**

- Evil refers to that which is in opposition to good.
- Cleave means to glue to, cement, to join or fasten firmly together.

**At the heart of true community is honesty. Without authenticity the command of John 13 and the prayer of John 17 would never become a reality.**

##### B. Meets real needs. (vs. 10)

1. To meet real needs I must have the right attitude. (be devoted...love)

- To be devoted to someone refers to having a family sort of love for someone that is not based on personal attraction or desirability with no personal gains in mind. In other words, Paul is saying love the brethren that are in the faith as if they were brethren in blood.

2. To meet real needs I must show the right appreciation. (giving...honor)

- Giving preference refers to having passion for another person's success. You place their needs above your own needs.

**Authentic relationships are about time, sacrifice and devotion. It doesn't take much to do things when they are convenient and don't cost you anything. You can impress from a distance but you impact by serving people up close and personal.**

C. For the right reasons. (vs. 11)

**What is your motivation for doing what you do? Is it for God's glory or your glory?**

1. Must have the right energy. (not lagging behind in business)
  - Not lagging behind in diligence means don't be slow or lazy.
  - Being lazy is the failure to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.
2. Must have the right enthusiasm. (fervent in spirit)
  - Fervent in spirit means to boil in spirit. This phrase suggest having plenty of heat to produce adequate, productive energy, but not so much heat that one goes out of control.
3. Must have the right encouragement. (serving the Lord)

**True love is choosing to give another person what they need most, when they deserve it the least and at great personal cost. That is how Jesus loves us.**

D. In the right way. (vs. 12-13)

1. The upward focus.

- Rejoicing in hope: hope is an anchored certainty of what will occur in the future. How do we accomplish this?
  - a. By hearing His word.
  - b. By reading His word.
  - c. By studying His word.
  - d. By memorizing His word.
  - e. By meditating on His ord.
  - f. By obeying His word.
- Persevering: to remain under, that is to remain under the test in a God-honoring manner, not seeking to escape but eager to learn the lessons it was sent to teach.
- Tribulation: a pressing together, pressure or oppression that comes as a result of your relationship with Christ.

**James 1:2-8 helps us with this, it gives us four things to do:**

- a. Cheer up. Vs. 2
  - b. Calm down. Vs. 3-4
  - c. Call in. Vs. 5
  - d. Carry on. Vs. 6-8
- Devoted to prayer: to give constant attention to, to be steadfastly attentive to, to be in constant readiness for.
    2. The outward focus.
      - a. Partnering with the saints.
      - b. Pursuit of strangers.

**Practicing hospitality: means the pursuit of strangers not merely entertaining of ones friends. In NT times travel was dangerous and inns were evil, scarce and expensive. So the early church often opened their homes to travelers, especially to fellow believers.**