Introduction: Parents and Children

- Every parent has a dream for their child.

- Our kids can be the source of our greatest JOYS or deepest PAINS.

- Our heavenly Father has a dream for every one of His children.

- God’s dream is to make you like His SON or DAUGHTER.

  Matthew 5:48, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 4:13

- God’s dream for every child of His is to become a disciple –
  a ROMANS 12 Christian!
5 Key Relationships: Romans 12 Biblical Responses

1. **Relationship with God:**

   **SURRENDERED** to God

   “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, **to offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.”

   Romans 12:1

2. **Relationship with the world:**

   **SEPARATE** from the World

   “**Do not conform** any longer 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.”

   Romans 12:2

3. **Relationship with yourself:**

   **SOBER** in Self-Assessment

   “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought**, but rather **think of yourself with sober judgment**, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

   Romans 12:3-8
4. **Relationship with believers:**

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.** Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

Romans 12:9-13

5. **Relationship with nonbelievers:**

**SUPERNATURALLY** Responding to Evil with Good

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. **Do not repay anyone evil for evil.** Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is Mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**”

Romans 12:14-21
Warning – Romans 12 is not a “try-hard” moral code to live up to, but a faith response to what God has already done for us.

- Romans 1 - 3: **SIN** - Our problem that separates us from God.
- Romans 4 - 5: **SALVATION** - God’s solution in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- Romans 6 - 8: **SANCTIFICATION** - Living your new life in God’s power and growing progressively in Christ-likeness.
- Romans 9 - 11: **SACRIFICE** - Living in confidence because God is in control and keeps all His promises…

**Personal Application Questions:**

1. Would you like to receive everything your heavenly Father has planned for you by becoming a Romans 12 Christian?

2. Have you personally taken the step to be “all in” in your relationship with Christ?

3. How does surrender and being separate from the world’s values prepare you to get God’s best for your life? see Psalm 84:11

4. What “next step” would help you fulfill God’s dream for your life?

5. Who could help and support you as you take that next step of obedience?
Introduction: “Risk, reason, and the decision making process”

– Excerpt from Harvard Business Review

Case Study #1 – John’s Civil War Coins

Case Study #2 – Sheila’s Picasso

Questions to ponder:

• What are the risks?

• What are the potential rewards?

• What would you do?

• Why?

Observations & Analysis:
Case Study #3 – Ancient Treasure

44The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

Jesus – Matthew 13:44-46 (NASB)

• Observations

• Thesis – Total surrender is the CHANNEL through which God’s best and biggest blessings flow.

• Definition – “Total commitment is the alignment of one’s motives, resources, priorities, and goals to fulfill a specific mission, accomplish a specific task, or follow a specific person.”

  – Webster’s Dictionary

• Spiritual Insight – Through which lens do you view total commitment?

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<th>Positive</th>
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The Problem: What does total commitment look like in our relationship with God? How does it work?

The Answer:
"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

The Command: “OFFER your bodies”

The Motivation: “The MERCY of God”

The Reason: “Spiritual act of WORSHIP.”
What does He want most?

1. He wants you!

2. All that you are and all that you have fully surrendered to Him.

Why surrender to His Lordship? Psalm 84:11

Because total surrender is the channel through which God’s best and biggest blessings flow.

The Question: Are you ALL IN?

Personal Application Questions:

1. How has your view of commitment changed?

2. Why do most Christians miss out on God’s best for their life?

3. What most keeps you from being “all in?”

4. What would it look like to surrender all to Christ today?
**Introduction:** Why are there so many decisions... ...and so few disciples?

**Negative Command:** “Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world…”

“Do not be conformed”

- Passive voice
- Imperative
- Present tense

**Translation:** “Stop allowing yourselves to be molded by the influences and pressures of this present world system.”

**Application:** We are to be **SEPARATE** from the world’s values.

15“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

1 John 2:15-17 (NASB)

**Summary:** The world’s system seeks to **SEDUCE** us from our love for Christ by **PLEASURE**, **POSSESSIONS**, and **POSITION**.
Positive Command: “…but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

“Be transformed”
- Passive voice
- Imperative
- Present tense

Translation
“But allow God to completely change your inward thinking and outward behavior by cooperating wholeheartedly moment-by-moment with the Spirit’s renewing process.”

Application
Are you shaped more by the WORLD or the WORD?

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”
Matthew 4:4 (NASB)

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18 (NASB)

The means of transformation: “…by the renewing of your mind.”

- Renewing your mind is a continual REFOCUS of a Romans 12:1 perspective.
  Colossians 3:1-4
- Renewing your mind will always involve a BATTLE.
  2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- Renewing your mind is a SUPERNATURAL work of the Spirit.
  Romans 8:5-6

Summary
You are what you EAT !!!

For more resources, go to www.LivingontheEdge.org
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Practical methods for “Renewing Your Mind”

1. **HEARING** God’s Word
   
   Romans 10:17 (NASB)
   
   *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.*

2. **READ** God’s Word
   
   Revelation 1:3 (NASB)
   
   *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

3. **STUDY** God’s Word
   
   2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)
   
   *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth.*

4. **MEMORIZE** God’s Word
   
   Psalm 119:9,11 (NASB)
   
   *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your Word. Your Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.*

5. **MEDITATE** on God’s Word
   
   Joshua 1:8 (NASB)
   
   *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

**A tool for transformation:** The “2PROAPT” Method
The purpose of transformation: “To get God’s best so that you may test, by experience, that God’s will is…”

- **Good** - winsome, attractive, beautiful, richly satisfying
- **Pleasing** - acceptable to God and well-pleasing to us
- **Perfect** - according to design, maximizing our fullest potential in fulfilling God’s purpose for our lives

Personal Application Questions:

1. What is your major “take away” from this message?

2. Why do so few Christians experience God’s best for their lives according to Romans 12:2?

3. We all struggle with the world’s system seeking to mold our lives – where are you most vulnerable? What has helped you the most to resist temptation in your areas of weakness?

4. Why is “mind renewal” so important? How does mind renewal and getting God’s best relate to one another?

5. Is there something or someone God wants you to say “no” to as it is conforming you to the world? Is there something God wants you to say “yes” to so your mind can be renewed and experience God’s best for your life?

Resources from Living on the Edge to Help You Apply Romans 12:2

*Ancient Paths to Intimacy with God*, CDs - C. Ingram
*Living Without Hypocrisy*, CDs - C. Ingram
*Love, Sex & Lasting Relationships*, CD/DVD series, Book - C. Ingram
*The Miracle of Life Change*, CD/ DVD series, Book - C. Ingram
*Ready, Set, Grow!*, CDs - C. Ingram
Three questions we all ask ourselves:

1. Who am I? (Identity)

2. Where do I belong? (Security)

3. What am I supposed to do? (Significance)
Why is it so hard to answer these questions?

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Genesis 3:3-13 (NASB)

Three obstacles to getting right answers:

1. Fear rooted in **SHAME**.

2. Hiding rooted in **INSECURITY**.

3. Blaming rooted in **DENIAL**.
God’s Answers: Romans 12:3-8 (NIV)

1. Who are you? Romans 12:3

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

The Command: Think ACCURATELY about yourself.

2. Where do you belong? Romans 12:4-5

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

The Reason: You have a ROLE to fill.

3. What are you supposed to do? Romans 12:6-8

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

The Practice: Discover and DEPLOY your spiritual gift.
Never forget who you really are!

1. God uniquely created you – you are **ETERNALLY VALUABLE**.
   Psalm 139:13-14

2. God placed you in His family – you are **UNCONDITIONALLY ACCEPTED**.
   Ephesians 3:19-22

3. God gifted you to fulfill His purpose – you are **IRREPLACEABLY SIGNIFICANT**.
   Ephesians 2:10

**Personal Application Questions:**

1. On a scale of 1 – 5, how accurately do you tend to think of yourself? Why? Why not?

2. On a scale of 1 – 5, how relationally connected are you to fellow believers? Why? Why not?

3. What is your primary spiritual gift? What do you love to do among God’s people and see that it is used to help and encourage others?

4. What “next step” do you sense God wants you to take to develop a more sober self assessment?

**Resources from Living on the Edge to Help You Apply Romans 12:3-8**

*Your Divine Design* - (CD/DVD- 4 part series) – Chip Ingram

*Living Without Hypocrisy* - (CD -3 part series) – Chip Ingram

*For Women: Precious in His Sight* – (CD- 4 part series) – Theresa Ingram
Introduction:

Why do so many good and sincere Christians get “spiritually stuck?” They love God, they want to grow, they have seen some measure of spiritual transformation, but they “stall,” they hit a spiritual ceiling. Some habits or attitudes seem to never change. Trying hard and making “re-commitments” last only for a short time. What do you do when you’re spiritually stuck?

Axiom: The greatest seed, in the greatest soil, cannot grow in the wrong environment.

• The COMMAND of Jesus requires a very specific spiritual ecosystem.

        John 13:34-35

• The EXAMPLE of Jesus’ ministry to develop His disciples demands a specific ecosystem.

        Mark 3:13-14

• The PRACTICE of the early church and its impact argue for a specific ecosystem.

        Acts 2:42-47

• The HISTORY of the Church, past and present, confirms a specific ecosystem for spiritual growth and transformation.
The Spiritual Ecosystem: **AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY**.

The form this system takes is: **A SMALL GROUP**.

A critical distinction: **AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ≠ A SMALL GROUP**.

**The principle:** We must be engaged in the spiritual ecosystem of authentic community for spiritual maturity to occur.

**Two big questions:**

1. What is authentic community?

2. How do you get it?

**Authentic community occurs when...**

*The real you...*

...*meets real needs...*

...*for the right reasons...*

...*in the right way.*

Romans 12:9-13

verse 9

verse 10

verse 11

verses 12-13
The real you – Not a PROJECTION of yourself.

- Authenticity – “Let love be sincere.”
- Purity – “Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

Meets real needs – Not SUPERFICIAL ones.

- Devotion – “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.”
- Humility – “Giving preference to one another in honor.”

For the right reason – Not to PLEASE people.

- Motive – “Not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”
- Method – “Genuine service to God is characterized by:
  - Diligence – excellence
  - Enthusiasm – passion
In the right way – Not in our own STRENGTH. Romans 12:12-13

- **Upward Focus** – “Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer.”
- **Outward Focus** – “Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing (pursuing) hospitality.”

**Why is authentic community so important to Jesus?**

20 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 17:20-21 (NIV)

**Application/Discussion Questions:**

1. Share a time when you’ve experienced authentic community in a significant way with brothers and sisters in Christ. (What made it so special to you?)

2. Describe a time when the hypocrisy of a Christian was a stumbling block for you.

3. Why do you think authenticity is so important in relationships? In having a positive impact on others?

4. What’s the difference between “real needs” and superficial ones? How does motive play into meeting “real” needs?

5. What specific step of faith/obedience do you need to take to build authentic community for you or someone else in order to be an answer to Jesus’ prayer in John 17?

**Resources from Living on the Edge to Help You Apply Romans 12:9-13**

- Love One Another - (CD series) – Chip Ingram
- Five Lies That Ruin Relationships – (CD/DVD series) – Chip Ingram
- Small Group Bible Studies – Available online at LivingontheEdge.org
Introduction: How to treat your enemies

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’
44But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?
47And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

48Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Jesus, Matthew 5:43-48 (NIV)

Becoming a Romans 12 Christian is NOT difficult….

…it is IMPOSSIBLE!
Important review: The Romans 12 Christian

1. The commands of Romans 12 are our faith response to Romans chapters 1-11 of God’s grace and mercy toward us.

2. R12 Christians focus on RELATIONSHIPS not rules or religious activity.

3. R12 Christians highest aim is LOVE.
   - Loving God through a surrendered life.
   - Refusing to love the world’s false promises.
   - Loving ourselves for who God made us to be.
   - Loving fellow believers through sacrificial service.
   - Loving our enemies by supernaturally returning good for evil.

Supernaturally responding to evil: Romans 12:14-21

14“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is Mine to avenge; I will repay” says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”
A Romans 12 response to personal attack:

Positive Command = “**BLESS** them that persecute you.”

- Forgiveness – Romans 12:14
- Identification – Romans 12:15
- Association – Romans 12:16

Negative Command = “Don’t take your own **REVENGE**.”

- Personal retaliation is a prohibited response for God’s people – Romans 12:17-18
- Two compelling reasons why personal retaliation is prohibited – Romans 12:19-20
  1. It usurps God’s role as **JUDGE**.
  2. It is an ineffective means to bring about **PEACE**.

Supernatural result = **GOOD** will overcome evil. Romans 12:21
Personal Application Questions:

1. How are we to respond to personal attack and injustice according to Romans 12:14-21? How does this differ from civil issues or violations of the law?

2. How did Jesus model this concept of overcoming evil with good in His life?

   In His death?

3. What person(s) or circumstances in your life (past or present) have you had the greatest difficulty in “blessing” as defined in this passage?

4. Why is it so difficult to genuinely forgive and even bless those who have deeply wounded us?

5. What new insight have you gained to help you deal with the evil and/or injustice you have experienced in the past?

6. What is your first step in overcoming evil with good?

7. Who might help you take this first step and keep your commitment to God?