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God's Unique Plan

Romans 12

Because each of us is different, God's plan for each of us is also different. If we are to know that plan, we must know ourselves—our gifts, talents, strengths and shortcomings.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What gifts and talents have you observed in each member of your group? Have each member of your group take a turn to listen while the other members tell him or her what gifts they have seen evidenced.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What has God made unique about you?

In the first eleven chapters of the book of Romans, Paul tells about the facts of the gospel. Beginning with chapter 12, he speaks of the practical implications of the gospel for our behavior. His words have much to say about God's plan and direction for our lives. *Read Romans 12.*

1. After reading this chapter, how would you define a "living sacrifice"?

2. Verse 2 says that being “transformed by the renewing of your mind” will allow us to “test and approve what God’s will is.” What is a renewed mind?

How does it differ from a mind that has been conformed “to the pattern of this world”?

3. How do our minds become either conformed or renewed?

4. What disciplines are helping you to renew your mind?

5. What responsibility do you have to “test and approve what God’s will is”?

How can you take this responsibility seriously?

6. What do verses 3-8 teach about God’s plan for the Christian community?

7. What is meant by making a “sober judgment” of yourself (v. 3)?

8. How will failure to do this lead you off track in understanding God’s will?

9. As you look at yourself with “sober judgment,” what do you believe to be your function and gifts in the body?

10. How has an understanding of your gifts helped you to “test and approve what God’s will is”?

11. How do verses 9-21 tell us that we should be treating other people?

12. Why would it be futile to seek God’s will if we are not being renewed in our love for others?

13. Continue to make a sober judgment of yourself by evaluating whether you have been conformed or transformed according to each of the ethical instructions in verses 9-21.

Ask God to be continually renewing your mind, and confess to him where you have been conformed to the pattern of this world.

Now or Later

Make a list of the spiritual gifts that are mentioned in Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27-31; and Ephesians 4:11-13. Write out a definition for each of these gifts. Which of these gifts has God given you?