Musing #67 Romans 12:1-3

Not only has God given us Grace… but He has also shown us incredible mercy.

Romans 12:1 So, brothers and sisters, because of God's mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service.

"present your bodies"—indicates a "once for all" rather than over and over again. Why the body? All of the rebelliousness that goes against God's ways.

Matthew 10:34-39 Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Romans 12:2 Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.

"Don't be conformed to this world"—watch out for "the schemes of this world."

The schemes people come up with to run and regulate their own, and others, lives.

The spirit of this age… the advancement of "self."

The world, flesh & devil will always press us for a dependence upon the flesh, the externals (power, significance, and recognition)—never the inner man and faith.

And often to the point of seeking some form of worldly greatness. We all desire a piece of that kind of action at times.

We must learn to be satisfied with the little things… a little ministry, a small offering of help to a friend or neighbor, a little extra in our giving. The insignificant little things for family, and others.

Jeremiah 45:5 (NLT) Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it! I will bring great disaster upon all people; but I will give you your life as a reward wherever you go. I, the Lord, have spoken!

Romans 12:1-2 (JBP) With your eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies (seat of power), as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable to him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed.

John also spoke of this kind of commitment in his 1st letter…

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Father, where shall I work today?
And my love flowed warm and free.
He pointed out a tiny spot and said,
"Tend that place for me."
I answered him quickly, "Oh, no! Not that!
Why, no one would ever see me,
No matter how well my work was done;
not that little place for me!"
The word He spoke, then, wasn't stern;
He answered me tenderly:
"Nazareth was a little place,
and so was Galilee."

—It's a quiet reminder that faithfulness is the small, unnoticed spot that is still service to Him. The "tiny place" isn't lesser work—it's the work He's assigned.

—From author Sarah D. Housley

Paul reminded the Corinthians that we are in a universal war… much of it with our self-life and perceived needs. Also one of the prime reasons he reminded us of our battle gear—the equipment God has given us for protection and value.

Ephesians 6:14-18 (Phillips) Take your stand then with truth as your belt, righteousness your breastplate, the Gospel of peace firmly on your feet, salvation as your helmet and in your hand the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Above all be sure you take faith as your shield, for it can quench every burning missile the enemy hurls at you. Pray at all times with every kind of spiritual prayer, keeping alert and persistent as you pray for all Christ's men and women. Don't let the world squeeze you.

It is so much easier to conform to the environment that surrounds us… thus the need for the "renewing of our minds." Regeneration is in the spirit. Renewing is in the soul… how we think, feel, and make decision and choices.

Spritual Warfare is largely a battle for our minds. Much of it is a process of learning to accept things that are often seemingly preposterous. But that is learning God's ways. It isn't reasonable that God's Son should died on a cross 2,000 years ago, and that paid for all of my sins—past, present, and all the sins I will ever commit. If we can believe that it's only the beginning of what God asks us to believe and live by. We have to learn to think differently to see things God's way.

Consider what God had Moses do to Aaron and his sons as He empowered them for what He was calling them to do.

Exodus 29:20 Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the

thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar.

I believe God was painting a picture of his calling for them. They must hear from God first (ear). He will tell them what He wants them to do (thumb). Oh… and also they must trust Him as He guides them on where in the world He wants them to go (toe). That kind of trust can only be received by a renewing of our mind, and a commitment of our heart.

A forshadowing of what Paul was saying to the church in Rome, **…give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Romans 12:1**

Hebrews 3:16-18 (Phillips) For who was it who heard the Word of God and yet provoked his indignation? Was is not all who were rescued from slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses? And who was it with whom God was displeased for forty long years? Was it not those who, after all their hearing of God's Word, fell into sin, and left their bones in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they should never enter his rest? Was it not these very men who refused to trust him?

It has always been about grace and believing. We have to think differently to see things His way. We can still sometimes sin—He still loves us! We must learn to let "who we are" inside, dictate "what we do" outside. Change comes from the inside/out. To just work to change our behavior (external) is law. To change our thinking based on why, (internal) is grace.

There is no difference in the New Testament between doctrine and conduct. Think for a moment—to truly believe something—is to do it. If I say "I believe" but don't put it into practice, then I may not really believe it.

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

"The measure of faith" is different in each one of us.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

A stronghold is, in reality, a wrong pattern of thinking. Strongholds go away as we learn God's new ways of thinking.

The next Musing will fully focus on **Romans 12:4-8**—gifts of the Spirit. You do have one! I'll be sending extra for testing, analysis, and many details for those interested.