

# The Sermon Connection

## Connecting Sunday's Teaching to Everyday Living

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The Sermon Connection is a weekly handout to help you apply Sunday's sermon content to your everyday life. It is designed to give you additional insights and practical tools for applying the teaching throughout the week.

The application, reflection and connection questions may also serve as a springboard for discussion in your small group, your family time, or in one-on-one conversations.

### ROMANS FOR YOU

#### What Do I Owe? ... (Romans 12:1-8)

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Calvin continued our summer series on the second half of the Book of Romans. In this section, Paul begins an outline of what the Christian life should look like once we understand The Gospel as he has presented it.

Calvin divided the passage into two simple thoughts. He presented them as questions: What do I owe God? What do I owe others? It is important to understand that he used the word "owe" not in a legally binding sense, but in a morally binding or obligating sense. This passage is all about our response to what Christ accomplished on our behalf on the cross. Tim Keller says "If what He did does not move you or break the ice over your soul, you must ask yourself if you have ever understood the gospel."

First, Calvin showed how (in vv. 1-2) God has given us life, both physical, and now spiritual. He has extended to us great mercy, love, grace and forgiveness. He has rescued from death to life and from darkness to light. He has given us a living hope through the Gospel. So, this begs the question, "What do I owe God in return for this?" Legally, my account has been settled. Morally, however, do I not owe Him my life, my very being? Do I not owe Him my body and my mind? Am I not obliged to know Him and to do His perfect and pleasing will in the world and in the work of helping others come to know Him? Calvin (really Paul) argued, "Yes"! The NIV describes this as our "true and proper worship." Another way to translate that phrase is to use the word rational, or logical.

Second, in verses 3-8, we see that God has given us a measure of gifts, abilities, relationships and opportunities to serve the body of Christ and beyond. He has uniquely and intentionally placed each of us in the body for a certain function. His gifting and placement are purposeful and necessary. Calvin reasonably asked, what, then, should be our response? He argued that we owe it to God and to others to be present, cooperative and active in the body according to the capacity God has given each of us individually. A key part of this is applying what Paul says in verse 3: to think of ourselves with "sober judgment." This keeps us in a place of humility.

Calvin concluded by teaching that multiple blessings flow from us responding to these "obligations." First, God is glorified and given His just due, which is worship. Second, we are fulfilled because we are doing what we were designed to do. Third, fellow Christians are built up in their faith and life as we serve them, which is mutual. Fourth, a lost and dying world is served and exposed to the Gospel, which gives them a chance to experience eternal life.

**E-CHECK: Embracing Our God-given Gifts**

## **READING AND REFLECTION:**

Read Romans 12:1-2. As you work to understand the passage, take the approach of a reporter doing a story: who what, where, when and how?

What is the difference between conforming and being transformed?

Read Romans 12:3-5. What is the connection between Paul's command in verse 3 and his analogy of the body?

Read Romans 12:6-8. List out the spiritual gifts that Paul mentions. Do you have any of those gifts?

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION:**

How do you define "worship"?

In your own words, answer the two questions posed in the sermon: What do I owe God? What do I owe others?

Do you read the Bible daily? Why? Why not? Do you try to memorize and/or meditate on Bible verses? Why? Why not?

Do you serve in your local church? Why? Why not? Do you volunteer in your community? Why? Why not?

What changes might God be leading you to make as a result of this Bible passage and the teaching you've heard?

## **COMMUNITY CONNECTION:**

When you gather with your family and/or your small group this week, talk about Calvin's message. Discuss ways in which we conform to the patterns of this world. What is Paul's answer? Discuss ways in which you see your mind being renewed. Finally, review the gifts that Paul lists in Romans 12:6-8 and encourage others in the group if you see those gifts in them.

## **KEY POINT:**

**Worship wholeheartedly, serve generously**

## **RESOURCES:**

One-Year New Testament Bible (Available at the Information Table on Sunday mornings)

Romans for You, Tim Keller

The Purpose-Driven Life, Rick Warren

Spiritual Gift Assessments: SHAPE, APEST