

ROMANS SEASON 4 PEOPLE OF THE GOSPEL

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- Did you prefer team or individual activities as a kid? Give an example.
 - Have you ever been pressured to make certain education or career decisions from other people? How did you respond?
 - In your opinion, what makes for a life well lived?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

There's a change of pace in Romans 12. Paul starts to rapidly describe the way the gospel changes the people of God, like a rock dropped in a lake, sending ripples in all directions. The major change he focuses on first is the way God's people are able to live as one, while still being different. In the Christian story, there's a strong "we" and a strong "me." The Christian story is big enough to include everyone without flattening anyone, and this is really, really good news. Paul is saying to us, "Be you together."

Living Sacrifice

READ: Romans 12:1-2

DISCUSS: What do you think it means to be a "living sacrifice"?

When people made sacrifices, they'd take an animal to a priest and stand by as the animal associated with them was killed and burned. Sacrifice is about death, but for disciples, their "death" sprouts new life. What then do we need to die to? The mould that the world creates and the pressure to squeeze ourselves into it. Rather, God changes his people, giving them the ability to live the way of his new world in our present one. It's really important for us to see that the only hope we have of being ourselves together is God's power at work, changing us into something new.

Be You

READ: Romans 12:3-8

DISCUSS: Why do you think it's good news that individuality matters among the people of God?

Paul sees Christians operating like a human body, and in these verses he focuses on the way we differ. We have gifts from God that give us a unique part to play in the body. Paul's list of gifts isn't comprehensive; he's giving examples of how our differences operate. Although the gifts differ, we're all supposed to do the same thing—"use them." We all have a responsibility to grow in our unique wiring and gifting from God. When we do, we share in God's grace—his love in action toward us. God is glorified, the body is built up, and we experience his joy.

Be You Together

READ: Romans 12:9-21

DISCUSS: Which of these instructions jumps out at you? Why do you think that is?

Beginning in verse nine, Paul moves from gifts that mark our individuality, to things that should characterize every Christian. He tells us to love one another well, to work and serve diligently, to strive for unity, to suffer well, and to carry out the mission of Jesus in the way of Jesus. Wherever there's a strong "we" living like this, it becomes like a healthy body in which many a "me" can grow healthy and strong. And in the same way that a hand is only helpful when it's joined to a body, our individuality only thrives when we're part of the body of Christ.

GRACE SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

It's impossible to live like this in our own power. We need to be transformed. We need to die to the moulds we're pressured to squeeze into. That's why God came into the world, and gave himself as a dying sacrifice. He suffered and was transformed "beyond human semblance," so that we could be transformed into something glorious.

CHANGE APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS

- Do you feel like you know how God has gifted you uniquely to be used as part of his people? What can you do to grow in that gifting?
- Have you enmeshed yourself in relationships with other Christians who will rejoice with you and weep with you? If not, what's holding you back?
- In what ways do you feel like you've been transformed by living as part of a body of disciples?

PRAYER RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Repent of ways you've found yourself living for the moulds of the world and turn to God as a living sacrifice.
- Pray for a vision of Jesus and the courage to present ourselves as a living sacrifice.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?