**May 19, 2019**

**Session 5: The Principle of Order**

Last time, we finished up the five probing questions of Romans 8:31-39. Now we are ready to move into an examination of what we will be studying in Romans 12. To get ourselves started, we need to establish a couple of very important principles.

**God is a God of Order**

It is important to recognize an important principle at this point; there is a necessary order to everything we are learning.

In Romans 1-5 the doctrine of our justification was set forth. This is the important foundational doctrine which must be laid before we can “build” anything that follows. This doctrine allows us to, once and for all, “settle the issue” of our salvation. We are instructed in our new identity in Christ as it pertains to our being made righteous.

In Romans 6-8:13, the doctrine of our sanctification was set forth. This is the natural next step to instructing us in those things which were given to us in Christ. Once the justification doctrine of our eternal life has worked in us, the sanctification doctrine of our functional life is built upon it. We are instructed in our new identity in Christ as it pertains to our sanctification which provides the practical instruction of how we can live for God in a way which is well-pleasing and acceptable to Him. The erroneous assumption is that anything we do for God, He must be pleased with; and that is not true in any age. Let me give you some examples.

Firstly, in the time past of Israel’s program, the Philistines had captured the ark of the covenant from Israel. After a series of mishaps, they decided to give it back. We take up the story as David determines to bring the ark home.

1 Chronicles 13:6 And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, *that is*, to Kirjath-jearim, which *belonged* to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth *between* the cherubims, whose name is called *on it*. 7 And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. 8 And David and all Israel played before God with all *their* might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. 9 And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. 10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

Uzza was attempting to do a good thing; to keep the ark from being pitched on the ground. Motive notwithstanding, God killed him just the same. Why? Good intentions are not sufficient to warrant a forbidden action.

The point here is that even though we may mean well (Like Uzza) there is a “way” that is acceptable unto God and the other “ways” are not, no matter how well intentioned they may be.

Do you recall what the “godly living” aspect is? It is “doing things God’s way.”

Now let us jump forward to see the sons of Sceva in the DoGG.

Acts 19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

The “time” of these events is the DoGG, during Paul’s “to the Jew first” ministry.

Acts 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

Vagabond today carries the idea of homelessness, but in that day, it simply means they traveled from place to place with no certain home place. Therefore, these *vagabond* Jews were of the Jewish nation and religion, but went about from town to town to get money by conjuring.

They traveled about to tell people their fortunes, and pretended by spells and charms to cure diseases, and to help people with other maladies. There can be some question here; were they simply hucksters in it for the money or were the truly trying to help people by whatever means possible? The answers to those questions tell us something about why they failed to cast out the devils.

They called themselves exorcists, because in doing their tricks they used forms of adjuration, “by such and such” commanding names. The superstitious Jews put a reputation upon these magic arts by attributing the invention of them to Solomon.

So **Josephus** (*Antiq.* 8. 45-46) says that Solomon composed charms by which diseases were cured, and devils driven out so as never to return; and that these operations continued common among the Jews to his time. Might this be what Christ seems to refer to in [Matthew 12:27](swordsearcher://bible/Mt12.27)?

Matthew 12:27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, **by whom do your children cast *them* out**? therefore they shall be your judges.

**Who was Josephus?**

Josephus recorded Jewish history, with special emphasis on the first century CE and the First Jewish–Roman War (66-70 CE), including the Siege of Masada. His most important works were The Jewish War (c. 75) and Antiquities of the Jews ( c. 94). The Jewish War recounts the Jewish revolt against Roman occupation.

Famed Jewish historian Josephus Flavius was born in Jerusalem in AD 37 or 38, not long after Christ’s crucifixion. The son of a priest, he became a Pharisee, a military commander in the Jewish resistance, and an eyewitness to Jerusalem’s destruction in AD 70. Eusebius, the first church historian, calls him “the most famous Jew of his time” and tells of a statue erected in his honor in Rome.

For two millennia Christian scholars have preserved and studied Josephus’s works, especially his account of the Jewish revolt (*The Jewish War*) and a complete history of God’s people from creation to the first century (*Antiquities of the Jews*). Pastors often incorporate details from Josephus in their sermons without even realizing they came from him. But should we trust his works?

As a teenager, Josephus spent time with various Jewish sects and knew them well. He later observed the Jewish revolt from the front lines. When he was captured, he got to see the other side. In fact, he won the favor of the general, Vespasian, by accurately predicting his rise to the throne of the empire. Josephus ultimately switched sides and received Roman citizenship, even adopting Vespasian’s imperial family name, Flavius. He now had access to the emperor’s libraries, military reports, and court records from Herod and other rulers in Palestine.

Yet Josephus was not an eyewitness to most events in his works. His history is only as good as his sources. The early history in *The Antiquities of the Jews* is far removed from his own personal experience. We can only be sure of the details that coincide with Scripture, but the others are no more trustworthy than the traditions he relied upon.

The point here is that even though Josephus may write about Solomon and the use of charms to cast out devils, we have no such understanding from the Scriptures.

Acts 19:14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

The profaneness they were guilty of: *They took upon them to call over evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus;* not as those who had a veneration for Christ and a confidence in his name (as we read of some who cast out devils in Christ's name and yet did not follow with his disciples; Luke 9:49)…

Luke 9:49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us.

… but as those who were willing to try all methods to carry on their wicked trade, and, it should seem, had this design:

* If the evil spirits should yield to an adjuration in the name of Jesus by those that did not believe in him, they would say it was no confirmation of his doctrine to those that did believe in Christ; for it was all one whether they believed it or no
* If the evil spirits should not yield to it, they would say the name of Christ was not so powerful as the other names they used, to which the devils had often by collusion yielded

This is an interesting issue. We can see in the book of Matthew there was a time in which this kind of deceptive tactic was used by the devils (Matthew 9). This deception made the religious leaders look like they had the power of God working through them. Believing the deception, they came to conclusion that Jesus must be casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub. And at the beginning, Satan could allow such subterfuge without damaging his own kingdom.

Matthew 9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know *it*. 31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country. 32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. 33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. 34 But the Pharisees said, **He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.**

In this instance, the Lord does not answer their charge. At this time, both were “casting out devils.”

But, a change took place in the ministry of the Lord Jesus whereby He went on the offensive against Satan and the vain religious system. In view of the Lord’s change of tactics, Satan can no longer afford to play the deceptive game of the Pharisees casting out devils. We see this in Matthew 12.

Matthew 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? 24 But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, **This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils**.

But this time, the Lord does answer their charge.

Matthew 12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Because of the nature of the conflict by the time of Matthew 12, Satan cannot divide his kingdom against itself. Therefore, the religious leaders in Israel no longer have the power to cast out devils as they previously did. Jesus, however, continues to heal the sick and cast out devils. There is more to see about all of this, but that is enough for now. **Returning to Acts 19:**

The sons of Sceva said, “*We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.”* It is as though they are experimenting to see what the name of Jesus will do.

But again, the result was a catastrophe. The power of God to cast out devils was not available to them. And since the deceptive “casting out” was no longer an option, the devils turned on them.

**Session Six: God Rejects Service in the Flesh**

But let’s get to the point which we have only been illustrating up to now. We were making the point that in Romans 6-8, we are instructed in our new identity in Christ as it pertains to our sanctification which provides the practical instruction of how we can live for God in a way which is well-pleasing and acceptable to Him. The erroneous assumption is that anything we do for God, He must be pleased with; and that is not true in any age.

For us, the issue is serving God in the energy of our flesh vs. serving God out of grace. If we are going to serve God, it must be done His way. Good intentions are not enough.

God rejects everything about our flesh.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, **in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing**: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

Romans 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, **who walk not after the flesh**, but after the Spirit.

Walking after the flesh condemns our functional life, our spiritual life, our ability to serve God acceptably.

Romans 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not after the flesh**, but after the Spirit.

The whole issue here is not to walk after the flesh, but to walk after the Spirit.

Romans 8:8 So then they that are in **the flesh cannot please God**.

Can a saved person be “in the flesh?” Of course they can; Paul is writing Romans 8 to saved people. Why warn them of a situation which cannot take place?

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you**.

The Spirit dwells in us as we live out of the doctrine; as we “mind the things of the Spirit” which are the things given to us in His word.

Galatians 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

That is a good question? Do we get saved by grace and then live for God in our flesh? Will our flesh bring us unto perfection? It will not.

This is why Paul spends so much time teaching us about the foolishness and futility of attempting to live for God out of our flesh and the necessity of living for God out of His provision of His grace.

You understand, this was not the case in the time past of Israel’s program.

Also in connection with our sanctification, in Romans 8:14-15, the doctrine of our adoption as sons was set forth. This is the 3rd component of our sanctification but it is also the context for everything we are about to be taught. As sons, we will be conformed to the image of God’s Son; that is the final goal of our sanctification; our edification unto godliness.

In Romans 8:16-39, the first three components of our establishment as sons are set forth. These components of our establishment are meant to: 1) give us a foretaste of what we are engaging in as sons, 2) produce an absolute confidence in our heavenly Father that what He says can be trusted, and 3) an absolute confidence in His word that will produce in us all He designed for it to produce.

We are complete in Christ and perfected by His word. And there is nothing can overpower Him or the working of His word in us.

In Romans 9-11, the fourth component of our establishment is set forth as it pertains to the dispensational change. In this component we find that when God is finished with this dispensation of Gentile grace, He will resume and complete His prophetic program with Israel.

As you can see, there is order to what is being presented to us.

That brings us to where we find ourselves in our study of the book of Romans.

In Romans 12-15:7, we encounter the education proper in which we are introduced to our initial instruction in the four decision-making skills of wisdom, justice, judgment and equity.

ADOPTED SON’S

LEVEL ONE EDUCATION

Wisdom – Romans 12:3-16

Justice – Romans 12:17-13:7

Judgment – Romans 13:8-14

Equity – Romans 14:1-15:7

The sonship skills are presented in this order for a reason; each skill necessitates the previous skill(s) be “up and running” in us. As you might imagine, there is order to even the sonship skills.

**The Education of God’s Wisdom**

When you heard that you were going to be instructed in godly wisdom, you may have thought you would be learning a series of pithy, wise sayings or something along those lines. When God instructs us in His wisdom, He does so by installing in us certain virtues. These virtues comprise His wisdom; they are the guiding principles behind His wisdom. These are not just any virtues, but they are various aspects of His love.

God’s wisdom is rooted in and springs from His love because godly wisdom is the application of His love. If we are to have God’s wisdom, it must take place the same way with us. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that our instruction in godly wisdom pertains to the establishment of godly love within us along with its subsequent features.

As great as this may sound, we cannot jump off into our education in godly wisdom without some preparation.

**Preparing to Love like God Loves**

The prep work for loving like God loves, for obtaining godly wisdom, involves loving God. If you think about it, that makes sense. Before you can love like God loves, we must first love God.

When we talk about loving God, we are not referring to some general feeling we have about God and we are not talking about loving Him simply because He saved us.

In order for godly love and charity to be installed in us, we must love Him for more than saving us. This is why we made such a big deal out of the Relationship Prayer and the mercies of God. We are learning to love God for all of those mercies (think about them) which were given to us in Christ. One of the things that believers do not understand today is there is further purpose behind the Cross and more to our salvation than simply saving us from hell.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, **that we might receive the adoption of sons.**

God sent His Son so that we might receive the adoption of sons. And why would God want to do that? It is because the biggest thing to God is the exaltation of His Son and sons and daughters are the greatest way for the exaltation of Jesus Christ to happen. His life being made manifest in them! As we choose, of our own volition, to yield ourselves to God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, to give up our lives in exchange for His life in us, that is the ultimate expression of praise and glory to Him.

Therefore, we love Him because all things work together for our good. We love Him for the process which makes us more than conquerors. Stop and think about that. Do we love Him for not intervening in the circumstances of life? Do we love Him for the sufficiency of the doctrine to work in us in the midst of our sufferings, or do we not value that as He does?

We love Him for adopting us. But do we love Him for treating us like adult sons and daughters or do we desire to stay children in understanding and conduct?

We love Him for educating us and installing His wisdom in us. We love Him for the excellency of His power which works within us. We love Him as our Father who is training us for work in His business, as a Father with whom we have a close, intimate relationship as His sons.

But not everyone loves God for more than just saving them. They may be thankful they are saved, but their affections are not for what God desires to do with them in this Dispensation of Gentile Grace. As our apostle would say, they do not love the Lord Jesus “in sincerity.”

Ephesians 6:24 Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ **in sincerity**. Amen.

Many today find pleasure in other things than in what God wants to do with them today. Even in the realm of the spiritual, people find pleasure in the alternative rather than the genuine. Because they do not understand the greater importance of the spiritual things God is accomplishing, people would rather be healed than have the excellency of His power at work in them. They would rather have God intervening in the circumstances of life than to have the life of Jesus Christ made manifest in the midst of life’s circumstances. They would rather serve God in the power of their flesh than have the word of truth effectually working in them. And about the only thing they love God for is for saving them from hell.

As a result, their spiritual life never grows beyond the childhood stage. And since their love for God is very one-dimensional, they are unable to love like God loves. They will embrace the human versions of love but reject the godly version.

**Human vs. Godly**

Accordingly, our education in the godly decision-making skill of wisdom begins with instruction in the first three facets of God’s love. As I describe them and where in Romans we are taught about them, you will notice I am applying the adjective “godly” in front of each facet. The reason for this to distinguish between common human features of love and the godly versions of each feature.

For example, one feature of love is that love is selfless. Most of us were brought up to behave ourselves in a “selfless” manner. While the common human version of selflessness is a good thing for someone who is lost, it is not sufficient for sons who have made the cry of “Abba, Father” and are looking to labor with their Father in His eternal business.

The various human aspects of love may slow down Satan’s attempt to engulf the world in utter chaos and violence, but each one lacks the fullness of its feature. The features of human love need to be in play for the world at large. The features of godly love must be acquired by sons and daughters if they are to ever be conformed to the image of God’s Son.

But any feature of love is only “godly” when we learn it from our heavenly Father and utilize it exactly as He does and for the same reasons. The features of normal human love will never be an adequate substitute for God’s version. Therefore knowing just how critical the issue of godly love is, we should be desiring and anticipating our instruction in godly love.

**Five Features of Godly Love**

What I want to do here is prepare us a bit more for what we are about to encounter. Think of this as flyover #2. In this flyover, we are going to get a little closer to ground so we can see more details; the landmarks we will recognize as we are “walking” through the book.

As was said earlier, our initial instruction in wisdom will teach us five core features of godly love. These are:

* Godly selflessness: Romans 12:2-8
* Godly kindness: Romans 12:9-10
* Godly tenderness: Romans 12:13-15
* Godly meekness: Romans 12:17-21
* Godly benevolence: Romans 13:1-7