



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—Romans 8:28, Jeremiah 18

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Talk about some of the typical things that God does to shape and mold you. Why do you think He takes that approach?
2. Share with the group about the strongest friend you've ever had. How did you feel when you were around them? Do you feel that way with God—why or why not?
3. In what specific areas do you sense that God is working on you to conform you to the image of Christ?
4. Discuss why each of the conditions—being in Christ (in the promise), knowing the promise, and trusting the promise—are important to be able to receive God's promise.
5. Talk about some ways that you can apply the truth that God's hands are "hands of patience" as you go through life next week.
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

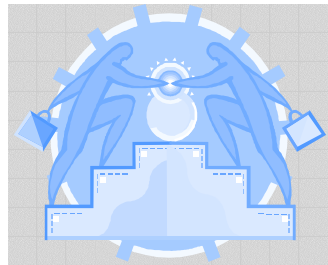
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions

9:00

10:45



**ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -**

Rm104	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 104	Open—Bower-Chappell
Rm 112		Rm 112	Women—Byrum
Rm 201	30s-40s—Sims	Rm 201	How People Grow
Rm 202		Rm 202	“ “ “
Rm 203	Young Singles —Franklin/Reynolds	Rm 203	30s—Tripp-Tripp
Rm 204		Rm 204	Singles—Bentzel
Rm 205	40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler	Rm 205	Open—Regis-Anderson
Rm 206	Experiencing God—Graham	Rm 206	30s—Heritier-Sharp
Rm 207	Women—Knox-Anderson	Rm 207	20s—Alexy/Jones
Rm 208	40s-50s—McBrayer-Wicks	Rm 208	College—Ayres-Getchell
		Gym	Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker

November 21, 2004

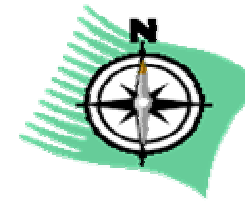
Extreme Makeover (Inside Edition)

Principles of Internal Change From the Book of Romans

Celebration Fellowship

Emerging from the Cocoon

A preview of Romans 12



Volume 3, Issue 12
November 21, 2004

Inside this issue:

Introduction to Next Week's Study	1
Summary of Last Week's Study Questions	1-2
Study Guide	2-3
Life Group Questions	4

The process of metamorphosis is fascinating, as an ugly worm spins its cocoon, only to emerge as a beautiful butterfly. This is the word picture that Paul uses to describe the journey of the believer as he or she grows to maturity. When we first become Christians we often resemble the person we were *before* Christ, more than the one we are becoming *in* Christ. But God plans for us to emerge from this "old" nature, and become the beautiful butterfly; for that to happen, though, there are certain steps we must take. First, in consid-

eration of God's great mercy towards us, we must decisively "present" ourselves to Him as living sacrifices. Having done this we must then purpose to stop being conformed to the world, and rather be transformed (Paul actually uses the term, "metamorphosis") by the renewing of our minds. Then, we must begin to relate to fellow members in edifying ways; this process starts as we think humbly about our abilities. Then, according to the faith we have, we must then discover our particular gifting, and be willing to serve in this



God wants to remake us from the inside out.

way to help one another. Our character must then develop in love, purity, enthusiasm, perseverance, generosity, humility, and hospitality. As we relate to the outside world we must pursue peace, seeking to overcome evil with good. Thus we will emerge from the cocoon.

I'm God, and You're Not (Romans 10:16-11:36)

At a particular point in the movie, "Rudy", Father Cavanaugh, trying to give Rudy an answer for his struggles, says, "In 35 years of religious study, I've only come up with two hard, incontrovertible facts: there is a God, and I'm not Him." This could well be the conclusion of Romans 9-11, also—there is definitely a God, and His wisdom is so great that we're obviously not Him. This wisdom is clearly seen in Paul's explanation of how the Jewish rejection of Christ relates to the fulfillment of God's promises to them. This discussion, which began in Romans 9, is concluded at the end of Romans 11. In Romans 9:1-10:15, Paul showed how God had sovereignly allowed for this rejection, but in this week's study he points out the Jewish responsibility for this rejection. God had given them the "good news" about Christ, but they had failed to listen to the message. This means that, even though they heard it, they did not

listen to (or obey) it. Since faith comes by and from "hearing" the word about Christ with an open heart, then obviously they were closed to God's message. Nevertheless, He had faithfully presented the truth to them. Just as He had done with the Gentiles, He had revealed Himself through creation. Psalm 19 tells us that nature "pours forth speech" about God, and its "voice" has gone out into all the earth. Furthermore, God told the Jews in advance that He would turn to the Gentiles if they rejected Him, which should have made them jealous enough to want to return to Him. Finally, God had continually stretched His hands to the Jews, but, in general, they had been obstinately disobedient in their rejection of Him. This placed the blame for their broken relationship with God on their shoulders; but incredibly, God had chosen not to permanently reject them. As Paul said, even himself was "exhibit A" that God had

not rejected His people, and throughout history God had always preserved a remnant. Elijah's story illustrated this: he had mourned centuries before Christ that he was the only faithful Jew left, but God let him know that He had kept 7000 for Himself who had not bowed to Baal. The reason was that God "foreknew" His people. The word "foreknew" refers to intimate, personal knowledge, and means that God had begun a relationship with these Jews even before they were born. Since God is faithful to His relationships, He would not sever His relationship with the Jews, but would save those who were His own, fulfilling His promises to them. This is the way God treats all of those whom He has foreknown; none of us has to fear "losing" our relationship with Him, because He is faithful to us in a personal way. However, those Jews who had repeatedly hardened their hearts against God finally had their hearts hardened by God. He allowed them a

(Continued on page 2)

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

Romans 10:16-11:36 (continued from pg 1)

"spirit of stupor" so that their eyes and ears could not function properly. He allowed their tables (symbolizing pleasure) to be a snare to them (they relied on their comfort), and He allowed their backs to "bowed" against Him forever. However, even in this rebellion, He still preserved a remnant according to His gracious choice. God also used this rebellion for a good purpose—to make room for Gentiles to come into His family. His plan was to use their turning to God to cause the Jews to become jealous of His favor, and then to want to return to Him. When these things happened then even greater blessings would come to the world; it was a win-win. This scenario that made Paul glad to be an apostle to the Gentiles, because he was so concerned for them. He knew that if their rejection would lead to the reconciliation of the world, then their restoration would be like returning from the dead—which, in fact, was prophesied in Ezekiel 37. He went on to say that the reason the Gentiles got into God's family tree was because the unbelieving Jews were "cut off"; thus allowing the "wild olive branches", the Gentiles, to be grafted into the original olive tree. There was a danger in this that the Gentiles had to avoid, that of becoming arrogant

against the Jews, and failing to recognize that they had gotten by their faith. If this faith was genuine, in it they would stand; but pride in their self-worth would contradict such faith, and God would cut off these "false believers". Thus two sides of God's nature are seen. First, there is His kindness, seen in calling of the Jews and in His grafting of Gentiles into His family tree; but there is also His severity, as seen in His promise to sever either of them, if they showed they were not true believers. True branches are always revealed by their continuance in faith, and will remain attached to God's family tree. Paul then further explained Israel's condition as a partial hardening allowed by God until the "fullness" of the Gentiles has



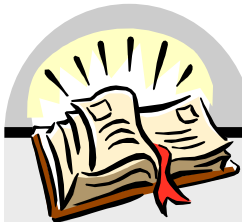
"God's integrity will not allow Him to reverse his gifts or His callings to His people."

come in. When the last Gentile has been saved, God will turn back to the Jews, and complete His plan to save the rest of them. Right now we live in this "Gentile age", but just before the Lord returns, He will complete His salvation of the Jews (see Luke 21). This is certain because God's integrity will not allow Him to reverse His gifts or His callings to His people. God's plan all along has been to allow sin to shut up everyone in disobedience so that His mercy could be shown to all. This mercy is clearly seen in these chapters, along with His infinite wisdom and knowledge. He is so far above us that His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways unfathomable. He is the ultimate answer for us, and He is indebted to no one. All things come from Him, flow through Him, and will revert to Him. In light of all of this, He alone is worthy of glory, forever. These characteristics are seen in God's dealings with both Jews and Gentiles. He had given man the responsibility to follow Him, but, wisely, He had made the salvation of His people secure by His sovereign choice. God has used the rejection of Israel to bring Gentiles into His family, and then to restore the Jews to Himself. Such wisdom is incomprehensible; He is clearly God, and we're not.

Study Questions for Romans 12

God's mercies should lead us to live in such a way that shows His will to be good, acceptable and perfect.

1. Read Romans 12:1. What are believers told to do (1b) and what do you think this means? What is the motivation for this action (1a), and why does it make sense (1c)?
2. In Romans 12:2 what negative and what positive thing are believers instructed to do (2a), and what will happen if we do (2b)? How is the will of God described (2b), and in what way are these descriptions true?
3. Looking at Romans 12:3-5 what kind of mindset should our "renewed" minds have (v3)? Why must we seek unity (v4, 5), and yet honor our differences (v4)? Why is the "body" a good way of seeing this?



"True branches are always revealed by their continuance in faith, and will remain attached to God's family tree."

4. From Romans 12:6-8 list the 7 gifts, and what you think they mean. Who possesses spiritual gifts (v6), how should each be used, and what does this passage imply about what to do with our unique gift?

5. Using Romans 12:9 what is the most important behavior for those with renewed minds (9a), and what does that mean? How does the second part of this verse help define that behavior?

6. Read Romans 12:10-11. What 2 things are we encouraged to do (10), and what do these mean? In what manner are we instructed to do them (v11)? How do you feel you measure up to this?

7. According to Romans 12:12-13 how are we to respond to difficulties (v12), and the needs of others (v13)? What are some ways you could carry this out?

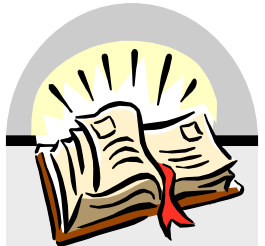
8. From Romans 12:14-15 how should we relate to people when they are against us (v14), and when they experience emotional ups and downs (v15)? Apply this to your life.

9. In Romans 12:16 what characteristic is encouraged, and, from this verse, what are some ways that it expresses itself?

10. Looking at Romans 12:17-18 what should we seek with all people (v18), and where does our responsibility end (18a)? What does v17 tell us to do, and how does it help carry out the instruction of v18?

11. Using Romans 12:19-21 what must we not do (v19a), and why (v19b). What should we do instead (v20)? What general principle does this approach illustrate (v21)?

12. Pick some of the behaviors that are encouraged in Romans 12:3-21, and explain how they reveal a mind that is renewed, and "prove" that the will of God is good, acceptable and perfect.



Memory Verse

"Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

Romans 12:21