

26-0830sc - Detailed Summary

26-0830sc - *The Book of Romans*, Steve Cain

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26-0830 - The Book of Romans, Chapter 12:1-21

Summary of Transcript (0:05 - 52:17), Teacher: Steve Cain

(0:05-1:23) Shift From Doctrine to Christian Walk

Steve opens the study in Romans chapter 12 and states that, in his estimation, Paul is changing focus. The first eleven chapters dealt with what it takes to become a Christian, receive justification, and be reconciled to God. Now that people are Christians, Paul wants them to realize there must be a change of behavior. Believers are not to behave as they did when they were Gentiles or Jews. They now have an obligation to change their behavior and their walk in life.

Steve mentions he had been reading Philippians chapter 4 and thinks the class will find it interesting. He then prepares to turn there, noting that in Romans 12 and the remainder of the book Paul will share God's concept of how believers ought to handle problems with fellow mankind and their walk in life. Paul advocates employing the things God has given him to share.

(1:23-3:20) Philippians Four Models Christian Practice

Steve turns to Philippians 4 beginning at verse 8. He explains that Paul is forthright there just as he is in Romans. After referring to verse 8, Steve notes that Paul makes the teaching personal because Paul is the teacher who is himself demonstrating the Christian walk. Steve believes Paul is doing the same thing in Romans: asking hearers to practice the things he shares and to implement them when approaching problems.

He then moves to the next paragraph, verses 10 through 14, in which Paul rejoices that the Philippians have revived their concern for him. They had been concerned before but lacked opportunity. Paul does not speak from need; he has learned to be content in whatever circumstances he is in.

(3:20-6:01) Contentment and Strength to Obey God

Steve continues reading Philippians 4:10-14. Paul knows how to get along with little and how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance he has learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, of having abundance and suffering need. He can do all things through Him who strengthens him. Nevertheless the Philippians have done well to share in his difficulty.

Steve highlights the familiar line "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." He applies

it to approaching the problems God wants believers to face and implementing God's advised approach. They can do these things because God strengthens them. When faced with a situation, God has already shared how to deal with that particular problem. Steve observes that people often disagree with rules and regulations and argue with God, but God says to do it His way; if they do, it will work out. Paul is telling them he can do these things through God who strengthens him. Steve therefore intends to approach problems the way God wants rather than the way man has trained people to deal with behavior.

(6:01-7:26) Prayer for Wisdom and Patience

With that mindset Steve leads the class in prayer. He thanks the Heavenly Father for providing insight into the way God would suggest problems be solved. He asks for understanding, insight, and especially wisdom accompanied by patience, because sometimes solving a problem requires waiting. He asks God to help the class understand what Paul will point out in the day's study so they can see the wisdom and insight of this approach to solving problems and situations. He asks God to bless the study and closes the prayer in Jesus' name.

Steve then returns to Romans and invites any comments or questions about what he has shared so far.

(7:26-10:09) Living Sacrifice and Varied Gifts

Steve begins Romans 12. Paul urges brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies as a living and holy sacrifice. Steve paraphrases this as approaching problems the way God suggests and letting Him be the responsible person. This is acceptable to God and is their spiritual service of worship. They are not to be conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of the mind so they may prove what the will of God is—that which is good, acceptable, and perfect.

Paul is pointing out that God has a specific way; it is not merely a suggestion. Believers are to approach problems this way and God will bless them. Through the grace given to him Paul says everyone should not think more highly of himself than he ought, but think with sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Just as the body has many parts that do not all have the same function, so those who are many are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since gifts differ according to the grace given, each is to use them properly: prophecy in proportion to faith, service in serving, teaching in teaching, exhortation in exhortation, giving with generosity, leadership with diligence, and showing mercy with cheerfulness.

(10:09-13:58) Gifts Serve the Common Good

Steve says all have a particular gift. For most it is apparent; for others it is not yet clear. That does not mean a person must settle for only one gift. People can develop primary, secondary, and tertiary gifts and are expected to develop themselves. He invites questions and notes the class already knows this material from studying 1 Corinthians 12.

He turns to 1 Corinthians 12 beginning at verse 1. Paul does not want them unaware concerning spiritual gifts. When they were pagans they were led astray to mute idols. No one speaking by the Spirit of God says "Jesus is cursed," and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

There are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, varieties of ministries but the same Lord, varieties of effects but the same God who works all things in all persons. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Steve emphasizes “common good.” The first time he heard that phrase was in a UAW union meeting after college when he worked for International Harvester. Meetings would close by asking whether anyone had anything to say for the common good of the union. The concern was the body. Likewise the church must be concerned about being one in unity and about the common good.

(13:58-16:51) Neglecting the Body Causes Harm

Steve applies the common-good principle to the Lord’s Supper discussion in 1 Corinthians. Some were coming early, eating, and leaving while others who could not arrive at the first hour were left out. Paul insists they must be concerned about the common good of the brotherhood. When the body is not considered, people become discouraged, angry, and upset; they quit. That is when Paul says they become sick and ill and fall away. Gifts must therefore be used for the common good of the body.

He continues reading the list in 1 Corinthians 12: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, effecting of miracles, prophecy, distinguishing spirits, various kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each individually as He wills.

Steve then recalls Ephesians 4, where Jesus, having ascended, gives gifts to people. He invites the class to look at Ephesians 4 beginning at verse 7 and begins reading from the New American Standard.

(16:51-20:14) Christ Gives Gifts to Equip the Church

Steve reads Ephesians 4:7-16. Grace was given to each according to the measure of Christ’s gift. When He ascended on high He led captives and gave gifts to people. He who descended also ascended far above all the heavens so that He might fill all things. He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

As a result they are no longer to be children tossed by waves and every wind of doctrine, by trickery and deceitful scheming, but speaking the truth in love they are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, Christ. From Him the whole body, fitted and held together by what every joint supplies according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Returning to Romans 12, Steve says believers have been given gifts and are to use them. They are not to sit back and wait until they are called on or to hide their gift until someone asks. As a young preacher he used to think people who sat in the back were waiting to be asked; later he learned they were often the ones actually doing the work of the church. Gifts belong to the recipients; they need to develop them, mature them, and use them the way God intended.

(20:14-22:23) Use Gifts; Do Not Hide in Crowds

Steve rereads Romans 12:6-8: gifts differ according to grace and each is to use them properly—prophecy in proportion to faith, service in serving, teaching in teaching, exhortation in exhortation, giving with generosity, leadership with diligence, mercy with cheerfulness.

He recalls his younger preaching days in Fort Wayne. People moving up from the South who had been introduced to Churches of Christ often would not look up the local congregation. One primary reason was that they did not want to be attached to a small church because they would then be called on to serve. They preferred large congregations of two or three hundred so they could get lost and not be asked to do anything. The congregation Steve was with at the time numbered only about forty or fifty, so anyone who came and was a member would be used. Those visitors did not want to be used and were afraid they would be.

(22:23-25:55) Sincere Love Without Hypocrisy

Steve picks up at Romans 12:9. Love must be free of hypocrisy. Detest what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Give preference to one another in honor. Do not lag behind in diligence; be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Hospitality is a challenge. An introvert may struggle with what Paul describes; an extrovert may also struggle by wanting to be particular about who they associate with and befriend. Paul is talking about generosity in a general sense.

He rereads “Love must be free of hypocrisy.” People say “I love you” to a spouse or children, but hypocrisy appears when the words are only words and depend on how much the speaker loves himself rather than looking out for the welfare of the other person. The Greek word is *agape*, the love that describes God, who looks out for everyone’s welfare. Steve mentions they could turn to 1 Corinthians 13 but will spare the class that reading.

A class member remarks that Steve is stepping all over his sermon; Steve replies that when he was a regular song leader many of his songs hit the lesson of the day even though he had no clue beforehand. Love can be hypocritical: a person can say “I love you” and then stab the other in the back. Love is to be without hypocrisy and must really mean looking after the other person’s welfare. Someone mentions James; Steve agrees that great minds work in the same direction.

(25:55-27:18) Practice Christian Virtues From Romans Twelve

Steve continues from the list in Romans 12. He says Paul talks about detesting what is evil and notes that this does not need much development, though it is very difficult to call somebody out on what is sin. Believers are to cling to what is good, be devoted to one another in brotherly love, give preference to one another in honor, not lag behind in diligence, be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, and practicing hospitality. Those are attributes Christians need to focus on and make sure they are practicing in their lives. The next instruction, he says, is very difficult in many cases, and the class has plenty of time to develop it.

(27:18-29:25) Bless Persecutors Against Greek Retaliation

Steve says what follows is very difficult to practice because of how people are raised and educated. The education system he and the class were introduced to is Greek in nature. That is how the Greeks taught people to fight back: treat others not as they would have you treat them, but retaliate and get even. Paul gives a different perspective and asks believers to implement and practice it. Steve says it is something he himself has to practice because of the way his wife and he were treated. He reads, “Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse.” He explains that he prays with Sandy every night and prays for her family. He asks God to bless them, to have grace and mercy on them, and to give them health. He does not want to be in their presence or hear them browbeat him. His kids asked him to leave them because they were abusing him. The children could see it and he did not. Nevertheless, the command remains: bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

(29:25-32:06) Rejoice and Weep Against Human Nature

Paul next says to rejoice with those who rejoice. Steve asks what the nature of that command is. If someone in the world who mistreated you is happy because they won the lottery, got a new job, or received some reward, you are to go and rejoice with them even though they just abused and mistreated you. How can you do that when you are being admonished to rejoice with them? He repeats: bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Suddenly the people who abused you lose a job, lose health, lose something, perhaps a relative dies or a child becomes very sick. The normal reaction would be that they are getting their just rewards. That is not what God asks. He asks believers to go and mourn with them and to do something for them. He asks the contrary of human nature. People cannot rejoice with them when they rejoice because they think God is rewarding them, and they cannot weep with them when they weep because they think God is punishing them. Paul tells them the opposite: rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

(32:06-35:48) Same Mind Toward All Without Pride

Verse 16 says to be of the same mind toward one another. Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Steve says this is another situation. Being of the same mind means looking after the other person's welfare and well-being and wanting the best for them. If they are hurting, you need to be by their side consoling them. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. If they were still of the world and of the Gentiles, they would respond the world's way. These people lived in the world and came out of it. They are now asked to adopt God's concept of how to deal with mankind, not the Gentiles' way or the world's way. Remember what Paul taught and encouraged; do that because God will bless you, as Paul said in Ephesians 4. Do not be wise in your own estimation. That is so difficult. Listen to somebody else. Class members add that this tempers being of the same mind: do not think differently of different people; treat them all the same; think the same of everybody, including yourself, so you neither elevate yourself nor lower somebody else.

Steve notes that Paul earlier admonished them that if God is not judging and has not condemned them, they should not condemn themselves. If Jesus died for them, why would He condemn them? He would not. Do not think so little of yourself or condemn yourself. People often belittle themselves. Know that God loves you and you are worthy of love. No one will take you away from the love of God.

(35:48-39:18) Trust God Not Your Own Understanding

“Do not be wise in your own opinion or estimation” reminds Steve of Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths. A class member asks how to interpret that if leaning on one’s own understanding leads to a knee-jerk reaction, while someone else’s counsel sounds better. Steve says someone may come asking for an opinion because they do not want to lean only on their own understanding; they want another person’s insight on how to deal with a problem. Paul advocates turning to God. Do not lean on your own understanding or do it the way the world taught, because believers are coming out of the world and have been heavily influenced and educated that way. They have a temperament that way. God through Paul advocates tempering that and looking to Him for the right advice: God, what is Your advice on this problem?

James says he who lacks wisdom should ask of God. God gives that wisdom without upbraiding and makes it available all the time. God wants people to turn to Him for advice and will give it. Whether they follow it or not, He will not upbraid them. If they make a mess and come back asking how to deal with it, He will not say, “What did you do with the last wisdom I just gave you?” He will not belittle them. He will suggest how to deal with it this way.

(39:18-42:20) Renew the Mind Through Scripture

Where do you find that advice? In the Word, through the knowledge of Him. Do not be conformed, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The Hebrew writer says believers need to discern right from wrong and how God would do these things, and they do that by being in the Word, studying the Bible. That is how they will know whether a certain thing is right or wrong. That is why it upsets Steve when he sees people going to an X-rated movie. Why subject yourself to foul language where every other word is a curse word? Who wants to be subjected to that or even know those kinds of words? Discern. That is not behavior and no place for a Christian to be. Discern where you go and the people you are with. Reject evil; hear it, reject it, be against it.

Steve notes he is reading from the New American Standard because many in the class have it, though he prefers studying the NIV. When he is home by himself he reads from every version and gets a lot of wisdom from all of them because of the way they apply the sentence itself. He returns to the text: be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.

(42:20-44:28) Never Repay Evil; Leave Room for God

Verse 17: Never repay evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all people. Steve finds that a little discerning regarding the brotherhood. Baptists, Methodists, and any other denomination have some very good thoughts and very good things. Respect that. Perhaps that is what Paul means: respect what is right in the sight of all people. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people. That is something they need to examine in how they approach it.

Verse 19 is why they need to recognize God’s involvement in their lives—divine intervention, providence, and preservation. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” If your enemy is hungry—this is another very difficult thing—feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. In so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

(44:28-47:14) Feed the Enemy From Proverbs Twenty-Five

Jesus said to pray for your enemies and for those who harass and persecute you. Steve had thought this idea originated with Jesus, but verse 20 quotes Proverbs 25:21-22: If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you. Steve's time is up, but he asks the class to bear with him. The idea is not original with him. He asks what their concept of heaping coals of fire on the head is. Is it punishment, making the person feel bad, making them want to apologize? That concept, he heard, is wanting to bring vengeance yourself. What is being advocated is not vengeance but something of comfort. He buys the explanation he heard hook, line, and sinker.

(47:14-50:43) Coals of Fire as Comfort Not Shame

The explanation is a comfort level. Not too long ago, when Steve was dating his wife Mary, they would go to her two-story house that had a pot-bellied furnace and a grate in the center of the ceiling. Heat rose but was not very effective on cold days. In those days they used a cast-iron pot, put burning coals from the furnace or fireplace into it, and placed it near the pillow. When you went to bed your feet and body were cold, but the fire in that pot kept your head warm. It is a comfort level. Paul is saying you will be providing comfort for the person. He is not stepping out of character or suggesting something different; he is suggesting you provide comfort for your enemy regardless.

A class member says he always thought the actions would make the enemy feel pulled out of bed by shame: if you show kindness even with a little water, he realizes how he mistreated you, and that shame may burden him toward return. Steve agrees that is a concept, but it still bears the fact that you are punishing them and bringing the shame they should experience, when it is God who brings the action that brings shame. Just as with praying for them, rejoicing and weeping with them, the reaction can produce shame or sorrow: look at how I have been treating this person and he is still treating me like a saint. The point at the beginning was never take your own revenge. Revenge should be taken, but let God exhibit it.

(50:43-52:17) God Takes Vengeance in Chapter Thirteen

Chapter 13 was not written with chapter divisions, so it is a continuation. The first few verses of chapter 13 tell how God takes vengeance. Vengeance is not only at the end of time; He also has provision for taking vengeance now, in time. That is why vigilantism—taking the law into your own hands—is wrong, because you are suing God. God has a provision for how He will take vengeance. Whether it seems right or wrong, this is the way they are supposed to do it. Second-guessing how God is working is exactly what they would be doing. Divine intervention, providence, and preservation operate either in time or at the end of time, or both. Steve says their time is up, thanks the class for their attention, and says they will go into chapter 13 next.

Verses Steve Covered in this class

Steve's August 30, 2026 class was built on **Romans 12**, with these verses actually read or worked through:

Main text

- **Romans 12:1–2** — living sacrifice; do not be conformed, be transformed
- **Romans 12:3** — do not think more highly of yourself; sound judgment; measure of faith
- **Romans 12:4–5** — one body, many members
- **Romans 12:6–8** — differing gifts used properly (prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy)
- **Romans 12:9–13** — love without hypocrisy through hospitality
- **Romans 12:14** — bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse
- **Romans 12:15** — rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep
- **Romans 12:16** — same mind toward one another; not haughty; associate with the lowly; not wise in your own estimation
- **Romans 12:17–18** — never repay evil for evil; respect what is right; so far as it depends on you, be at peace
- **Romans 12:19–21** — leave vengeance to God; feed a hungry enemy; heap coals of fire; overcome evil with good

He closed by saying the next class would pick up **Romans 13** (especially the opening verses on God taking vengeance through governing authority).

Passages he read or used as support

- **Philippians 4:8** (introduced; wording not fully transcribed)
- **Philippians 4:10–14** (read: contentment; “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”)
- **1 Corinthians 12:1–11** (read: varieties of gifts for the common good)
- **Ephesians 4:7–16** (read: Christ's gifts to equip the body)
- **Proverbs 3:5–6** (trust the Lord; do not lean on your own understanding)
- **Proverbs 25:21–22** (source of Romans 12:20 on feeding the enemy and coals of fire)
- **James 1:5** (ask God for wisdom; He gives without upbraiding)
- **Hebrews** on discerning good and evil by the Word (he pointed to the idea in Hebrews 5:14 without citing the number)
- Brief mention of **1 Corinthians 13** (agape) and Jesus' command to pray for enemies, without a full reading

So the class covered **Romans 12:1–21** in order, with the heaviest extra reading in Philippians 4, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and Proverbs 25.