

Week Seven

Conversations with God

ROMANS 12–14

READ

Key to understanding this next section of Romans is the very first word.

Therefore... (Romans 12:1).

Change happens from the inside out. We know this. Inside-out change is the heartbeat of the *Morph* experience, and it's central to Romans. The emphasis on the internal could be easily misapplied, though, by leading one to believe that the external is unimportant. Such is not the case. The opening of Romans 12 marks a transition. After sounding the depths of God's internal work, Paul now puts the external results on display. By embracing the astounding work of Christ and God's Spirit, change will be seen in a person's life.

Paul addresses numerous ways this change is seen in a person's life. Spiritual change is seen in the way a person stewards gifts and talents (Romans 12:3-8), it is seen in the way we interact with others (Romans 12:9-21), it is seen in our respect and obedience to government (Romans 13:1-7), and it is seen in how we are patient with the weak and respectful of those with differing views (Romans 14). Most significant to all of this change, though, is Paul's emphasis on love. Woven through each of the areas he addresses is his conviction that the commandments are "*summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'*" (Romans 13:9).

Deep thinkers are often criticized for their lack of practical application. It is thought that they crawl to the top of their ivory towers and philosophize about issues irrelevant to daily life. Paul's letter to the church in Rome is unquestionably deep. It is in these chapters, though, that we discover the profound implications on our daily lives. As you read through these chapters, talk with God about your own life and how spiritual training could bring about an internal change that is deep and profound, that will increasingly be put on display by outward acts of love toward others.

MEMORIZE

This week's memory verses:

1 Timothy 4:7-8, "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

ROMANS 12–14

MEDITATE

Meditating is simply talking and listening to God. Your conversation with God will be inspired and informed by reading and memorizing Scripture, but your conversation should also be personalized. Carefully consider the passages, but don't *just* consider the passage. Talk and listen. Pour out your thoughts, concerns, frustrations, and joys. Or just sit in silence before God. Some talk best with God in a quiet room. Others prefer to talk with God while running or walking. Most importantly, engage God in a way that is authentic and personal.

Use the space below to record memorable thoughts or highlights from your conversations with God to share with your Small Group or Running Partners.

