

Romans 12

Leon L. Combs, Ph.D.

Began December 28, 2004

Our prior studies in this book written by the Apostle Paul have covered some very “heavy” theological concepts such as “once saved, always saved” – because it is God Who preserves us so that we can persevere – and double imputation and the ultimate intellectual challenge for us “kind people”: double predestination. We have seen how such concepts are taught throughout the Bible and not just in the book of Romans. Now Paul transitions in his writings to the application of all that has proceeded in the book. It seems then that his “therefore” used in the beginning of chapter 12 does not just refer to the material just discussed but to all of the material written prior to this transition. So now we see how we are to live the Christian life based upon all of the previous revelations about God.

Rom 12:1 “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

Before God worked to quicken us to spiritual life, we were not worthy of any sacrifice because there was nothing about us that was acceptable to God. But after the double imputation work of God, we are now acceptable to God so now we can offer a spiritual service of worship to Him. A physical death by us would not accomplish anything spiritually for anyone else such as the death of Jesus. But we are called to make a **living** sacrifice.

2Cor 5:15 “and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

I will not get into another discussion on the word “all” here for I have already discussed that subject in a paper on <http://LivingTheology.com>. Our emphasis here is how we are to live since we are not Christians. Since Jesus died a death of atonement for us, we are now Christians and are called to live accordingly. We can only live a “holy” sacrifice because of the double imputation that God worked in us. We are called to live a sacrificial life as a spiritual service of worship of God. Our lives should be marked by a driving desire to have all that we do be molded by the holiness of Jesus. We need to keep ourselves totally centered on Jesus so that our minds are occupied with His thoughts, our eyes are allowed to only see what develops our holiness, our tongues should then only speak what is in line with a life devoted to Christ, our feet should only be allowed to take us to places where the Temple of the Lord is welcome and encouraged:

1Cor 6:19 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”

A study of how to be a holy sacrifice gets into the next verse of Romans 12:

Rom 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

This verse is indeed the key to living life as a spiritual sacrifice to God. Remember that this is also the way we perform our spiritual service of worship of God. What we think, what we allow ourselves to see, what we allow ourselves to hear, what we speak, and where we go are all guided by our worldview. The world wants us to be conformed to those items it lifts to us in constant bombardment: happiness, self-fulfillment, and many items that are in total opposition to the teaching of God. People seek to look younger by various means and by considerable expenditures, which is saying that they are not satisfied with the way that God designed them to look. People want to be liked by other people so they try to be as television teaches them since those “people” are popular in the TV programs. Really much of what people do in their world is trying to act out some movie or TV personalities that seem so wonderful to the world. We are not called to live outside of the world but we are called to live a sacrificial life of holiness that proves to the world the will of God. Here we see what the will of God for His people is: “that which is good and acceptable and perfect”. Of course the standard for “good”, “acceptable”, and “perfect” is what the Bible teaches us concerning our actions and thoughts.

What is our motivation for living such a life? We go back to verse one and see that all is available to us because of the mercies of God. Our motivation is very simple and that should be our genuine heart-felt gratitude to God for having such a wonderful mercy on us. Stop now and think about how you were before God acted to give you faith, to raise you from the spiritual dead, to take away all of your sin, and to give you the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Now think about what God did for you entirely out of mercy. Now what is your reaction to those thoughts? Humbleness and gratitude should be driving forces in our minds to give us all the motivation we need to live the life of holiness in all that we do. Every time we act in ways counter to God’s way should fill us with shame and drive us to repentance and restitution.

Every day we should spend some time thinking of how we spent our time and how much of that time was spent in the transformation of our minds and how much was spent in conformation to the ways of the world. The word for transformation is the same as used of the metamorphosis involved in the development of the butterfly. As we fill our minds with the Word of God and act out that Word in our daily lives, we will witness a transformation in ourselves that is truly a miracle of God.

We live in a mindless world, a world where there are no standards for right and wrong, a world where secularism rules. We are all secular meaning that we live in the world. But when we add “ism” to the word, the meaning is very different. Secularism is a religion involving humanism and a belief that what we see is all that exists. Secularism is the world of the cockroach, meaning that we live, we die, and that is all that there is. Carl Sagan was one of the main icons of secularism and many people were misled by his “Cosmos” shows on TV. He clearly proclaimed there that what we see is all that there is.

Of course Darwinism is part of humanism. I say that we live in a mindless world because we seldom are witnesses of anyone actually voicing some clear thinking about almost anything. I read about people who say that theories are facts. Then there are the many parents who believe someone saying such ridiculous words when the person has no training in science. I read recently about people comparing evolution with Newton's Law of Gravitation, saying that nobody questions his theory. But Newton's theory of gravitation is indeed wrong even though it stood for over 250 years. Our newspapers are full of irrational sayings and there seems no voice to help anyone who might be so audacious as to begin to think that what they read or saw on TV or on the web might actually be wrong.

The world does not want to really think about itself, but it only wants to be entertained until death. So many churches are changing to be "seeker friendly" that even God's truth is not fully discussed during the "worship service". Praise the Lord for our pastor who has a good grasp of what it means to gather as God's people to really worship Him as a group. Verses 1 and 2 above clearly tell us how to have spiritual worship as a service to God and such involves all of our time. A sacrifice is not always something that is pleasant in a humanly way. A sacrifice involves totally giving ourselves to the service of God in whatever place He has put us. We should continually look for opportunities to live out the will of God wherever we are because we are wherever we are because God put us there.

There have been several excellent books written about peoples' concerns about the world not thinking clearly. Two such books are referenced below (Stott and Blamires) and every Christian should read these books and give them some serious consideration. Blamires' first sentence is "There is no longer any Christian mind." He means that the people leading our societies have given over to Secularism as the basis for their thoughts. Much of Paul's writings encourage us to use our minds and to know "true knowledge". God is emphasizing to us the importance of using Biblically-based thinking in all that we do. However it is so much easier to just follow the world.

I am not optimistic about the world's chances of success because it is firmly rooted in the error of secularism. One day God also will tire of dealing with humankind and it will all come to an end. That end will also glorify God. So go forward each day with a determination to not be molded by the mindless world but to be molded by the very Word of God as we apply it to our existence. Glory to God!

Rom 12:3 "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."

As we perform this appraisal of our time, we need to judge ourselves only by our understanding of the Word of God. God has given each of us a measure of faith and that faith is to be used to rightly divide and apply the Word of God. We have a tendency to want to give ourselves a good grade for the day, but we need to look closely at our actions as revealed by a comparison to the Word. If we are truly Christians, we will be

comparing ourselves more and more to the pure, perfect standard of God and this comparison must be done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as He works in our lives. Satan will accuse us of nothing but failure. God will show us the error of our ways, praise us for the times when we have obeyed Him, and give us the required discipline, but we will leave His presence cleansed. We will leave the presence of Satan only condemned. So be careful with the self analysis. We will see below how we are to use the faith that God has given each of us.

Rom 12:4 “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Rom 12:6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

Rom 12:7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

Rom 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Now Paul starts to talk about the function of each individual member of the visible church, which is made up of all true disciples of Jesus Christ. He says that each of us does not have the same function within the body of Christ. We are all given gifts that are to be worked out within the church. We are not only each members of the body of Christ, but we are also members of each other for we are each dependent upon every member successfully deploying his/her gift. Below I am taking from my article on “The Holy Spirit I. Gifts” that is available on my web site (<http://LivingTheology.com>):

I. Distinguishing Talents and Fruits

A. Talents

It is important to distinguish between talents and gifts. **Talents** are given to Christians and to non-Christians

James 1:17 “Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.”

Spiritual gifts have been defined by Ray C. Stedman of the Peninsula Bible Church of Palo Alto, California as “a capacity for service which is given to every true Christian without exception and which was something each did not possess before he became a Christian” (“Body Life”, Regal Books, Glendale, Cal, 1972, p. 39).

Sometimes the gifts work through the talents:

Ex 31:3-5 “And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all {kinds of} craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold,

in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all {kinds of} craftsmanship.”

The “craftsmanship” is the talent and the “understanding” and “knowledge” are the spiritual gifts.

The ability to play a musical instrument or to sing is a talent given to Christians and non-Christians. Sometimes God will give such talented people the gift of exhortation to work with the talent.

B. Fruit of the Spirit

Before proceeding with the Gifts, let’s now briefly mention the Fruit of the Spirit:

Gal 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

All of these fruits of the Spirit should be exhibited by every Christian. Let’s repeat them and savor them slowly in our mind:

- **LOVE**
- **JOY**
- **PEACE**
- **PATIENCE**
- **KINDNESS**
- **GOODNESS**
- **FAITHFULNESS**
- **GENTLENESS**
- **SELF-CONTROL**

I propose that each of us put these somewhere that we can see them almost constantly during the day: on the refrigerator, on the door going out to the car, on the dashboard of the car, on the computer monitor at work, on the door to the bedroom, on the door to the bathrooms, etc. What a changed world we would occupy if each of God’s children concentrated on letting the Holy Spirit manifest these fruits in our lives all the time! When we don’t cooperate with the Holy Spirit we are grieving Him as seen below:

Eph 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

II. Spiritual Gifts

A. What is the relationship between the spiritual gifts and the church?

Since the purpose of the spiritual gifts is to edify the church (as seen below), we must first look at a few vital points about the church. The church is

- Founded on the Lord Jesus Christ
- Called into being by the Holy Spirit
- Made up of people of all races to be united as Children of God

The church members are fellow citizens:

Eph 2:19 “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,”

Seemingly paradoxically, the church has unity and diversity, all controlled by the Holy Spirit:

- Unity: *Eph 4:4-6 “{There is} one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*
- Diversity in gifts: *Eph 4:7 “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.”* And *Eph 4:11-12: “And He gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;”*
- The Lord unifies the diversity: *1Cor 12:4 – 6 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all {persons.}”*
- We see unity and diversity: *Rom 12:4-5: “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”*

B. Why are there gifts?

Eph 4:12 “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;”

C. Who receives the gifts?

1 Cor 12:11 “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”

1 Cor 12:7 “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

1 Peter 4:10 “As each one has received a {special} gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

D. Who gives the gifts?

1 Cor 12:11 “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”

The word for spiritual gift is “charisma” or “charismata” based upon the Greek word “charis” meaning “grace”. So the spiritual gifts that God gives to each of His children is part of the action of the grace of God to His children.

It is crucial for each Christian to understand that we are commanded to serve the church using the gift(s) from the Holy Spirit

1 Peter 4:10 10 “As each one has received a {special} gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

“Employ it” is a command and not an option. Let that sink into our minds as we seek to walk a life pleasing to God. We are each to exercise our gifts for the edification of the church. If each of us will exercise the gifts that God has given us then the body of Christ will be edified. If one member does not exercise his/her gifts then there is a lack of edification. Each person must know what his/her gifts are, know the area of service of those gifts, and then be empowered by God to exercise those gifts. What a different place the church would be if each true Christian were serving the church by employing his/her spiritual gift(s)!

It is extremely important to understand that the gifts are part of a sequence of events administered by the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. This process is revealed to us in

1Cor 12:4 – 6 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all {persons.}”

From this scripture we see that there are:

- Varieties of gifts
- Varieties of ministries (services)
- Varieties of effects (what is worked out or energized)

And all of the above are coordinated by the same Spirit, Lord, and God (here we have the Trinity at work). To illustrate this concept let us use a particular gift and look at all three actions.

- Gift of helps (1 Cor 12:28)
- Ministry: take meals, buy medicine, pay medical bills, work at a clinic, be a nurse, be a MD, be a Ph.D. researcher of find new drugs, work with foster children, visit retirement homes, etc.

- God energizes the Child of God to produce some effect in some ministry with the gift.

Get the point? First we determine our gift, then we look for ministries in which to use the gift, then God empowers us (provides the opportunity, provides resources, gives energy and health, etc.) to use the gift in the ministry to produce His desired effects. Isn't this truly exciting? The above is the method for how each of us works with God to edify the church. We should always look at this three-fold function as we look closer at the gifts that God gives His children. In my article on Gifts I do examine this method further for each gift.

E. So what are the spiritual gifts?

It is not possible to be exhaustive in listing the gifts because some other words in Scripture could also be interpreted as gifts in addition to those listed below. However these are the main spiritual gifts as understood by most theologians.

<u>Romans 12:3-8</u>	<u>1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30</u>	<u>Ephesians 4:11</u>
Prophecy	Word of Wisdom	*Apostleship
Ministering (helps)	Faith	Prophecy
Teaching	Healing	Evangelism
Exhorting	Miracles	Pastoring
Giving	Prophecy	Teaching
Government (ruling)	Discernment	
Showing mercy	Tongues	<u>1 Peter 4:9-10</u>
	Interpretation	Hospitality
	*Apostleship	Speaking
	Teaching	
	Ministration (helps), Government (ruling)	

From what we have seen above, it is imperative for each child of God to know his/her gift so that he/she may obey the command to employ the gift(s). You can go to my web site (<http://LivingTheology.com>) that will refer you to this web site where one may go and determine his/her spiritual gifts: <http://www.churchgrowth.org/cgi-cg/gifts.cgi> . There are also many books that contain methods of determining spiritual gifts ("Jesus on Leadership" by C. Gene Wilkes, Life Way Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1996 is strongly recommended).

From this point on in this text we will assume that the reader has determined his/her spiritual gift(s) and we will elaborate on most of the gifts.

F Some Details of Spiritual Gifts

Every child of God has at least one spiritual gift:

1Cor 12:4-7: “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all {persons.} But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

1. Apostle

The word “apostle” appears 19 times in the New Testament:

Rom 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called {as} an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

Rom 11:13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

1Cor 1:1 Paul, called {as} an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

1 Cor 9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

1Cor 9:2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1 Cor 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

2 Cor 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy {our} brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

2 Cor 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

Gal 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not {sent} from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and {who are} faithful in Christ Jesus:

Col 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

1 Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, {who is} our hope;

1 Tim 2:7 And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

2 Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,

2 Tim 1:11 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

Heb 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

1Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen

2Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

In its technical sense, this word means those who were witnesses to the works of Christ and who were specifically commissioned by Christ to establish the church on a proper base. Some people have postulated that the gift is still active today in that missionaries who are church planters have the apostle gift. Paul, in 1 Cor 9:1 stressed the importance of an apostle having seen the Lord Jesus Christ and certainly he was the last one to have that honor. The reformed theology position is that this gift ceased with the death of the last apostle in New Testament times.

2. Prophet

This word appears 64 times in the New Testament and 156 times in the Old Testament. There are two possible interpretations of this word. One would be the person who revealed truth of God to the people of God and foretelling or predictive revelations from God. However God no longer reveals “new truth” about Him to His people. The Bible is closed with the book of Revelation and we have a very strong warning for people claiming to further add to the Bible

Rev 22:18-19 “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

Therefore we declare that this first meaning or application of the prophesy gift as ceased.

There is another possible interpretation of the word prophesy and that is a gift that is the ability to understand and to engage in the exposition of the Word of God. Paul speaks of this use of the gift extensively in 1 Cor 14 and especially we read

1Cor 14:3 “But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.”

Theologians that I respect very much such as Boice say that the gift of prophesy must be understood in its technical sense (the first meaning above) and thus this gift has ceased. Other people believe that the gift is still active in its second sense as stated above. It seems to me that we should accept the verdict of Boice and others and say that there are no Prophets today for people who portray themselves as prophets use the first meaning, which is definitely not correct. People claiming that they have new revelations from God or who say that they know when Jesus will come again are certainly speaking contrary to Biblical truth. The Bible’s requirement for such a prophet or forth teller is that the person must be 100% accurate. Because of the misuse of the term, I prefer to say that the gift of teaching involves the second possible interpretation of prophesy and that the gift of prophesy has ceased. Certainly a gifted teacher has the gift to understand and to engage in the exposition of the Word of God.

3. Evangelist

This gift most certainly is still active in the world today. The word only appears three times in the New Testament:

Acts 21:8 “And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.”

Eph 4:11 “And He gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers,”

2 Tim 4:5 “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

The meaning of the Greek word is “One who announces good news”. The person with the gift of evangelism then has a special ability to communicate the Gospel. Philip is the only person in the New Testament who was actually called an evangelist (Acts 21:8) and he was a deacon. Boice says (Foundations of the Christian Faith) that he has known quite a few men and women who definitely had this gift and none of them were ordained. Although the person must certainly know the Gospel and be able to answer questions pertaining to it, the person does not have to have a formal theological education.

Now Paul proceeds to tell us how we should behave toward each other and toward the world.

Rom 12:9 “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Rom 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Rom 12:11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Rom 12:12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

Rom 12:13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Rom 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not.

Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Rom 12:16 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.

Rom 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”

Our love should never have any self motives in it. We should love others with a pure heart. The Greek word that he uses for love is “agapee” and we all know what that means. This is the love of God toward us that does not depend upon any return on the part of the person being loved and this meaning is consistent with his saying that we should not exhibit any hypocrisy in that love towards someone. It is actually impossible for this type of love to have any self enhancement involved with it. However this type of love is not possible for the worldly person. As we walk in the world we must hate evil and cling to what is good. In other words we must take an active part in preferring what

is good in the sight of God and totally staying away what is evil in the sight of God. All of this type of living is consistent with the life of someone who is now a living and holy sacrifice to God.

If we are totally devoted to others in the body of Christ then we cannot be selfish in our life. He then goes on to describe more about what it means to be devoted to others in the body of Christ (the invisible church). Giving preference to each other in honor means that we put everyone else in the Body before us to the glory of God. Instead of selfishly always thinking about what will make us happy and what we want, we should be thinking of others and doing what we can to help them in their life.

Paul next tells us how to live in the world and living in this world is very complicated for the Christian. First we must obey God.

Acts 5:29 "But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men."

But God has also set up the world according to His plan and He has rules for us to follow in living with the people who are not in the Body of Christ.

Rom 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Rom 12:19 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.

Rom 12:20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

Rom 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Even though peace in the world was not part of the plan of Jesus, we should always strive to be at peace with everyone, even the worldly people.

Matt 10:34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Luke 12:51 "Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;"

The Jews at the time of Christ were looking for a Messiah who would bring worldly peace to them and set them up as a ruling nation. But by looking for their own definition of the Messiah they missed the true Messiah. The peace that Jesus brought was peace with God and that meant that those who did not have that peace would certainly not have peace with us. The people who do not have peace with God think that we are their enemy and that our very lives of demonstrated peace with God brings out anger and envy in their hearts.

We, however, should strive for peace in the world. But when it does not come, we are to turn the situation over to God. We are not to take our own revenge when people harm us and blaspheme God, but we are to leave the vengeance to the One who knows perfectly

how to reward and to punish. The overcoming of evil that we are called to exhibit is exactly opposite to the world's view. We are to offer help to our enemies and in so doing we will be revealing that we are indeed children of God and brothers with Jesus. Therefore it will be revealed that the people doing evil to us will actually be doing evil to Jesus and therefore bringing even more wrath upon their heads.

References

1. All Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, Moody Press, 1975.
2. James Montgomery Boice, "Romans, Volume 3, God and History", Romans 9 - 11, Baker Book House, 1993.
3. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "Romans, Exposition of Chapter 12, Christian Conduct", Banner of Truth Trust, 1 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh EH12 6EL, 2000.
4. John R. W. Stott, "Your Mind Matters", InterVarsity Press, 1972.
5. Harry Blamires, "The Christian Mind", Servant Publications, 1978.