

THE ROAD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

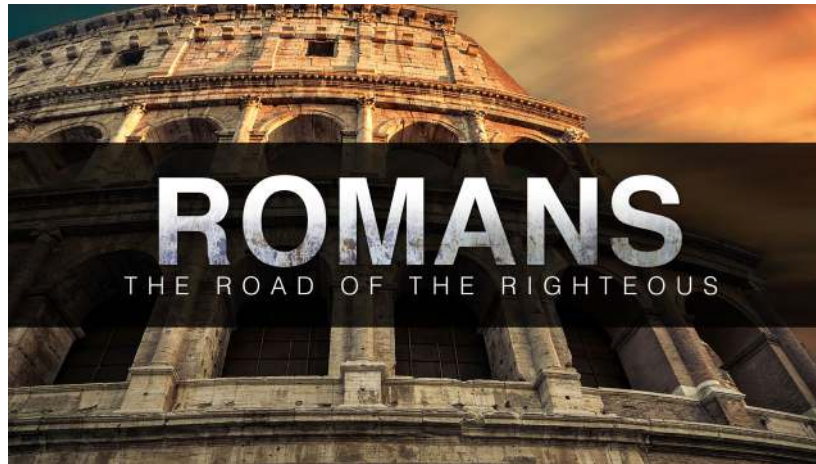
Expositional Study Of Romans

Romans 12:12

Written By

©Pastor Marty Baker

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Grubs are destructive little worms, and in northern Virginia there are seven kinds which can, and will, destroy your lovely lawn by eating your roots in the summer months. You know the drill. You fertilize in the spring, and you might even throw down some extra seed to thicken up the turf. To get that deep, lush green you might even go over the top and apply some much needed iron too. Then, you sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labors as your lawn becomes one of the lawns on the block everyone likes to look at.

However, toward the end of July, your lawn starts heading south. Patches of yellow start appearing here and there, so you do what any logically-minded gardener would do: you water all the more. Why, you might put down some trusty fertilizer to green up the yellowing turf. But to no avail. The grass continues to die in clumps, and if you pull hard enough it just comes out in your hand. What in the world is going on?

You have grubs. They are designed (by Satan, I think), to eat the roots of your turf. How do you stop them dead in their proverbial tracks? You put down *Grub Killer Plus* by Bayer, you know, the aspirin people. Talk about the perfect way to get rid of a headache. Why is this product so good? It contains Dylox, which is one of the few products capable of eliminating the seven varieties of grubs in our region. It also kills ants, crickets, cutworms,

earwigs, ticks and so forth. What a bargain.

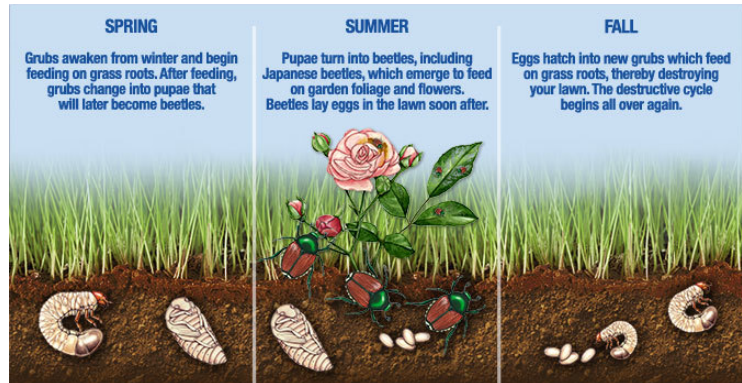


But there is no time to waste. The time to get this product on your lawn is NOW. Put it down in the spring (April) and in the fall (September) and you'll make sure you don't have grubs eating away at your tender, beautiful turf. Don't delay because there is so much at stake, right? So, I'd advise you to take immediate and RADICAL action by heading to your local nursery and picking up and actually applying a bag of these primo chemical. And, please, don't forget to water it in so it can do what it is built to do: take out grubs.

Spiritually, the same holds true. Once we are justified by faith in the person and redemptive work of Jesus, the Christ (Rom. 5:1-), we are, as Paul commands us in Romans 12, responsible for getting rid of the godless grubs which eat away at our practical righteousness. How do we do this? We take aim at these pesky pests by taking radical action. What kind of radical action? The kind which is continually focused on purposefully and strategically behaving more like a Christian and less like a non-Christian each and every day.

Got any godless grubs eating away at your practical righteousness?

Apply spiritual Dylox by following Paul's insightful commands as disclosed in Romans 12, verses 9 through 21. Here Paul, the master spiritual gardener, gives us our marching orders as saints of Jesus.



https://www.google.com/search?q=grubs&safe=active&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiR9Ky7gvnkAhVsIlkKHXRzC7EQ_AUIESgB&biw=1280&bih=640&dpr=1.5#imgc=8-cCR0gRl4YvNM:&spf=1569862749172

Radical Righteousness Must Permeate Our Sacred And Secular Lives (Rom. 12:9-21)

In verse 12, he adds three more areas where improper, sinful behavior should be replaced with proper, holy behavior. I trust you are still being mindful of the other areas where attention is desperately needed in order for the godless grubs to be summarily defeated.

- Be Radically Righteous With Love (Rom. 12:9)
- Be Radically Righteous Toward Evil (Rom. 12:9)
- Be Radically Righteous Toward Good (Rom. 12:9)
- Be Radically Righteous Toward Loving The Family (Rom. 12:10)
- Be Radically Righteous Toward Honoring Family Members (Rom. 12:10)
- Be Radically Righteous Toward How You Function (Rom. 12:11)

How are you faring? Making progress? I trust you are by means of the Spirit's assistance (Eph. 5:18). For our purposes in this study, we will only address the next two concepts Paul challenges us to weave into our lives to righteousness prevails over unrighteousness.

Be Radically Righteous Concerning Hope (Rom. 12:12a)

Watch how Paul presents this imperative with three short words in the original text:

NAS Romans 12:12 rejoicing in hope . . .

NIV Romans 12:12 Be joyful in hope . . .

GREEK Romans 12:12 τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες,

The present active participle here is “rejoicing,” *chairontes* (χαίροντες), and it has an imperatival nuance to it, meaning it is a prescription not a description . . . a command, not a suggestion you should simply shrug off. What does this verbal root mean exactly? I’ll let Bauer’s Greek lexicon tell you:

χαίρω mid. by-form χαίρεται TestAbr s. below; impf. ἔχαιρον; fut. χαρήσομαι (B-D-F §77; Mlt-H. 264); 2 aor. pass. ἐχάρην (Hom. +).

① to be in a state of happiness and well-being, *rejoice, be glad* opp. κλαίειν J 16:20; Ro 12:15ab (Damasc., Vi. Isid. 284 χαρίεις πρὸς τοὺς χαριέντας); 1 Cor 7:30ab; Hv 3, 3, 2. Opp. λύπην ἔχειν J 16:22. W. ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι (Hab 3:18; TestJob 43:15; ParJer 6:20; cp. TestAbr A 11 p. 89, 17 [Stone p. 26]) Mt 5:12; 1 Pt 4:13b; cp. Rv 19:7; GJs 17:2. W. εὐφραίνεσθαι (Jo 2:23 al. in LXX) Lk 15:32; Rv 11:10. W. σκιρτᾶν Lk 6:23. W. acc. of inner obj. (B-D-F §153, 1; Rob. 477) χ. χαρὰν μεγάλην *be very glad* (Jon 4:6; JosAs 3:4 al.) Mt 2:10. τῇ χαρᾷ ἧ (by attraction for ἦν) χαίρομεν 1 Th 3:9. Also χαρᾷ χ., which prob. betrays the infl. of the OT (Is 66:10), J 3:29 (B-D-F §198, 6; Rob. 531; 550). The ptc. is used w. other verbs *with joy, gladly* (Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 40 §169 ἄπιθι χαίρων; 3 Km 8:66; Eutecnius 4 p. 43, 7 ἄπεισι χαίρουσα; Laud. Therap. 12 χαίρων ἐστέλλετο) ὑπέδεξατο αὐτον χαίρων Lk 19:6; cp. vs. 37; 15:5; Ac 5:41; 8:39.—The obj. of or reason for the joy is denoted in var. ways: w. simple dat. τοῖς τὰ πολλὰ λέγουσιν *those who are (merely) garrulous* Papias (2:3) (Aristonous 1, 45 [p. 164 Coll. Alex.]; Just., A I, 5, 3 al.; Orig., C. Cels. 8, 69, 20; s. also below on Ro 12:12) or prep. χαίρειν ἐπὶ τινι *rejoice over someone or someth.* (Soph. et al.; X., Cyr. 8, 4, 12, Mem. 2, 6, 35; Pla., Leg. 5, 729d; Dioid S 1, 25, 2; Plut., Mor. 87e; 1088e; BGU 531 I, 4 [I A.D.]; POxy 41, 17; Tob 13:15ab; Pr 2:14; 24:19; Bar 4:33; JosAs 4:4; Jos., Ant. 1, 294; 3, 32; Ar. 15, 7; Just., D. 28, 4; Iren. 1, 16, 3 [Harv I 163, 9]) Mt 18:13; Lk 1:14; 13:17; Ac 15:31; Ro 16:19; 1 Cor 13:6; 16:17; 2 Cor 7:13; Rv 11:10; Hs 5, 2, 5 and 11; 8, 1, 16; 8, 5, 1 and 6; Dg 11:5. Also διά w. acc. (Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 102 §428; EpArist 42) J 3:29; 11:15 the ὅτι-clause gives the reason, and δι ὑμᾶς is *for your sakes = in your interest*; cp. 1 Th 3:9. ἐν τινι (Soph., Trach. 1118; Pla., Rep. 10, 603c; En 104:13) Hs 1:11. ἐν τούτῳ *over that* Phil 1:18a (for other functions of ἐν s. below). περί τινος *in someth.* (Pla., Ep. 2, 310e.—περὶ πλοῦτον Did., Gen. 150, 8) 1 Cl 65:1. ἵνα μὴ λύπην σχῶ ἀφ’ ὧν ἔδει με χαίρειν (either ἀπὸ τούτων ἀφ’ ὧν or ἀπὸ τούτων οἷς) 2 Cor 2:3. The reason or object is given by ὅτι (Lucian, Charon 17; Ex 4:31; Just., A II, 2, 7) Lk 10:20b; J 11:15 (s. above); 14:28; 2 Cor 7:9, 16; Phil 4:10; 2J 4. χ. ἐν τούτῳ ὅτι Lk 10:20a. χ. ὅταν 2 Cor 13:9. χ. ... γάρ Phil 1:18b (19). The reason or obj. is

expressed by a ptc. (X., Cyr. 1, 5, 12; Pla., Rep. 5, 458a; Dio Chrys. 22 [39], 1 al.; PGM 4, 1212 χαίρεις τοὺς σοὺς σὺζῶν; 1611; Just., D. 114, 4): ἰδόντες τὸν ἀστέρα ἐχάρησαν Mt 2:10; cp. Lk 23:8; J 20:20; Ac 11:23; Phil 2:28; Hv 3, 12, 3. ἀκούσαντες ἐχάρησαν *they were delighted by what they heard* Mk 14:11; cp. Ac 13:48; Hv 3, 3, 2.—1 Cl 33:7; Dg 5:16. λαβόντες τὰ ἐδέμματα ἐχάρησαν Hs 5, 2, 10. W. gen. and ptc. (as Just., D. 85, 6) 9, 11, 7. If χαίρειν is also in the ptc., καί comes betw. the two participles: χαίρων καὶ βλέπων (*and*) *it is with joy that I see* Col 2:5. ἐχάρην ἐρχομένων ἀδελφῶν καὶ μαρτυρούντων *I was glad when some fellow-Christians came and testified* 3J 3.—τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίρ. Ro 12:12 is not ‘rejoice over the hope’ (the dat. stands in this mng. X., Mem. 1, 5, 4; Theopompus [IV B.C.]: 115 Fgm. 114 Jac.; Epict., App. D, 3 [p. 479 Sch.] ἀρετῇ χ.; Iambl., Vi. Pyth. 28, 137 οἷς ὁ θεὸς χ.; Pr 17:19), but rather *rejoice in hope* or *filled with hope* (B-D-F §196). τὸ ἐφ’ ὑμῶν χαίρω *as far as you are concerned, I am glad* Ro 16:19 v.l. In the majority of cases in our lit. ἐν does not introduce the cause of the joy (s. above): χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν *I rejoice in the midst of* (though *because of* is also poss.) (the suffering(s) Col 1:24 (the Engl. ‘in’ conveys both ideas). χαίρ. ἐν κυρίῳ Phil 3:1; 4:4a, 10 (the imperatives in 3:1; 4:4ab are transl. *good-bye* [so Hom. et al.] by Goodsp., s. Probs. 174f; this would class them under 2a below). Abs. Lk 22:5; J 4:36; 8:56 (EbNestle, Abraham Rejoiced: ET 20, 1909, 477; JMoulton, ‘Abraham Rejoiced’: ibid. 523–28); 2 Cor 6:10; 7:7; 13:11; Phil 2:17f; 4:4b (s. Goodsp. above); I Th 5:16; I Pt 4:13a; cp. 13b; GPt 6:23; Hv 3, 3, 3f; Hs 1:11; 5, 3, 3; GJs 16:3.—On the rare mid. χαιρόμενος (TestAbr A 11 p. 89, 21 [Stone p. 26] χαίρεται καὶ ἀγάλλεται) Ac 3:8 D, s. Mlt. 161 w. note 1; B-D-F §307.

② in impv., a formalized greeting wishing one well, also in indicative, to use such a greeting (in effect, to express that one is on good terms w. the other, cp. Soph., Oed. R. 596 νῦν πᾶσι χαίρω=now I bid everyone good day)

Ⓐ in spoken address, oft. on meeting people (Hom. et al.; also χαίροις TestAbr A 16 p. 97, 21 [Stone p. 42]; B 13 p. 117, 18 [82]; JosAs 8:2; GrBar 11:6f; loanw. in rabb.) χαῖρε, χαίρετε *welcome, good day, hail (to you), I am glad to see you*, somet. (e.g. Hermas)=*how do you do?* or simply *hello* Mt 26:49; 27:29; 28:9 (here perh. specif. *good morning* [Lucian, Laps. inter Salutandum 1 τὸ ἐωθινὸν ... χαίρειν; also scholia p. 234, 13 Rabe; Cass. Dio 69, 18; Nicetas Eugen. 2, 31 H.; so Goodsp., Probs. 45f; he translates Lk 1:28 and the 2J and H passages in the same way]); Mk 15:18; Lk 1:28; GJs 11:1 (Ps.-Callisth. 1, 4, 2 Nectanebos says to Olympia upon entering her room: χαίροις Μακεδόνων βασιλεία); J 19:3 (on the sarcastic greeting as king cp. Diod S 34 + 35, Fgm. 2, 8f [Eunus]); Hv 1, 1, 4; 1, 2, 2ab; 4, 2, 2ab. χαίρειν τινὶ λέγειν *greet someone, bid someone the time of day* (Epict. 3, 22, 64; pass.: χαίρειν αὐτοῖς ὑφ’ ἡμῶν λέγεσθαι Iren. 1, 16, 3 [Harv. I 162, 11]) 2J 10f.—On the poss. sense *farewell, good-bye* for Phil 3:1; 4:4 s. 1 above, end.

Ⓑ elliptically at the beginning of a letter *greetings* (X., Cyr. 4, 5, 27; Theocr. 14, 1; Plut., Ages. 607 [21, 10]=Mor. 213a; Aelian, VH 1, 25; Jos., Vi. 217; 365; Mel., HE 4, 26, 13; pap [Mitt-Wilck. I/2, 477–82; HLietzmann, Griech. Pap.: Kl. T. 14², 1910; Witkowski, Epistulae; GMilligan, Selections fr. the Gk. Pap.² 1911]; LXX.—B-D-F §389; 480, 5; Rob. 944; 1093. GGerhard, Untersuchungen zur Gesch. des griech. Briefes, diss. Heidelberg. 1903, Philol 64, 1905, 27–65; FZiemann, De Epistularum

Graecarum Formulis Sollemnibus: Dissertationes Philologicae Halenses XVIII/4, 1911; PWendland, Die urchristl. Literaturformen^{2, 3} 1912, 411–17 [Suppl. 15: Formalien des Briefes]; WSchubart, Einführung in die Papyruskunde 1918; Dssm., LO 116ff-LAE 146ff [lit.]; FExler, The Form of the Ancient Gk. Letter 1923; ORoller, D. Formular d. paul. Briefe '33; RArcher, The Ep. Form in the NT: ET 63, '51f, 296–98; Pauly-W. III 836ff; VII 1192ff; Kl. Pauly II 324–27; BHHW I 272f) τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ... χαίρειν *greetings to the brethren* Ac 15:23; cp. 23:26; Js 1:1; AcPlCor 1:1; 2:1. Ign. uses the common formula *πλεῖστα χαίρειν* (πολύς 3ba) IEph ins; IMg ins; ITr ins; IRo ins; ISm ins; IPol ins.—The introduction to B is unique: *χαίρετε, υἱοὶ καὶ θυγατέρες, ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου, ἐν εἰρήνῃ* 1:1.—JLieu, 'Grace to you and Peace', The Apostolic Greeting: BJRL 68, '85, 161–78.—Schmidt, Syn. II 550–73. DELG. M-M. EDNT. TW.¹

To rejoice means you are in a state of happiness, that you exude happiness, that you are known for happiness. You are not to be known as a “Debbie Downer,” as “Downcast Dave,” as a wet blanket, or as a “Negative Nanny.” You’re not to be the guy who looks at a rose and says, “That’s too bad they have thorns.” No, you’re the guy who looks at the rose and says, “I’m thankful that those thorns have beautiful roses.” You are the guy who, despite what is going on, pulsates with joy that the situation at hand is not the end of the matter.

Why are you supposed to be happy? The answer is simple: you have “the hope” (τῆ ἐλπίδι). The presence of the article “the” does not appear in the English translations, yet it is highly significant because it grounds our joy in the hope God has clearly revealed to us. More specifically we could safely surmise that this particular hope is eschatological in nature, meaning it points to what lies ahead at the summation or conclusion of God’s plan for mankind. Let’s drill down into this concept further to gain illumination.

What is the hope of the Christian which should result in him or her having a joyous attitude in all of the ups and downs of life? Join me as we work our way through a brief checklist.

- *We have hope in rapture of Christ for His Church.* As Paul articulates in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 ¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.* ¹⁴ *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.* ¹⁵ *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.* ¹⁶ *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.* ¹⁸ *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*” Prior to the tribulation, which is a time where deals specifically with Israel (Dan. 9:24–27), Christ will snatch His bride, the Church, away from the coming judgment. Who cannot be inspired with the excitement of His glorious and imminent coming for us? Who doesn’t wait for the sound of the trumpet?

¹ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1074–1075.

- *We have hope of the coming of Christ.* Again, Paul addresses this thought in his letter to Titus: “¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (Titus 2).
- *We have hope of realized eternal life in God’s glorious presence.* Paul’s words in Titus chapter three tell us this much: “⁷ so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3). We have this life now (John 3:16; 5:24-25); however, one day it will be completely realized as we walk and talk in Christ’s heavenly sphere. And I might add, we have this hope of life because of the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, as Peter denotes, “³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through (or by means of) the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1). *Because He lives, we, too, shall live even though we die.*
- *We have hope that we shall eventually be completely conformed to Christ’s holy image.* John gives us this wonderful and exciting insight when he states, “¹ See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3). When you think and meditate upon the fact that one day you will be like Christ, this endeavor, in and of itself, moves you to purity, and or holiness, because you realize you should begin to reflect His holy image NOW, not just later. This spiritual data point should also move you to sing a hymn from 1898 devised by Carrie Ellis Breck, a woman who wrote over 1,200 hymn in her lifetime:

¹ Face to face with Christ my Savior,
 Face to face--what will it be
 When with rapture I behold Him,
 Jesus Christ who died for me?

Chorus:

Face to face I shall behold Him,
 Far beyond the starry sky;
 Face to face in all His glory,
 I shall see Him by and by!

² Only faintly now I see Him
 With the darkened veil between,
 But a blessed day is coming
 When His glory shall be seen.

Chorus²

- *We have hope we currently possess a spiritual inheritance which is beyond earthly analysis, classification, and description.* Peter, who had seen into glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, wrote these divinely inspired words we should commit to

² Carrie E. Brick and Grant C. Tullar, *Face To Face*.

memory: ³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* ⁴ *to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,* ⁵ *who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1 Pet. 1). First, we have hope because we know that since Jesus lives, we, too, shall live when we die. This is a living hope which cannot be extinguished in our hearts. Second, our Lord has an inheritance to give us which is imperishable and undefiled and is off the proverbial charts. We will live in a city to beat all cities (Rev. 21). We will enjoy our own personal mansions crafted by the Lord Himself (John 14). We will eat of the tree of life anytime we want (Rev. 22:1-5). We will worship the living God in worship services to end all worship services (Rev. 4-5). We will have bodies which, like our Lord’s, know no limitations and can easily move in and through various dimensions. We will be reunited with saved friends and family (Luke 16). We will, well, I’m sure you can fill in the almost unlimited blanks. Tonight, Liz and I will fly to San Diego to get her mother’s home ready for sale. Two weeks ago we had to place her mother and step-father, Andy, in care facilities, and now we must sell the home to raise funds to care for them. The home, of course, is Liz’s earthly inheritance, but it is inferior to her heavenly inheritance in every way. Walls will need to be painted, dry rot will need to be repaired, the lawn and gophers will need some tending (and terminating), and everything the Law of Entropy has touched will need attention. Her eternal inheritance is far superior to her earthly inheritance and that is why she should bask in joyous hope. So should you.

So, just what does radical Christian living look like? In a world full of woe, despair, depression, and utter hopelessness, it should be a life bathed in joyous hope of what lies ahead for those who love God. Are you known as one who, no matter what, rejoices in this type of hope? Perhaps your joy pump can get primed right now with a little antiphonal singing of the old chorus *Rejoice in the Lord Always*.

Rejoice in the Lord always:
 again I say, Rejoice!
 Rejoice in the Lord always:
 again I say, Rejoice!
 Rejoice, rejoice,
 and again I say, Rejoice!
 Rejoice, rejoice,
 and again I say, Rejoice!
 Rejoice in the Lord always:
 again I say, Rejoice!
 Rejoice in the Lord always:
 again I say, Rejoice!

An eighth area where Paul calls saints to move toward a greater level of holiness is contained in the second clause of verse 12:

Be Radically Righteous Concerning Tribulation (Rom. 12:12b)

Paul's command hits home here because we all know, at various times of our lives, tribulation and affliction. As those who have hope in what lies ahead for the saints, we should, *ipso facto*, be known as those get going with the going gets tough. We should not be known as those who fold like the proverbial lawn chair with storm clouds roll in and rain pummel us. On the contrary, we should set the tone for how to handle tough times. Here is how Paul couches this command:

NAS Romans 12:12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation

NIV Romans 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction

BGT Romans 12:12 τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες

Paul certainly knows how to address areas in our lives where growth is, and will be, needed in order for our lives to be conformed to the image of Christ.

The Greek word translated “persevering” (NAS) and “patient” (NIV) is a present active participle, and based on the context it has an imperatival air about it. The present tense nature of the verbal idea tells us we are to be continually devoted to what it commands. Ostensibly, this means we should always be known as those who know how to deal with tough, testy, trying times. The active voice of the verb informs us we are the subject of the action. Put differently, it means we are responsible, coupled with God's help, of course, to willfully chose to stand strong when the winds of adversity blow.

The Greek verb behind “persevering” is most interesting. It is *hupomeno* (ὑπομένω). Paul has, once again, combined a preposition, *hupo*, which means with the genitive “by, by means of,” and with the accusative “under, below, under the authority of,”³ to the verb “to remain,” *meno* (μένω). At this point, we all know this prepositional stapling serves to heighten the meaning of the verbal command. Paul, therefore, isn't just saying, “remain in times of affliction,” but be known as one who will “super-remain.” Be known as the person who will by no means desert your post, despite what the enemy hurls at you. Greek lexicons easily reveal the meaning of this amazing and instructive word:

Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon

[Fri] **ὑπομένω** laor. ὑπέμεινα; pf. ptc. ὑπομεμενηκώς; (1) with ἐν and the dative of place remain behind, stay (when others depart) (LU 2.43); (2) as refusing to flee hold out, stand one's ground, endure (MT 10.22); (3) with the accusative of the thing be patient under, suffer, endure, put up with (HE 12.2); (4) absolutely endure, continue firm, persevere (RO 12.12; JA 5.11)

ὑπομένω VIPA-1S ὑπομένω

Danker, Greek NT Lexicon (DAN)

ὑπομένω [ὑπό, μένω] – 1. ‘stay in a place when others are leaving’, **remain, stay (behind)** Lk 2:43; Ac 17:14. – 2. ‘be steadfast in face of difficulty’, **endure** Mt 10:22;

³ Barclay M. Newman, *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 188.

Ro 12:12; 1 Cor 13:7; 2 Ti 2:10, 12; Hb 10:32; 12:2f, 7; Js 1:12; 5:11; 1 Pt 2:20a (without flinching), 20b. Some would put Ro 8:24 v.l. here (s. 3). – 3. ‘be persistent in expecting someth.’, wait for, unless one understands the focus to be on a condition demanding endurance (s. 2) Ro 8:24 v.l.

From the word’s lexical meanings we quickly learn that Christians are to be known for standing their ground in the most dire circumstances.

The word Paul employs here for tribulation and affliction is equally instructive. The Greek lexicons, again, open up the meaning to Westerners:

Fri] θλίψις, εως, ἡ literally pressure, pressing together; figuratively in the NT, of suffering brought on by outward circumstances affliction, oppression, trouble (RO 5.3); especially to be regarded as participation in the sufferings of Christ (CO 1.24); of sufferings of the end-time tribulation, trouble, distress (MK 13.19); called ἡ μεγάλη θ. the great tribulation, the time of great trouble (MT 24.21; RV 7.14)

Danker, Greek NT Lexicon

θλίψις, εως, ἡ [θλίβω; ‘pressing, pressure’] in NT metaph. sense ‘distress that is the result of outward circumstances’, distress, suffering Mt 24:9 (suffering caused by brutal physical abuse), 21; Ac 11:19; Ro 12:12; 2 Cor 4:17; Col 1:24; 2 Th 1:6; Hb 10:33; Rv 2:9, 22; 7:14. W. focus on inward anguish, trouble, distress 2 Cor 2:4; Phil 1:17.



To appreciate this term, think of a power-lifter in a strong man contest lifting over 500 lbs. over his head. The pressure the vast amount of weight represents is, in every sense of the word *thlipsis* (θλίψις), or adversity. Here is *Thor the Mountain* pragmatically illustrating what this Greek word is all about. Don’t tell me his entire body isn’t under

tremendous, bone-crushing pressure. Don’t tell me his joints and muscles are screaming out for him to put this massive amount of weight down. But, as you will note, Thor doesn’t flinch, he doesn’t waver, he doesn’t waffle, but on the contrary he does what he has to do.

Applied to Christians who desire to live radically for God it means we bear up in times of hardship which, by default, points people to the living God. Paul, obviously, knew what it meant to “persevere in tribulation.” To the carnal Corinthians who attacked Paul’s spiritual leadership so they could advance their own power in and over the local church, the apostle gave them his credentials.

²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure upon me *of* concern for all the churches (2 Cor. 11).

Paul's credentials speak for themselves. He was a leader's leader, whose leadership was forged on the divine anvil of difficulty and tribulation. I give you these credentials so you can hopefully better appreciate the import of his command in Romans 12:12 to "persevere in tribulation." He was a fighter, not a flincher.

The real question, however, is why did Paul command believers to stay the course in tough times? He gave us this command because he, above all people, knew firsthand the spiritual truths and values of tribulation.

- *The Lord is the Lord of tribulation.* Various verses from the Scriptures remind us of this timeless concept: ¹⁴ *In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider— God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him* (Ecc. 7). In Isaiah, God says, "I form light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). Since God is sovereign, He is in absolute, continual control of all the events and life and is constantly working in and through them to achieve His lofty, eternal goals.
- *Tribulation will burn out the sinful dross in your life.* Peter's words underscore this in his first epistle, ¹² *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you* (1 Pet. 4). The Greek word here for "fiery" was used in ancient times of fire used to purify metals. Applied to the saint, it speaks of the fire of affliction which serves to show you your sin so you can confess it and move onto higher, holier living. This truth forces you to ask yourself a very personal question: What is my current time of tribulation showing me is sinful and needs to be confessed? What is the dross, God? Show me.
- *Tribulation deepens your understanding of the character and ways of God.* Consider young Daniel who was led into captivity around 606 B.C., when the Babylonians took his city and defeated his country. Daniel 1:2 tells us that God's hand orchestrated even this invasion. The rest of the chapter and the book reveals, also, how God used this time of tribulation to strategically place Daniel in the king's presence so he could eventually become the confidant and spiritual guide to the king during (and after) the captivity. No wonder Isaiah made this comment as a prophet speaking for God: ⁹ *For as the heavens are higher*

than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55). Isn't that the truth? Without a doubt.

- *Tribulation sets you up to witness the unveiling of the powerful hand of God when, not if, He moves.* On this communion Sunday, can we not say this is the story of the cross? Indeed. Jesus bore our sin on the cruel, wooden tree. He endured the mocking of the crowds, and the taunting of the Roman crucifixion detail. He watched as life ebbed away from His beaten and battered body as the Roman soldiers greedily gambled away what little earthly belongings He owned. That was Friday, but, as E. V. Hill once said, “Sunday was comin.” Yes, degradation was swallowed up in glorification. Such is the way of divinely ordered tribulation. God uses it to show Himself strong to His saints so they can praise Him or His timely provision.

As stated, Liz and I leave tonight for San Diego to sell her mother's home. Believe me when I say the last few weeks have been the toughest of our married lives. Getting her mother placed in a facility which would adequately care for us was a monumental undertaking, one we didn't think would, or could, transpire because of her situation. Getting Andy, Liz's stepfather, placed with his dementia issues was another hurdle we did not know how to clear as we ran. At one point, I devised nine options to help us find a solution as to what to do with them as their money is running out, but none of those options were, well, optimal. Each was fraught with issues, and as we sought a “final” solution we could literally feel the pressure of the tribulation.

Then, all of a sudden, God stepped in and moved. Liz's brother, who used to own a large foreign car repair business in North County, ran into a client whose father had just died. Within a few moments, Mark learned where this man's father had stayed until he died. Within a few hours, Liz's mother found a place which could handle her deteriorating situation.

A few days later, a family friend we had hired to help with Liz's mother at home said she knew a case worker at the local Veteran's Administration in Escondido who might be able to help Andy, who had been in the Navy during the Korean war. That man introduced us to a social worker who has been the hands and feet of Christ. Through her counsel and wisdom, we had Andy placed in a setting where his unique needs can, and will be met.

All of this is truly shocking. When we thought there was no way out, God made a way, and He did it all on His own in ONE WEEK! We now praise the One who has shown Himself strong, and as we continue to walk in the affliction, we know He is more than able to make the crooked path straight.

In light of this, it is no wonder Paul counsels all saints to live radically righteous lives be enduring affliction. We endure because of all stated and unstated reasons.

The old godless grub, however, comes along and attempts to eat away at your life, leaving you hopeless and wallowing in despair. If he has eaten away at your joy this day, then it's time to deal with him head-on by embracing joy because of what lies ahead for God's saints. If the damage

he has done to your life is leading you to think that God is not the God of tribulation and that you just need to throw in the towel, then it's time to fight, my friend, not flinch.

And you think God doesn't work in tribulation? Think again. He's at work in your tribulation right now. Will you persevere? This is the question.