

Day 1

After watching the brief video online, complete the following:

Remember making a list of our priorities in week #1? Let's pull that back out. It's been a month and today, as we meditate on having a heart that examines what is excellent we will be using our priorities list.

Start with prayer. Asking the Lord to calm and quiet your heart to allow you to train your focus on what it is He is revealing to your heart as we revisit our priorities to evaluate how we have done over the past month. Complete the chart below:

You will write in your top five priorities (Priority), then write out one of your favorite scriptures affirming that priority in your heart (Passage), then add a practical step you can take to grow in that area (Practice)...this could be studying passages or listening to sermons on the topic, or journaling steps you're taking to improve, asking a spouse or close friend if they have noticed changes in a given area...then use this as a tool to look back on and glean encouragement from when your days get long in those mundane moments! 😊

Priority	Passage	Practice

Let's not forget to be praying over our priorities as well, remembering that we all desperately need to rely on the strength, power and peace of the Holy Spirit each day!

I pray that you have a blessed day!

Day 2

As we continue to reflect on approving “the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless” let’s take time to meditate on Romans 12, read through Romans 12 below making observations, interpretations and applications. I have triple spaced it to give you plenty of space...mark it up!

Romans 12

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

³For through the grace given to me I say to everyone 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. ⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his

serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹*Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰*Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be 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. ¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never 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.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 on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Observe with me:

1. What is our service of worship? _____

2. In light of what we have learned about “real knowledge”, what is it that transforms us? (vs.2) _____

3. Having a transformed mind allows us to do what? (vs. 2)

4. What does verse 3 call us to do? (Hint: the word is repeated 3 times) _____

5. What spiritual gifts are listed in vs. 6-8?

Close out today's study time reflecting on what the Holy Spirit has revealed to your heart and asking Him to guide you in knowing what is best.

Day 3

1. Revisit Romans 12 today, first, read through and circle every a time a reference to mind, wisdom, thought or thinking is mentioned.
2. Now, preferably with a different color pen, return to those comments and underline the application of thinking, the use of the mind...ask why, or what for, what is the result given?
3. Does Romans 12 instruct us to our sincerity? _____
4. Fill in the blanks for verse 9: “*Let love be without*_____. Abhor what is_____; cling to what is_____.”

Romans 12:9 seems pretty straight forward, however many believers get this a bit mixed up. So, let's just be clear...

“Let love be without hypocrisy” – hypocrisy is the opposite of sincerity. Hypocrisy hides personal sin while condemning others...hypocrisy is gracious with self while searching for sin in others, hypocrisy judges a sister's mess while hiding their own clutter in a closet!

- Pause for a moment and confess any hypocrisy lurking in your heart to the Lord, asking not only for forgiveness, but also soundness of mind in quickly recognizing hypocrisy before it is allowed to take root in your heart moving forward.

“Abhor what is evil” – please note that this doesn't say: abhor those who do evil things. There is a sharp difference between the two...Ephesians reminds us that our battle isn't against flesh and blood:

Ephesians 6:12

“¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*”.

We cannot love our neighbor while despising them for their sin, especially if they don't know the Lord.

“Cling to what is good.” – we should be drawn to the things that are good and pleasing to our Lord. But we can only know what is good in His sight if we are in His word...a great filter of sorts to keep in mind is:

Philippians 4:8,

“⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

I used to have this verse posted in every room in my house while I was walking through a difficult time. It forced me to constantly evaluate my thoughts and my emotions through the lens of scripture. As we close out our study today, take time to meditate on this verse in light of your current situation. What thoughts are you allowing to feed your emotions? Are they filtered through the lens of scripture?

Day 4

Does Romans 12 instruct us in our living a blameless life? Re-read Romans 12 again, this time highlight or underline (with a different color than you used yesterday) every time you see a reference to how we can live a blameless life. Hint: remember this is referring to how we relate and live with others – not causing others to stumble.

1. I counted 24, how many did you find? _____
2. Complete the chart below, choosing 7 of the ways we are commanded to live blamelessly and then how you can personally apply that principle in your daily life.

Command	Application

As we close day 4, prayerfully reflect on applications you have gleaned from today's lesson.

Day 5

As we close this week out, I would be negligent to not take time to focus on “blameless” as it refers to not causing others to stumble...

This mandate is scattered throughout scripture, Jesus addressed this in: Matthew 18:6

“...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Jesus is not talking here about literal children, but of anyone who comes to Him with the faith of a child. This encompasses all believers, young and old.

Keyword:

Stumble: to cause to sin, to be the reason why someone sins.

Millstone: a huge stone used to grind wheat, a stone so large it took a donkey to pull it.

What does Jesus say would be better than causing someone else to sin?

Does this apply to me and you? _____

How might we be intentionally or unintentionally causing others to stumble in our lives?

In our words: _____

In our actions: _____

In our attitudes: _____

Are we establishing a friendship with this world without realizing it? Remember

James 4:4,

⁴You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

It can be a slow and gradual slip, first we become desensitized to the ways of the world, then we accept it as normal, next we find ourselves rationalizing slanted values, then we participate.

All the while we don't realize we are causing those around us to stumble.

This is why it is vital that we stay in God's word! His word is the truth that holds us, keeps us from stumbling!

As we close out week 5, meditate on Romans 12 again, praying over how it may help you to: "approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ."