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I. Living the r12 Life

- A. Wow, it has been an exciting journey.
- B. Let's see where we have been.
- C. We started with the life of Paul as recorded in the book of Acts.
- D. Next I shared an overview of the Book of Romans that was written by Paul.
- E. If you missed either of those messages, I would highly recommend you listen to them. They are just good background knowledge of how the message of the Gospel was spread and the basic beliefs of followers of Jesus Christ.
- F. Then we turned our attention to Romans 12

II. Historical Perspective

- A. I thought it might be good time to go over the timeline of the Old Testament stories that we have looked at during r12.
- B. The order that we have looked at them is not necessarily the order they occurred.
- C. Abraham and Sarah's story begins in Genesis 11, somewhere around 2160 BC. It is about God's promise to raise up a nation who will surrender to Him. Their son Isaac has twin sons, Jacob and Esau. God chooses Jacob's family to continue the promise. His name is changed to Israel.
- D. He has 12 sons, one of whom is Joseph. His story begins in Genesis 30, around 2000 BC.
 1. The 12 tribes of Israel grow while riding out the famine in Egypt.
 2. They live in Egypt from around 1876 BC–1446 BC.
 3. During that time they begin to be treated like slaves.
- E. Moses is born around 1446 BC and eventually leads them out of slavery in Egypt and brings them right to the brink of the promised land. The land we know as Israel.
- F. From 1406 to 1050, they live sort of a tribal existence and there is no central leadership.
- G. 1050 to 931 the tribes are united by King David and we talked about the relationship of David and Jonathon. They stay united under the leadership of Solomon, David's son.
- H. From 931 BC to 605 BC. Israel is divided. There is a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom.
- I. In 605, both kingdoms are conquered by the Babylonians and that was the period in which Daniel lived.
- J. Those five periods give you the high points of Old Testament history, leading up to the birth of Jesus Christ.

III. Learning to Give God What He Wants the Most

- A. *(Rom 12 NASB) 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.*
- B. From the story of Abraham, we learned the importance of surrender.
- C. We were challenged to write God a blank check for our life.
- D. To say *I'M ALL IN!*
- E. You will be receiving that in the mail in the future as a reminder.

IV. Learning to Get God's Best

A. *{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.*

B. Daniel exemplified what it meant to not *Conform* to culture but to be transformed by God, through our faith.

C. If we conform to the world, it is hard for God to give us His best.

D. Frankly, if we don't offer God our best, it is hard to expect God's best.

E. A lot of people told me they really appreciated the bold stance that I took on some of the moral issues that our culture wants to compromise.

1. We are all pretty much in agreement about the addictive behaviors that are plaguing 21st century Americans:
2. Pornography, alcohol, drugs, media are all corrupting and diverting our time, finances, energy and certainly not leading us to God's best.

F. I stepped on a few toes when I mentioned that promiscuity, adultery, divorce, live-in relationships, same-sex and opposite-sex, are compromises of God's best.

G. Testimony: I just wanted to thank you for your sermons on this r12 Series. I don't know when I have been as spiritually uplifted, as in the last few weeks. I'm sure this series hasn't always been the easiest to prepare, for us. Week 2 was probably a tough one, but the one most of us needed. I know it affected me where I needed it most. I appreciate a pastor who will tell it like it is and let the chips fall where the Lord wants them too.

I found that I needed to make right a couple of things from my past. They were from many years ago and were sins of omission. They obviously were only bothering me, since my husband didn't even know. I set my record straight and frightened him in the process. My sin was only hurting me. I had carried this all these years because I was ashamed to tell him something I did before I met him.

H. I am grieved that we lost a few people who were upset by the reality that their lifestyle choices are not what God wants for their life.

I. On the other hand many were cheering the fact that though we consider all of us imperfect, we don't use it as an excuse to compromise.

J. Let me make one more statement that probably will convict, maybe offend, but I hope will challenge you. If you are not tithing, you are compromising and it is hard for God to give you His best.

K. I got an email about this: I want to be all-in with God. You know my passion and what I believe is a calling. I am not sure if it is pastoral directly but I do know I am called to minister as a leader to others to exalt the Lord's Name. I am struggling with trying to find out how I can go all-in and start tithing the full 10% that God demands of us in the Bible. I really want to do what's right but I also worry about my financial situation with my family. If I did go all-in it would mean that I would literally need a miracle to keep us afloat as we are at 79% of our total income for essentials (this includes the current 2% tithe that we make). I guess I am asking for you to pray for me and my family that God leads us to the correct choice. I apologize if I sound like I am worrying, but it is something God has put on me and is leaning strong on my heart. I need to stop making excuses.

L. I asked for his permission to use his email and this was his response: *Yes. Also, I took that leap of faith and am relying on God.*

V. Learning to Come to Grips With the Real You

A. *{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. {4} For 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. {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; {7} if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; {8} or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

B. Through the life of Moses—Exodus 2–4, we learned about the value of having *A Sober Self Assessment*.

C. The need to not think too highly of ourselves, but to know with confidence that we are loved by God and when we are surrendered, when we offer God our best, we then begin to discover God’s plan for our life and purpose.

D. Affirmation 3x5 cards for r12 life message. Sober self assessment section

1. We need to learn what God thinks about us.
2. Read each card everyday for 6 weeks.
3. *Appearance: My Physical appearance (in my unchangeable aspects) is beautiful in God sight. He is my designer and maker.*
 - a. *(Psa 139:13-17 NIV) For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. {14} I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. {15} My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, {16} your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. {17} How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!*
4. *Belongingness: I am wanted, appreciated and loved by God, the most important person in my life.*
 - a. *(Rom 8:31-32 NIV) What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? {32} He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*
5. *Worthiness: I am now a righteous person in God's sight since I have trusted Christ. I am covered by the robe of His purity and goodness. Also, since I have a new nature, I am a good person in my general practice of life as I continue to grow in Jesus Christ.*
 - a. *(Isa 61:10 NASB) I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*
 - b. *(2 Cor 5:17 NIV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*
6. *Security: I am secure in my relationship to Jesus Christ in my daily safety and well-being, and in my future outlook. Whether on earth or in Heaven.*
 - a. *(Rom 8:38-39 NIV) For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, {39} neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
7. *Competence: I am a competent person, equipped by the Holy Spirit to carry out God's will in my daily life in a way that pleases Him, regardless of what stage of growth I may be in at the present. My real importance in life is connected with way I am touching other people's lives with the love of God and message of Christ.*
 - a. *(Phil 2:13 NIV) for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*
 - b. *(Phil 4:13 NKJV) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*
 - c. *(Eph 2:10 NIV) For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

VI. Learning to Experience Authentic Community

A. *{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; {12} rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, {13} contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.*

B. The story of the friendship of David and Jonathan gave us a model of true community and how to develop true community.

C. I don't know if we can all have friends who would catch a grenade for ya, but I desire to see a church where people practice the essentials:

1. *Be Aware*
2. *Be Intentional*
3. *Be Honest*
4. *Be Available*
5. *Be Loyal*
6. *Be Vulnerable*
7. *Be Spiritual*, practice faith with each other

D. Ben Tupper side note about community—relationships so much better when your relationship with Christ is growing, and your relationship with your wife is growing. In the past I may have been tempted to work on other relationships while ignoring the two that are most important ones—when I am good with God and my wife, all is soooooo much better.

E. Larkin's r12 Group

1. Just wanted to let you all know that a new 17 cu. foot freezer will be delivered to Family Promise on Friday. Marshall Larkin was able to facilitate the purchase at a most reasonable price, and all the people attending his r12 group kicked in enough to cover the cost.
2. We will get another, smaller size upright next week for Windy Hill. Then the Windy Hill food pantry and Family Promise will be able to provide USDA protein, such as poultry, cheese, sometimes beef, pork and sausage, to the families that we help. March is Tyson chicken month, so we should have both freezers full before spring break!
3. What a huge Yea God this has been!!!!

F. Outreach Team Incentive

VII. Learning to Overcome the Evil Aimed at You

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

B. Joseph's Story—Genesis 37–50 showed how God used evil, hard times, tough circumstances to get Joseph to a place where he could accomplish God's Will.

1. Even when he was an arrogant young teenager.
2. When he was betrayed by his brother.

3. Wrongly accused of a crime he didn't commit.
4. Forgotten in prison.

C.Through all manner of adversity, God finally raised Joseph up to a place where he could not only redeem himself, a whole country, but also the family who betrayed him.

D.Ultimately, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is the prime example of the God Life we all would like to have. It only comes when we are willing to overcome evil with good.

E.Jesus' greatest statement on how to live is summed up in (*Mat 5:3-12 NASB*) "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {4} "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. {5} "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. {6} "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. {7} "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. {8} "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. {9} "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. {10} "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {11} "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. {12} "Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

VIII. Turning your r12 experience into an r12 lifestyle.

A. There is no easy, one size fits all formula of how to be a faithful, victorious follower of Jesus Christ, but the basic elements of Romans 12 offer a great guide.

B. It begins with surrender: saying to God, I'm all in!

C. It leads to commitment to not conform to the culture, but to be transformed. When we continue to conform to the world, it is difficult for God to give us His best.

D. Form a sober self-assessment. Many of us have formed our self-assessment by what the culture says about us. We need to see what God's Word says about us.

E. We need to form healthy relationships with other believers. Learn how to relate to each other. Small groups are great ways to grow your faith in community.

F. Trust that God is working even when the circumstances around you aren't. Trust God even when you are betrayed. Trust God when you can't see Him at work.

IX. (Rom 12 NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. {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. {3} For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. {4} Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, {5} so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. {6} We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. {7} If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; {8} if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. {9} Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. {10} Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. {11} Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. {12} Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. {13} Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. {14} Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. {15} Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. {16} Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. {17} Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. {18} If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. {19} Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. {20} On the contrary: "If your enemy

is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." {21} Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.