

## Ways of God – Romans 12

**What are the “Ways of God?”** In Exodus 33:12-13, *Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.* – NIV

**In Isaiah 55:7-9, The Lord tells His people, *Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*** – NIV

**To walk in the “Ways of God”** means to examine our own ways of thinking, how we interact with God and with others. It means we change our hearts and minds by adopting God’s truth, His value system, His way of interacting in relationships and His way of living life.

**In Romans 12:1-2, The Apostle Paul addresses this transformation from our ways to God’s ways, *“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. 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.”*** – NIV

**Romans 12:1- Romans 15:15** seem to be a clear teaching on the Ways of God, including learning to live in community and serve one another through the seven gifts. They are a practical guide to God’s ways for followers of Jesus, His Church. Paul tells us in Romans 15:15-16, *“I have written to you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”*

I have summarized Paul’s teaching on the Ways of God and the corresponding ways of the sinful nature from Romans 12-15 below. May the followers of Jesus grasp the importance of Walking in the Ways of God. To often these are forgotten keys of obedience in Biblical discipleship.

<b>Ways of God</b>	<b>Ways of the Sinful Nature</b>
Love must be sincere	Living life with surface relationships that are not based in truth
Hate what is evil and be devoted to what is good	Make no distinction between good and evil. God's word makes clear what He approves and disapproves
Be devoted to one another in brotherly love	Look out for your own interests
Honor others above yourselves	Seek to promote yourself, even if it is at the expense of others
Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor	Go with the mainstream
Be joyful in hope	Complaining spirit that always gives way to darkness and unbelief
Patient in affliction	Complaining and believing God has given up on you when things get tough
Faithful in prayer	Inconsistent intimacy with God
Share with people who are in need	Ignore the needs of others
Practice hospitality	Hospitality is not important
Bless those who persecute you and do not curse	Curse those who hurt you
Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn	No empathy or sensitivity toward others
Live in harmony with one another	People need to learn to get along with me

Do not be proud – be willing to associate with people of low position	Associate with those who can advance your standing in society
Do not be conceited	Self-centeredness, pride, and low self-awareness
Do not repay evil for evil	Get even whenever you can. Slander others who have hurt you
Be careful to do what is right	Live a life unexamined – a life by default
As far as it depends on you – live at peace with all men	It is up to others to get along with me
Do not take revenge – Vengeance belongs to God alone	Seek to hurt those who have hurt you
If your enemy is hungry – feed them! If they are thirsty give them something to drink	Do all you can to destroy your enemies. Only help those you get along with that can help you
Do not be overcome with evil – but overcome evil with good (Be salt & light)	Don't speak up for the Gospel. Go along with what society dictates and avoid conflict with the world
Submit to the authorities that God has established	Disregard authority at will and bring reproach on the name of Christ
Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor	Borrow without thought of consequences or repayment. Withhold honor and respect from those who deserve it
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law	Leave your debts unpaid, including the debt to love your "fellow-man"
The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other	Conform to the world's standards even though you profess Christ. Disregard God's command to live a holy life

commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself”	
Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law	Have no concern about harming your neighbor. Ignore God’s command to love and care for our neighbors
Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature	Adopt the worlds systems of values and mores. Sex outside the covenant of marriage is OK
Let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling-block or obstacle in your brother’s way. (summarizes chapter 14:1-13)	Criticize your brothers and sisters in Christ and oppose them rather than encouraging them and praying for them.
Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. So, whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. . . We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up	In matters of conscience or personal conviction don’t be sensitive to others. Don’t be sensitive to weaknesses of others
May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ	Don’t seek unity so that we may glorify God with one heart and voice