



When In Romans: “HOW THE MIRACLE OF LIFECHANGE HAPPENS”

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Introduction:

God desires for each of us to experience true relational connection. Each of us desires deeply to be known and loved for who we are, yet as marriage shows us, there are often layers within us that make it hard for us even to know ourselves. Our judgments make loving others difficult, and our shame and ego blind us to the emotional landmines within us that are waiting to be triggered. All this is such a part of our hard-wiring that we are often completely unaware of how they affect our ability to connect with others in a meaningful way. Life change needs to happen, or we stay stuck in unhealthy patterns. Thankfully, God has a plan for you and me to be able to grow beyond all that. As God was knitting Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians together – people whose values and ways of thinking were the opposite of one another, the Lord provides the guidance needed to tear down walls and create unity, connection, and true oneness. These same principles help us to navigate the challenge of having thriving relationships, whether in church, marriage, or work.

For Reflection And Discussion:

Read aloud Romans 12:1-2 (p.1296 *Christian Basics Bible*). Paul lets believers know that the only way to experience true life change is by letting God have all of you. Being a living sacrifice is offering up the totality of who you are to

honor and serve the Lord.

1. What areas do you struggle to obey or trust God? Why?
 - o Marriage and dating
 - o Money/generosity
 - o Forgiving
 - o Career
 - o Politics and divisive attitude
 - o Serving God and getting involved at church
 - o Other:_____.

What action step of faith would make room for God to move in that area?

2. Now read Romans 12:3-13, which addresses the need to let God shape you through relationships. According to the passage, what are the obstacles within us that get in the way? What changes in mindset and then actions are needed? Can you share an example of how your life was changed in how you relate to others?

3. Finally, the hardest part is *letting God increase our capacity to love*. Read Romans 12:14-21. Are there difficult relationships that people in the group are dealing with right now? If so, please share as much as you feel comfortable sharing. Be sure to leave room for everyone who wants to share.

Now, take the situation(s) that were shared. Each person who shared needs to ask these two questions of the Lord. The answer may be obvious, or it may take time. But God will reveal the answers.

- 1) "What would it look like if Jesus were going to win the day?"

2) "Lord, what do you want me to learn through this?"

Close by praying for those in the midst of a difficult relationship. Also, ask the Lord to help each one of the group to continue to become more like Christ with God's help.

Memory Verse

"Don't copy the behaviors and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

Romans 12:2