

“Culture Shock”
Romans 12:9-16

Introduction:

1. Have You Ever Been To A Place:
 - That Was So Different Than What You’re Used To Here:
 - That You Thought You Were In:
 - Another World?
 - This Can Happen:
 - Not Only:
 - When You Visit Another Country!
 - But Even:
 - When You Visit Some Places:
 - In Our Own Country!
 - Not Too Far From Here:
 - You Can Still Visit Communities:
 - Where Horses:
 - Outnumber People! And:
 - Where Buggies & Wagons:
 - Are The Primary Mode Of Transportation!
2. Now - To Visit Places Like These:
 - May Make A Nice Vacation!
 - But - To Move To & Then Live In Places Like These:
 - Can Affect You:
 - To Your Core!
 - Because Their Culture:
 - Is Not Your Culture!
 - And Their Customs:
 - Are Not Your Customs!
 - And For Many:
 - “Culture Shock” Becomes:
 - All Too Real!
 - Just Ask Our Missionaries:
 - When They Come For A Visit!
3. Well - As We Return In Our Bibles This Morning:
 - To Romans 12:
 - I Believe That:
 - If We Put Into Practice:
 - What We Find In This Chapter:
 - When Someone Comes Into Our Homes Or Into Our Church:
 - They Will Experience A “Culture Shock” Of Their Own!
 - Because - The Gospel:
 - Was Designed By God:
 - To Renew Your Mind & Transform Your Life:
 - In Such A Way:
 - That It Will Produce:
 - New Customs & A New Culture That Is:
 - Altogether Different Than The World In Which We Live!
 - So Different, In Fact, That:
 - You Will Be Seen As What You Truly Are:
 - “Strangers And Pilgrims On The Earth!” (Hebrews 11:13)
4. So Far - In Romans 12:
 - The Apostle Paul Has Been Making An Appeal:
 - To Us - 12:1 - “By The Mercies Of God!”
 - That Is - Because Of The Mercies Of God:
 - That Are Found In:
 - The Gospel Of Christ:
 - He First Calls You - As Christians:
 - To “Present Your Bodies A Living Sacrifice!” (12:1)

- He Then Commands Us:
 - To “Be Not Conformed To This World: But Be Ye Transformed!” (12:2)
- Paul Also Counsels Us:
 - To Live And Serve:
 - As The Body Of Christ:
 - By Using The Spiritual Gifts That Have Been Given To Us! (12:3-8)
- But Then - In The Verses We Come To This Morning:
 - 12:9-16 - Paul Describes:
 - The Culture Of Christians:
 - Which - In So Many Ways:
 - Is Counter-Cultural To This World In Which We Live!

5. And - The Primary Characteristic:

- Of Our New, Christian Culture:
 - Is To Be - 12:9 - Sincere Love!
 - “Let Love Be Without Dissimulation!”
 - Without Hypocrisy - Paul Writes!
 - And Then - In Many Ways:
 - The Rest Of This Chapter:
 - Gives Examples Of What:
 - Sincere Christian Love:
 - Looks Like!
 - For This Morning, Though:
 - We Will Just Be Looking At The Verses:
 - That Deal With How Our Love:
 - Manifests Itself:
 - Within The Church!
 - So - Let’s Read Together:
 - 12:9-16 - “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. / 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; / 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; / 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; / 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. / 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. / 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. / 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits!”
 - When We Live This Kind Of Life:
 - As Christians:
 - It Will Be A “Culture Shock” To This World!
 - Is This True Of Your Life Today?
 - Let’s Look More Closely:
 - At What Our New, Christian Culture:
 - Is To Be Like!
 - In These 8 Verses - There Are 8 Points:
 - We Are Going To Go Through!

* First - The Culture Of Christians Consists Of:

1. *Striving!*

- And - Striving Together - Which Is What We Find In:
 - 12:9 - “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good!”
 - As Believers In & Followers Of Christ:
 - We Need To Strive Together With:
- A Heart:
 - Of Sincere Love!
 - “Let Love Be Without Dissimulation!”
 - Without Hypocrisy!
 - This First Phrase In A Long List Of Instructions:
 - Many Believe To Be The Heading:
 - Of This Section Of Romans 12!
 - In Other Words - Everything Else Is Just A Manifestation Of:
 - Sincere Christian Love!

- And - Supporting Each Other - Which Is What We Find In:
 - 12:10 - “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another!”
 - This Is The Kind Of Bond:
 - That There Is To Be:
 - Within The Body Of Christ!
 - **IE:** Its Interesting To See Who You Are Related To “By Blood” - Using Websites Like Ancestry & Family Heritage - To Come Up With Your Family Tree! But - Christians Have A Greater Bond! We Are Bound Together By The Blood Of Jesus Christ! And So - We Need To Support One Another Through A Special:
- Bond Of Affection!
 - “Be Kindly Affectioned One To Another With Brotherly Love!”
 - This Is Love:
 - That Sees & Treats One Another:
 - As Family!
 - As The Family Of God!
 - And That Is Why:

- There Needs To Also Be A Special:
- Bond In Attitude!
 - “In Honor Preferring One Another!”
 - The Word “Prefer” Here:
 - Has The Idea Of Leading & Going Before!
- In Other Words:
 - Each Of Us Needs To:
 - “Take The Lead” In Honoring:
 - One Another!
 - **IE**: Perhaps It’s A Bit Like When The People Went Before Jesus To Honor Him - When He Made His Way Into Jerusalem - On Palm Sunday - Using The Palms Of Trees & Their Own Coats - To Pave The Way For His Entrance - And Shouting - “Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!”
- Imagine The “Culture Shock” This World Would Have:
 - If All Of God’s People Supported Each Other:
 - With The Same Kind Of Affection & Attitude:
 - That We Claim To Have:
 - For Christ!

* But Then - Third - The Culture Of Christians Can Also Be Seen In:

3. ***Serving!***

- And - Serving Together - Which Is What We Find Next In:
 - 12:11 - “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord!”
 - This Is Related To Paul’s Counsel To Us:
 - About Using Our Gifts Within The Body Of Christ:
 - But - Goes Even Further To Include:
 - All Of Our Roles & Responsibilities As Christians!
 - As Christians - We Need To Live & Serve:
 - With Industry!
 - “Not Slothful In Business!”
 - Whatever God Has Given You:
 - That Requires Diligence & Effort:
 - Do Not Be Slothful & Do Not Be Weary In Well Doing!
 - This Can Include Your Business:
 - At Work - Or - At Home - Or - At Church!
 - As Ecclesiastes 9:10 Tells Us - “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might!”
 - Don’t Lose Steam!
 - **IE**: Over The Last Decade - And Even Longer - Great Drought Out West - Lake Meade - Which Is Held Back By The Massive Hoover Dam - Is Only 37% Full - And Falling - Affects Hydroelectric Power Too! The Drought Has Taken Its Toll!
 - Without Love For & Devotion To:
 - Christ & His People:
 - You Will Lose Your Steam & Power:
 - In Whatever You Do!
 - Do Not Leave Your “First Love!”
 - Because - As Christians - We Also Need To Live & Serve:
 - With Intensity!
 - “Fervent In Spirit!”
 - This Can Describe Your Own Spirit:
 - And Zeal - But Where Does Even That Zeal Come From?
 - **The** Spirit! The Holy Spirit!
 - So - If You Walk In The Spirit:
 - You Will Be Able To Do What Paul Tells Us:
 - In Colossians 3:23 As Well:
 - “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men!”
 - Because - We Also Need To Live & Serve:
 - With Intentionality!
 - “Serving The Lord!”

- All Your Work & All Your Service:
 - Can & Ought To Be Done:
 - To & For The Lord!
- This Is One Of The Great Changes That Took Place:
 - During The Reformation:
 - Of The Middle Ages!
 - *All* Work For Christians:
 - Is Sacred Work!
 - *All* Work As Christians:
 - Can Be Done In Service To The Lord!
- And This Kind Of Service:
 - Will Be A “Culture Shock” To This World:
 - When You Serve In All That You Do:
 - “In Singleness Of Your Heart, As Unto Christ!” (Ephesians 6:5)

* But - Paul Continues To Describe Our Christian Culture - Fourth - As:

4. ***Standing!***

- And - Standing Together - Which Is What We Find Next In:
 - 12:12 - “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer!”
 - One Writer Describes These Three Instructions As:
 - “Natural Partners!”
 - Because - They Stand & Fall Together! And We Need To Stand Together:
- With The Same Prospect!
 - “Rejoicing In Hope!”
 - As Christians - Our Hope Is Great!
 - And - Our Hope Is Great:
 - Because Our God Is Great - And:
 - Our Hope Is In Him!
 - So - No Matter What You Are Going Through:
 - You Can Rejoice In:
 - Your Hope!
 - **IE:** Isn’t This What Led The Philippian Jailor To Ask Paul & Silas To Ask - “What Must I Do To Be Saved?” (Acts 16:31) - Not Just Because Of The Earthquake - But Because - Even In Prison - Those Two Men Were “Rejoicing In Hope” As They “Prayed And Sang Praises Unto God!” (Acts 16:25)
 - We Need To Stand Together:
 - By “Rejoicing In Hope!”
 - But Also:
- With The Same Patience!
 - “Patient In Tribulation!”
 - There Are So Many Stresses & Strains In This Fallen World:
 - That We All Experience:
 - Whether You Are A Christian Or Not!
 - But - By God’s Grace & Through His Strength:
 - You Can Endure It & Overcome It:
 - With Joy & Hope!
 - Even As Paul - 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 - “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; / Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed!”
 - We Can Stand Together:
 - By Being “Patient In Tribulation!”
 - Especially:
- With The Same Prayer!
 - “Continuing Instant In Prayer!”
 - **IE:** This Is The Time Of Year When A Lot Of Children - Who Have Been Out Of School Now For A Month Or So - Start To Say They Are “Bored!” Because - “There’s Nothing To Do!” The Novelty Of Life Without School Has Worn Off! And Yet - As Parents - We Know That There’s Plenty For Them To Do! If They Don’t Find Something To Do, We Will Find It For Them!
 - Well - All Too Often - We Become “Bored” In Our Christian Life - “Nothing To Do!”

Especially If You Are Older! God Has Something For You To Do! Pray! Not Just For Each Other, But With Each Other!

- And - Even Though The Instructions In This Verse:
 - Have A “Hidden” Quality To Them:
 - Yet - They Must Not Be Practiced In Isolation From Each Other!
 - We To Stand Together In These Things!
 - Remind Each Other:
 - Of Our Hope!
 - Encourage Each Other:
 - In Our Tribulations!
 - And - Pray With Each Other!
 - Because - This Is The Kind Of Culture:
 - That Will Shock The World!

* But We Also Need To - Fifth - Keep:

5. *Sharing!*

- Sharing Together - Which Is What We Find In:
 - 12:13 - “Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality!”
 - Even Though There Are Some Christians:
 - Who Have Been Given The Spiritual Gift Of Giving:
 - We All Need To Have A Heart Of Giving:
 - For The Needs Of Others!
 - And Especially For The Needs Of Those Within Our Christian Family! So - From:
- Open Hearts:
 - We Need To Offer Our:
- Open Hands:
 - By - “Distributing To The Necessity Of Saints!”
 - This Means That You See:
 - The Physical & Material Needs:
 - Of Your Brothers & Sisters In Christ:
 - As Your Own Needs!
 - And Help Them:
 - As God Enables You To!
 - And - Sometimes That Includes Offering:
- Open Homes!
 - “Given To Hospitality!”
 - Which - In Paul’s Day:
 - Was Essential For The Spread Of The Gospel!
 - But - Even Though Things May Be A Bit Different:
 - In Our Day - As Christians:
 - We Need To “Pursue After” Opportunities To Show Hospitality:
 - To People Who God Brings Our Way!
- Are You Willing To Share:
 - What God Has Given You:
 - To Help & Be A Blessing:
 - To Others?
 - “Especially Unto Them Who Are Of The Household Of Faith?” (Galatians 6:10)

* But Then Paul Adds - Sixth - We Need To Keep:

6. *Suffering!*

- And - Suffering Together - Which Is What We Find In:
 - 12:14 - “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not!”
 - Even Though Paul Shifts His Focus:
 - From Within The Church To:
 - Those Without The Church!
 - This “Blessing” Is To Be A Church-Wide Blessing:
 - To Those Who “Persecute” Us As The Body Of Christ!

- It Is So Easy For Us:
 - To Feed The Spirit:
 - Of Resentment & Retaliation:
 - When Things Aren't Going Our Way!
 - But - Isn't This The Way:
 - The World Reacts To Hardship & Opposition?
- What A "Culture Shock" There Will Be In This World:
 - If God's People Followed Christ's Example:
 - "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously!" (1 Peter 2:23)
- To "Bless Them Which Persecute You":
 - Means That We Are To:
- Pray For Their Blessing!
 - Because - As The Doxology Reminds Us:
 - It Is God:
 - "From Whom All Blessings Flow!"
 - Jesus Himself Tells Us To:
 - Luke 6:28 - "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you!"
 - But - This Blessing Goes Further:
 - And Means That We Are To:
- Pursue After Their Best!
 - Paul Will Develop This Further:
 - In The Last Part Of This Chapter!
 - But - Perhaps This Is Why:
 - When Persecution Arises Upon The Church:
 - The Church Tends To Grow & Thrive!
 - Because - There's A "Culture Shock" When The World:
 - Sees Us Respond To Suffering:
 - The Way Jesus Did!

* But - Paul Continues On - And Encourages Us To Keep:

7. ***Sympathizing!***

- Sympathizing With Others:
 - Which Is What We Find In:
 - 12:15 - Which May Further Describe:
 - The Kind Of "Blessing" That We Are To Bless Others With!
 - "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep!"
 - This Means That:
 - We Need To Have:
- A Genuine Connection With Others!
 - Whether Believers Or Unbelievers:
 - Who Experience The Grace Of God:
 - In Some Way:
 - In Their Lives! And:
 - "Rejoice With Them That Do Rejoice!"
 - There Are Legitimate Joys In Life:
 - That Everyone Can Experience!
 - It Is That "Goodness Of God" That Even Led "Thee To Repentance!" (2:4)
 - Though True Christian Love:
 - "Rejoiceth Not In Iniquity!" (1 Corinthians 13:6)
 - When We "Rejoice With Them That Do Rejoice!"
 - That Will Be A "Culture Shock" To This World!
 - The Old Preacher:
 - John Chrysostom - Once Observed This:
 - When He Said - Something Like:
 - "It Is Easier For Us To Weep With Those Who Are Weeping, Than It Is For Us To Rejoice With Those Who Are Rejoicing, Because Envy & Bitterness Too Often Gets In Our Way!"
 - But - Along With This:

- Genuine Connection With Others:
 - There Also Needs To Be:
- A Genuine Compassion For Others!
 - Because We Need To:
 - “Weep With Them That Weep!”
 - For Those Who Have Lost - And:
 - Especially - For Those Who:
 - Are Lost!
 - Even As Jesus Did:
 - When He Went To The Tomb:
 - Of His Good Friend Lazarus:
 - And When He Saw Mary & The Others “Weeping” – “He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled” - And - John 11:35 - “Jesus wept!”
- This Is The Kind Of Culture:
 - That We Need To Cultivate:
 - As Followers Of:
 - Our Compassionate Savior:
 - Who Was Frequently “Moved With Compassion” When He Saw His People As:
 - “Sheep Not Having A Shepherd!”
- And That Is Why:

* We Further Need To Keep - As His Sheep:

8. *Seeking!*

- Seeking The Mind & Heart Of Christ!
 - Which Is What We Find In:
 - 12:16 - “Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits!”
 - This Is An Echo Of What Paul Wrote:
 - Back In 12:3 - “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith!”
 - Imagine The Culture Shock:
 - This World Would Experience If:
 - As Christians - We All Had:
 - “The Same Mind One Toward Another!”
 - What Kind Of Mind?
- Not High-Mindedness!
 - We Must Not:
 - “Mind High Things” About Ourselves!
 - But Instead - We Need To Pursue:
- Humble-Mindedness!
 - Like The Mind Of Christ Himself!
 - “Condescend To Men Of Low Estate!”
 - Or - Let Yourself Be Attracted By & Associate With:
 - What The World Considers:
 - Low & Lowly:
 - And Not Worthy Of Your Time & Effort!
 - This Includes:
 - Humble Pursuits - And:
 - Humble People!
- Together:
 - We Need To Keep On Seeking:
 - “First The Kingdom Of God, And His Righteousness!”
 - Even Though The World:
 - Considers It To Be:
 - A Waste!

Conclusion:

1. And So - In These 8 Verses:
 - We Find 17 Specific Instructions:
 - That Paul Uses To Teach Us:
 - The New Christian Culture:
 - Which We Are To Pursue!
2. It Describes:
 - An Entirely New:
 - Christian Culture:
 - Because It Reflects:
 - The Radical Character:
 - Of Jesus Christ Himself!
 - In Each Case:
 - Jesus Manifested In His Own Life:
 - The Difference:
 - He Called Us To!
 - Jesus Always:
 - 12:9 - "Cleaved To That Which Is Good!"
 - Because - He Himself:
 - Was & Is The Very Definition:
 - Of Goodness!
 - Jesus Always:
 - 12:10 - "In Honor Preferred" Us:
 - Over His Own Comforts:
 - Even To The Point Of Going Before Us:
 - To Calvary - To Pay The Price Of Our Sin & Pave The Way For Our Salvation!
 - Jesus Always:
 - 12:11 - "Served The Lord!"
 - He Only & Always Did:
 - Those Things That Pleased His Father In Heaven!
 - 3. In Each & Every Case:
 - This Christian Culture:
 - Reflects The Character Of Christ!
 - And - When You Come To Christ:
 - Through Repentance From:
 - Your Old Culture! And:
 - Through Faith In:
 - The Life Transforming Power Of The Gospel!
 - It May Be A "Culture Shock" Even To You!
 - 4. But - The More You Live:
 - In The Culture Of Christ:
 - The More You Will Realize That:
 - God's Way Is The Best Way!
 - That God's Will Is:
 - Truly - 12:2 - "Good And Acceptable And Perfect!"
 - 5. So - Let God & His Gospel:
 - Continue To Transform You:
 - Into A "Culture Shock" That:
 - Will Continue:
 - To Shake This World:
 - For Christ!

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com