

PRAYER

- Thank God for His love and His desire for us to become more like Christ every day. Be honest about your weaknesses and inadequacies before Him, and admit your need for Him in your life every day.
- Pray that your life would be a reflection of Christ. Pray that you would make Him known through what you say and how you live.
- Pray for those who persecute you, who have done evil against you, and who may be lowly in your sight. Ask God for eyes to see them the way He does, and pray for compassion, love, and grace.

NOTES



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Fueled by Hope

WEEK 4

WARM-UP

- Who is one person you look up to or want to be like? Why?
- What are some things you do to show a person that you love them, care about them, or think about them? Why are these important to you?
- How do you usually respond when you don't like a person's attitude or behavior? Recall an instance explaining this.

WORD *¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

ROMANS 12:1-2

(Read also **ROMANS 12:3-21.**)

Everything God has done for us—our salvation, redemption, and eternal place in Christ—are to result in worship to Him. In light of His mercy, goodness, and faithfulness, we are to lay down our lives as a living sacrifice. We are not to be like the world. Instead, we are to live differently, fueled by hope in God and secured by His mercies. Let's look at how different our lives should be now.

1 When we are fueled by hope, we can bless others and not curse.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

ROMANS 12:14

When we are persecuted, our natural human tendency would be to protect ourselves and curse our persecutors. But we are not to live this way. Instead of cursing others, we are to bless them. Why do you think this can be difficult? What do you think can happen when we bless and pray for our persecutors?

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2 When we are fueled by hope, we can live humbly and not be haughty.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

ROMANS 12:16

As we progress in life, we may think of ourselves as higher or better than others. We have a tendency to become haughty, to distance ourselves from the lowly, and be wise in our own eyes. But we are not to live this way. Instead of considering ourselves better than others, we are to *live in harmony* and *associate with the lowly*. What would this look like in daily life? Who might we consider to be lowly, and how can we associate with them?

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3 When we are fueled by hope, we can respond honorably and not vengefully.

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **ROMANS 12:17**

When we are wronged and evil is done to us, our tendency is to take revenge and repay the evil done to us with more evil. But we are not to live this way. Instead of avenging ourselves, we are to do what is honorable and right before others. We are to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). Instead of avenging ourselves, according to Romans 12:19–20, what are we to do? Why is this better?

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We are to live in a way that is different from our human tendencies and what the world dictates. In Christ, we are to honor, love, and serve one another. While this is impossible on our own, the love and mercy of God toward us empowers and enables us to live in a way that honors Him. We can love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), and we can live fueled by hope.

APPLICATION

- Take some time this week to meditate on Romans 12. Ask God to reveal your concerns and issues, and ask Him to lead you to the cross. Pray that you would live a life of worship in light of His mercy and love.
- Can we leave those who are evil in God's hands? How can you live in a way that honors God, even when you are wronged?
- How can you be a blessing to those around you who may be difficult to love? What is one thing you are willing to do this week?