

**The New Humanity: Getting Personal (1)**

READ through the Bible passage. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

**Monday, 7/14/08 – Read Romans 12:1-2**

My Observations \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: Sometimes, when we think about God's work in the world, it's easy for us to think in impersonal terms. When we focus on God's building the New Humanity, it's easy to think of things like gender discrimination or racial bias or tension between groups and nations. And yet, finally, what God is doing in the world is very personal. One of the compelling insights of Christian faith is that God is always personal -- and what God is doing in the world affects "me" personally. ... In today's reading, Paul says that the renewing of our minds enables us to discern (recognize) the will of God. ... In your personal life, in your relationships with those close to you, is there something that you have noticed -- and thought: I'll bet this is something God wants me to be doing right now? ... Write down your insight or your recognition.

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**Tuesday, 7/15/08 – Read Roman 12:3-7**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: Don't "think of yourself more highly than you ought to think." This advice in today's reading may at first seem just wrong. We understand that we need high self-esteem, and this may seem to contradict today's reading. Popular slogans (like "be all that you can be") seem to suggest that we are to think of ourselves as highly as we possibly can. But the whole of today's reading makes it clear. ... The problem is **comparison**. We tend to compare ourselves to others, and in comparison we always seem better or worse than others. We may find ourselves striving to be better than other people. ... The point of today's reading is that God has gifted us differently, and it is our differences that make us each one so valuable. ... How do you compare yourself to others? Does this

comparing actually undermine your self-esteem? Does comparing yourself with others work against building good relationships with them?

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**Wednesday, 7/16/08 – Read Romans 12:9a**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: When we respond to God's love for us, when we say "yes" to God, then God invites us into a new kind of human community -- the New Humanity. Our lives -- and our relationships -- are transformed by our experience of and response to God. We don't have to compare ourselves to others so much. And we notice that we are caring for others in a new way. We care for them not just for what they can do for us or how they can enhance our lives but for themselves. "Let love be genuine!" That's the recommendation for today. What would you characterize genuine love? What is it like? Think of a time when someone loved you genuinely. What was that like for you?

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**Thursday, 7/17/08 – Read Romans 12:9b**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: In your relationship with other people, what do you focus your attention on? Do you focus on what's wrong with them or what's great about them? ... Sometimes we don't distinguish between bad behavior and the person who is behaving badly. In our upset over bad behavior, we can fail to see the person. ... In your relationships, how do you stay focused on the person and not just the behavior? Can you think of some specific way to focus on the person?

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**Friday, 7/18/08 – Read Romans 12:10a**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: Yes, we are called by God to love others -- even when they don't love us back. But love reaches its greatest height when it is mutual. This is sometimes hard for us because it means that we have to **receive** as well as **give**. Being the one who gives makes us feel powerful and in control. Simply receiving what another has to give may feel weak or vulnerable. ... Think of a time when you did receive what another had to give. What was that like for you? Were you able to receive? Were you able to receive gladly?

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**Saturday, 7/19/08 – Read Romans 12:10b**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: Do you tell others when you notice them doing something good? Do you write thank you notes? Do you tell others about the great thing you saw your friend doing? Do you brag on people? ... Today's reading suggests: Compete in showing honor! ... Think of three people you have seen do something good lately. Today write them a note of appreciation. ... Think of someone you currently have some tension with. Pay that person a compliment. Tell someone else about the good thing you saw them do.

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**Sunday, 7/20/08 – Read Romans 12:11**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: The Bible often says "serve the Lord." But how do you do that? ... All this week we have talked about how we treat one another, and we conclude with the instruction: "serve the Lord." ... The point seems clear: we serve God by the way we treat one another. ... Take a few moments today to think about those closest to you. Think about each one individually. Think about the way you treat each person. ... Would it make a difference if you thought of that relationship as a way you serve God? What difference would it make?

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*My Faith Journal*, July 13, 2008

The New Humanity #9

**Getting Personal (1)**

**What do I want to remember out of today's message?**

**What action do I intend to take as a result of today's message?**