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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

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Romans 12 (The Message)

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply.

Dear Friends in Christ,

“To love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and your neighbour as yourself.”

These are the two commandments to which Jesus gave first priority. But what do they really mean. Heart, soul, mind, and strength imply our totality, our whole being. The list begins with the heart, the source of all feelings. As Paul develops this requirement in Romans 12 He calls it as from the center of who we are. We are to be ‘changed from the inside out’. Beginning with our emotions of the heart we are to direct all our love to God our creator and sustainer. This is not as easy as it at first sounds. Think for a moment about how easy it is for the unimportant to intrude on the truly important in our relationships.

- You get up early to spend a few moments with God to start the day, but you end up making plans for your own self-initiated activities of the day.

- Your friend is pouring out her heart to you but you're distracted by a bit of misapplied lipstick.

- Your spouse is talking about something really important but your mind wanders to the fact that your favourite TV show started two minutes ago. It's not easy to control such distractions. What Jesus said in two short sentences can take us a whole lifetime of practice and focusing to achieve. We must replace our old set of values with a new set and then we must begin to act on this new set. Our priorities must be redirected, our feelings must be refocused. A good place to begin is with the simple directions given by Paul as quoted above. So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out.

And this is not a one time task. It is a daily process. Beginning with the feelings of our hearts; continuing to the inner essence of our souls, we will be remade by the inner dwelling of God's Spirit. This must continue until as Paul puts it: We love from the center of who we are.

Dear Creating Father, place a new and right spirit within us and help us to make our love of you our first priority. Amen.

(Rev.) John McGurrin