

## Romans 12

Level 2

For guidance on how to use these readings, [see here](#) and for conventions, abbreviations and definitions [see here](#). Answers to the Questions are at the end of these pages. The purpose of the Questions is not to test you, but to call your attention to significant features of the passage and so help you to improve your reading skills. If you can't answer some, don't worry: look at the answers and you'll learn. Or just read through the Practice Passages! With regard to the Questions, bear in mind that for the purposes of parsing, participles and infinitives are classed along with the moods proper.

This selection offers you a chance to work through most of a chapter of one of Paul's letters—most, because it has been lightly abridged (it includes verses 1-2, 4-6a, 9-12, 14-19a, and 21). Although there is a lot of vocabulary in this passage that occurs fewer than 30 times in the GNT, most of these words are either not so very rare and/or are important words because of their meaning. That means that learning some of them by rote could be a good use of your limited time. Or just enjoy the passage in Greek, relying on the glosses and Helps: that's fine too. All Greek reading is good reading!

### Practice Passage 1

Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,  
διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ  
παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν  
θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν  
τῷ Θεῷ εὐάρεστον,  
τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·

### Helps 1

οἰκτιρῶν: mercies; or tr. as sing.  
παραστῆσαι > παρίστημι: present  
θυσίαν: sacrifice  
εὐάρεστον: pleasing      Helps 2  
λογικὴν: rational, spiritual  
λατρείαν: service, worship

### Helps

1. ἀδελφοί: in Greek (as in other European languages) plural nouns designating human beings are often ambiguous with respect to sex, if there are two forms of the singular, one masculine and one feminine. The rule is that the feminine plural is used for groups solely composed of females. The masculine plural, however, is used both for groups that are entirely comprised of males *and* groups comprised of both males and females. Generally, only context will indicate which is the case. If Paul is here addressing himself solely to male members of the church, then ἀδελφοί would be translated as 'brothers'. If you think he is addressing both female and male Christians, then you would have to use 'brothers and sisters', since 'brothers' in English cannot be used for groups of siblings including both males and females.
2. Remember that the manuscripts of the GNT do not contain punctuation: all the punctuation you see in whatever version of the GNT you are using reflects the decisions of editors. Most of the time, these decisions are not controversial and are helpful aids to understanding the syntax. However in this case, there are a number of ways θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν τῷ Θεῷ εὐάρεστον τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν could be punctuated, each giving a slightly different inflection to the sequence of words. The punctuation here, that of the Nestle 1904 version, is only one possibility.

## Questions 1

1. Παρακαλῶ: what person, number and tense are this verb? How and why does its form differ from that of λύω?
2. What is the relation of ὑμᾶς to ἀδελφοί?
3. διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ: διὰ + gen is often glossed as ‘through’. Is this the best translation here? You might want to check a resource like [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com) (use the ‘parallel’ tab) to see how different translators handle it.
4. παραστῆσαι: what mood is this? On what previous word is it syntactically dependent?

## Answers 1

1. Παρακαλῶ > παρακαλέω, a contract verb, hence the circumflex on the omega. 1 sing pres: λύω is also 1 sing pres but has no circumflex on the omega because it hasn’t contracted.
2. Both designate the same group, but ὑμᾶς is the object of Παρακαλῶ, and so acc, while ἀδελφοί is a freestanding vocative: ‘I urge you, [O] brothers and sisters’. The cases are not the same because ἀδελφοί is not standing in apposition to ὑμᾶς.
3. No single correct answer here. The most obvious choice would be ‘by’.
4. παραστῆσαι: inf, following on from Παρακαλῶ: I urge you to present.

## Practice Passage 2

καὶ μὴ συνσχηματίζεσθε	> συσχηματίζω: be conformed to
τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ,	
ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε	> μεταμορφόω: change, transform
τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός,	> ἀνακαινώσις: renewal
εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς	> δοκιμάζω: discern
τί	Helps 1
τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ,	
τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.	τέλειον: perfect

## Helps

1. τί: you can tell the difference between the interrogative and indefinite pronouns by their accent: all the interrogatives have an accent on the first or only syllable. An indefinite pronoun has no accent if it has one syllable and an accent on the second syllable if it has two. In this instance, the accent aligns with the interrogative pronoun and grammarians of Greek confusingly class such usages as interrogatives, even though this word is functioning like a relative pronoun—it is not standing at the beginning of a direct or indirect question. Whatever label you give to it, here it means ‘what’.

## Questions 2

1. What does μὴ mean and why must it be used in this syntactic context?
2. What tense, voice and mood is μεταμορφοῦσθε?
3. Compare τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ and τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός. Both are the same case but not for the same reason. What is the case and in what way are these instances of it different?

4. εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς: how is the preposition functioning here? What mood is the verb and why? What case is the pronoun and why?
5. τί . . . τέλειον: what needs to be supplied after τί to make sense of its relation to the rest of the sentence when you translate? What is the relation of τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον to the rest of the sentence?

### Answers 2

1. μὴ is a negative particle, used in questions that suppose a negative answer, and with the subjunctive, optative and imperative moods. This is not a question, so μὴ is required because of the following imperative.
2. μεταμορφοῦσθε: pres impvn mid / pass. The circumflex reflects contraction of the vowels.
3. Both phrases are dative. In the first phrase, the dative is used to express what the subject is conformed to; the second dative is a dative of means, reflecting what it is that effects transformation.
4. εἰς is here serving to indicate purpose. It is followed by an inf + acc construction because a preposition cannot stand at the head of a clause with finite verb. In inf + acc constructions, the noun in the acc denotes the agent of the verb's action, not its object. In English, the closest to the inf + acc construction is a possessive adjective + pres part. Here that would give: 'for your discerning'. However it might seem more natural to translate as a clause, though: 'so that you may discern'.
5. τί is the subject of an implicit ἔστιν, of which τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ is the complement: what [is] the will of God. τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον stands in apposition to τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, specifying what God's will is like.

### Practice Passage 3

καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι      καθάπερ: just as  
πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν,

τὰ δὲ μέλη      πάντα οὐ      τὴν αὐτὴν      ἔχει      προᾶξιν,      προᾶξιν: function  
οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ      ἐν σῶμά      ἔσμεν      ἐν Χριστῷ,  
τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς      ἀλλήλων      μέλη.      τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς: individually

ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα      χαρίσματα: gifts  
κατὰ τὴν χάριν  
τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν      δοθεῖσαν > δίδωμι, aor part pass  
διάφορα [. . .]      διάφορα: different

### Questions 3

1. ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι: what part of speech is ἐν? And ἐνὶ? How is ἐνὶ related to σώματι?
2. What is οὐ negating?
3. What is the subject of ἔχει?
4. οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σῶμά ἔσμεν: what part of speech is ἐν?
5. τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη: what is understood or has to be supplied here?
6. What kind of structure are καθάπερ and οὕτως signalling?

7. How is κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν functioning?

### Answers 3

1. ἐν is a prep which takes the dative. ἐνὶ is an adj, a form of εἷς, the number 'one', specifically, the masc/neut dat sing. It modifies σώματι, specifying how many bodies are in question.
2. οὐ could be taken as negating either πάντα or ἔχει.
3. τὰ . . . μέλη. Remember that n pl subjects take singular verbs.
4. This is another form of εἷς. The rough breathing is the tip off that it's not the preposition.
5. A form of εἰμί.
6. A parallel: just as . . . so also/likewise.
7. It intervenes in the middle of the noun phrase χαρίσματα . . . διάφορα.

The next passages contain what may be the most relentless series of participles in the whole GNT. Participles are very common in Greek and to read the GNT, you need to become comfortable with them. This passage would read tiresomely in English if each Greek participle were translated with an English one. The most obvious choice is to render the participles as imperatives. To make matters more complicated, there are a number of these adjectives and infinitives that can be taken as functioning as imperatives. Start by noticing carefully which words are participles and which are adjectives or infinitives. Look carefully at the form of the participles and infinitives, noting their tense, aspect and voice. Then try converting the participles and infinitives into imperatives and supplying verbs to flesh out the adjectives. Compare your result to a translation or translations.

### Practice Passage 4

ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος.	ἀνυπόκριτος: sincere
ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονηρόν,	ἀποστυγοῦντες > ἀποστυγέω: detest
κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ.	κολλώμενοι > κολλάω: cling to

### Questions 4

1. In the first line, what is missing that you would normally expect to see?
2. What mood(s) are ἀποστυγοῦντες and κολλώμενοι?
3. In the second and third lines, what is missing that you would normally expect to see?
4. Given the omissions queried in (1) and (2), what adjustments would a translator need to make to produce standard English?

### Answers 4

1. There is no verb of any kind, so in English you have to supply one 'Let . . . be'.
2. Both are participles (the participle is not technically a mood, but is usually lumped together with the moods for parsing purposes).
3. A finite verb. There are two verbs, but they're participles, so neither of them is finite. Complete sentences or clauses in English normally require at least one finite verb.

4. Most translators would feel they need to satisfy English readers' itching for a finite verb, so they might insert 'Let' in the first line and convert the participles of the second two lines, so: 'Detest what is wicked, hold fast to what is good'.

### Practice Passage 5

τῇ φιλαδελφία	φιλαδελφία: brotherly love
εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι,	φιλόστοργοι > φιλόστοργος: devoted
τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι,	προηγούμενοι > προεγέομαι: outdo
τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί,	σπουδῇ: zeal, eagerness ὀκνηροί: lazy
τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες,	ζέοντες > ζέω: boil, be fervent
τῷ Κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες,	δουλεύοντες > δουλεύω: serve, obey
τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες,	
τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες,	ὑπομένοντες > ὑπομένω: endure
τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες,	προσκαρτεροῦντες > προσκαρτερέω: devote oneself to
ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἀγίων κοινωνοῦντες,	κοινωνοῦντες > κοινωνέω: share
τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες.	φιλοξενίαν: hospitality διώκοντες: here, extend

### Questions 5

1. The long series of definite articles beginning this series of phrases, are all, with one exception, in what case? Why?
2. Which is the article in a different case and why?
3. What might Paul's rhetorical purpose have been in using this long series of phrases dominated by a single grammatical form, the participle?

### Answers 5

1. They're all dative. They mean in, by or through. The underlying idea is the same but needs to be translated differently for all if them to sound idiomatic in English.
2. The last, τὴν φιλοξενίαν. It is the object of διώκοντες, 'obeying' or better here, 'following the principles' of hospitality.
3. Assuming the repetition was deliberate, he might have wanted to drive home the series of principles he was upholding: repetition can call attention to what is repeated, but it can also distract from the repeated thing and thereby draw attention to something else. Here, the reader's attention is arguably drawn to the different qualities signalled by the lexical meaning of the verbs because their forms are relentlessly repetitive.

### Practice Passage 6

εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας,	
εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε.	καταρᾶσθε > καταράομαι: curse
χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων,	
κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων.	

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, ἀντὶ (+gen): for

προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

προνοούμενοι > προνοέω: think of, have regard for  
ἐνώπιον: here, 'in the sight of/opinion of'

εἰ δυνατὸν τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν,  
μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες·  
μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες,  
ἀγαπητοί,  
ἀλλὰ δότε τόπον τῇ ὀργῇ . . . .  
μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ  
ἀλλὰ νικά ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ

'as far as it depends on you'  
εἰρηνεύοντες > εἰρηνεύω: live at peace  
ἐκδικοῦντες > ἐκδικέω: avenge, seek justice for  
δότε τόπον: leave room for  
νικῶ/νικά > νικάω: conquer, overcome  
τὸ κακόν.

### Questions 6

1. εὐλογεῖτε: what mood and voice is this? And καταρᾶσθε, what mood and voice?
2. How are χαίρειν and κλαίειν different from εὐλογεῖτε and καταρᾶσθε?
3. What case is μηδενὶ and why?
4. What part of speech is καλὰ and how is it being used here?
5. What part of speech is ἑαυτοὺς and how is it functioning here?
6. What is the lexical form of δότε and what mood is it?
7. What does ὑπὸ mean here?
8. νικῶ and νικά come from the same verb, given in the gloss, but have different forms. What do those forms tell us?
9. What is the object of νικά?

### Answers 6

1. εὐλογεῖτε is an active imperative, 2 pl. καταρᾶσθε is also 2 pl impv, but M/P in form.
2. χαίρειν and κλαίειν are infinitives in form, though here they are functioning as imperatives. Infinitives can do this on occasion, and in this passage, adjectives are used in the same way (ἀνυπόκριτος, ὀκνηροί: let your love be sincere, be zealous, not lazy).
3. It's dative, because ἀποδίδωμι suggests an indirect object: give (in return) something to someone.
4. It's an adjective but it's being used as a noun, 'good things' or 'the good'.
5. ἑαυτοὺς is a pronoun (acc 3 pl) functioning as the object of ἐκδικοῦντες.
6. δότε is the aor impv act of δίδωμι. -μι verbs tend to be treated in introductory textbooks late and fleetingly, but some of them, especially δίδωμι, occur frequently in the GNT, not only in their basic form but in compounds (in this passage, ἀποδίδωμι), so it is worth learning the principal parts of this verb, and the personal endings of -μι verbs.
7. With the gen, ὑπὸ means 'by' and with the acc, 'under'. Here it is part of a prepositional phrase whose noun is gen, so it means 'by'.
8. Both are forms of a contract verb. νικῶ is the pres M/P impv (be conquered) and νικά is the pres act impv. Note the moral/spiritual message of the shift in verb forms: our choice is to *be conquered* by the bad or to *conquer* through the good.
9. τὸ κακόν.

Whew! For an early intermediate reader of NT Greek, this is a challenging passage, though a rewarding one, because of its content. I hope that the reward of reading this for yourself, with a little help, will deepen your understanding of the value of learning Greek so you can appreciate the text in its original language and not only in translation.