

Romans 12:1-2

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

## ***“Renewing our Minds”***

### **Romans 12:2**

INTRO:

The last time we were here in **Romans 12**, we noted how Paul exhorted us when he made the transition from the doctrinal to the practical part of his epistle. Here in **Romans**, he exhorted us *“to present our bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, and well pleasing to God.”*

As we pick up our study today, we will move from the exhortation to present our bodies a living sacrifice to how we are to do this. *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* We present our bodies to the Lord by first refusing to be conformed to this present world, and second by being transformed by the renewing of our minds. If we do this we will prove *“what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

***I. Do Not Conform***

***II. Be Transformed***

***III. Prove the Will of God***

***I. Do Not Conform***

A. Paul’s thought did not stop at the verse division between **verses 1 and 2** of this chapter. It is wonderful to exhort us to present our bodies a sacrifice to the Lord, which is our reasonable service. However, if we are going to do this, we need to know how. So, he tells us in **verse 2**. We do this first by stopping something we should be already doing.

***“And stop being conformed to this present age.”***

1. The structure of the Greek sentence indicates we need to stop doing something we are already doing in our lives. Stop adopting the world’s way and standards. J. B. Phillips paraphrased this verse in this way: *“Stop letting the world pour you into its mold.”*

## 2. How do we do this?

B. First, we need to understand what the world is here in this verse. The Greek word is not the word kosmos. It is the word for the age. Paul used this word to describe the influence of the present anti-God world system. The culture of this age does not help us grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. Let us consider some verses which underline God's attitude to our present world system. For example, James wrote plainly in **James 4:4-5**

***“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”***

We do not begin to comprehend how much God is opposed to the present world system. The tragedy today is that some teach that the church needs to become as close to the world as possible to reach them. Does God want us to be like that which He hates?

2. One more example, in **1 John 2:15-17**, the Apostle John gives us tremendous counsel about our relationship with this present world.

***“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”***

I think it is instructive to note John wrote this specifically to the young men in the faith, who thought themselves strong and vibrant!

C. Second, we must evaluate carefully the values that this present world is seeking to cram down our throats. The source of this thinking is our media; television, radio, movies, music, and so on. All these things are vehicles the world uses to promote its values and lifestyles. Let us then listen to the Apostle Paul's command and let us stop letting the world press us into its mold.

## ***II. Be Transformed***

***“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*** (Romans 12:2)

A. Like the exhortations in Ephesians and Colossians ***“to put off”*** and ***“put on,”*** Paul gave us something to replace the world's influence on our lives.

***“But be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”***

We must stop being conformed to the world, instead we need to be transformed in our minds.

B. The word translated **“transformed”** is a word from which we derive our word **“metamorphic.”** While the Apostle did not describe rocks which were substantially changed, he used a word which denotes radical transformation. We met this word in the record of the Mount of Transfiguration.

***“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.” (Matthew 17:1- 2).***

C. How can we be renewed in our minds so that we are transformed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ? It seems to me that there are four texts we need to consider in seeking to answer this question.

1. The first thing that must have taken place in our lives is that we have been saved. Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:17**

***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”***

The process of renewal begins when the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives at salvation. He makes us a new creation and begins to change us from the inside out.

2. We see this emphasis again in **Titus 3:5-6.**

***“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”***

This is the same word as we find in **Romans 12:2**, ***“the renewing of your mind.”*** He makes us new in quality from the inside out. He gives us a new heart, new desires, and a new outlook on life. Paul wrote in **Romans** that we need to grow in this new direction in our hearts and in our thinking!

3. The “how” of doing this is found in the last two texts we must consider. First, in **Philippians 2** as Paul reminded us of the great condescension of our Savior to come to earth to die for us and then the heights of His exaltation because of His obedience to the Father, The Apostle immediately applied what we learned.

***“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”***

We must carry out in the day to day moments of our lives our salvation. We must live every moment in view of eternity, knowing that God is at work in us both to make us desire His will and to accomplish His will in us.

4. Finally, we see how this works in **2 Corinthians 3:18**.

***“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”***

We see the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus in the Bible and the Spirit of God in us actively transforms us into that same image. This word ***“transforms”*** is the same word as we find in our text! ***“Be transformed.”*** It is through the active study of the Word of God the Holy Spirit renews our minds and changes us into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### ***III. Prove the Will of God***

A. If we stop being conformed to the world’s thinking, and instead we work together with the Holy Spirit in transforming our minds, what will be the result?

***“You will prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”***

B. The word ***“prove”*** means ***“that which is proved by testing”*** or ***“something discovered by testing.”*** Paul asserted that if we stop being conformed to this present age, and we actively seek to renew our minds through the ministry of the Spirit of God through His word, we will discover by experience what the will of God is.

C. Then he adds three adjectives to describe the qualities of the will of God.

1. It is first good. The word translated good means that which is morally upright, but also that which is attractive and pleasant.

2. Second, it is also that which is ***“well-pleasing.”*** This is the same word as we found earlier in our text.

3. Finally, it is ***teleios***, that which is fulfilling, and complete. It will fulfill all our needs and is perfect according to God’s eternal plan. This is both as God looks at it and as we discover His will to be in our life and experience.

D. Are we actively doing this? If we have received the Lord as Savior, our response should be to present our bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, and well pleasing to God. We present our bodies by not being conformed to this present age, but by being transformed in our minds by the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives

through the Word. If we do this, we will discover by experience the will of God, that it is good, well pleasing, and perfect in every way!

**Hymn #378 *Only One Life to Offer***