

## Be Transformed! (*Part 1*)

### *Romans 12:1-2*

**Thought for the Day:** It is only as we are fully surrendered to the Lord that He will be able to transform us and enable us to live a life that conforms to His good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2 is the crucial turning point in the Apostle Paul's development of the theme of Righteousness.

Chapters 1-11 – the Doctrine of Righteousness – i.e., how we can be in right standing and right relationship *with* God. Focus: Positional Righteousness – our position in Christ.

Chpts. 12-16 – the Practice of Righteousness – i.e., how we can live a life of righteousness in our daily activities *for* God. Focus: Practical Righteousness – our practice for Christ.

It is often said, "The problem with living sacrifices is, they keep crawling off the altar!" That is certainly a problem. But the greater problem is that many Christians have never placed themselves on the altar in the first place. Romans 12:1 is not a call to salvation but to commitment and consecration. Have you at some point in your life made this initial, once-for-all commitment and presentation of your life to the Lord?

Many Christians want Jesus to be the Savior of their soul but they've never submitted to Him as the Lord of their life. Until we have done that, the rest of what follows in Romans is not going to make a lot of sense to us.

Missionary, Jim Elliot: "If we are the sheep of His pasture, remember that sheep are headed for the altar."

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will."

- If there is a "silver bullet" for effectively living the Christian life, Romans 12:1-2 is it! The concepts presented in these two verses are crucial to the Christian life.
- Cp. Matthew 22:38-40; Mark 12:30-31 – The Greatest Commandments in the Law.
  - The first and greatest commandment is to love God with our entire being. Romans 12:1 is the fullest and most practical expression of obedience to this command.
    - When we offer our bodies to God as living sacrifices we are giving Him everything that we are and have—our entire self.
    - As living sacrifices, we are loving God with our whole being—mind, heart, soul and strength.
  - The second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Romans 12:3 through chapter 16 is a detailed description of what fulfilling the second greatest commandment looks like.
    - Paul explains what it looks like to love our neighbor as ourselves—our fellow Christians, those who don't yet know the Lord, and even our enemies.

- In between verse 1 and verses 3 and following, verse 2 is the key that helps us to understand how we get to the place of loving God with our whole being and our neighbor as ourself.
  - We must stop being conformed to the pattern of this world.
    - Cp. Ephesians 4:17-22.
    - A carnal Christian looks an awful lot like an unbeliever!
    - When we live in conformity to the pattern of this world, we will only go from bad to worse as we live to indulge the lusts of our sinful nature.
  - We must be transformed from the inside out by the renewing of our mind.
    - Cp. Ephesians 4:20-23.
    - The way we think determines the way we live and if we want to change the way we're living, we have to change the way we're thinking.
    - "Stinking thinking produces lousy living."
  - We must submit our will to the will of God so that we live in a manner that is good, pleasing and perfect in His sight.
    - Cp. Ephesians 4:24.
    - When our minds are being renewed by the truth of God's Word, we will pursue righteousness and holiness in our daily lives.
- This is the necessary process that must take place in our lives if we are to love God with our whole being and to love others as we love ourselves.
  - Romans 12:1 – we offer our bodies to God as living sacrifices—a one time commitment that we renew day by day. (Cp. Romans 6:11-14, 19)
  - Romans 12:2a – we deliberately and intentionally cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of being transformed into the likeness of Christ by saturating our minds with the Word of God. (Cp. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18)
  - Romans 12:2b – we bring our wills, our desires and ambitions, into submission to the will of God so that His good, pleasing and perfect will is worked out in our daily life. (Cp. Philippians 2:13)

## **CONCLUSION**

It is only as we are fully surrendered to the Lord that He will be able to transform us and enable us to live a life that conforms to His good, pleasing and perfect will.

- 1) We must sacrifice our bodies to the worship of God. Have you made that initial commitment of giving your life as a living sacrifice to God?
- 2) We must saturate our minds with the Word of God. Are you committed and do you have a plan for the daily intake of the Word of God?
- 3) We must subordinate our desires and ambitions to the will of God. Have you surrendered control of your life to the Lord? Who's in charge of your life? Is Jesus Christ truly the Lord of your life?