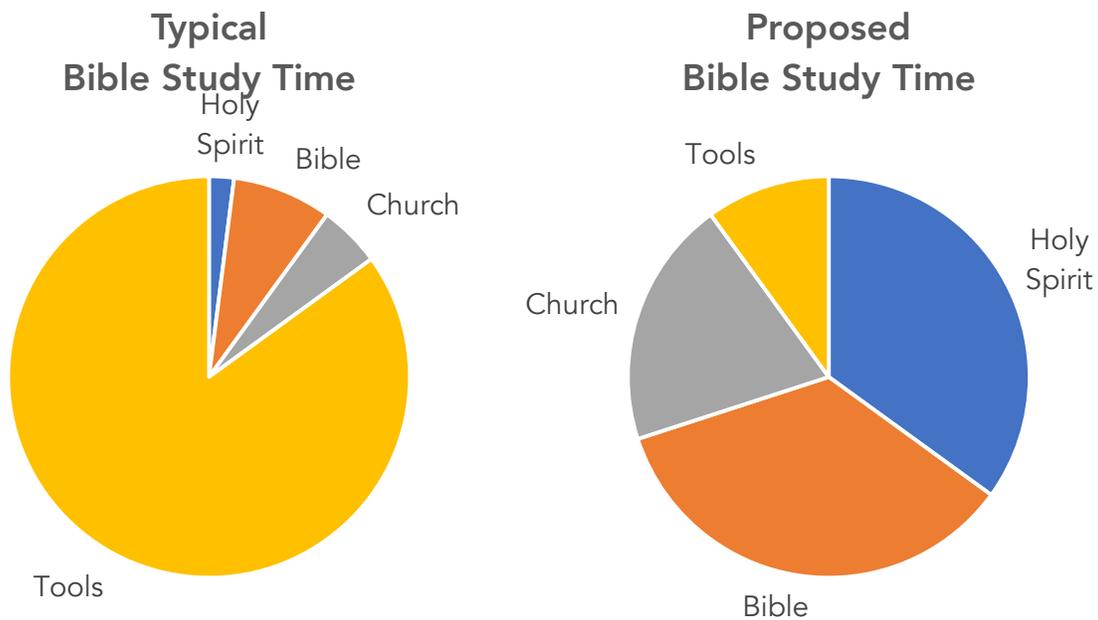


Romans

A Living Sacrifice ([Romans 12:1-2](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Here's our outline of the book of [Romans](#) (summarized from the ESV's outline):

- ✓ Paul's Introduction & Righteousness Introduced ([1:1-17](#)) (three weeks)
- ✓ Righteous Wrath ([1:18-3:20](#)) (six weeks)
- ✓ Saving Righteousness ([3:21-4:25](#)) (three weeks)
- ✓ Righteous Freedom ([5:1-8:39](#)) (11 weeks)
- ✓ Righteousness → Jews ([9:1-11:36](#)) (eight weeks)
- 6. Righteous Living ([12:1-15:13](#)) (September to October) (nine weeks)
- 7. Paul's Closing ([15:14-16:23](#)) (November to early December) (five weeks)
- 8. Righteousness Summarized ([16:25-27](#)) (December & wrap up) (two weeks)

Today's text ([Romans 12:1-2](#)) is the first part of this major section.

Read: A Living Sacrifice (12:1-2)

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Explain: A Living Sacrifice (12:1-2)

What do the words mean?

1 I **appeal** [present active indicative; call near, invite, invoke, beseech, call for, comfort, desire, exhort, intreat, pray] **to you therefore, brothers, by** [*dia*] **the mercies** [pity, mercy] **of God, to present** [aorist active infinitive; stand beside, exhibit, proffer, recommend, substantiate, be at hand, aid; same word used in [Romans 6:13](#) (twice), [16, 19](#) (twice)] **your bodies as a living** [present active participle] **sacrifice** [sacrifice (the act or the victim)], **holy** [sacred, pure, consecrated, holy, saint; same word used in [Romans 1:2, 7; 5:5; 7:12; 8:27; 9:1; 11:16](#)] **and acceptable** [fully agreeable, acceptable, well pleasing] **to God, which is your spiritual** [*logikos*; rational, reasonable, of the word] **worship** [ministration, worship, divine service; same word used in [Romans 9:4](#)]. **2** **Do not be conformed** [*syschematizo*; present active imperative; to fashion alike, conform to the same pattern, conform to, fashion self according to] **to this world** [*aion*], **but be transformed** [*metamorphoo*; present middle imperative; transformed, changed, transfigured] **by the renewal** [renovation, renewing] **of your mind** [mind, understanding; same word used in [Romans 1:28; 7:23, 25; 11:34](#)], **that by testing** [note: 'that by testing' does not appear to be in the Greek manuscripts the ESV is based upon—it is perhaps a further definition/expansion of the word for discern/prove] **you may discern** [present active infinitive; test, approve, allow, discern, examine, like, prove, try; same word used in [Romans 1:28; 2:18](#)] **what is the will** [determination, choice, purpose, decree, volition, inclination, desire, pleasure, will; same word used in [Romans 1:10; 2:18](#)] **of God, what is good** [good, beneficial] **and acceptable** [fully agreeable, acceptable, well pleasing; same word used in [Romans 12:1](#)] **and perfect** [complete, completeness, of full age, man, perfect].

Paul's appeal is based upon all that has been said in [Romans 1-11](#). [Romans 1-11](#) is the context for [Romans 12:1-2](#). Here Paul changes direction. He has laid out his case before us and has reached his conclusion. He says, "I beg of you," by the mercies of God. **What mercies?** The mercies of God that Paul has told us about throughout the first eleven chapters of [Romans](#). The gist of which is: God has made Himself known to man and even in man's rejection and rebellion against Him, God through His judgment

and righteousness has made a way for man to be redeemed. By faith. In Christ Jesus. This redemption is not limited to Israel nor is it only to the gentile. It is for *all* who believe.

Mercies is a description of the character God's compassion.

Present means to show oneself, place beside, to yield. It is a technical term used to describe the presenting of Levitical sacrifices and offerings.

Bible-History.com:

The Burnt Offerings

The burnt offering was a sacrifice that was completely burnt. None of it was to be eaten at all, and therefore the fire consumed the whole sacrifice. It is also important to note that the fire on the altar was never to go out:

Lev 6:13: A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.

Lev 1:3: Let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD.

Lev 1:4-9: Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting . . . and the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

Lev 1:6-9: And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; 'but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water.

The common Israelite worshipper brought a male animal (a bull, lamb, goat, pigeon, or turtledove depending on the wealth of the worshipper) to the door of the tabernacle.

The animal had to be without blemish. The worshipper then placed his hands upon the head of the animal and in awareness that this innocent animal was standing in for the sinner he would seek the Lord for forgiveness and then killed the animal immediately. The priests were also responsible to wash various parts of the animal before putting it on the altar.

The Burnt offering was performed to atone for the people's sins against the Lord and was a dedication offering of one's life before the Lord continually.

Vincent: In the Levitical sacrifices the offerer placed his offerings so as to face the Holy Place, thus bringing it before the Lord.

Body refers to the physical body of the believer. It is to be a living sacrifice in contrast to the slain offerings. Compare [Romans 6:8-11](#). In Greek, the word order is different. It is a sacrifice, living, holy, acceptable to the God. I like this order.

Vincent (quoting Chrysostom): How can the body become a sacrifice? Let the eye look on no evil, and it is a sacrifice. Let the tongue utter nothing base, and it is an offering. Let the hand work no sin, and it is a holocaust. But more, this suffices not, but besides we must actively exert ourselves for good; the hand giving alms, the mouth blessing them that curse us, the ear ever at leisure for listening to God.

The Greek word, *hagios*, means set apart. In Greek culture, it did not have a sense of purity or freedom from evil. But in Christian usage it does, in that God Himself is infinitely pure and free from sin. So, the physical body of the believer put at God's disposal, presented to Him, is holy, both in the sense of being set apart for His use, and holy in the sense of being used for pure and righteous purposes and free from sinful practices.

Acceptable, *euareston*, is a compound word made up of *arestos* meaning acceptable, pleasing, approved, satisfactory, and *eu* meaning good or well. It speaks of something that is well-approved, eminently satisfactory, or extraordinarily pleasing.

Spiritual worship. The King James translates the word spiritual in this verse as reasonable. I believe this is the more correct way. Here is why. The Greek word is *logikane*. It is an adjective formed from *logos*. We hear *logos* and many of us automatically think "Word." But it also has the meaning of reason of the mind. **Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: pertaining to the reasoning faculty, reasonable, rational**. So, what we have here is a worship that is well thought out, reasoned.

This does not take away from spontaneous worship. It is a different thing. Here, in this usage, it is directly tied to our "sacrifice, living, holy and acceptable."

Worship is also translated "service." It is in reference to the priestly service in the temple. When the priests offered sacrifices in the temple they were performing their daily service or their daily worship. Plug this into your mind when you are working in the nursery, choir, Awana, or teaching Sunday school or any number of other things. "My service in X is my worship."

Our reasonable worship is to present our bodies a sacrifice, living, holy and acceptable to God.

[Romans 12:2](#)

World, *aioni*, it means the age, or time. According to Trench it means, "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale, —all this is included in the *aion*, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, 'the subtle informing spirit of the *kosmos*, or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God.'"

Object lesson: Playdough

Do not be conformed.

Conformed means to assume an outward expression that does not come from within us and is not representative of our inner heart. It means to shape one thing to be like another. It refers to things that are transitory, unstable, changeable. This word can never be used to speak of an inner transformation.

When believers are conformed to the world they are not being changed into the world, they are instead hiding who they really are.

But be transformed, *metamorphosis*. *Meta* meaning change and *morphe* meaning form. When I hear the term metamorphosis I always think of caterpillars and butterflies. This transformation is from within the inner man. We are to be completely changed from the inside out. We are to do so by the renewing of our mind. But in the end, it is not us that makes the change, it is the Holy Spirit working in us as we yield to Him. As we definitely, intelligently, and habitually yield to the Spirit He will put sin out of our life and produce His own fruit within us.

Testing, to test or prove with the expectation of approving and finding that the thing tested is true. When the Spirit has control of our minds, when we are "being renewed," we are able to put our lives to the test for the purpose of approving it. When our minds conform to the Word of God, and we experience what obedience is to the Word, we find out what it means to have the Word saturate and control our lives, so we see that it really is the Word of God and thus approve it. **John 7:17: If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.**

I beg of you my brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present yourselves a sacrifice, living, holy, acceptable to God, which is your well reasoned worship. Do not be conformed to this age but be completely changed by the renewing of your inner man, that by testing you may understand the will of God, what is good, and acceptable and complete.

Apply (What is the point?)

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

Next week: Gifts of Grace (12:3-8)

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. **4** For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, **5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; **7** if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; **8** the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- Bible: [Romans](#) (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read ([Romans](#))
- Talk (about [Romans](#)—bit.ly/romans2017group)
- Send (feedback to jim314@yahoo.com by Wed)

Quotes & Observations

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

The Christian is to allow himself to be continually changed so that his life conforms more and more to that of Christ.

Nothing but total commitment of our lives to God make any sense.

Hughes talks about these two verses express the basis, character, demands and effects of our commitment.

Two beautiful verses with heavy impact.

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

In view of God's acts of mercy it is entirely fitting that we commit ourselves without reservation to him. To teach that accepting the free gift of God's grace does not necessarily involve a moral obligation on our part is a heresy of gigantic proportions. p. 232

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

With all of the distractions of our modern world it is easier than ever to fall into the "patterns of the world." This is a good reminder to push the reset button daily or hourly if need be when we find ourselves straying from behavior or thinking things that are pleasing to God.

McGarvey (Ironsides)

The first two verses of [chapter 12](#) are the introduction to this entire practical part of the letter, based upon the revelation given in [chapters 1-8](#). For we may very properly consider [chapters 9-11](#) as a great parenthesis, occasioned because of the necessity of clearing the mind of the believing Jew in regard to the ways of God.

The opening words necessarily link with the closing part of [chapter 8](#): 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren' (12:1). The 'therefore' refers clearly to the magnificent summing up of Christian standing and eternal blessing in the [eighth chapter](#). Because you are in Christ free from all condemnation; because you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit; because you are sons by adoption; because you are eternally linked up with Christ; because you are the elect of God, predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son; because you are beyond all possibility of condemnation, since Christ has died and been raised again and sits at God's right hand; because no charge can ever be laid against the believer that God will hear; because there is no separation from the love of God for those who are in Christ Jesus — 'I beseech you [to] present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your [intelligent] service!' (v. 1).

That's a pretty loaded "**therefore!**" Entertaining a picture in your mind, if that loaded "**therefore**" were a loaded baked potato, it's toppings would exceed the entire volume of the Ryan's buffet selection (without being sneezed upon, mishandled, and otherwise inappropriately groped and fondled, of course...and more than enough to feed the colony)!

We are not to suppose that nonconformity to the world necessarily involves awkwardness of behavior, peculiarity of dress, or boorishness in manner. But the entire world system is summed up in three terms: (1) the lust of the flesh; (2) the lust of the eye; and (3) the pride of life, or the ostentation [That's right...ostentation] of living. Therefore, nonconformity to the world implies holding the body and its appetites in subjection to the Spirit of God, subjecting the imagination to the mind of Christ, and walking in lowliness of spirit through a scene where self-confidence and boasting are the order of the day.

Tim & Mila Archer (MacLaren)

Romans 12:1

Paul, in beginning his practical exhortations, lays as the foundations of them all two compassion precepts. One, with which we have to deal, affecting mainly the outward life: it's twin sister, which follows in the next verse, affection mainly the inward life.

- I. We observe that we have here, first, an all-inclusive directory for the outward life. There are two thoughts for the outward life of a Christian is sacrifice. That, again, includes two things; 1) self-surrender and 2) surrender to God.

"I remember a quaint old saying of a Germans schoolmaster, who apostrophized his body, thus" I go with you three times a day to eat; you must come with me three times a day to pray. Subjugate the body, and lit it be the servant and companion of the devout spirit.

Sacrifice is the keynote—moaning thereby surrender, control and stimulus of the corporeal frame, surrender to God, in regard to the impressions which we allow to be made upon our senses, to the indulgence which we grant to our appetites, and the satisfaction which we seek for our needs, and the activities we engage in the by means of this wondrous instrument with which God has trusted us.

- II. The relation between this priestly service and other kinds of worship.

Paul is not meaning to depreciate the sacrificial ritual, from which he drew his emblem. But He is meaning to assert that the devotion of the life, manifested through bodily activity, is higher in its nature than the symbolical worship of any alter and of any sacrifice.

Remember, that whilst life is the field of worship there must be the inward worship within the shrine, if there is to be the outward service.

III. The equally comprehensive motive and ground of this all-inclusive directory for conduct.

The sacrifice of Christ is the ground on which our sacrifices can be offered and accepted, for it was the sacrifice of a depth propitiatory and cleansing, and on it, as the ancient ritual taught us, may be reared the enthusiastic service of a life—a “thankoffering” for it.

If we will open our hearts to the sacrifice of Christ, we shall be able to offer ourselves as thankofferings. If we will let His love sway our wills and consciences, He will give our wills and consciences power to master and to offer up our flesh.

Romans 12:2

I. The foundation of all transformation of character and conduct is laid deep in a renewed mind.

It is a new gift of a life which will unfold itself after its own nature, desires, tastes, directions, and renewing the whole nature. And so, say Paul, the beginning of transformation of character is the renovation in the very centre of the being, and the communication of a new impulse and power to the inward self.

II. A transfigured life

Life is to be transformed. The transformation is to be into His likeness who is the pattern of all perfections. Transformation is not a sudden or magical thing.

III. The great reward and crown of this transfigured life

The issue of such a life is, to put it into plain English, and increased power of perceiving, instinctively and surly, what it is God’s will that we should do, and that is the reward. To know beyond doubt what I ought to do, and knowing, to have no hesitation or reluctance in doing it, seems to me to have no hesitation or man that has it needs be little more. This, then, is the reward. Each peak we climb opens wider and clearer prospects into the untraveled land before us.