

**Romans: The Good News According to Paul**  
*"The Christian's Worship"* (Part 2) Romans 12:1-2  
 Heather Bible Chapel (May 26, 2019) Pastor Larry Nelson

**Introduction:**

1. Please open your Bibles this morning to Romans Chapter 12.
2. Last week, we crossed the dividing line in the Book of Romans as we began to study Chapter 12, where the Apostle Paul transitions from doctrinal teaching in chapters 1-11, to their practical application in chapters 12-16.

*Romans 12:1-2*

- 1 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*
  - 2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*
3. As I stated last week, nothing is more important for the Christian than how we worship God.

**TRANS>** So last week I began this 2-part sermon in *Romans 12:1*, where we studied:

- I. **The Reason for Worship** (Romans 12:1a)
  - II. **The Essence of Worship** (Romans 12:1b)
- I. **The Reason for Worship** (Romans 12:1a)

*Romans 12:1 "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God ..."*

- A. And you will remember from last week, that contrary to many of the pseudo-Christian false teachings of our day, worship is not about what we can get from God, but rather, what God wants His children to give back to Him, in light of all the blessings that He has bestowed upon us.
- B. Since God has already given to each Christian, "... everything pertaining to life and godliness ...", (2 Peter 1:3), and He has already "... blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ", then it is the Christians duty and privilege to live for, love, and worship God accordingly.
  1. Please remember, that sanctification in the Christian life is not about us getting **more** of God, but it is all about God getting **more** of **us**!
  2. It is the practical working out, of what He has already worked in.
- C. So, in light of all of the "... *mercies of God* ...", Paul urges Christians to worship.
  1. He has just spent 11 chapters teaching us about God's mercy as seen by His gifts of love, grace, kindness, forgiveness, freedom, justification, glorification, eternal life, resurrection, sonship, the indwelling Holy Spirit, faith, peace, hope, and imputed righteousness.

2. And so, in light of all that God has done and given to us in the past, Paul now calls upon every Christian to spend the rest of our lives in present tense devotion, obedience, and worship.
3. *Hebrews 13:15* instructs us to: "... continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."

**TRANS>** Next we studied:

## II. The Essence of Worship (Romans 12:1b)

- A. In other words, what does true worship actually look like?

*Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

- B. Because of the sinful imaginations, which move even Christians to crave that which God has forbidden us to have, we must continually remember to offer our bodies to God as a "living and holy sacrifice."
1. Simply put, this is all about constantly reminding ourselves that we have been purchased by the blood of Christ, and as such, we do not belong to ourselves, but to Him.
  2. Therefore, He has the blood-bought right to tell us how to live, and how to worship.
  3. And as we learned last week, presenting our "... bodies a living and holy sacrifice," which is "acceptable to God", begins with:
    - a. Lord, I give You my hands to touch and hold that which honors and pleases You.
    - b. Lord, I give You my eyes to only look at that which honors and pleases You.
    - c. Lord, I give You my feet to only go to those places that will honor and please You.
    - d. Lord, I give You my ears to only listen to that which honors and pleases You.
    - e. Lord, I give You my voice to speak in ways that honor and please You.
    - f. Lord, I give You my mind to think about that which honors and pleases You.
    - g. Lord, I give You my affections to love only that which honors and pleases You., and
    - h. Lord, I give You my possessions to honor and please You.
  4. And then, throughout our Christian lives, and particularly during times of temptation, we must constantly remind ourselves about these promises and commitments to repentance, as we seek to honor our Master as a "... a living and holy sacrifice ..."

*Romans 6:12-13*

12 *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,*  
 13 *and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

5. Remember, Our daily battle with sin, our will vs. God's will, is both won and lost in the mind.
6. And this is why, as slaves of Christ, we must be constant and deliberate in our presenting the members of our body and our mind over to God as a "*living and holy sacrifice.*"
7. And as we have studied before, true worship and God-honoring victory over sin, can only be accomplished by the moment-by-moment power and control of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (*Romans 8:13; Ephesians 5:15-18; Galatians 5:16-23*)
8. So in point of fact, we never get more of God or the Holy Spirit, but He gets more and more of us, as we deliberately give ourselves over to His moment-by-moment control of our lives.
  - a. This is what it means to "... *present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice ...*", where throughout the day, we are giving God the right to rule and to control our hands, and feet, and eyes, and voices, and ears, and affections, and minds.
9. Presenting ourselves to God as a "*living and holy sacrifice*" means that we must give Him our best, not the leftovers, because only our best is "*acceptable to God.*"

**TRANS>** So much for our review of: **The Reason for Worship** and **The Essence of Worship**, now lets move on to:

### III. **The Transformation of Worship** (Romans 12:2a)

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

- A. The mind is the battleground of the soul, where every day we think and make decisions that will either reflect our new nature of holiness for the glory of God, or our old nature of willful rebellion.
- B. J.B. Phillip's paraphrase of this passage gives us a very clear sense of its meaning, where he says: "*Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.*"
  1. The word "world", as it is translated here, speaks of this present, sinful, evil and satanically ruled world system that is pitted against the rule and reign of God.
  2. And here is the biblically defined condition that we were all born into:

*Ephesians 2:1-3*

- 1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*
- 2 *in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, (Satan), of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*
- 3 *Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

3. Not only were we born spiritually dead, but we were called sinful "children of wrath."
4. Then Paul goes on to reveal the sinner's helpless and hopeless condition, as he lives under the bondage of Satan.

*2 Corinthians 4:3-4*

- 3 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,*
- 4 *in whose case the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

5. And were it not for the sovereign work of God on our behalf, none of us would have ever been rescued from our blind and lost condition.

- C. And for those of us who have received Christ through repentant faith, the battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil isn't over.

1 John 5:19 *"We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."*

1. But for the Christian, now that the devil no longer owns us, he does everything possible to defeat holy living and blunt our testimony by enticing us into the world's sinful fashions, vocabulary, entertainment, music, and relationships.
2. But listen to:

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

- D. The Bible defines every Christian as being a "new creature" or a "new creation", Because of our new relationship with Jesus Christ.

1. Positionally we become "new creations" the moment that we are "born again" into God's forever family.
2. But practically, we still struggle in the sanctification process of becoming like Christ in our day-to-day thinking and living.
3. And so, our *Romans 12:2* text exhorts every Christian to be, "... *transformed by the renewing of your mind ...*"

4. The Greek word for “transformed” is <meta - mor - **pho** - o>, from which we get the word *metamorphosis*, which speaks of a total outer and inner change of mind, nature – and behavior.
5. And how does God produce this metamorphosis in the life of the Christian?

*Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

*Psalm 119:9-11*

- 9 *How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By keeping it according to Your word.*
- 10 *With all my heart I have sought You;  
Do not let me wander from Your commandments.*
- 11 *Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.*

6. The great evangelist, D.L. Moody said, “*Either the Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.*”

E. It is through meditation in the Word of God, that He transforms our minds to know and desire His will, which is one of the ways that we are to worship God.

1. After the death of Moses, as God was preparing to pass the mantle of leadership to Joshua, He commanded him saying:

*Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.*

2. Meditation is the careful and prayerful study and thinking about Bible, for the purpose of honoring God through our Holy Spirit empowered obedience to it. **<REPEAT>**
3. As we study and meditate in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit not only gives us understanding as to what needs to change in our lives, but He also gives us power and the want to change.
4. The Holy Spirit-controlled Christian does not obey God because we have to, we are to do it from a grateful heart of worship.
5. And that want to happens through Scripture renewing our minds.
6. God-honoring transformed lives, start and are maintained by minds which are enlightened and transformed by Scripture.

*Colossians 1:28 “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.”*

7. So according to our Romans 12:1-2 text, the wisdom that transforms our minds comes from the Word of God, not the wisdom of the world.
8. And this is the essence of Biblical Counseling, where we seek to enlighten and correct, according to the Scriptures, so that individual lives and families can be transformed for the glory of God.
9. Quite often I am called upon to explain the difference between the three different kinds of counseling that are available today.
  - a. First of all there are over 400 different philosophies that combine to fit under the umbrella of what we call “*Secular Counseling*.”
    - (1) And they all share the common denominator which believes that the answers to life’s problems can all be found independently from any belief in God.
  - b. And then there is “*Christian Counseling*”, where the counselor usually professes to be Christian.
  - c. But 99% of them have their training and degrees in “*Secular Counseling*”, which may have even been obtained from a so-called Christian college or university.
    - (1) These counselors attempt to wrap a prayer or a Bible verse around Freud, or Jung, or Rogers, or Ellis, or any number of the other 400 secular philosophies, and vuala!!, you have, “*Christian Counseling*.”
  - d. And finally there is “*Biblical Counseling*” or as it is often called, “*Neuthetic Counseling*”, which is foundationed in the belief that since God “... *has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness ...*” (2 Peter 1:3), then we must not look to the methods and philosophies of “*Secular Counseling*” to minister to the heart needs of Christians.
    - (1) Therefore, “*Biblical Counselors*” use the Scriptures to diagnose and treat all problems of the soul.
    - (2) As Paul comes to the end of Romans, he declares to the entire church:

*Romans 15:14* “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish (*noutheteo*) one another.”

- (3) *Noutheteo* means to exhort, counsel, or admonish another person, to a change his thinking and behavior.
- (4) And it is the practical working knowledge of the Word of God, that credentials the *biblical counselor* to assist the in the transforming and renewing of the counselee’s *mind*. (*Romans 12:2*).

- (5) Simply put, God wants us to test everything that claims to be true and acceptable through the grid of Scripture.

*1 Thessalonians 5:21* "... examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;"

- (6) And so, the more that we saturate our minds in the Word of God, the less likely that we will find ourselves being squeezed into the stinking thinking and behaviors of this sinful world's mold.
- (7) As Christians, we should never be like those who make terrible decisions, and then say to me later, as I am trying to help them pick up the pieces, "*Pastor, the reason that I did not come and talk to you first, is that I knew you would tell me words from the Bible, which at the time, I did not want to hear.*"
- (8) A very wise father said to my friend, "*Son, there are those who will tell you that experience is the best teacher; but I tell you that a fool learns no other way!*"
- (9) Dear ones, Life is too short to learn all the lessons of life the hard way.
- e. King Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs so that his son would acquire God's wisdom, instead of going through life as a "*wise in his own eyes*" "fool."
- (1) Here is a project that I would recommend to all of you.
- (2) There are 31 chapters in the Book of Proverbs, and so by taking just a few minutes a day, to read just one chapter, you can read the whole book in a month.
- (3) Try doing this for an entire year, or better yet two years.
- (4) And pretty soon you will find yourself running all of life's situations through the wisdom grid of Proverbs.
- (5) Almost 50 years ago, as I was doing my Carpenter Apprenticeship, I carried the Book of Proverbs in my lunch box, and I read it almost every day for 4 years.
- (6) And I still find myself quoting its passages to myself, and to those whom I counsel.

**TRANS>** Which brings me to our final point this morning:

#### **IV. The Discernment of Worship (Romans 12:2b)**

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

- A. Every Christian should want to know and obey the will of God.
- B. As slaves of Christ, the Christian life is all about learning how to conform our will to His will.
1. When most young people think about the “*will of God*” for their lives, their minds immediately go to future things like:
    - a. What school should I go to?
    - b. What vocation should I prepare for?
    - c. Who will I marry?
    - d. Where will I live after leaving home?
  2. And these are all valid questions, and God desires you to have these answers, even more than you want to know them.
  3. However, let’s take a few moments to see where the “*will of God*” is the same for every Christian, of all time.

- a. Concerning sorrow over sin, Paul exhorts us in:

*2 Corinthians 7:10* “... the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation,”

- b. And concerning our bodies, Paul exhorts us in:

*1 Thessalonians 4:3* “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;”

- c. And concerning the difficult circumstances of life, Paul exhorts:

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

*16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing;*

*18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

- d. And concerning suffering, Peter encourages in:

*1 Peter 4:19* “Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

- e. And concerning how we work for others, Paul instructs us in:

*Ephesians 6:5-6*

*5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;*

*6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*

- f. And concerning those who wrongfully criticize, Peter says in:



1 Peter 2:15 *“For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.”*

g. And concerning our relationship to the world, John commands us in:

1 John 2:15-17

- 15 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
- 16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*
- 17 *The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

4. Did you notice that all of these commands and instructions concerning the “will of God” are in the present tense.
5. That’s right, please hear me when I say that the will of God is primarily present tense.
6. Think with me for a moment:, if we are dishonoring our Lord by not walking in the will of God that is the same for every Christian in the present, why would He show us His will for the future?

C. For those who would like to study more about the will of God, there are two excellent books that I would recommend to you:

1. Decision Making and the Will of God
2. Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will

D. Whatever else Scripture can teach us about the will of God, our *Romans 12:2* text assures us that God wants us to be able to understand His will, because it is “... good and acceptable and perfect.”

1. Let me quote that last phrase of Romans 12:2 again:, The will of God is “... good and acceptable and perfect.”
2. And so, whatever His will for your present or future, you can trust Him.

### Conclusion:

1. Over these many many years, I have counseled some who have actually been afraid to fully devote their lives to God’s will and care, because they thought that as soon as they did, He would call them to do something “*terrible*”, like going out as a single missionary to some horrible place, on the back side of the world.
2. Remember, The will of God is “... good and acceptable and perfect”, and He will give us all grace and joy to walk in it.
3. It is true that walking in the will of God can be hard, and sometimes it is very costly, but I assure you with all my heart that it is worth it!

4. So let's all remember:

*1 Thessalonians 5:24 "Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it." (KJV)*

*Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*

5. God's commands come with His enabling, and so, as we walk in His will, with a submissive heart, He calls this worship.

6. Let's pray together.