



# Transformed: To Give Jesus My All

## Romans 12:1-2

LEADER'S GUIDE

### GETTING STARTED

> *As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.*

**Let's do life together!/Opening Discussion:** Welcome everyone and ask how their week has been. **Share:** How you have seen God working this week: in the good times and the bad times?

**Our Subject Today:** This week, We continue in the new study called **Transformed:** What are some of the characteristics of the person who has been transformed by Jesus?

### VIDEO NOTES/QUESTIONS

**INDUCTIVE STUDY / OBSERVATION:** In Romans Paul explains the Gospel. It comes from grace and has practical results.

**INTERPRETATION:** See Commentary on pages 5-6

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1) Review from last week: *Romans 12:1* speaks about being a living sacrifice. Define living sacrifice again:

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: APPLICATION** - Being a living sacrifice requires us to have the courage and the determination to keep laying down our lives upon the altar. We keep saying YES to God day, after day, after day, no matter the question. Being a living sacrifice, in the grand scheme of things, is a whole lot harder than being a dead one. You know what? I think Paul would agree.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**

Read *2 Corinthians 11:21-33*

2) Make a list of all the things Paul went through that show he was willing to be a living sacrifice. What are some ways in which God is molding and shaping your character to help you grow in Jesus?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** Being a living sacrifice and dying daily is whole lot harder than simply having to die once. Believe that dying daily is worth it because that's how God grows our faith. It is how God grows our character. It is how God molds and shapes us into the men, and the women and the people He wants us to be.

**READ PHILLIPPIANS 3:4-11.** How did Paul's values determine his motivation to be a living sacrifice?

Read *Romans 12:1-2*

3) Paul says that pleasing sacrifices are **PURE** sacrifices. What is a **PURE** sacrifice from your heart?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** We need to give good our best efforts. Our offerings to God and our gifts to Him should be coming from a heart and a life that is pure and focused on God. A pure life is the outflow of a pure heart that seeks help from the Holy Spirit to denounce and cast out sin in our life, spend time in repentance, and ask forgiveness from God for each sin with a goal to live a more righteous life.

4) Paul says that pleasing sacrifices are **PERSISTENT** sacrifices. What does that mean to you?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** Sacrificing to self is a daily and ongoing, process that becomes a part of our life - so that when we wake up in the morning and before our feet hit the floor, we consider all the mercies of God, including the new mercies He's going to give us that day. We say, "God, today, best as I can, I'm living my life for You and whatever the question might be, my heart is to say YES!" It's not just a one-time YES the day we trust Christ as Savior, but a its daily / moment-to-moment YES as we seek to LIVE for Christ our Savior every day. **READ PHILLIPPIANS 3:12-14.** How did Paul's values fuel his persistence in following the Lord?

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**

5) Paul says that pleasing sacrifices are PERSONAL sacrifices? How would you define PERSONAL sacrifices?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER:** Whenever we give our body and life to another person, that is a very intimate, powerful, and personal thing to do. This connects you on so many different levels (emotionally, and physically and spiritually). According to Paul, it's those 3 things that make sacrifices and offerings pleasing to God. It's PURE. It's PERSISTENT. And it's PERSONAL.

Read *Romans 12:2*

6) How can a follower of Christ be conformed to the world? How does being transformed lead us to doing God's acceptable and perfect will?

**SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: SCRIPTURE** - God desires us to get to the point in our lives where we are willing to do whatever God asks of us. Just as a child that learns to obey their parents, our Heavenly Father desires us to follow His instruction and guidance in everyday life.

**Question** - Ask your group to come up with a list of things that conforms us to look and act like the world and then discuss how to overcome these worldly things.

**SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)****POSSIBLE SUMMARY/TAKE-AWAY:**

- Is God drawing you to trust Christ as Savior?
- Is God calling you to trust Him in regards to some other aspect of your life?
- Is God leading you to join this church or follow Jesus in believer's baptism?
- Is God speaking to you about serving Him, or giving, or offering up something to Him?
- Is God convicting you about giving up or sacrificing something for Him?
- Is God asking you simply to live for Him, at school or at work, or when your hanging out with your friends or with your neighbors?



## COMMENTARY

(Additional commentary on *Romans 12:1-2* can be found in the previous lesson.)

***Romans 12:1-2.*** Having completed his explanation of sin, salvation, sanctification, and sovereignty, Paul now does to the Roman believers, in a manner of speaking, what the Holy Spirit does in our lives—he urges the Rome believers to act on the truth they have received.

The key action verb in Paul's urging is to offer. But before getting to that key action step, Paul justifies his exhortation. He does not simply command them to offer themselves; he appeals to their reason (*logikos*). In view of God's mercy, Paul says, it is only reasonable that you offer yourselves to God. Prior to this verse in *Romans*, Paul has mentioned the mercy of God ten times (*Rom. 9:15* [twice], *16, 18* [twice], *23; 11:30, 31* [twice], *32*), and mentions it two more times following this verse (*12:8* [the mercy of God manifested by human instruments]; *15:9*). His conclusion to chapter 11 summarizes all that he has taught on the sovereignty of God in salvation by saying that "God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all" (*Rom. 11:32*).

In the Old Testament, there were sacrifices for sin as well as sacrifices of gratitude and praise. Christ has obviously fulfilled the sacrifice for sin once for all (*Heb. 9:26; 10:10, 12, 14*), and there is nothing that the believer can add to that sacrifice. But living sacrifices of gratitude and praise are the appropriate (reasonable, spiritual) sacrifices to be made by those who live only by the mercy of God. These sacrifices are as much the act of worship of the believer today as the sacrifices of dead animals were the act of worship of Old Testament Israelites. *Latreia* is the word Paul used for the worship practices of Israel in *Romans 9:4*, so he obviously has the same concept in mind for New Testament believers. The root of worship is *latreuo*, to serve. God was served in the Old Testament by sacrifices of property owned by the believer, but he is served in the New Testament by the sacrifice of the believer himself or herself. Paul does not tell believers to "make" a sacrifice, but to "be" a sacrifice.

The sacrifice we are to offer is our bodies, which recalls Paul's earlier words in *Romans 6:13*: "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin ... but rather offer yourselves to God ... as instruments of righteousness." God's mercy resulted in our being bought out of the slave market of sin and adopted into the household of righteousness. Therefore, our bodies are to become living sacrifices as we worship the one who redeemed us by his mercy.

It takes many times of hearing this truth for the contemporary believer to get it right. God is not asking the believer to dedicate his gifts, abilities, money, time, ideas, creativity, or any such thing. He is asking the believer to sacrifice himself or herself. God, through the apostle Paul, is calling for the body of every believer to be offered daily as a sacrifice in worship—and if necessary, in death.

The person who has truly sacrificed himself or herself to God will be distinguished by one overriding characteristic that informs the rest of life. That characteristic is the unwillingness to be conformed to the pattern of this world. The believer must resist the pressure to conform morally, intellectually, and emotionally—and ultimately behaviorally—to Satan's schemes for life. In other words, believers are coming out of Satan's domain where lies and depravity are the language and currency and depraved minds (*Rom. 1:28*) are the norm. Therefore, our minds must be renewed in knowledge according to the image of God, not the age in which Satan rules.

But how exactly is the renewing to take place? What is to "fuel" the metamorphosis that takes place in the believer's life? Transformation ("conformation" to the image of Christ) happens when the renewed mind begins to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. It is the will of God—his standards, his desires, his motives, his values, his practices—which gradually pull the monarch butterfly of the believer out of the world's cocoon into which he or she has been squeezed. It is a knowledge and practice of the will of God that leads to spiritual growth and maturity in the Christian's life.

Ultimately, the will of God is all that matters. The idea here is that the renewed mind can discover and put into action—thereby proving or demonstrating—the will of God. His will is good, pleasing and perfect, and in doing his will, the believer demonstrates sacrificial living. That is, when a person chooses to sacrifice the preferences of the flesh (the normal human disposition), and chooses to do the will of God instead, the life of sacrifice is seen (Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, *Romans*, vol. 6, Holman New Testament Commentary [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000]).

***2 Corinthians 11:21-33. 11:1*** Paul felt compelled by circumstances to compare himself with those who had usurped his authority in Corinth. He foresaw that this would seem like foolishness or madness to some, for which he begged indulgence.

***11:20-21*** Tactics of the false teachers included psychological and physical intimidation.

***11:22*** The false apostles and the true apostles were alike in their Jewish heritage. Yet the false apostles were perhaps, like the Judaizers in Galatia (*Gal 5:1-6*), construing salvation as being based on keeping the law or performing good works.

## COMMENTARY

**2 Corinthians 11:21-33 (cont.). 11:23** Paul did not concede that these false apostles were servants of Christ. He had just called them Satan's servants (v. 15). But he granted their claim for the sake of argument.

**11:24-25** The five Jewish beatings and the three Roman beatings were administered during a more brutal era when adults were subjected to corporal punishment by religious or governmental authorities.

**11:28** Everything Paul mentioned in vv. 23-27 was endured in the course of church planting or evangelism. After converts were made, he faced the task of cultivating these believers in their faith (Kendell H. Easley, "2 Corinthians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017]).

**2Corinthians 11:21-33.** Paul will show that his weakness allows God's power to work more powerfully in him (1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 12:9; 13:4). Who is of Christ? The boastful autocrat who ascends the throne of his own pride, coercing others to bow to his will and running roughshod over any opposition? Or the gentle and mild servant whose only badge of rule is his consideration of others and devotion to their spiritual welfare? Paul's answer can be found in *Phil 2:6-8*; *Rom 15:3*; and *2 Cor 8:9*. He gladly shares the shame with Christ of unselfish service for others.

Paul begins his foolish boasting with his strengths, matching and surpassing his rivals point by point. Only then does he switch to his weaknesses in *11:29*. The strengths prove that he is equal to the superlative apostles. The weaknesses, however, prove "the power of God evident in his ministry" (see *4:7*; *12:9*).

The only valid Christian criteria to measure apostles have nothing to do with noble birth or personal accomplishments but relate to how they conform to the cross of Christ and what God has done in them. Paul does not legitimate his ministry by comparing himself with others. He would compare himself only with Christ and recognizes how far short he falls in that comparison. Nevertheless he also recognizes how God's power courses through his ministry in spite of his weakness. His point would be that God's power has worked in him in such a way that his weakness becomes strength, the conclusion in *12:10* (David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians, vol. 29, *The New American Commentary* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999]).

**Philippians 3:4-14. 3:9.** Why such single-minded devotion to Christ? Because he is the only source of righteousness—that is, of right relationship with God. In regards to eternal salvation, humans deserve nothing, can achieve nothing, and have no reason for pride or self-assurance. God has done everything: created, disciplined, had grace, given his Son Jesus on the cross for our sin, raised Jesus, declared us righteous and justified, adopted us as his children, and promised us resurrection and eternal life. The only human part in all this, in faith, is to accept what God has done.

**3:10-11.** Demonstrating the lack of importance of earthly things, Paul expressed what life truly meant to him. This changed Paul's aim in life. He wanted to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. To know Christ meant much more than knowing about him in his mind. To know Christ in this way meant he was ready to share in Christ's sufferings, even if that meant sharing his death. Paul's longing to share with Christ comes through strongly in *Galatians 2:20*.

**3:12.** Not yet mature, he was still very much in the race of the Christian life. The perfection he would have at the future resurrection was not yet attained. He still had to deal with what in Romans 7 he calls "the flesh," an innate pull to sin. He purposes to press on as he had not attained the intense personal knowledge of Christ that he desired and had not become all that Christ wanted him to be. He did not press on out of personal power or will. A fact of the Christian life is that the more you mature the more you realize how much further you have to go to become like Christ.

**3:13.** Paul, in this verse, underlines his denial of personal power or attainment and his single-minded focus. He cannot look back. He strains every muscle in his body to achieve forward motion. Paul forgets the guilt of persecuting the church. He forgets the pain of prison and physical punishment. He looks ahead to see the resurrection, where he will meet Jesus face-to-face.

**3:14.** With this focus he pursues his goal intently. His goal is to win the prize for which God had called him in Christ Jesus. He wants to hear God call his name and summon him to the victory stand, where he will meet Jesus face-to-face and know him in perfect intimacy. Earthly prizes do not last. Eternal prizes do. The goal can never be realized on earth. It is a goal that pulls us heavenward. Note *1 Corinthians 9:25*. In the late 1950s, Jim Elliot, former husband of author Elisabeth Elliot, gave up his life to reach a hostile tribe in the jungles of Ecuador. His words have been immortalized: "He is not a fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." While Paul was not spiritually where he thought he would ultimately be, he intended not to be distracted by anything as he pursued his goal (*Heb. 12:1-2*) (Max Anders, Galatians-Colossians, vol. 8, *Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999]).

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