

Romans 12:1-2: The Only Reasonable Response

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Romans / Romans 12:1-2

Introduction

- Buying a boat - something I wanted since moving to Charleston, especially wanted with Luke's love for fishing - wanting to spend more time, building memories, etc. Fleeting time with boys and I want to make the best of it. Saved money.
- New boats are expensive, spent a year looking for something I could afford that was also reliable, hoping it's not going to cost me a fortune. BUT... a boat was what I wanted.
- We spend a lot of time pursuing what we want. In our relationship with God, we spend a lot of time seeking God for what we want. "I want to know who I'm supposed to marry. I want to know the career path I'm supposed to follow. I want to know how you're going to get me out of this mess I'm in. I want you to heal me of my disease."
- You know what you want, and you probably know what you want from God. BUT... a better question to ask: What does God want from you? Paul answers that question in [Romans 12:1-2](#).
- In these two verses, Paul explains we must respond to what Jesus has done for us. From these verses, I want to show you two ways you must respond to the work of God in your life.

I must give God my whole life.

- vs. 1 - For 11 chapters, Paul has expounded on the Gospel. Now, for five chapters, Paul is going to tell us how to live in response to the Gospel (Therefore)...
- Paul tells us to give our bodies as a living response to God in response to His mercy. All of the application that Paul gives in the next five chapters is in response to God's mercy. What God has done for us motivates us to live our lives for Him.
- In the Greek , the word *present* is in the aorist tense. Aorist tense describes something that is a whole, decisive event. It's determined commitment. It's surrender. "God, everything I am belongs to you."
- Jesus has made the once and for all sacrifice ([Hebrews 10:10](#)). He went to the cross to die for our sins, and rose again securing for us eternal life.
- In response to His atoning sacrifice, we sacrifice our lives for Him. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, there were several types of sacrifices. There were sin offerings, peace offerings, thanksgiving offerings, etc.
- In Leviticus, the burnt offering is the first offering described. It was a voluntary offering that a person would make to God where a whole animal would be completely consumed on the altar. In essence, the offerer was saying, "I commit my whole self to you."
- Paul is calling us to a decisive decision to commit our whole selves to God as a living sacrifice.
- A living sacrifice means I'm constantly giving my life in service to the Lord. I'm not physically dying on the altar, I'm committing myself to live as if I'm dead to my desires and alive to His.
- It's a decisive decision that's lived out daily because there's a daily temptation to get off the altar.

- Giving myself as a living sacrifice is pleasing to God. It's true worship. Worship is far more than a Sunday morning worship service or singing songs to God. Worship is a life committed to serving the Lord because of His mercy.
- In the Greek , the word for true is *logiken*. We derive our word *logic* from this word. Something that is logical is something that makes sense. Because of God's mercy, it just makes sense that we would completely give our lives to Him in worship. It's the only logical or reasonable response.
- [Romans 12:1](#) challenges us to evaluate what we give ourselves to.
- **What am I most willing to sacrifice my life for?** What I'm most willing to sacrifice for reveals what my heart craves the most. The way you answer that question reveals what you worship.
- **I'm most willing to sacrifice my life for what I believe promises to give me what I crave the most.** You may struggle to lay your life on the altar before God because other desires or cravings have taken His place. You may crave what this world offers far more than you crave God Himself, so you sacrifice yourself for the things of the world.
- Do I crave:
 - Being comfortable or being faithful to the Lord.
 - Being settled in this life or living intentionally for God's Kingdom.
 - Retreating from the challenges of life or living on God's mission in a difficult world.
 - Being served by others or serving God with all my heart.
 - If my job, or my relationships, or my hobbies, or my wealth offers me what I crave, then that's what I sacrifice for. However, in the Gospel, reminded that only Jesus gives us what our hearts ultimately crave: real, everlasting life.

- How do I grow to crave my relationship with God more than anything else so that I might give my life to Him? Vs. 2 answers that question.

I must let Jesus renew my mind.

- How do I get to a place where I crave God more than this world? I must let the Holy Spirit transform my mind.
- Notice that Paul gives a contrast: Do not be conformed. Instead, be transformed.
- Conformed = present tense or an ongoing action. You must make the daily choice to STOP being conformed to this world. (World = this present age that is under the influence of the evil one.)
- The world wants to conform you. To be conformed means to be pressed into or to adapt to the patterns of this world. It's not inner change, it's blending in and accepting the things of this world as normal and good.
- It's easy to be conformed to this world. The world tries to disciple us. We talk a lot about discipleship. The reality is that whatever you give your mind to the most is what trains you, what you follow, and ultimately what shapes your life.
- For some of us, we are unknowingly being conformed to this world. Think how our sinful culture shapes us:
 - Culture tries to teach you what to think. (Live for yourself, get what you want out of life. You deserve to be happy. How you feel is your truth. Don't judge others for living how they want to live.)
 - Culture tries to teach you what to want. (American dream, sex, success, etc.)
 - Culture uses constant exposure to normalize sin. (Normalization of lifestyles that oppose God through media, politics, etc.)

- Culture keeps you distracted so you won't think about the Kingdom of God. (Entertain me, mindless scrolling on the screen - distracted by our phones, media. Average person on their phone 4 hours a day - up to 8 hours a day for teenagers. Many are being disciplined by a device that is teaching us to not think for ourselves.)
- Instead of being conformed, be transformed. Transformation is a work of the Spirit that changes you from the inside out. (Greek word is the word from which we get our word metamorphosis — the change from one form to another.)
- Transformation happens as your mind is renewed. A polluted mind will lead to a polluted life. A transformed mind will lead to a discerning life.
- If you are going to live as a living sacrifice, your mind needs to be reprogrammed. Transformation is a work of the Spirit as you submit to His work.
- You're transformed as you as you obey the Lord and spend time with Him. As you discipline yourself for growth you put yourself in a position for the Spirit's work.
- As the Lord transforms you, you are able to discern the will of God.
- We think of the will of God as a choice-making. "Does God want me to marry this person or that person? Does God want me to go to this school or that school? Move or stay here?"
- The will of God is a way of thinking (renewed mind) that leads to right choices. It's being more concerned about what God wants from you - your total commitment - more than the details of the choices you are trying to make. If you are living your life transformed by God, you'll be able to discern His will in every area of life.
- How do you put yourself in a position for the Spirit to renew your mind?

- **Get your head out of the sand.** Stop being oblivious to the affect the world is having on you.
- **Do a mind evaluation.** You're already saturating your mind with something, but what is it? Outside of your job, what influenced your thinking the most last week? What did you let your mind dwell on? Mindless scrolling? Binge-watching the questionable show? How much time did you spend intentionally thinking about your faith?
- **Saturate your home.** If you're a parent, what influences are you willingly allowing in your home that are working to conform your family to the world? Take an inventory. I'm NOT saying you have to say a complete "no" to television, internet, social media, etc. BUT, I am saying that many of us lack caution and wisdom in our homes. How often was God talked about in your home last week? How often did you pray together as a family? Was there any time in Scripture as a family?
- **Put a plan in place.** What disciplines do you need to add to your life? What needs limits? What needs to be removed? How often was God talked about in your home last week? How often did you pray together as a family? What if you prayed together twice over the next week? Or made it a habit to talk about the Bible text we preached from at lunch on Sunday afternoon?
- **Slow down enough for what matters most.** The world tells you to go full speed pursuing your desires. God says, "Be still and know that I am God" ([Psalm 46:10](#)). What needs to be rearranged in your schedule so you can spend 30 minutes to an hour each day of time reading Scripture, praying, reading a good theological book, etc.
- God is worthy of you submitting to Him because of what He's done for you. His mercy compels a life of surrender to Him. His mercy compels a new way of thinking. Have you experienced His mercy? Have you embraced the Gospel - Jesus has come to give you new life by living the life you could not live only to die on the cross for your sins to rise again

three days later. If you have never placed your faith in Him, repent of your sins and place your faith in Jesus.