

# Romans 12:1-2

## Worship

Image Church // Members of the Kingdom: Week 1

---

### Introduction

Well good morning Image Family ...

**Promo for Kids Camps:** 3 days all day, free camp [SLIDE]... We're doing this for you, but we're doing this for our community as well... We've been marketing it hard- invited business on our road and invited through some of you... We're getting a good response from the community... Spots are filling up, so make sure that you sign up. Also, invite your friends to this- we want to engage your friends!

Alright, we're kicking off a new series this weekend called **Members of the Kingdom**...

This is the year of discipleship, where we're looking at what it means to be a disciple of Jesus...

So far, we've looked at the Life of Jesus, *the ministry of the Spirit that gives life to the work of Jesus in us*... Now, practically we want to press in on what this new life through the Spirit should produce in us...

And to do that, we're going to spend the next **8 weeks** walking through our core values... The purpose of these values we have as a church is to give us handles on what new life in Christ looks like...

**Think about it like this**... A **disciple** is a Spirit-filled follower of Jesus. **Discipleship** is growing in what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

The way that we frame this is that discipleship is the process of responding to the gospel by growing as a **worshiper, a family member, a steward, and a missionary**...

These are our values here, and we're going to take 2 weeks to walk through each of them.

And this morning, we're going to start with **worship**...

Let me ask you this, what's the first thing that you think about when you hear "worship"?

- For many of you, I bet you're thinking "singing"...

The thing is, the bible paints a different picture of worship for us that's way bigger than most of us realize...

- And it's important for us to understand this because we don't want to come in here and sing a few songs and assume that we're worshiping God when the reality is that we can sing all day long, but the reality is that we're not actually worshiping God...

**If you have your Bible go ahead and turn to Romans 12...**

- Paul is going to define what worship is....

Let's jump in...

### Romans 12:1-2

Paul says... **1 Therefore, brothers and sisters,** [Leave all of verse 1 on the screen all at once until I finish talking through it]

Now we have to stop here... The first thing we need to talk about is the **Therefore** at the beginning... Every time you see it, you want to ask *what is it there for?*

The **Therefore** connects everything that Paul's been talking about in the previous **11 Chapters**, which is **God's mercy in action** through the gospel...

And what he does here in **Chapter 12** is he makes a transition from *what God's done* to *how we should respond in light of God's done*...

Here's the connection, look at the rest of **verse 1**... *Paul says:*  
... in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,

Now when you first read this, it might sound weird because when you think about a sacrifice in the bible, you think about something being killed and offered to God...

- This is how they used to do it, and the sacrifice was given in response to God, but it also embodies a very real reality for them...

**We have to understand the symbolism in OT sacrifices:**

- God gave Israel this as a reminder of their reality and a picture of what was to come...
  - *Flesh out*...
- The innocent animal was slain in the place of the guilty... Something had to die in order to pay for their sin...

When they made an offering, it was an act of worshiping God for His *mercy*...

- **Mercy is not getting what you deserve**...
- God didn't give Israel what they deserved, which is death for their sin. Instead, the animal took it in their place...
- They had to do it over and over to atone for their sins... As *payment for their sins*...

**But here's the beauty of the gospel**...

- The **gospel** is that Jesus was killed in our place
- He was the once and for all sacrifice for our sins...
- Perfection in our place, punishment in our place...
  - **Resurrection:** New life to us, given to us through the power of the Holy Spirit...

- We deserved the wrath of God for our sin, God poured it out on Christ in our place...
  - So that through Him we could receive **restoration** and **reconciliation**...
  - IOW: you get God, you get to be in a relationship with Him and part of His family, you are no longer a sinner separated from God, you are a son or daughter of God!

That's the mercies of God that Paul's talking about here!

- Some of you need to receive this for the first time...
- Those that have received it need to remember it...
- That's Paul's point here... He's preached the gospel like 20 times already and now he's reminding them of it again!!

I think we move past the gospel too quickly... Or we think we already know it...

- But the gospel is not just something you know... It's something that transforms your life... This is what Paul's showing us here...

*Paul's saying:*

In view of the mercies of God, **I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice.**

Paul says that we're to **lay our lives down in response to the work that God's done for us!**

**Our lives are to be an offering to God**...

- This is dying to self, your desires, and your selfishness and being about devoted service to God...
- This is where life's not about you and your gain and your glory. It's about God's glory...

*Not doing this to pay God back... Piper Debtors Ethic...*

- **Problem:** Leads to drudgery and fatigue... Not feeling like you've done enough, not knowing where you stand...

You could never pay God back... **You offer your life in response to what he's done for you...**

- Really have to understand this on a heart level...
  - The depths... You can never mess up what He's done for you- that is His mercy!

The difference between **information** and **formation**...

- One is just facts in your head, and the other is when those facts make it to your heart, and your life begins to form around them...

This is what Paul's showing us here...

**Now Paul's going to get really practical and show us what this looks like... Doesn't leave us wondering...**

**1 Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.**

**holy and pleasing to God;**

**Holy** doesn't mean perfect, it means set apart...

- Not just set apart for anything... But set in a way that is **pleasing** or acceptable to God...

Practically this is:

- Not setting your life apart to climb the corporate ladder.
  - For many of us, our lives are more set apart for our jobs than they are for Christ...
  - *\*This is why, for a lot of folks, they'll miss more Sunday Gatherings than they will work...*
    - Won't take PTO to do something, but will forfeit the gathering of God's people to go do it...
- One of the clearest ways that the bible calls us to be set apart in a way that's pleasing to God is through the Church!

Here's another way this holy and pleasing living plays out:

- The way that you talk to and engage your spouse and your kids...
- This is your ethic at work...
- Character and integrity even when it's hard...

**Key:** this isn't done to get something from other people. It's done for God...

- So important; if you do it for others or to get a response out of your spouse, you can get discouraged... Not about what you get; it's about setting your life apart for God's glory!

**It's about what Paul says next here, this is your true worship.**

OR: *reasonable worship...*

**IOW:** Paul shows us that worship is a way of life... One where we're responding to who God is and what He's done for us through Christ...

And this is not a one-time thing; it's a whole life journey...

- Where we grow in our knowledge of God and in our love for God, and having the right beliefs, right practices, and right affections.

*This is what Paul's going to flesh out for us in **verse 2**...*

**2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,**

**First:** Do not conform to this age...

- **Proverbs 14:12** *There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death.*
- **1 Cor. 7:31** *This world passing away...*

**The world's call is to conform...**

- Be this, do that, got to have this...
- Got to look like this... Self-image... Instagram
- Sexuality: Be want you to want... **BTW:** Pride month, Living beyond Sunday Podcast (Spotify and Apple Podcasts)

- Self-preservation... Money stuff...

**Example:** Like a Carnival with your kids...

- Got to have it all...
- *Walk out with a bag of stuff that goes in the attic...*

This is what the world is like for us... And Paul's calling for us not to squeeze into the mold of this world, the ways of this world...

*Here's the thing, one of the ways that this can play out through an unexpected means is by **religious conformity**...*

**Example: Transformer toy:** love these things

- The thing is, I could move those parts and change that toy as many times as I wanted to, but at the end of the day, it was still a toy. It really wasn't transforming; it was just changing appearance as I moved the parts resembling different things.
- No amount of moving or configuring could ever change the actual makeup of that toy. At the end of the day, it was just a standard toy that really never transformed; it was just manipulated into different positions.

I think for many of us, that's what our Christian lives are like. We're constantly trying to manipulate our outward appearance by doing good things...

We're not experiencing transformation; we're just practicing **a religious version of conformity**...

- Where we're trying to follow the *rules*... doing things **for** God instead of responding to the work of God...

**Example:** If you just asked me to serve you and do a bunch of things for you... I would hate that... *But if you gave me a million dollars, I would do whatever you asked*... What you've given me changes my response...

**Transformational change** happens when you remember the mercy of God responding to it instead of conforming to a set of religious principles...

**Conform vs. transform**...

- **Example**... Bricks vs. tree...
  - One grows by throwing more on top, the other grows from the inside out...

One is mechanical and external- the other is a heart change that starts on the inside and works its way out...

Transformation happens by renewing our minds... **The way we renew our minds is by continually resetting our minds on the gospel.**

**Example: In sports-** what keeps you keeping on? When things get hard, when you have to make sacrifices, when you have to go above and beyond, when you're working when no one else is looking...

- You have to keep refocusing back on your intent- Your goals...
  - The same is true in **corporate America**...

\*The same is true when it comes to the gospel- the way that it transforms us is by us continuing to come back to the gospel over and over again...

- Continuing to adjust our way of thinking in light of the gospel...

We put on gospel glasses that reshape how we view everything...

If you just feel like you have to do things for God for the sake of doing them to check a box or because you have to for Him to approve of you then you'll never want to do them... And you will be miserable...

**Gospel transformation** changes how you think... It reprograms your life, it reorients your heart and your desires, it motivates you toward faithful stewardship of your life for the glory of God...

### Examples:

- Christ has been generous with me, so I will be generous with my money...
- Christ has served me, so I will serve others...
- Christ has loved me, so I will love others...
- Christ has committed Himself to me, so I will commit myself to the church...
- *These are all acts of worship*

*And here's the last thing that we see here that Paul says in **verse 2**: When you renew your mind on the gospel, and allow it to begin to transform you from the inside out ... you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.*

### Conclusion [Vamp]

Most of us think about the **will of God** as a pathway in the jungle... If I go right, this will happen if I go left, this will happen; which one is best?

That's not how the will of God works...

- The reality is God is less concerned with the next steps that you take in life and far more concerned about the posture of your heart...

\*What Paul's saying here is that as we are transformed by the renewing of our minds through the gospel... We will begin to understand and agree with what God wants for us and be able to put it into practice...

*In Scripture, the will of God is presented as something you become. A way of thinking that you adopt that then informs your choices.<sup>1</sup>*

***What Paul is showing us is that worship gives way to the will of God in your life...***

- The more vast your worship, the more clarity you will have on God's will for your life...
  - Life questions
  - Situations

So yall, here it is: ***Worship is our response to who God is and what He's done for us through Christ...***

- This is daily
- This is intentional
- This takes us deeper into the things of God...
- This brings transformation in us...

### Call to respond:

- Christian
- Non-Christian

### PRAY

---

<sup>1</sup> JD Greear, sermon. *Therefore*. Sept. 22, 2019.

## Reflect and Discuss

- Other than singing in a Sunday gathering, how do you worship God on Sunday?
- How does your life reflect a posture of worship during the day to day each week?
- Read Romans 12:1, what are the mercies of God that Paul talks about? How do you see the mercy of God in your life?
  - What does it mean to present your body as a living sacrifice?
- Read Romans 12:2, what is a practical example of not being conformed to the the world in your life?
  - What are methods that God has given us be transformed by renewing our minds?

**Outtake:**

God's mercy does not automatically produce the obedience God expects is clear from the imperatives in this passage. But God's mercy manifested in his Spirit's work of inward renewal (see v. 2) does impel us toward the obedience that the gospel demands.<sup>2</sup>

**You say, practical, what does this look like to renew our minds with the gospel and the implications of the gospel?**

- The Word of God, the people of God, the Church of God...

Some of you lack gospel transformation because there is a gap in a gospel presence in your life...

- Not in the word, not around the people of God, and not committed to the church of God...

---

<sup>2</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 749–750.