

Belonging to One Another

Week 1: A Body Given

Scripture:

Romans 12:1-2

Motivation (Why You Need This):

Romans 12:1 (ESV) 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.

Romans 12 begins with an appeal.

Paul has spent 11 chapters laying out the gospel...

- The depth of human sin (Romans 1-3)
- The righteousness of God (Romans 4)
- The death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 5)
- The security and victory of those who are in Christ (Romans 6-8)
- The mercy of God toward Jew and Gentile alike (Romans 9-11)

Then he gives his appeal based on these things.

Everything Romans 12 asks of the church flows from **a life that has been surrendered to God**. Before *serving, loving, and belonging*, there is the offering of yourself.

This series, *Belonging to One Another*, is not a community-building strategy.

It is the natural shape of a church that has heard Romans 1–11.

Belonging to one another is not just *attending something* but *participating together* as one body with others.

So first, we must learn what it means to give ourselves completely to God for His purpose and use.

Information (What You Need to Know):

How to give yourself completely to God...

■ **You must offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God**

Romans 12:1 (ESV) 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.

✓ Paul's appeal to believers is rooted in the mercies of God

"We do this because of the mercy shown to us by God, and we are only *able* to offer ourselves to God as He works His mercy in us. God commanded us to do this, and He makes it possible for us to do it." – David Guzik

✓ The reasonable response to God's mercy is offering yourself to God

"The body is not evil in itself; if it were, God would not ask that it be offered to Him. As an instrument, it can express either sin or righteousness. If the latter, then it is an offering *pleasing to God*." – Expositor's Bible Commentary

■ **You must not be conformed to the world**

Romans 12:2 (ESV) Do not be conformed [*Gr. to fashion oneself according to*] to this world...

1 John 2:15 (ESV) Do not love the world or 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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

What defines the world?

✓ The *desires of the flesh* is a strong desire for rebelliousness against God

"I want to do my own thing."

✓ The *desires of the eyes* is a strong desire to have more

"I won't be satisfied until I get what I want."

✓ The *pride of life* is a desire to impress with what you have or what you do

"I want people to know my name and be jealous of what I have."

■ **You must be transformed by renewing your mind**

Romans 12:2 (ESV) 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.

"The key to this change is the mind, the control center of one's attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and actions. As one's mind keeps on being made new by the spiritual input of God's Word, prayer, and Christian fellowship, his lifestyle keeps on being transformed." – Bible Knowledge Commentary

Application (What You Need to Do):

The application is not a task.

It is a posture.

Are you here this summer with a renewed mind, willing to let Romans 12 do its work?

Or are you here with the pattern of this world still running your life?

Is church (the people, not building or programming) one of many things in your life?

Or do all the other parts of your life flow out of your surrender to God?

The diagnostic question for the whole series is planted here in Week 1...

Have I given myself to the Lord, or is He only getting part of my life?