

Transformed

It's Only Reasonable

Before we begin our journey through Romans 12 together, let's take a step back. In the previous chapters, Paul, the writer of Romans, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, explained how to become a Christian (Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8, and Romans 10:9-10). He then uses this section of his letter to the Roman church to explain how Christians can become more like Christ.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

-Romans 12:1 NIV

When reading the first verse in Romans 12, the first word you encounter is the word "therefore." Here's a hint when reading the Bible. If a Biblical passage begins with the word "therefore", I would encourage you to read the passage before this verse to see what the word "therefore" is "there for." In this case, in Romans 11:36, Paul states that everything created by God "comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory." (Romans 11:36, NLT)

All of creation is meant to glorify God. With that knowledge, let's read Romans 12:1 again:

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."

-Romans 12:1 NIV

"A living sacrifice." Wow! Talk about a commitment. We often think of Christian service as doing "big things" for God. In fact, Christian Veterinary Mission is known for our short-term mission trips. If you have never gone on one of these, then I highly encourage it. It can be life changing. But how do we become a "living sacrifice" in the day-to-day setting of a veterinary clinic or as a veterinary student?

I often use the phrase "eternal mindset" when encouraging fellow Christians. To be a "living sacrifice" requires us to actively and intentionally reflect Christ as we go through our day. We need to realize that every second that we live can and often does impact eternity. It's the routine interactions in our day-to-day life in which our actions as a Christian stand out from the world. It will make others take notice. They may even mention it. If they do, then "always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you." -1 Peter 3:15

If we aren't intentional, then our sin nature shines through. My default was to be loud and brash. "Cocky Rocky" they used to call me. However, as my relationship with Christ developed, my Christlikeness began to develop as well. People around me started noticing the change. I began serving in Christian ministries. I began taking more short-term mission trips. But the day-to-day actions are what most of my friends and colleagues noticed. That's what will impact those around you the most as well.

Still, the devil is always active, and I developed new ungodly behavior. As a result of my "Christ-like" actions and activities, the guy who had shed the cocky persona began to feel pride in his heart that he had this Christian thing figured out. That's when one night, while reading the

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Bible on a short-term mission trip in Indonesia, when I was feeling pretty good about myself, God showed me Romans 12:1 again. Only this time He had me read it in the New King James Version.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1, NKJV

It was as if God was sitting there right beside me and said, "Rocky, you are being obedient. You are allowing me to do some incredible things through you. There is no doubt that you have put yourself in some dangerous places and faced resistance with unwavering faith. However, offering your body as a living sacrifice is nothing to be proud of. It's only reasonable."

That fact washed over me as I realized what Christ had done for me. Jesus made a way to know Him, the source of pure Love and Peace, for eternity by becoming the ultimate sacrifice! Why should I be prideful of my actions when I sacrifice anything for Him?

- 1) **Have you committed to "offer your body as a living sacrifice"? What are some ways you can live that?**
- 2) **The Message version states Romans 12:1 like this:**

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him."

Does that change how you see it?

- 3) **How do you dishonor the Lord when you don't have an "eternal mindset"?**
- 4) **Is there an area of your Christian life in which you feel like you are doing well that may be leading to pride?**



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