

## 3rd Way of Jesus Week 1 - GC Discussion Guide

**TEXT - Romans 12:1–2 (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. <sup>2</sup> 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.

- What sticks out to you in this text? Any OT connections that might help us understand it further?
- How would you summarize the overall message of this text in your own words?
- What might Paul mean by “Do not be conformed to this world.” What is the relationship between worship (v1) and formation (v2)?

### **THEOLOGY** - What do we learn about God from this text?

- a. God desires to not only save us from the penalty of sin but also from the power of sin at work in our lives. We are justified freely by God’s grace (justification) and brought into his family as sons and daughters (adoption). Because much of our patterns of thinking and living were formed in life apart from God’s love, God is committed to progressively transforming (sanctification) us into the image of his true son Jesus. This happens as our mind and heart are renewed by the Spirit working through the word of God.

*What else can we learn about God from the text?*

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### **LIFE**

- *What are some of the ways your thinking has been shaped by the world (Past and present) rather than Christ? What voices have you listened to? Where do you look for wisdom, and clarity on the matters of our day?*
- *How do you respond to those who don’t share your views? How have you been tempted to participate in the outrage culture?*
- *How does this text lead you to love God and others more?*
- *In light of what we have learned in this text, is there anything Spirit has brought to mind that you need to confess to God and others?*

### **PRAYER**

- *Stop and confess your sin to God in prayer. Ask Him for strength to respond in obedience to his word.*
- *What is one personal need you have that we can pray for you as a group?*
- *Pray for one friend, family member, or coworker who you want to share the love of Jesus with.*

NOTES:

### **Additional Resource Links**

- [Are Churches Losing the Battle to Form Christians? \(TGC Article\)](#)

## Consulting the Scholars (Romans: An Introduction and Commentary)

1. THE LIVING SACRIFICE (12:1–2) In view of all that God has accomplished for his people in Christ, how should his people live? They should present themselves to God as a ‘living sacrifice’, consecrated to him. The animal sacrifices of an earlier day have been rendered for ever obsolete by Christ’s self-offering, but there is always room for the worship rendered by obedient hearts. Instead of living by the standards of a world at discord with God, believers are exhorted to let the renewing of their minds by the power of the Spirit transform their lives into conformity with God’s will.

Doctrine is never taught in the Bible simply that it may be known; it is taught in order that it may be translated into practice: ‘if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them’ (John 13:17). Hence Paul repeatedly follows up an exposition of doctrine with an ethical exhortation, the latter being linked to the former, as here, with the particle ‘therefore’ (cf. Eph. 4:1; Col. 3:5).

It is worthy of note, moreover, that the ethical admonitions of this and other New Testament letters, whether Paul’s or not, bear a marked resemblance to the ethical teaching of Christ recorded in the Gospels. They are based, in fact, on what Paul calls ‘the law of Christ’ (Gal. 6:2; cf. 1 Cor. 9:21). In particular, an impressive list of parallels can be drawn up between Romans 12:3–13:14 and the Sermon on the Mount. While none of our canonical Gospels existed at this time, the teaching of Christ recorded in them was current among the churches—certainly in oral form, and perhaps also in the form of written summaries.

1. I appeal to you. Paul tends to use this verb (*parakaleō*) at turning-points in his argument, especially in introducing an ethical exhortation (cf. also 15:30; 16:17); it has a diplomatic flavour about it (and is significantly absent from Galatians).

Present your bodies. Cf. 6:13, 19; the verb there translated ‘yield’ is the verb used here. Paul now brings out in greater detail what is involved in their presenting themselves to God to be used in his service.

A living sacrifice. The sacrifices of the new order do not consist in taking the lives of others, like the ancient animal sacrifices, but in giving one’s own (cf. Heb. 13:15–16; 1 Pet. 2:5).

Your spiritual worship. *neb*, ‘the worship offered by mind and heart.’ The noun is *latreia*, used already in 9:4 of the ‘worship’ ordained for the Israelites. The adjective is *logikos* (from *logos*, ‘word’, ‘reason’), which may mean either ‘reasonable’ (the service of obedient lives is the only reasonable or logical response to the grace of God) or ‘spiritual’ (as in 1 Pet. 2:2, ‘spiritual milk’). Here ‘spiritual worship’ is probably set in contrast with the externalities of Israel’s temple cult. In the Testament of Levi (3:6) the angels are described as ‘offering to the Lord a fragrant odour, a spiritual (*logikos*) and bloodless sacrifice’.

2. Do not be conformed to this world. This ‘world’ or ‘age’ (*aiōn*, as in 1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6; 3:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4) is distinguished from the age to come (cf. Eph. 1:21). While it is called ‘the present evil age’ (Gal. 1:4), whose ‘god’ blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4), yet it is possible for people living temporally in this age to conduct themselves as heirs of the age to come, the age of renewal and resurrection. On them ‘the end of the ages has come’ (1 Cor. 10:11); for them, because they are a ‘new creation’ in Christ, ‘the old has passed away, behold, the new has come’ (2 Cor. 5:17). It is by the power of the indwelling Spirit, the pledge of their inheritance in the world to come, that they can resist the tendency to live according to the standards of ‘this world’.

Be transformed. The same verb (*metamorphoō*) is rendered ‘transfigured’ in the transfiguration narratives of Matthew 17:1–2 and Mark 9:2. The only other place where it occurs in the New Testament is 2 Corinthians 3:18, of believers being ‘changed’ into the likeness of Christ ‘from one degree of glory to another’ by the operation of ‘the Lord who is the Spirit’—a passage which is a helpful commentary on the present one.