

SURRENDERED
From the Inside Out, Pt.1
October 11, 2026

Hi BSCC: I am thankful to be in the presence of God with you in this worship service. =

Everyone online: I am glad you are joining us!...I know God is there with you.

We're going to take the next 4 Sunday in our study of God's Word, to work our way through the 21 verses that make up the 12th chapter of Romans.

In this series we will explore the amazing picture of transformation God provides for us in these verses. = It is a picture of the humble, holy, loving person we become as we learn to live life *from the inside out*.

My prayer for this series is that we will embrace this chapter over the next 4 weeks in ways that empower us through the Holy Spirit to look more like Jesus in our character...And to live more like Jesus in our actions.

I want to challenge you to read the chapter at least once a week every week during the series.

Chip Ingram wrote a book on Romans 12 called *True Spirituality*, that I am using as a resource in this series. = You might find it to be a helpful addition to your library as well.

Today we're going to focus our study on the first two verses. = These verses answer the question: *How can I know God's will?*

We all want to know God's will. = Should I date this person?...Should I take this job?--"God, which road should I go down?...God, what should I do?...please help me to know your will." As we take these two verses to heart, they will help us tremendously in being able to discern God's will--which is always good, pleasing, and perfect for our life.

Are you facing an important decision right now? = Maybe it's a decision in your family or in your finances.--Maybe it has to do with your work or with your future.

I am not saying that these two verses will somehow magically show you God's will. = But what I am saying is that you cannot discern God's will if you are not applying these two verses to your life.--Let's look at them...

Romans 12:1 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. 2. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.(NIV)

I want to touch on some key words in these 2 verses and then we'll look 4 lessons from them. = The chapter begins with the word "Therefore."--In other words, in view of what you have previously read...I am going to summarize that content in a minute.

Verse 1 provides a pivotal turning point in the book, that separates Romans into two major sections. = Chapters 1-11 are about doctrine and theology.--The rest of the book is about how to live...how to apply that doctrine and theology to your daily life.

Paul writes, "Therefore, I urge you." = The word "urge" carries a sense of importance and long-term consequence.--Paul's writing at this point in the letter has a change of tone to it...it's more intense, more personal.

In verse 2, the word "transformed" Paul resembles a word we learned from Science class in grade school: the word is *metamorphoo*--from which we get the word metamorphosis...it means: *to be transfigured, to be changed*.

I've called this series *From the Inside Out* because this chapter is an amazing description of how a person is transformed by the Holy Spirit lives--especially relationally.

Paul ends verse 2 by saying, this transformed person will be able to test and approve what God's will is.

When he says God's will is good, pleasing, and perfect...Paul is saying that God's will is always good for us. = His will is always pleasing to Him...and as we grow spiritually, we will find it increasingly pleasing to ourselves.

And God's will is perfect.--His will is never flawed...It is flawless and faultless. = Perfect, just like God Himself.

Paul writes, "Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy." = "In view of God's mercy" is a good summary of the first eleven chapters of Romans.

In these words Paul identifies the motivation behind our efforts to partner with the Holy Spirit in our transformation. = Take a look at this...

1. My inspiration _is God's mercy_. (TV)

Paul doesn't say, "Offer your body to God in view of his anger" or "in view of his judgment." = He says, we're to offer our body to God in view of his mercy.

In the Bible, God's mercy describes God's desire to treat us not as we deserve, but instead, to relate to us with compassion, grace, and unconditional love.

The first eleven chapters of Romans tells the story of how through Jesus Christ, God's mercy triumphs over his judgement.

The first 3 chapters teach us that: all have sinned...there is no one righteous...we all fall short of God's glory.

Chapter 4, is a breakthrough chapter that begins painting the picture of God's mercy, stating that--No matter what a person has done, anyone can be made right with God through faith in Jesus.

Chapter 8 is one my favorite chapters in the Bible. = It tells us that God is for us in every situation in life.--And that there is nothing in life, including death itself, that can separate us from God's love in Christ.

Chapters 9-11 is an amazing description of how God has wrestled with the people of Israel throughout history. = Time and again they've turned away from him and broken his heart. Yet, in spite of what they've done, God's grace and love are still open to them. = Incredible!... the mercy of God is indescribable!

Let me ask you an important question: Have you thought about the mercies of God lately? =
Have you had some recent experiences with God's mercy?...Is it fresh in your life?
Has God been merciful to you in giving you life? = Has he been merciful to you in just the
last few moments--in extending your life with each breath you take?..
Has he forgiven, by his mercy, any sins in your life? = Is there one that comes to mind right
now that you would go: "Oh, if that were ever put on the screen, I would die of shame?"
Scripture says, "as far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our transgressions
from us"...because of his mercy.

Have you felt his merciful peace?...Has he invited you to call him Father? = Has he ever
answered a prayer or provided for a need in your life?...Has he ever guided you or opened
a door for you?

Have you ever thought about the fact that the greatest mercies you'll experience are still to
come? = Heaven awaits you in Christ, you haven't seen anything yet.--His best mercies
are still to come.

I know the only reason I can stand up here and preach to you, is because of God's mercy.

The outward actions that we're going to learn about in this chapter, come from the inward
motivation of God's mercy. = Our gratitude and thankfulness for God's mercy!

To prepare our hearts for Communion, I want to read from Ephesians 2...

Ephesians 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5. made us alive
with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been
saved.(NIV)

We were dead in our transgressions and sins.--Separated from our Holy God. = Without
Jesus, that separation would be permanent.

But because of God's great love and great mercy, Jesus gave us a new spiritual life within. =
By paying for our sins on the cross...And then resurrecting on the third day.

As we partake of the bread and the juice, let us celebrate the richness of God's mercy,
which has saved us and made us alive forever with Christ.

If you would like to speak with someone about the forgiveness and new life Jesus is able to
provide for you, please reach out to us. = If you're online, email us.--If you are in the
room, please stop by the Connection Point.

The motivation that inspires our transformation, is the undeserved kindness God has shown
us in Jesus.

It comes from appreciating that our sins have been removed...that we are forgiven, loved,
adopted...filled with the Spirit, and bound for heaven where we will live with God forever

The transformed life is not lived in view of God's anger or his judgment...but in view of his
mercy. = Let's read verse 1 again...

Romans 12:1 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.(NIV)

Paul says, "In view of God's mercy, offer your body as a living sacrifice to God." = Paul uses imagery here from the sacrificial system we read about in the Old Testament.

Picture in your mind, an altar that you crawl up on. = What goes up on the altar: Your decisions, your relationships, your finances...your future, your schedule, your daily choices...your voting choices, your entertainment choices...

Your bitterness, worries, fears--everything. = Paul says, "offer your body"...because it is the vehicle we use to express who we are.

Here we learn that to be transformed, I must...

2. Offer my _entire life to God each day_. (TV)

Paul describes this offering of our life to God as a "living sacrifice." = That's an odd phrase when you think about it.--Of course in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, the sacrifice on the altar was dead...and a dead sacrifice just lays there.

But think what a living sacrifice might do. = A living sacrifice might be tempted to say, "I want to get down...I want to crawl down off the altar."

Paul is saying to us: The offering of your entire life to God needs to happen again and again, every day.

Every morning, you and I are to pray: "God, I place my will, my schedule, my desires, my relationships, my time...I put them on the altar before you.--They are not mine anymore... I regard my entire life as a living sacrifice of thanksgiving and worship to you."

Paul writes, living in this way is "holy and pleasing to God." = Such a life is "set a part" or dedicated to God.--And it is a life that pleases God and honors him.

Paul says, "this is your true and proper worship." = In other words, when you live like this, you are worshipping God with all of your life.

The New King James Bible uses the word "reasonable" here instead of the word "proper." = When you understand God's mercy, giving God your entire life is the proper thing to do.--it is the reasonable thing to do.

To give God all of who you are, is not unreasonable, irrational or shortsighted...When you understand and experience God's mercy.

Have you ever been overwhelmed by the mercies of God? = I wish we had time to pass the microphone around so a bunch of you could describe a time when the mercy of God blew you away--just made you stand in awe.

Have you had an experience like that before: Where you felt the hand of God's mercy upon your life?

If so, wasn't it just natural, didn't it seem reasonable to you...wasn't it just like a reflex to go = "I am going to live all out for God...No one has a gun to my head...It's just, in view of his mercy, I want to live fully devoted to God every day...

"I want to love him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength...I want to think about him often.--I want to talk with him and hear everything he has to say to me...

"I want to be wide open to his promptings...I want to serve him, whatever it costs.--I want to follow his guidance, wherever it leads me...

"When I get to the end of my life, I want to have left everything on the playing field for such a great, merciful God!"

If I were to put a formula up of what this looks like, it would be this...

***GOD'S MERCY = TOTAL COMMITMENT (TV)**

That's just the math that makes sense to me. = The mercies of God.--The **equal sign** stands for: "it's reasonable that I do this."--That I make a total commitment of my life to God.

I went to Bible College to help me decide what I believed about God. = Whether he existed, and if so what kind of God was he?

Over the next two years, God in his mercy took me on a journey where I saw how compassionate, faithful, and patient He is.

That season in my life culminated with a 3-month internship at a church, where I was able to see most-every-day an expression of God's mercy in the life of a student or one of the staff members I was working with.

From seeing the joy of people coming out of the water after being baptized...To seeing people energized with hope and peace after having received prayer...

I knew at the end of that internship, I was convinced as a 22-year-old, that the smartest thing I could do would be to: Offer my entire life to God. = Four plus decades later, I am more convinced than ever--it's the only reasonable response to God's mercy.

To be transformed, you must offer your entire life to God on a daily basis. = In verse 2 of Romans 12, we find two specific expressions of a life that is fully offered to God.

Let's read the verse again...

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.(NIV)

The word Paul uses here for *conform* means to "*form according to a mold*." = When he refers to the world, he's talking about a system of values that our fallen world operates under.

It is a system that operates under the control of the enemy of our soul, Satan. = Whose goal is to steal, kill, and destroy.--His agenda is to ruin your relationships...to separate you from God...and to lead you into areas that will destroy your life.

Jesus calls him a liar and a murderer.--Revelation 12:9 says he leads the whole world astray. = Here is a third principle from these verses about being transformed...

3. Do not _allow the world to squeeze me into its mold_. (TV)

There are a couple of verses in 1 John that summarize the world system that Satan oversees...

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.(NIV)

In verse 16, John identifies three desires that we all have. = The lust of the flesh...the lust of the eyes...and the pride of life.

The **lust of the flesh** is the **passion to feel**.--It's the desire we have for pleasure. = That pleasure can be expressed through food, sex, music--lots of different ways...

By the way, these desires are all good and fine when kept within the guardrails God has provided for us. = What Satan does is create a world system that responds to these God-given desires in ways that are ungodly and destructive.

The **lust of the eyes** is the **passion to have or to possess**. = "I've got to have this passion or that friendship or I can't be happy."

And the **pride of life** is the **passion to achieve** something or do something so that I can feel like I am somebody of importance and value."

Satan's primary strategy for squeezing us into the world's mold is temptation. = The first time we meet him in the Bible he approaches Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Temptation involves planting a thought in your mind that triggers either the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.

Satan comes to Eve and gets her to notice that the fruit from the one tree that God had said was not to be eaten...That fruit was pleasant to the eyes and looked like it would be good to eat.

Satan tells Eve, "You will not die if you partake...Surely God doesn't intend for you to not enjoy something that looks so delicious."

The deceptiveness of Satan and the world system that he oversees...Is aimed at convincing you that sin will bring you satisfaction. = That sin is anything other than the destruction of your life.

How do we combat Satan and not allow the world to squeeze us into its mold. = God tells us what we need to do in 2 Corinthians 10...

2 Corinthians 10:4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.(NIV)

The strongholds Paul is talking about here, are worldly thoughts that have become entrenched in our mind--like a fortress. = Most of the time we're not really aware of the thoughts we have each day.

Many of our thoughts are repetitive, and we don't even realize it. = The battle for your spiritual life is won or lost in your mind--with the thoughts you allow yourself to have.

The weapons Paul refers to here are the Word of God and prayer. = But the words I want to focus on for a moment are in verse 5, where Paul writes: "we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Please hear me: This is one of the most important things you can do in order to be transformed by the Holy Spirit! = You need to learn how to take every thought captive and submit each thought to Jesus.

You either take your thoughts captive, or they will take you captive.

How do we do that? = To not be shaped this world, you need to interrogate your thoughts.--
You need to ask them questions...like it talks about in Philippians 4:8: Is this thought
true, right, pure, lovely, praiseworthy?
And we then submit the thought to Jesus.

What thoughts have shaped your life? = What thoughts that you didn't even realize you were
having, have been squeezing you into the mold of our fallen world?
I'll tell you one that was a stronghold in my life for many years.--I used to believe this lie. =
I will always be lonely...People don't really want to be my friend...I am boring.
As I have reflected on that lie, I trace it back to some early friendships, rejection, and
relational embarrassment I experienced as a child and teenager.
I carried that lie with me for many years. = And I can connect that stronghold to a lot of the
sins and struggles I had with purity and living out my faith in the first half of my life.

Fortunately, God in his mercy and goodness, helped me recognize that stronghold--take it
captive and submit it to Jesus.
When those thoughts comes to my mind now, I am quick to recognize its source.--And
reject it for the lie from Satan that is.
I wish I would have developed this spiritual skill much earlier in life.--It would have saved
me a lot of heartache. = With that thought in mind, I want to issue a special challenge to
young people to learn how to take your thoughts captive and submit them to Jesus.
This leads me to something else I've learned to do in overcoming strongholds.--Paul
identifies it in Romans 12:2. = Let's read the first part of the verse again...

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of
your mind.(NIV)

If Satan's primary weapon is lies, then our greatest weapon against him is the truth of
Scripture. = To be transformed by the Holy Spirit, I need to...

4. Fill my _life with the truth of God's Word_. (TV)

This is called the Principle of Replacement. = Where you learn to remove the lies that you
have taken captive...And replace them with God's truth.
God has given our brains a great capacity for change--it's called neuroplasticity. = The brain
has an amazing capacity to change its physical connections and structure as you learn
new information and have new experiences.
Just because you have thought a certain way, doesn't mean you have to keep thinking that
way. = Through Scripture, prayer, and the experiences you have with Christ's Church,
the Holy Spirit is able to renew your mind and transform you from the inside out.

As I identified the lie I used to believe that I would always be lonely and that people really
don't want to be my friend.--I replaced that lie with the truth of Scripture.
I learned, memorized and reminded myself of verses like: Hebrews 13:5 where God says: "I
will never leave or forsake you."--Psalm 13:14 "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."
Psalm 68:6 "God places the lonely in families." = And Romans 8:39 "Nothing can separate

me from God's love in Christ Jesus."

Well, before we pray, I want to ask you a few questions...

I would like for you to picture an altar: Now, climb up on it. = In view of his mercy, what are you giving to God?--What do you need to surrender to God: a decision?...a relationship?...a fear?...your money?...your job?
Whatever comes to your mind: Surrender it to God.

As you think about the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life--Where are you most vulnerable to Satan's deception?
Lastly: What is the lie that Satan is using to squeeze you into the mold of this fallen world? =
What are you giving your mind to?
What thought do you need to interrogate and submit to Jesus?

As you take these 4 spiritual principles we've looked at to heart, Romans 12:2 says: "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."
We all want to know God's will. = You cannot discern it unless your mind is being transformed.--That's how you can know it!
As you live by these 4 principles from the first two verses of Romans 12, the Holy Spirit will be at work to transform your mind and life in Christ.
Let's pray together and ask God to do this good work within us.

I am excited about where God is going to take us and what he is going to do in us...as we continue to work our way through the 12th chapter of Romans.
I challenge you to read the chapter through at least once this coming week.

This week, begin each day by praying: "God, I surrender the day to you...Please help me to take captive all of my thoughts today--to make them obedient to Jesus...God, in view of your mercy, I offer myself to you as a sacrifice of worship and thanksgiving."
Have a great week!