

Be not conformed to the world – Lesson 13

Have you ever wondered what it truly means to worship God? Is it just about singing hymns on Sunday mornings, or is there something more?

As we look into Romans 12, we discover that true worship goes far beyond our church services – it's about offering ourselves, our entire lives, 24-7, as a living sacrifice to God.

The Power of "Therefore" – From chapter one, through chapter 11, Paul prepares to announce the conclusion.

v1 **"Therefore,"** the significance of this small but powerful word in Scripture. As we turn to **Romans 12**, we need to understand the context.

Paul has just finished --explaining **Romans 1:20**, "that **all are without excuse**", **3:10**, there **is none righteous, no not even one**, **v12**, "they have **all turned aside**" **v18**, "there is **no fear of God in their eyes**, **v32** "for **all have sinned** and **fall short** of the glory of God.

The incredible mystery of God's plan --to save both Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

Paul is overwhelmed --by God's wisdom and mercy, exclaiming: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" **Romans 11:3**

It's in light of this awe-inspiring mercy --that Paul says: **v1** -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.**"

Now, you might be thinking, "Wait, just a minute, isn't a 'living sacrifice' an **oxymoron**?"

- Have you ever heard a phrase that seems to contradict itself, yet somehow it makes perfect sense?

- Perhaps something that sounds almost impossible? That's the work of an oxymoron.

Don't sacrifices usually involve death? You're right! It's a **paradox** (a statement or situation that at first glance seems self-contradictory or logically impossible, yet upon closer examination, it often reveals a deeper truth or insight), **a statement that captures the essence of being transformed.**

Remember --He's still working on me (in me) to make me what I need to be. **It's an inside job!**

- **What is this living sacrifice?** A sacrifice that includes crucifying my desires, my words, my thoughts, my actions, and my will.

Paul is telling us --that those evil things, those desires in me that don't reflect the way of Jesus **MUST** be **put to death**, so that what might come to life --is Christ in me, the hope of glory."

This idea of being a living sacrifice --means that we're constantly dying, daily to our old selves (our fallen, sinful nature)

- **By allowing Christ** --to live in and through us. It's a daily process of surrender and transformation.
- **By the Renewing of our Minds** -- Paul gives us the key to renewal in **Rom 12:2:**

Do NOT **be conformed** (soos-khay-mat-id'-zo, is a Greek **passive imperative!**

To conform --means to change into another form, (to change one's mind and character) to fashion ourselves according to) **-NOT to this world's pattern** but **be transformed** (metamorphoo) **verb** by the **renewing of your mind**, means to change; to fashion yourself according to, the consummate excellence, in Christ - that you may prove what that good and acceptable and perfect will of God is."

2 Corinthians 3:18 – “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

A living sacrifice contains both (1) **a negative** and (2) **a positive exhortation**.

The picture is comprehensive—this way, we are **putting on** and **putting off**, which means we are giving up one thing to embrace the other.

- There is no room for **halfway** or compromise—only a complete and visible transformation.

Transformation doesn't happen --by simply trying harder or following a set of rules. It all begins with **a change in our thinking**.

- We need to align our minds with God's truth, allowing His Word and His Spirit to reshape our thoughts and attitudes.

Living It Out – **by Putting on!** Means Putting this into practice? Some practical steps we can take:

- Reflect on God's great mercy: Take time daily to remember and thank God for His incredible grace in your life. Start each day by consciously presenting yourself as a living sacrifice. How, by renewing your mind through daily studying the Word, prayer, and allowing God's truth to transform your thinking. Seeking opportunities to serve others. Live intentionally: In every interaction and every decision, ask, "How can I reflect Jesus in this situation?"

Remember, that living as a sacrifice isn't about perfection – it's about progress.

It's a daily choice we make to surrender our lives to God and allow Him to work in and through us.