

Romans 12:1-2
“Persuaded by His Mercies”

I. Intro

II. Vs. 1-2 Persuaded by His Mercies

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This chapter starts off with an interesting four words: “*I beseech you therefore*”! The word “*beseech*” means to plead or to beg. But it is the word “*therefore*” that catch’s my attention. This word has an arrow attached to it and the arrow is always pointing backwards. Paul is about to plead for his readers to do something *but not before reminding them that his motivation* has to do with what he has been writing about for the last 11 chapters. As such he is holding to a pattern you will see him do continually in his letters and that is to place the believer’s “*position*” before their “*practice*”, thereby emphasizing “*doctrine*” before “*duty*”. For 11 chapters Paul has been emphasizing what God has done through grace in sending His son Jesus to die in our stead and the word “*therefore*” shows he is pleading believers to respond. It is as if Paul is saying: “*Because God is rich and wise, great and glorious, a God of love and mercy; while we are ignorant of the future, forgetful of the past and unable to control the present*” I beg you to present you bodies as living sacrifices. Based upon the vast number of books and the question I’ve gotten over the years for many years one of the most asked questions in the Christian life is: “*How can I know God’s will for my life*”. *The question is based upon a presupposition that God’s will is hidden, lost or hard to determine.* But nothing could be further from the truth God’s will won’t have to be found because it’s not lost. Today we will look at specifically what God’s will is for each of us.

II. Vs. 1-2 Persuaded by His Mercies

Vs. 1 God does not condemn or command us for our past failure, instead He pleads with us that His mercies towards us might move us! ***Greater is God's persuasive mercies in bending our hearts than any other power. There is always greater power to turn a life in love than hate.***

Many folks misunderstand grace: As recipients of God unmerited favor, ***we don't "do to get" we "do because they have gotten"***! We followers of Christ have the opportunity to lay down our life because Jesus has laid down His life for us! ***Revival happens at any point in time when we are willing yielding areas of our life over to God because we have become so convinced that what He has for us is so much better than what we have been holding on too!***

Paul says, "***Take your body, all the tasks you have to do each and every day and offer all of it as an act of worship to God.***" When Paul uses the word present your bodies he does so in a tense that means "***once for all***" rather than a continuous action. ***Do it once then live the rest of your life on that basis,*** Paul says. I would think that it impossible to give God a gift but here we are told that the gift He would have us to give Him is our bodies. ***Now that just seems a bit weird, this old carcass that snores and smells has a bad heart and dirty mind and causes us so much trouble all the time and God wants us to give that to Him as a gift?*** Even more amazing is the words that follow this as we are told that by presenting our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice He will turn around and make them Holy and acceptable to Him. In this verse I see ***five things about offering ourselves:***

1. ***It is voluntary:*** As Paul asks us to present a term that was used in the temple to bring in gifts. ***Paul's words make such an offer a gift not a command.***
2. ***It is complete:*** The phrase suggests that ***we are to offer all of us.***

3. **It is sacrificial**: In the temple there were two classes of sacrifices: Those **associated with reconciliation** (sin and peace offerings) and those **associated with consecration** (burnt and meal offerings). It is the 2nd class of offering that Paul is describing here. We are redeemed so that we may be consecrated or set apart for a Holy work. That is why our offering is living not dead!
4. **It is practical**: **It is our service and as such it has to do with our work.** We aren't just saved to sit; we are saved to serve all the days of our lives.
5. **It is rational**: It is our "**reasonable**" service, it's logical and makes sense since we have been given our position in Christ that we should now exercise that position for Christ.

The first step to finding God's will for our lives: Is to present our bodies as a "living sacrifice" to Him. This means that we come to Him and say, "***Lord, I'm yours, I love you more than anything or anyone else, and I'm going after You.***" I've found a problem in my life being a "living sacrifice" and not a "dead sacrifice" and that is **I tend to climb off the altar.** **Worship is allowing God to use all of you each and every moment to be the dynamic instrument through which He can be glorified.**

Vs. 2 Sounds intriguing but just **how do you give your body to God?** Based upon this verse it is a **two-step process that we will need to keep repeating**:

1. **Do not be conformed to this world**: We will need to stop forcing our lives into the pattern of this world. And by pattern we are talking about the philosophy of life that surrounds us. To sum up the philosophy of this world is relatively easy: "***It's all about ME!***" ***In this philosophy I'm the center of my universe, all that matters is ME, and what is pleasing to me is what matters.*** Have you noticed that we are born with this philosophy engrained upon us? We are totally into the advancement of SELF, "***What's in***

this for ME” is our question. The whole of the world and most folks are into this philosophy but the problems arise when I’m living as if “*It’s all about ME!*” and you’re living as if “*It’s all about YOU!*” **And they can’t both be true.** Friends don’t let the world pressure you into thinking that this is the way to live any longer.

2. **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind:** With almost everyone else thinking and acting if “*It’s all about them*” it’s very difficult to live as if it’s all about the LORD! So, Paul takes up the 2nd step and it has to do with the way we think. We can’t go on thinking the world revolves around ME, we can’t let our lives to be continually shoved into the mold of SELF. Notice it is the “*renewing*” of the mind which **suggests that this is a continual process one that comes day by day. This renewing allows us to see what life is really all about isn’t us but God, then others and finally self.** In fact, we were designed that way that SELF only is really satisfied when it is last!

Based on this we see every person has to categories in their lives:

- **Conformers:** The word for conform has as its root a word that means “*outward form*” which changes. So, Paul is saying **don’t try to fashion your life around the outward form of the world which is constantly changing.** When we are like this we are “*thermometers*”, adjusting to the climate of the culture, conforming to its temperature. J.B. Phillips translates this verse, “*Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold*”. I was reading the introduction to a new book by Daniel Fusco called “*Ahead of the Curve*” in he stated that in 1997 the University of Chicago held a conference titled “*After Post Modernism*” and it wasn’t until 2006 before any in the church held a conference on “*Post Modernism*” (Above All Earthly Powers: The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern

World.) That is one of the many glaring problems with Christians being “conformers” we are at least 10 years behind the curve.

- **Transformers:** Or we can be “*thermostats*” instead of adjusting to the temperature of the culture we are changing the climate of the culture. That doesn’t mean that we aren’t in-tune to the culture around us nor does it mean that we are evangelizing the culture to become our culture. Paul explained it this way in 1 Cor. 9:19-22 where he wrote: “*For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some.*”

The second step of finding the will of God for our lives: Involves this transformation and we do this once we have chosen to be a living sacrifice by keeping our mind on the Lord. Then as the psalmist reminds us in Psalm 37:4 we will have “*Delighted ourselves in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*” But just what is “*delighting ourselves in the Lord?*” Well, it’ devotion and in the first two verses of Romans 12 Paul reveals to us that **devotion involves three things:**

1. **Present your bodies:** According to 1 Cor. 6:19-20 our bodies are our houses of worship and the question we need to ask ourselves is what are we worshipping? Paul gives us two reasons that we are to do this once for all act:

- a. Right response: Paul says that we are to do so because we have been the recipients of the mercy of God.
 - b. Reasonable service: It is a daily way we can demonstrate our worship to God.
2. **Give Him your mind**: The world wants your mind; wants to control what you think but God wants to transform your thinking. The word transform means a change from within. The world wants to control what you think so it exerts pressure and stimulus from the outside. Ah but God wants our mind to be transformed and He does this from the inside by releasing pressure and stress.
3. **Give Him your will**: Your mind controls your body, but your will controls your mind. You don't control your will by "*willpower*" you control your will when you yield it to the will of God and it's His power that gives us "*willpower*" and "*won't power*".