

## “A Transformed Life of Worship” Romans 12:1-2

**Author:** Paul the apostle (a Roman citizen by birth), born to proclaim God’s gospel (Gal 1:15-17).

**Date/Provenance:** Late 50s AD (58-59). Written from Corinth on his third missionary journey.

**Purpose:** Systematic proclamation of the gospel that saves (Rom 1:16-17), Paul’s “Magnum Opus.”

- 1 – I exhort/beseech – After doxology (Rom 11:33-36), Paul clearly transitions here to *application* of doctrine, as he does in most of his epistles after first laying out doctrine (cf. 1 Cor 4:16, Eph 4:1, 1 Tim 2:1). “Application” = modern meaning of Scripture for those who hear/read it today. Though Scripture has many human authors, there is One divine author (2 Tim 3:15-16, 2 Pet 1:20-21). Hence, all of God’s Word is relevant to *all* intended audiences. When the think/feel/do implications of doctrine are pressed home, it is *within* the intended meaning of God’s Word, always *rooted* in (but not limited by) its original historical/literary context. Note, no hard distinction between doctrine and application.
- The call to present your bodies as a living sacrifice is really quite shocking. Instead of an animal sacrifice (an OT expression of loss but chiefly worship), Paul is saying you should sacrifice....yourself (cf. Ps 51:16, Isa 1:11-20, Hosea 6:6, Heb 13:15-16). This idea is connected to the Greatest Commandment (Mt 22:37-38). Since God’s glory is our purpose (WSC Q1), we should not be surprised that giving up sinful self-focus is necessary to a life of worshipping Him (Mt 6:24, 16:24). All believers have been bought with a precious price (1 Cor 6:20) and belong to the Lord Jesus (in life and death, *Heidelberg Catechism*, Q1).
- “Reasonable/rational” service vs a superficial/nominal “going through the motions” in order to please men (Mt 6:1, Gal 1:10, Col 3:23). John Murray: “The service here in view is worshipful service and the apostle characterizes it as ‘rational’ because it is worship that derives its character as acceptable to God from the fact that it enlists our mind, our reason, our intellect. It is rational in contrast with what is mechanical and automatic.”
  - Unlike works-righteousness based thinking, the exhortation of Romans (and all of the Bible is) *given* God’s great saving love for you, *now* you live and worship Him.
  - App: Worship as a corporate activity vs whole-life worship. Mistakes to avoid: Thinking too lightly of corporate worship w/God’s people or on the other hand not considering the call to worship God in all that we think, do and say (1 Cor 10:31).
- 2 – Do not be conformed but transformed. The pattern of the present evil age (1 Cor 2:6-8, Gal 1:4) is not the pattern for the believer. The negative construction of this verse acknowledges the difficulty of our situation since the fall of Adam (1 Thess 1:9, 1 Jn 2:17).
  - App: Remember Palm Sunday – expectations vs reality. Do not be lulled by the way the world thinks and lives. Believers are called to stand firm upon the truth of God’s Word and not be driven by changing winds of culture (as individuals or as a body, in any age). We can’t give up truth to win the world w/a diminished gospel...
- The perfection of God’s law deserves our meditation. It is the whole subject of Ps 119! Murray again: “The commandment of God is exceedingly broad. There is not a moment of life that the will of God does not command, no circumstance that it does not fill with meaning if we are responsive to the fulness of his revealed counsel for us.” This is *why* we have a high view of Biblical counseling vs worldly methods. The Christian life goes far beyond Sundays. We are called to worship God w/ every aspect of our being (Mt 22:37)!