

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: Transforming inside Outwardly: Romans 12:1-2

Fear brings pain and struggle to your life because it prevents you from taking action that benefit you and fulfill the vision of the Almighty, but that's not fear's greatest effect. The most damaging effect of fear comes in the mind. Here's something you should know: The mind acts on the impulse of the strongest suggestion given to it.

In all of his letters, Paul concluded with a list of practical duties that were based on the doctrines he had discussed. In the Christian life, doctrine and duty always go together. **What we believe helps to determine how we behave.** It is not enough for us to understand Paul's doctrinal explanations. We must translate our learning into living and show by our daily lives that we trust God's Word.

The key idea in this section is **relationships**. The term "relational theology" is a relatively new one, but the idea is not new. If we have a right relationship to God, we will have a right relationship to the people who are a part of our lives. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4:20).

Our Relationship to God (Romans 12:1-2) This is the fourth "therefore" in the letter. Romans 3:20 is the "therefore" of condemnation, declaring that the whole world is guilty before God. Romans 5:1 is the "therefore" of justification, and Romans 8:1 the "therefore" of assurance. In Romans 12:1, we have the "therefore" of dedication, and it is this dedication that is the basis for the other relationships that Paul discussed in this section.

What is true dedication? As Paul described it here, Christian dedication involves three steps.

You give God your body (v. 1). Before we trusted Christ, we used our body for sinful pleasures and purposes, but now that we belong to Him, we want to use our body for His glory. The Christian's body is God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) because the Spirit of God dwells within him (Romans 8:9). It is our privilege to glorify Christ in our body and magnify Christ in our body (Philippians 1:20-21).

Just as Jesus Christ had to take on Himself a body in order to accomplish God's will on earth, so we must yield our bodies to Christ that He might continue God's work through us. We must yield the members of the body as "instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13) for the Holy Spirit to use in the doing of God's work. The Old Testament sacrifices were dead sacrifices, but we are to be living sacrifices.

There are two "living sacrifices" in the Bible and they help us understand what this really means. The first is Isaac (Genesis 22); the second is our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaac willingly put himself on the altar and would have died in obedience to God's will, but the Lord sent a ram to take his place. Isaac "died" just the same - he died to self and willingly yielded himself to the will of God. When he got off that altar, Isaac was a "living sacrifice" to the glory of God.

Of course, our Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect illustration of a "living sacrifice," because He actually died as a sacrifice, in obedience to His Father's will. But He arose again. And today He is in heaven as a "living sacrifice," bearing in His body the wounds of Calvary. He is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16) and our Advocate (1 John 2:1) before the throne of God.

The verb "present!" in this verse means "**present once and for all.**" It commands a definite commitment of the body to the Lord, just as a bride and groom in their wedding service commit themselves to each other. It is this once-for-all commitment that determines what they do with their bodies. Paul gives us two reasons for this commitment: (1) it is the right response to all that God has done for us - "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God" (*italics mine*); and (2) this commitment is "our reasonable service" or "our spiritual worship." This means that every day is a worship experience when your body is yielded to the Lord.

You give Him your mind (v 2 a) The world wants to control your mind, but God wants to transform your mind (see Ephesians 4:17-24; Colossians 3:1-11). This word transform is the same as transfigure in Matthew 17:2. It has come into our English language as the word "metamorphosis." It describes a change from within. The world wants to change your mind, so it exerts pressure from without. But the Holy Spirit changes your mind by releasing power from within. If the world controls your thinking, you are a conformer, if God controls your thinking, you are a transformer.

God transforms our minds and makes us spiritually minded by using His Word. As you spend time meditating on God's Word, memorizing it, and making it a part of your inner man, God will gradually make your mind more spiritual (see 2 Corinthians 3:18).

You give Him your will (v. 2 b). Your mind controls your body, and your will controls your mind. Many people think they can control their will by "willpower," but usually they fail. (This was Paul's experience as recorded in Romans 7:15-21). It is only when we yield the will to God that His power can take over and give us the willpower (and the won't power!) that we need to be victorious Christians.

Disciplined Prayer is marked by or possessing discipline

We surrender our wills to God through disciplined prayer. As we spend time in prayer, we surrender our will to God and pray, with the Lord, "Not my will, but Thy will be done." We must pray about everything, and let God have His way in everything.

For many years I have tried to begin each day by surrendering my body to the Lord.

Then I spend time with His Word and let Him transform my mind and prepare my thinking for that new day Then I pray, and I yield the plans of the day to Him and let Him work as He sees best. I especially pray about those tasks that upset or worry me - and He always sees me through. To have a right relationship with God, we must start the day by yielding to Him our bodies, minds, and wills.

The strictly Doctrinal teaching of this great Epistle being now concluded, the apostle, as a wise master-builder, follows it up in this and the remaining chapters by impressing on believers the holy obligations which their new standing and life in Christ imposed upon them. In doing this he first puts clearly before them, in a couple of verses, the general character of all Christian service, and then goes at some length into a variety of details.

The General Character of All Christian Service-SELF-CONSECRATION, in our Whole Spirit and Soul and Body, to Him who hath called us into the Fellowship with Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2)

I beseech you therefore, brethren - in view of all that has been advanced in the foregoing part of this Epistle, By the mercies of God, - those mercies whose free and unmerited nature, glorious channel, and

saving fruits have been opened up at such length, That ye present, [Rom 6:13, where (as also in Romans 12:16,19) the same word is used, and there rendered "yield:"

Your bodies - that is, 'yourselves in the body,' considered as the organ of the inner life (see the note at Rom 6:12). As it is through the body that all the evil that is in the unrenewed heart comes forth into palpable manifestation and action, so it is through the body that all the gracious principles and affections of believers reveal themselves in the outward life. The Christian must never forget that as corruption extends to the whole man, so does sanctification (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

A living sacrifice - a glorious contrast to the legal sacrifices, which, except as they were slain, were no sacrifices at all. The death of the one, 'Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world,' has swept all dead victims from off the altar of God, to make room for the redeemed themselves, as 'living sacrifices' to Him who made "Him to be sin for us;" while every outgoing of their grateful hearts in praise, and every act prompted by the love of Christ, is itself a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour (Hebrews 13:15-16). Holy. As the Levitical victims, when offered without blemish to God, were regarded as holy, so believers, 'yielding themselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God,' are, in His estimation, not ritually but really "holy," and so

Acceptable, , 'well pleasing'] unto God - not as the Levitical offerings were pleasing to God, merely as appointed symbols of spiritual ideas, but which, when offered by those who were void of the character which they represented, were hateful to God, (Isaiah 1:13-15; 66:3; etc.): believers in their renewed character and endeared relationship to God through His Son Jesus Christ are objects of divine complacency intrinsically, when presenting to Him their bodies a living and holy sacrifice.

[Which is] your reasonable service, rather, 'your rational worship;' not as opposed to a superstitious worship (as Calvin), or to the senselessness of idol-worship (as others), but in contrast with the ceremonial character of the Levitical worship (as most interpreters agree): cf. 1 Peter 2:2, the only other place where the same word [] is used to express "the milk of the word," or 'the rational milk,' in contrast with the material substance on which babes are nourished. This presentation of ourselves as living monuments of redeeming mercy, and as divine property in the highest sense, is here called 'worship'

"Service," indeed, it is, as our version renders it; yet not that of a 'servant' , but of a 'priest.' For as all believers are "priests unto God" (Revelation 1:6), so their whole Christian life is just a continuous exercise of this exalted priesthood-`their rational worship.' So 1 Peter 2:5, "Ye are ... a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (compare John 4:24).

In the next verse the same great worship of self-consecration is inculcated under another aspect. The apostle had bidden us present our bodies a living sacrifice to God. But since it is by our bodies that we move about, and mix in society, and come in contact with all the various phases of life, how are we to carry out our Christianity in the evil and bewitching world around us? The next verse gives both a negative and positive answer to this question.

And be not conformed to this world, the imperative of this verb, and the following one, is, for the reasons given by him, to be preferred to the infinitive - which, on very weighty external evidence certainly, Lachmann adopts] - **'fashion not yourselves according to [the pattern of] this world;'** But be ye transformed. Matthew 17:2, where this word is rendered "transfigured;" and in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "changed."

By the renewing of your mind - is probably not genuine; nor is it needed, for without it the sense is the same.] The thing enjoined is not a mere outward disconformity to the ungodly world, many of whose actions in themselves may be virtuous and praiseworthy, but such an inward spiritual transformation as makes the whole life new-new in its motives and ends, even where the actions differ in nothing from those of the world-new, considered as a whole, and in such a sense as to be wholly unattainable except through the constraining power of the love of Christ.

That ye may prove - that is, prove experimentally, or learn by proof (the note on the word "experience," in Romans 5:4),

What is that good, and acceptable ('the good and well-pleasing,') and perfect will of God. Most modern critics render the words thus: 'that ye may prove (or 'discern') the will of God, [even], what is good, 'and acceptable, and perfect. But we think it yields but doubtful sense to say 'that ye may prove what is the will of God, even what is acceptable;' for who could doubt that what is the will of God is acceptable to Him? The rendering of our own version, which we think decidedly preferable, is that of the Vulgate, Luther, Calvin, Beza, Estius, Reiche, etc. In this view the "will of God," which believers are experimentally to prove, is said to have three characteristics to recommend it: It is "good," as it demands only what is essentially and unchangeably good (see Romans 7:10); it is 'well-pleasing,' in contrast with all that is arbitrary, as demanding only what God has eternal complacency in (compare Micah 6:8 with Jeremiah 9:24); and it is "perfect," as it requires nothing else than the perfection of God's reasonable creature, who, in proportion as he attains to it, reflects God's own perfection.

But what, it may be asked, is that 'conformity to the world' which Christians are to avoid? Not, surely, its expressly sinful practices; for when these are meant, they are branded with their own names. Clearly the thing meant is, that general course or way of life which characterizes "the children of this world," who "mind earthly things." Not being spiritual themselves, they can have no sympathy with anything spiritual-their ambitions, interests, and affections are all bounded by and centered in "the world," which "passeth away, and the lust thereof." The "children of light," on the contrary, "being risen with Christ," have a life of their own-the life of pardoned and reconciled believers: renewed in the spirit of their mind, they breathe a new air, they have new interests and affections, and their sympathies are all spiritual and heavenly. Since, then, these two classes of mankind are, religiously, so contrary the one to the other, what real fellowship can either have with the other? As the former cannot possibly have conformity in spirit with the latter, so the latter cannot cultivate conformity with the former, without grieving the Holy Spirit of God, wherewith they have been sealed unto the day of redemption, blunting badly the edge of their spirituality, and at length "forgetting that they were purged from their old sins." (See the note on 'the thorny ground,' in the Parable of the Sower, p. 146.) But after all, the true preservative of believers against 'conformity to the world,' is to 'be renewed in the spirit of their mind.' It is the lively presence and ruling power of the positive element that will alone effectually keep out of the heart the negative one. Such, then, is the great general work of the Christian life-the comprehensive business of the redeemed. But to rest in generalities, however precious, is not our apostle's way in writing to the churches. He hastens, as usual, to the details of Christian duty; those specified being almost exclusively.

Relative Duties-a Modest Estimate and Loving Exercise of our own Gifts, relative to Those of other Believers (Romans 12:3-8)