

# ROMANS 12:1-2

## **Be a Berean!**

- I'm Graham – Renewal invite
- Josh –
- Last time I was up here, I was accused of talking really fast.
  - That's because there is a lot to cover and only a little time to do it in.
  - It may happen again today, but don't worry, you can always go and watch it again.
  - Let's get into it!
- 2Tim 3:16-17 tells us that: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."
  - So, by the Word of God:
    - We learn doctrine: Who God is and the things that pertain to Him.
    - We are reproofed: Our wrong thoughts and actions are revealed and exposed – convicting us.
    - We are corrected: Our faults are put right – our wrong thoughts and actions are re-formed.
    - And we are also instructed: We are taught and trained how to move forward in the right way of thinking and acting.
      - Which is also the best way for us.
      - A lot of the time, these things all happen together since they are inter-dependent.
- As I have mentioned before, I really appreciate the instruction or the "How to live this Christian life" that God gives us in His Word.
  - And this 'How to...' is what we are going to look at today in Romans 12:1-2.
    - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
- Paul is writing this and the first thing he mentions before getting into the 'How to...' part is that he gives his heart, the reasoning, and the impetus behind these instructions.
  - *I beseech you therefore, brethren*, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
    - To beseech someone is to earnestly urge, beg, plead and encourage them to some sort of action.

- So what Paul is going to tell them and us is of great importance!
    - He's saying, 'This is really crucial! Please, please, please, don't miss this! Grab it, learn it, and apply it to your lives.'
  - And he adds the word brethren, so it takes on a familial tone and heart.
    - He's not just the great apostle Paul telling us to do this thing because he has the authority to do so...
    - No, he's appealing to us as a brother, as a family member that has our best interest in mind.
- Next, we note that these instructions on living this Christian life are to be done 'by the mercies of God'
  - I beseech you therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
    - What follows, we must first realize that it doesn't originate or fully depend upon us.
    - We are to choose to do these things, but we are to choose to do them by God's mercy.
      - It's by His undeserved compassion that He will empower us to do the instructions that follow and will carry us through!
      - God knows who we are:
        - Psalm 103:14 'For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.'
        - Hebrews 4:15-16 says 'For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.'
    - Jesus gets it.
      - He knows how hard this life is.
      - He went through it and experienced it in every way that we do...
        - But He did it without sin – without missing the mark.
      - As I tell the young adults often, God understands our weaknesses, but He doesn't excuse them.
        - That is a very important point that we can't miss or get twisted.
      - Because God understands our frame and has experienced what it's like to walk in our shoes, He provides for us every step of this walk.
        - He provides the:
          - Doctrine (the Truth about God and life).
          - Rebuke (the exposing of our error and sin).

- Correction (the re-forming of our understanding and actions).
    - Instruction (the lessons that teach us how to move forward in a way that glorifies Him and is best for us).
  - And – He provides the mercy and grace by the Holy Spirit that we may actually:
    - Know the correct Doctrine.
    - Hear and take the Rebuke.
    - Have our thoughts and ways Corrected.
    - And be empowered to do the things He is instructing us in!
  - In other words, we choose Him and He does it in us.
    - Phil 2:13 'For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.'
- So, that brings us to the instruction: How do we live this Christian life, day by day?
  - Glad you asked!
  - Back to our main verse:
    - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you *present your bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
  - The first thing that we are instructed to do is 'To present our bodies'
    - We will look at the three ways of how we are to present them.
    - But what does it mean to 'present' them?
    - 'Present' is the Greek word: παρίστημι (paristēmi), παρίσταμαι
      - To be in front of, stand before (Ac 27:24)
      - To provide, make available (Ac 23:24; Ro 12:1; 2Co 11:2)
    - When I was in the military and my Lieutenant would call me into his office, I would 'present' myself to him:
      - I would bring myself before him, stand at attention and be ready to carry out his orders to the letter.
    - So, too, we are to present – to offer and avail ourselves to God.
    - But what are we to bring before and make ready for Him?
      - Our 'Bodies'
      - Now, this word is more than this flesh and blood that we currently wear.
      - It refers to your entire person – Your body, your mind, your heart, your soul...
    - Jesus tells us this same thing in Mark 12:30 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.'

- Above all else, we are to show love to God through:
      - Our heart: this encompasses our volition, our will, our desires, and emotions.
      - Our soul: this refers to our inner self, our person or what makes us, us.
      - Our mind: This speaks of things like our understanding, reasoning, thoughts, disposition, decisions...
      - And Our strength: This refers not only to these physical tents we are currently living in, but also our abilities.
  - Back to Romans 12: We are to 'Present our Bodies'.
    - We are to bring before God and make available our heart, our will, our desires, our emotions, our goals, our aspirations...
    - We are to bring before God and make available our soul, our personhood and personality...
    - We are to bring before God and make available our mind, our understanding, our reasoning, thoughts, and decisions...
    - And we are to bring before God and make available our physical bodies and abilities.
- As I mentioned, this 'presenting' is done in 3 ways:
  - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, *that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God*, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
  - \*PLEASE LEAVE SLIDE UP UNTIL THE NEXT ONE\*
  - The first of which is as a living sacrifice.
    - This is a strange thing!
    - When a sacrifice was given in the OT, it was only able to be given once.
      - Once the lamb was sacrificed, it was killed and burned up or cooked and that was it. It could NOT be sacrificed again...
    - But we are to be a living sacrifice...
      - This speaks of a sacrifice that is given over and over again.
        - Each day when we wake up, we are to bring before God and present to Him our hearts, our minds, our souls and our bodies...
        - But not just each day, it's literally at each moment, for it's a living sacrifice...
        - So, at each moment we are living, this is the attitude that we are to have – that our entire beings are at His disposal.
        - At each moment we are alive, we are to be living in the conscious choice to be presenting ourselves to Him.
      - Jesus said it this way in Luke 9:23-24 "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross

daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

- Daily sacrifice? That's a tall order, Graham! Yeah, I know!
  - That's why it's a sacrifice... It costs us something.
  - King David said in 2 Sam 24:24 that he would not give God a sacrifice that cost him nothing. (paraphrase)
    - It costs us everything... but He gave us everything and He is worthy!
  - But, just wait, the order gets taller...
- The second way we are to present ourselves to God is to do it in a 'holy' manner.
  - This doesn't mean that we have to make it perfect before we can bring it before Him.
  - 'Holy' means pure, but it also means dedicated or consecrated.
    - It's something that is set apart for God or for His use only.
  - I'm a father of 4 kids, so there isn't much that I have that is set apart for me only.
    - The only thing I could think of was my toothbrush.
      - It's reserved for me. No one else is allowed to use it for any reason.
      - It's not to be used for other people's teeth or to scrub some soap scum or clean the dirt out from under the dog's nails.
      - It's for my use only – and I don't think that's asking for much...
        - Of course, if my kids or wife needed it, and I couldn't provide another, I would let them use it.
  - I know that's a silly and lacking analogy.
  - Nonetheless, we are instructed to present our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies in a consecrated manner - for His use only.
- The third way we are to present ourselves to God is to do it in an 'acceptable' way.
  - This word acceptable is translated in many other places as 'pleasing'.
    - So, what is acceptable and pleasing to God?
    - Faith!
    - Hebrews 11:6 says: 'But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.'
      - That word 'to please' is from the same root word as 'acceptable'.
  - So, we are instructed to present our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies by faith – for without it, it cannot be pleasing or acceptable to God.
    - We have to believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- We have to believe He will take what we give to Him – our hearts, minds, souls and bodies - and use it all for His glory and our good...
  - If we didn't believe this, we wouldn't give it to Him in the first place?
  - But we also, should not only go half-way in the presenting of ourselves to Him...
- I have mentioned this to you before, but it's a repeated lesson that God has been giving my wife and I over 3 years now:
  - God is either who He says He is or He's not.
  - This lesson started when we were roaming the country, homeless with our 4 kids in an RV because we believed God told us to take what we call an "Abraham step of faith".
    - We were to go to the place He will show us.
    - Virtually every day of the 9 months, we did not know what we were doing or where we were going!
    - It was getting more and more difficult to walk in faith through it and as a man, the difficulty was compounded by the fact that I wasn't working or providing in the traditional manner.
      - As any guy in here knows or can imagine, that really starts to wear on a fellow.
    - It was about month 3 of this 9-month nomadic season that God challenged us with this:
      - God is either who He says He is or He's not.
      - If I believe He is, and I do;
        - What does that mean?
        - What am I going to do with that?
        - How does that affect my thinking and my walk?
      - I need to take Him and what He says seriously.
        - I need to believe what He says.
        - I need to act on what He says by faith.
      - If God is who He says He is, then it leaves NO ROOM for wavering – no room for doubt.
      - If God is who He says He is, then there is no option for those things.
      - I have by no means arrived. I have been challenged with this concept for the last 3 years and it still comes around.
        - But I look back and see growth!
        - I see a deeper walk and more prevalent faith than before.
      - Believing God to this degree is pleasing to Him!
- I challenge you to settle this in your hearts:

- Is God who He says He is or not?
    - If He is, what does that mean for your faith and walk?
  - Back to Romans 12: We must make the presenting of our whole selves to God in a pleasing way - by faith – trusting and knowing that He will take our hearts, minds, souls and bodies and use them for His glory and our good!
- When we avail our hearts, minds, souls, bodies, emotions, thoughts, hopes, dreams, goals, aspirations, abilities – our very personhood to Him in a daily, moment by moment sacrifice, for His use only by faith... we need to keep in mind this next point:
  - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
- All of this is simply our reasonable service...
  - Reasonable doesn't just mean 'rational', though it does... it can also mean sensible or intelligent.
  - The Greek word for reasonable is 'Logikos' – does that sound like anything we know?
  - Yes, it's logical to offer ourselves to Him in such a way.
    - When we step back and really look at what He did and gave us, what we are being instructed to do here is 'reasonable and rational.'
    - A good exercise would be to make 2 columns and in one put all that God is instructing you to give to Him...
      - In the other, list all the things He has given you – things like:
        - Loving you when you were His enemy.
        - Clothing you with the righteousness of Christ.
        - Forgiveness of every one of your sins, past, present, and future.
        - The complete removal of your sins by the death of His only begotten Son.
        - A life of purpose and meaning.
        - Adoption into His family as sons and daughters.
        - Being made Co-Heirs with Christ.
        - Entrance into heaven.
        - New bodies, hearts and minds.
        - Eternal perfection lived out in the very presence of God...
  - We could go on... but take time, sit down, and make those columns and see if what we are told to do is reasonable, rational, sensible, and intelligent in light of what He has done.

- Our 'Reasonable SERVICE'.
    - The word 'Service' literally means to minister to or worship God.
    - Worship isn't what we do for 20 min before the teaching starts.
      - That's just one part of it.
    - Serving or ministering to God isn't what we do on Sunday when we sign up as a greeter or to help in children's ministry –
      - That's also just one part of it.
    - Worship and serving God is a lifestyle that necessarily permeates every part of our lives.
    - This is exactly what Paul is telling us here.
  - Do you want to intelligently and sensibly worship and serve the Creator God of the universe who loves you immensely?
    - Great! He tells us right here how to do it!
      - Present and avail your hearts, minds, souls, bodies, emotions, thoughts, hopes, dreams, goals, aspirations, abilities – your very personhood to God in a daily, moment by moment sacrifice, for His use only - by faith.
  - Paul puts it another way in 1 Cor 6:19-20: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."
    - We are His.
    - We should live as such.
- OK, on with Romans 12:2.
    - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
    - God is so very good to us!
      - He doesn't just tell us what not to do, but He tells us what to do and if we do those things, we will automatically not do the thing He is telling us not to do! Win-Win!
    - We are not to allow the culture, the prevailing thought, the popular opinion, social pressure, or social media to cram us into its mold, dictate what we believe, think, or say.
      - We are not to let the world shape us in any way.
      - On our own, this would be very difficult if not impossible as the prevailing world view of this present age is all pervasive, it comes at us from every side and it's very slick and cunning.
    - The best way to resist and keep this conforming from happening, is to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.



- The world wants us to be conformed to it – it will manipulate and twist us until we look like it and are towing its line.
  - But God wants to transform us.
    - He wants to take and completely change the essential nature of who we are.
- Eph 2:1-10 'And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
  - This is the Transformation! – This is the change God is doing!
  - Transforming us from a place of death to a place of life.
- This transformation and resistance of the conforming of the world happens by the 'Renewing' of our minds.
  - This is done by the Holy Spirit and the washing of us by the Word of God – You can look up a couple verses later for more on this; Titus 3:3-7 and Eph 5:25-27.
  - It's a work of Him through and by His Word.
    - The more of the Word we get in us, the more of the world comes out of us!
- What is the result of all of this?
  - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, *that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*
  - God's will for your life and mine is: Good. It is acceptable or pleasing. It is in fact, perfect – without flaw or lack – complete.
    - How do we know this?
      - We can take it by faith...
      - But, Paul is telling us that if we do these things laid out by Him – then this good, pleasing and completely perfect will and plan of God for your life will be tested and proved to be true.
- So, here is the unauthorized Graham paraphrase of these 2 verses:

- I earnestly plead with you, my family, in view of and accomplishing this by all the underserved kindness given to us that you bring before, offer and make fully available to God, your hearts, emotions, will, hopes, dreams, goals, aspirations, thoughts, understanding, personhood, personality, body and abilities over and over again at every moment, consecrated to Him and for His use only by faith, remembering who He is and what He has done. Don't let the cram you into its mold or box in any way, shape or form. Instead, wash yourself with the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to implement it in your life which will transform your thinking, understanding and world view to match God's. If you do these things, God's good, pleasing, and perfect plan and will for you will be proven and come to pass in your life.
- I encourage you to read Romans 12:1-2 in the classic amplified version and think and meditate on it later...
- Before we move on to communion today, there is one thing I skipped over.
  - At the beginning of Romans 12:1, Paul says, 'I beseech you therefore...'
    - A good rule of Bible study is that whenever you see a therefore, you should stop and see what it's there for.
    - It helps to keep things in context for what is about to be said.
  - In the verses before (Romans 11), Paul is talking about the Gospel, Israel and what God has done for us through it.
    - He quickly gets so excited and enraptured with laying out God's wisdom and grace that he exalts and praises God in beautiful language:
- Romans 11:33-36 "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."
  - I beseech you therefore... Because of who God is and what He has done, I beg you...
  - It's because of this Wonderful God that we are told to give of ourselves fully and without reserve to Him in Romans 12:1-2.
  - It's also because of this that we now take communion.
- While you are getting up to take communion, I want to remind us that this is not for someone who does not believe in Christ.
- This is for those who trust in Jesus as the Savior, that believe that He lived and died for their sins and that He rose again.
- It's for those who's lives are now IN-CHRIST, not lived for the passing pleasures of the world, but for God's glory.
- It's not for those who are perfect, for none of us are, but it's to remember the sacrifice of Jesus - the One who is perfect and is perfecting us.

- It's also not to be taken if you, as a believer, are living in or walking in un-repentant sin.
- I'm going to ask that you come, take a cup and a piece of bread and then wait and we will all partake together as a family.
- As you come up, to get the elements or are standing there in an attitude of prayer, be asking God to search you and know you. To forgive you and cleanse you...
- And when everyone gets the elements, we will remember and thank Him for what He did.