

Exegetical Notes - Romans 12:1-2

“Living Sacrifices”

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Romans 12:1-2

Verse 1

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.

- This passage opens with one of Paul’s great “therefore’s.” It means because of all that precedes it. In Romans 10-12, Paul has explained the great plan of God to bring salvation to all who confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead. Those who do so are “the elect of God.” They are the Church. They are those who rejoice in what God has done and in their salvation through Jesus Christ. They are those who praise God because he has saved them.
- But now, Paul calls them to live differently because they know the mercy, the unmerited favor, of God.
- They are to be “living sacrifices.” No other sacrifice but those numbered among the elect are to be “living sacrifices.” All other sacrifices die when they are sacrificed. The elect of God are to live lives which are completely pleasing to God. They are to do life according to the word of the Lord and so to please God.
- True and proper worship is living to please God because God prepared you for salvation.

Verse 2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- Though the world insists that all people “conform” to its pattern, those who are numbered among the elect of God must not conform to the world’s pattern (“Do not conform” is one word in Greek. This word is only used one

other time in the New Testament. See 1 Peter 1:14). Conformity to the world's ideas and concepts, when they contradict the Bible is not pleasing to God.

- Instead, the elect of God are “transformed.” This world is in the durative tense in Greek. Implying that those who belong to God are constantly being transformed as opposed to conformed. Transformation is a process by which the elect are changed.
- The change occurs through the “renewing of the mind.” It is not an emotional, feelings-based change. It is not something done for us by the power of God through the Holy Spirit. It requires us to consider what God says in his word and to alter our thinking on the basis of God's word. God's word becomes “normative” in the minds of those who are saved, not the pattern of the world in which we live.
- Knowing what God's word says makes the elect of God able to “test” everything. If what the world says contradicts what the word says, the elect follow the word. Through the word the elect know what is good and pleasing to God. Through it, they know God's perfect will and they live accordingly.
- Understanding the “**LIVING SACRIFICE PRINCIPLE**” affects everything that a Christian does and the way he or she relates to other people and the circumstances which life throws at them. Paul will give specific examples of how this works out in the remaining chapters of Romans.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Living Sacrifices*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Interim Senior/Lead Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)