

ROMANS 12:1-2

GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2 (KJV)

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

“**Beseech**” means “1) to call to one’s side, call for, summon. 2b) to beg, entreat, beseech.”[Thayer’s Greek Definitions] “**Mercies**”—“*compassion, pity*”[*New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance*] See [1 Corinthians 1:10](#); [Romans 15:30](#) “**Present**”—“In the NT, to place or set before someone, present, exhibit.”[Complete Word Study Dictionary] “**Bodies**”—“means your whole person”[Complete Word Study Dictionary] “**Living sacrifice**”—“The expression probably means, that they were to devote the vigorous, active powers of their bodies and souls to the service of God. A *sacrifice* is an offering made to God as an atonement for sin; or any offering made to him and his service as an expression of thanksgiving or homage. It implies, that he who offers it presents it *entirely*, releases all claim or right to it, and leaves it to be disposed of for the honour of God. This is the offering which the apostle entreats the Romans to make; to devote themselves to God, as if they had no longer any *claim* on themselves; to be disposed of by him; to suffer and bear all that he might appoint; and to promote *his* honour in any way which *he* New Testament] might command.”[Barnes Notes on the

“**Holy**”—“Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint. It has a common root, chaste, pure. Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement.

(I) Pure, clean, ceremonially or morally clean, including the idea of deserved respect, reverence.

(A) It particularly means perfect, without blemish ([Rom 12:1](#)).

(B) Metaphorically it means morally pure, upright, blameless in heart and life, virtuous, holy. (1) Generally ([Mar 6:20](#); [Rom 7:12](#); [1Co 7:34](#); [Eph 1:4](#); [Eph 5:27](#); [1Pe 1:16](#); Sept.: [Lev 11:44](#)). (2) Spoken of those who are purified and sanctified by the influences of the Spirit. This is assumed of all who profess the Christian name, hence ,

saint, saints, Christians ([Act 9:13-14](#), [Act 9:32](#), [Act 9:41](#); [Act 26:10](#); [Rom 1:7](#); [Rom 8:27](#); [1Th 3:13](#)). Spoken of those who are to be in any way included in the Christian community ([1Co 7:14](#)). Holy kiss means the sacred Christian kiss, the pledge of Christian affection ([Rom 16:16](#); [1Co 16:20](#); [2Co 13:12](#))." [Complete Word Study Bible]

“Holy. This means, properly, without blemish or defect. No other sacrifice could be made to God. The Jews were expressly forbid to offer that which was lame, or blind, or in any way deformed, [Deuteronomy 15:21](#); [Leviticus 1:3,10, 3:1, 22:20](#), [Deuteronomy 17:1](#). Comp. [Malachi 1:8](#). If offered without any of these defects, it was regarded as *holy*, i.e., appropriately set apart, or consecrated to God. In like manner we are to consecrate to God our best faculties; the rigour of our minds, and talents, and time. Not the feebleness of sickness merely; not old age alone; not time which we cannot otherwise employ; but the first rigour and energies of the mind and body—our youth, and health, and strength. Our sacrifice to God is to be not divided, separate; but it is to be entire and complete. Many are expecting to be Christians in sickness; many in old age; thus purposing to offer unto him the blind and the lame. The sacrifice is to be free from sin. It is not to be a divided, and broken, and polluted service. It is to be with the best affections of our hearts and lives.”[Barnes Notes on the New Testament]

“ **Acceptable unto God.** They are exhorted to offer such a sacrifice as *will be* acceptable to God; that is, such an one as he had just specified, one that was living and holy. No sacrifice should be made which is not acceptable to God. Those services will be acceptable to God, and those only, which he appoints. Comp. [Colossians 2:20-23](#). Men are not to *invent* services; or to *make* crosses; or to seek persecutions and trials; or to *provoke* opposition. They are to do just what God requires of them, and that will be acceptable to God. And this fact, that what we do is acceptable to God, is the highest recompense we can have. It matters little what *men* think of us, if God approves what we do. To please *him* should be our highest aim; the fact that we *do* please him is our highest reward.”[Barnes Notes on the New Testament]

Which is your reasonable service . The word rendered *service*—properly denotes *worship*, or the *homage* rendered to God. The word *reasonable*, with us, means that which is "governed by reason; thinking, speaking, or acting conformably to the dictates of reason," (*Webster*) or that which can be shown to be rational or proper. This does not express the meaning of the original. That word denotes that which pertains to the mind, and a reasonable service means that which is mental, or pertaining to reason. The worship of the Christian is that which pertains to the mind, or is spiritual.

We may learn from this verse,

- (1.) that the proper worship of God is the free homage of the mind. It is not forced or constrained. The offering of ourselves should be voluntary. No other can be a true offering, and none other can be acceptable.
- (2.) We are to offer our entire selves, all that we have and are, to God. No other offering can be such as he will approve.
- (3.) The character of God is such as should lead us to that. It is a character of mercy-of long-continued and patient forbearance-and it should influence us to devote ourselves to him.
- (4.) It should be done without delay. God is as *worthy* of such service *now* as he ever will or can be. He has every possible *claim* on our affections and our hearts.”[Barnes Notes on the New Testament]

Verse 2. And be not conformed, etc. The word rendered *conformed* properly means, to put on the *form, fashion, or appearance* of another. It may refer to anything pertaining to the habit, manner, dress, style of living, etc., of others.

“**Conformed**”—“To fashion alike, conform to the same pattern outwardly. With a dat. following, to conform to ([Rom 12:2](#) and also [1Pe 1:14](#)). In [Rom 12:2](#), "be not conformed. An expanded rendering might read, "Stop being molded by the external and fleeting fashions of this age, but undergo a deep inner change by the qualitative renewing of your mind." Such a transformation can be wrought only by the Holy Spirit ([2Co 3:18](#)).”[Complete Word Study Dictionary]

To this world. The word which is commonly rendered *world*, when applied to the material universe, is *cosmos*. The word used here properly denotes an *age*, or *generation* of men. It may denote a *particular* generation, or it may be applied to the race. It is sometimes used in each of these senses. Thus here it may mean, that Christians should not conform to the maxims, habits, feelings, etc., of a wicked, luxurious, and idolatrous age, but should be conformed solely to the precepts and laws of the gospel; or the same principle may be extended to *every age*, and the direction may be, that Christians should not conform to the prevailing habits, style, and manners of the world—the people who know not God. They are to be governed by the laws of the Bible; to fashion their lives after the example of Christ; and to form themselves by principles different from those which prevail in the world. In the *application* of this rule there is much difficulty. Many may think that *they* are not conformed to the world, while they can easily perceive that their neighbour is. They indulge in many things which others may think to be conformity to the world, and are opposed to many things which others think innocent. The design of this passage is doubtless to produce a spirit that should not find *pleasure* in the pomp and vanity of the world; and which will regard all vain amusements and gaieties with disgust, and lead the mind to find pleasure in better things.

Be ye transformed. The word from which the expression here is derived means *form*, *habit*. The direction is, "put on another *form*, change the form of the world for that of Christianity." This word would properly refer to the *external appearance*, but the expression which the apostle immediately uses, "renewing of the mind," shows that he did not intend to use it with reference to that only, but to the change of the whole man. The meaning is, do not cherish a spirit devoid to the world, following its vain fashions and pleasures, but cultivate a spirit attached to God, and his kingdom and cause.

By the renewing. By the *making new*; the changing into new views and feelings. The Christian is often represented as a *new creature*, [2 Corinthians 5:17](#), [Galatians 6:15](#), [Ephesians 4:24](#), [1 Peter 2:2](#).

Your mind. The word translated *mind* properly denotes *intellect*, as distinguished from the will and affections. But here it seems to be used as applicable to the whole spirit as distinguished from the body, including the understanding, will, and affections. As if he had said, let not this change appertain to the *body* only, but to the *soul*. Let it not be a mere *external* conformity, but let it have its seat in the spirit. All external changes, if the mind was not changed, would be useless, or would be hypocrisy. Christianity seeks to reign in the *soul*; and having its seat there, the external conduct and habits will be regulated accordingly.

That ye may prove. The word used here is commonly applied to *metals*, to the operation of testing, or trying them by the severity of fire, etc. Hence it also means to explore, investigate, ascertain. This is its meaning here. The sense is, that such a *renewed* mind is essential to a successful inquiry after the will of God. Having a *disposition* to obey him, the mind will be prepared to understand his precepts. There will be a *correspondence* between the feelings of the heart and his will; a nice *tact* or taste, which will admit his laws, and see the propriety and beauty of his commands. A renewed heart is the best preparation for studying Christianity; as a man who is *temperate* is the best fitted to understand the same; the man who is chaste has most clearly and forcibly the arguments for chastity, etc. A heart in love with the fashions and follies of the world is ill-fitted to appreciate the arguments for humility, prayer, etc. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," [John 7:17](#). The *reason why* the heart is renewed is, that we may do the will of God; the heart that is renewed is best fitted to appreciate and understand his will.

That good, etc. This part of the verse might be rendered, that ye may investigate the will of God, or ascertain the will of God—that which is good, and perfect, and acceptable. The *will of God* relates to his commands in regard to our conduct, his doctrines in regard to our belief, his providential dealings in relation to our external circumstances. It means what God demands of us, in whatever way it may be made known. They do not err from his ways who seek his guidance, and who, not confiding in their own wisdom, but in God, commit their way to him. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way," [Psalms 25:9](#). The word *good* here is not an *adjectivenoun*. "That ye may find the will of God, that which is good and acceptable." It implies that that thing which is *good is* his will; or that we may find his will by finding that which is good and perfect. That is good which promotes the honour of God, and the interests of his universe.

Perfect. Free from defect, stain, or injury. That which has all its parts complete, or which is not disproportionate. Applied to religion, it means that which is *consistent*, which is *carried out*; which is evinced in all the circumstances and relations of life.
agreeing with "will," but a

Acceptable. That which will be pleasing to God, or which he will approve. There is scarcely a more difficult text in the Bible than this, or one that is more full of meaning. It involves the main *duty* of religion to be separated from the world; and expresses the *way* in which that duty may be performed, and in which we may live so as to ascertain and do the will of God. If all Christians would obey this, religion would be everywhere honoured. If all would separate from the vices and follies, the amusements and gaieties of the world, Christ would be glorified. If all were truly renewed in their minds, they would lose their relish for such things; and seeking only to do the will of God, they would not be slow to find it. —Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

Summary

In this lesson I have tried to use the best Biblical definitions and commentary material which explains these two verses of scripture. In much of the quotations I deleted the Greek words spelled in Greek so you would have a free read of the material. As you can see the will of God for the life of every believer is to render your mind, body, spirit and soul totally to the control of the Holy Spirit. We are not to be yielding ourselves to the control of this world and trying to patter our Christian life after our old way of living. We are a new creation in Christ. We have been born again. Jesus said: **"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ."**[John 3:5]

I want to leave you with this verse in another translation:

Romans 12:1-2 (AMPLIFIED BIBLE)

¹ I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, *and* beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service *and* spiritual worship.

² Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, *even* the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]."

Quote: **It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it. Lighthouses do not ring bells and fire cannon to call attention to their shining-they just shine.** -Dwight L. Moody