



GOD'S VISION FOR A NEW HUMANITY | A CHANGED RELATIONSHIP TO GOD (30)

April 19, 2026
Romans 12:1-2

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Discussion Question

- What food or activity would you have the hardest time giving up?

WORSHIP 10 MIN

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Psalm 51

O LORD, open my lips,

And my mouth will declare your praise.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;

You will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 12:1-2

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

BIBLE STUDY 40 MIN

Summary

This week we have begun a new sermon series entitled *God's Vision for a New Humanity* throughout which we will be studying the latter part of the book of Romans. While much of Romans expounds upon the theology of the gospel message, chapters 12-15 focus on the practical implications of the gospel on the life and relationships of the believer. This week's passage will focus on our relationship to God.

The passage begins with an appeal that is both authoritative and encouraging; however, prior to launching into any instruction on the application of the gospel, Paul grounds this appeal on a firm foundation: the mercies of God. These mercies, stated in the plural to show their multitude, have been the focus of the first 11 chapters, and they form the basis on which the Christian is meant to live a holy life. As Thomas Erskine once wrote, "In the New Testament, religion is grace, and ethics is gratitude." In other words, the Christian does not live righteously in an effort to be saved; they live righteously because they are grateful that they have been saved.

It is in view of this mercy that Paul makes his appeal to the Romans: They should offer their bodies to God as living sacrifices. This offering involves the devotion of the body to God's cause, and it is not the first time Paul refers to this idea. In Romans 6, Paul establishes that the body is *always* presented as an offering; either it is offered to sin for unrighteousness, or it is offered to God for righteousness. And as those who have been brought from death to life by the gospel, the choice should be clear. Paul's use of "holy" and "acceptable to God" offer moral parallels to the Levitical offerings that were to be "without blemish" and "a pleasing aroma" (Leviticus 1:3,9). The description of this act as "spiritual worship" is interesting, as the Greek word for "spiritual" used here can also mean rational or reasonable. From this we can conclude that the logical outcome of a life transformed by the gospel is to live that life in service of pleasing God.

The second part of the appeal yields more information about these living sacrifices. The lives that are offered are not meant to be shaped by the world, but rather transformed by the renewal of their minds. Once again, Paul presents the believer with two outcomes: They can either be squeezed by the world into the shape of wickedness, or they can have their minds renewed and their lives transformed by the Holy Spirit — there is no middle ground. The word "transformed" here gives insight into the renewal of the mind, as it is the same verb used to describe the transfiguration of Jesus in both Matthew and Mark (Matt 17:1-13, Mk 9:2-13). In the same way Jesus was completely transformed to reveal his glory to the disciples, our minds are to be fully transformed and renewed to reveal his glory in all of our relationships. 2 Corinthians 3:18 ties these themes together nicely, reminding us that we are transformed into God's image when we behold his glory, in this case shown by his mercy.

What does a renewed mind result in? All believers go through periods where they struggle to figure out what God wants them to do with their lives. Here Paul provides the solution to this problem, suggesting that the ability to discern the will of God only comes through a renewed mind. This is the sum of the matter: The believer, so overcome by the merciful offering of Christ on the cross, should offer both mind and body to God for the purpose of transformation, and in doing so, they take their place in what N.T. Wright calls a "small working model of the new creation."

1. Looking at the Bible

- Share with the group some key phrases or ideas that stood out to you from the passage.

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- In what ways could focusing on the sacrifice of Jesus, the ultimate act of God's mercy, motivate us to offer ourselves to God in a fuller sense?

3. Looking at our Hearts

- Notice that these verses speak of both mind and body. Why are both of these important in our relationship with God?
- What are some practical steps you can take toward the renewing of your mind?

4. Looking at our World

- What are some ways we might be conformed by the world without even realizing it?
- How might a renewed mind enhance your ability to have an impact on the world around you?

**PRAYER
15 MIN**

Pray for each other: Share any prayer requests you have.

Pray for each member of your group to come to know Jesus better and to grow in their knowledge of his fulfillment of all the Scriptures.