

Complete Transformation

Romans 12:1-2



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

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Introduction



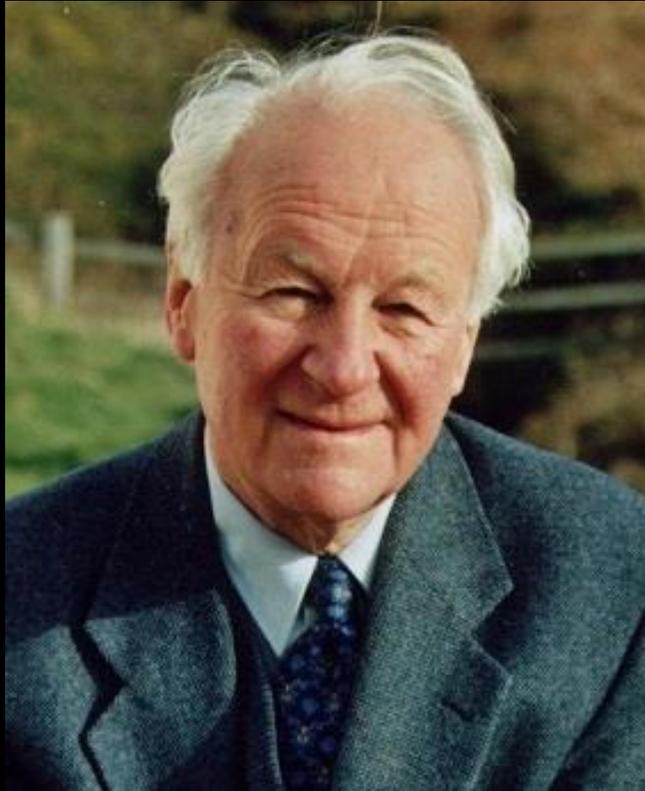
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Introduction

- Key concept: **God's grace**
 - Unmerited favor, freely given to penitent sinners.
 - God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

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Introduction



Indeed, the gospel is precisely God's mercy to inexcusable and undeserving sinners, in giving his Son to die for them, in justifying them freely by faith, in sending them his life-giving Spirit, and in making them his children.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
All Souls Church, London*

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Introduction

- In **Romans 1 – 11**, Paul has been describing right belief.
- In **Romans 12 – 15**, he will now describe right conduct.

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Introduction

- Key phrase: “the obedience of faith” (1:5, 16:26)
- Faith and obedience are *related – not rival* ideas.
- The gospel brings about **faith** which leads to **obedience**.
- This was Christ’s intention for Paul’s apostleship.

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- See also (all ESV),
- **2:7** patience in well-doing
- **6:4** walk in newness of life
- **6:18** set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness
- **8:5** live according to the Spirit

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Introduction



The New Testament knows nothing about a theology that remains on the theoretical level. All theology, all teaching about God, has implications for life, for when we learn about God, we learn about ultimate reality. And we cannot simply sit back and contemplate that reality; it changes the way we think ...

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

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Theology, in other words, includes in its nature an implicit call to transform one's life, to adjust our thinking and our acting in accordance with the truth of God in Christ.

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

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Our Plan for Romans:

1. The Purest Gospel **1:1-18**
2. Our Need for Grace **1:18 – 3:20**
3. God's Gift of Grace **3:21 – 8:39**
4. God's Gracious Plan **9:1 – 11:36**
5. Life Lived by Grace **12:1 – 15:13**
 - Part 5 will consist of 7 messages.

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5. Life Lived by Grace:

- A. Complete Transformation 12:1-2
- B. Many Members 12:3-8
- C. Love That Is Genuine 12:9-21
- D. Church and State 13:1-7
- E. Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10
- F. The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14
- G. Working on Unity 14:1 – 15:13

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Our Topic Today:

1. Motivation
2. Action
3. Explanation
4. Instruction (Do not ... , but do ...)
5. Ongoing Effect

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Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

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Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

I 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. ² Do 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.

1. Motivation



1. Motivation

(ESV) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God...

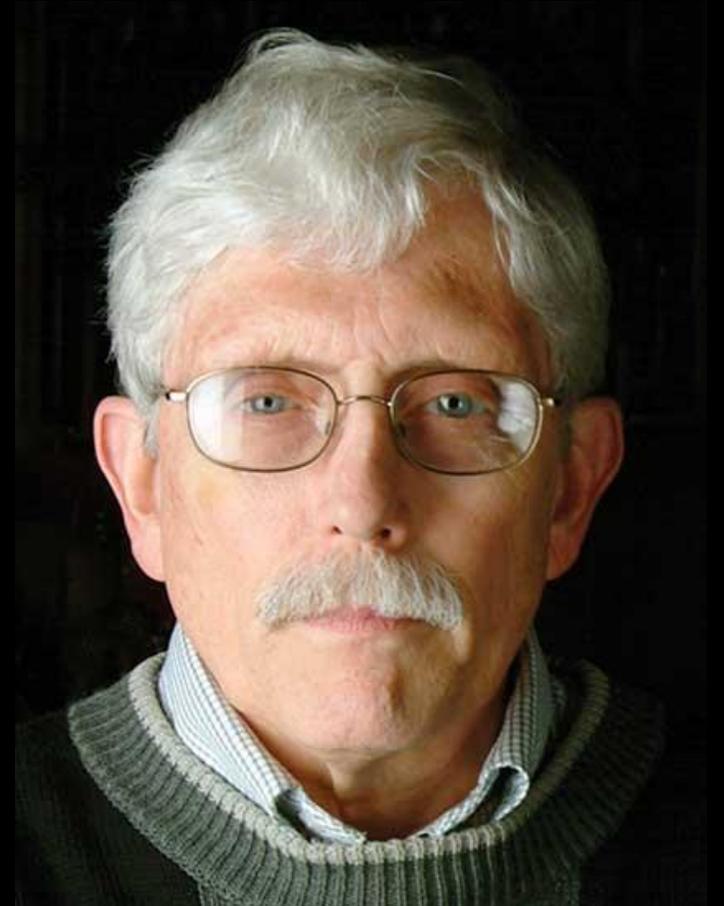
(NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy ...

(NLT) And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you ... because of all he has done for you.

1. Motivation

The total commitment of ourselves to God is based on the totality of his mercy to us.

*– Grant Osborne,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



1. Motivation

- Once we consider God's mercy, anything that he might ever ask of us makes perfect sense.
- What can we hold back to the One that has freely given us eternal life?

2. Action



2. Action

(ESV) present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God

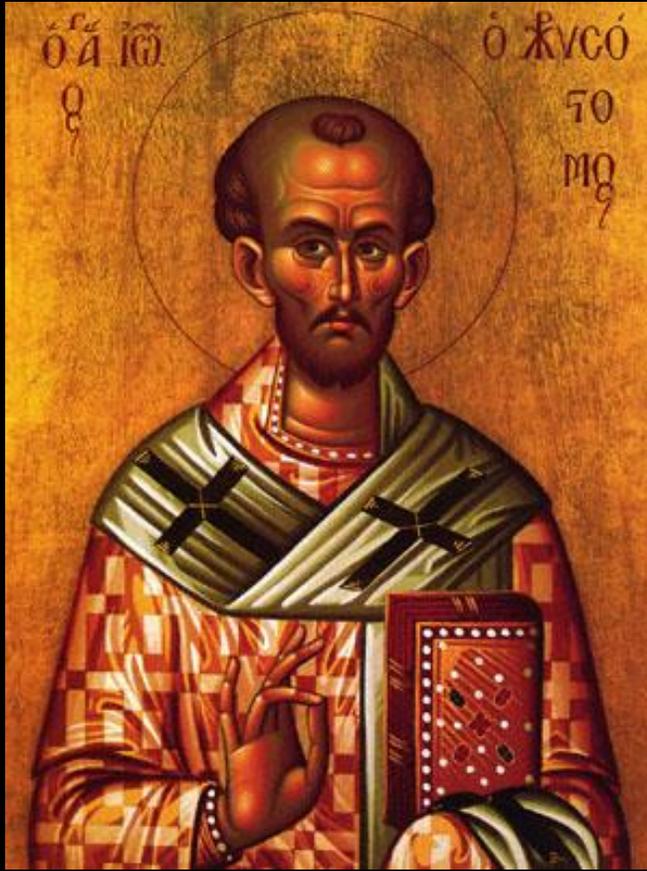
(NIV) offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God

(NLT) give your bodies to God ... Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.

2. Action

- What does it mean to become a “living sacrifice”?
- No one has answered this question than John Chrysostom did in the early centuries of the church.

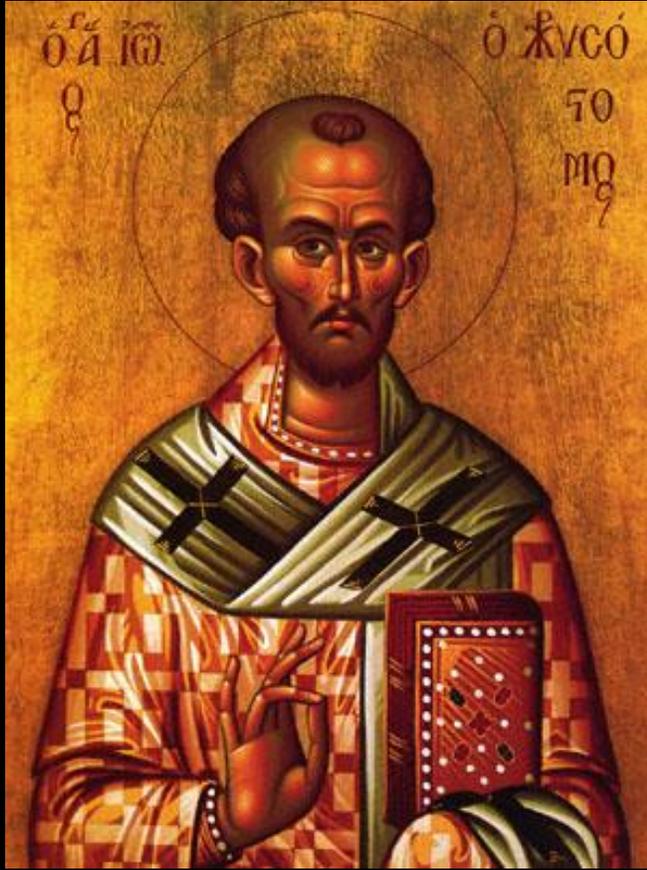
2. Action



Let thine eye look upon no evil thing, and it hath become a sacrifice; let thy tongue speak nothing filthy, and it hath become an offering; let thy hand do no lawless deed, and it hath become a whole burnt-offering. But this is not enough, we must have good works also ...

*– John Chrysostom (~345 – 407),
Archbishop of Constantinople*

2. Action



Let the hand do alms, the mouth bless them that despitefully use us, and the ear find leisure evermore for the hearing of Scripture. For sacrifice can be made only of that which is clean; sacrifice is a firstfruit of other actions. Let us, then, from our hands, and feet, and mouth, and all our other members, yield a firstfruit unto God.

*– John Chrysostom (~345 – 407),
Archbishop of Constantinople*

2. Action

- When all that we do is done with the intention of serving God, we will be the “living sacrifice” that Paul describes.

3. Explanation



3. Explanation

(ESV) which is your spiritual worship.

(NIV) this is your true and proper worship.

(NLT) This is truly the way to worship him.

3. Explanation



Paul describes the self-offering of believers as their 'true and proper worship' (NRSV: 'spiritual act of worship'), in which 'spiritual' translates a word (logikos) that is relatively rare in the NT ... However, it was a favorite expression of ancient philosophers ... where it carries the idea of 'being carefully thought through' or 'thoughtful'.

*– Colin Kruse,
Melbourne School of Theology*

3. Explanation

- In other words, when we really think about it, offering ourselves to God is the most sensible thing we can do.
- This will consist of both a consecrated mind and a consecrated body.
- Paul now gives us more specific instruction.

4. Instruction



4. Instruction

- (ESV) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
- (NIV) Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- (NLT) 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.

4. Instruction

This renewing is an internal process, a reorientation of our world view as we seek to live the way Christ lived and to think as he thought. By offering our bodies to God, we are offering him our minds. Nothing is left behind to conform to the pattern of this world.

*– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian
University of the Congo*



4. Instruction

- **1 Corinthians 2:14** (ESV)

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

4. Instruction

- Instead of trying to fit into this world's mold, we need to get our minds to start thinking like the Bible.
- The result will be a **complete transformation**.
- We will be **“transformed.”**

4. Instruction

- This word, related to our *metamorphosis*, is also used by Matthew and Mark to describe the *transfiguration* of Jesus.
- The process begins with the renewal of our minds.

4. Instruction



“Mind” translates a word that Paul uses especially to connote a person’s “practical reason,” or “moral consciousness.”

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

4. Instruction

- As this moral consciousness is developed, we actually start to see the situations of life more clearly.
- We will see them more like God does.
- This will have an ongoing effect.

5. Ongoing Effect



5. Ongoing Effect

(ESV) that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

(NIV) Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

(NLV) Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

5. Ongoing Effect

Notice that Paul expects not just obedience from believers, but moral discernment. For many, perhaps most, situations in life, there is not a specific biblical rule to tell one precisely what to do ...

*– Ben Witherington III,
Asbury Theological Seminary*



5. Ongoing Effect

Therefore, one must have a renewed mind, gain a moral vision, and develop a competency in moral discernment to determine what is indeed good and pleasing and perfect in God's sight.

*– Ben Witherington III,
Asbury Theological Seminary*



5. Ongoing Effect

- The result is that we will think and act a lot more like Jesus.
- And that is the whole point from God's perspective.

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Conclusions



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Conclusions

- **Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)**

I 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. ² Do 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.

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Conclusions

- **Philippians 3:20** reminds us, “our citizenship is in heaven.”
- We believers are already members of God’s family and subjects of Christ’s kingdom.
- We are new creations living in an old world – and we begin life as a part of the “**Old World Order.**”

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Conclusions

Paul has shown us how transformation can take place.

- When we focus on the mercies of God, we can fully offer our very selves as a sacrifice in worship to God.
- As our minds begin to process the revealed will of God, they are renewed.
- Living for Jesus becomes easier to do.

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Conclusions

- **Romans 8:29** (ESV)

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.