

## Getting Started

As Romans 12 begins, we are presented with the fourth “therefore” in the letter. In your own words, summarize the high-level message of Romans using the first three “therefores” as an introduction to chapter 12.

Romans 3:20 – The “therefore” of condemnation, declaring that the whole world is guilty before God.

Romans 5:1 – The “therefore” of justification, declaring believers righteous/innocent before a holy God.

Romans 8:1 – The “therefore” of assurance.

Some refer to Romans 12:1 as the “therefore” of dedication which serves as the basis for living out our faith for God’s glory.

## Discussion

*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. <sup>2</sup> 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. (Romans 12:1-2)*

- Before getting to the key action step in verse 1, Paul justifies his exhortation. He does not simply command them to present/offer themselves; he appeals to their reason (*logikos*). In view of God’s mercy.
  - Why should our response of offering ourselves to God be tied to His mercy?
  - Explain why offering our bodies to God as a living sacrifice is reasonable and logical.
- In the Old Testament, there were sacrifices for sin as well as sacrifices of gratitude and praise. Christ has obviously fulfilled the sacrifice for sin once for all (Hebrews 9:26; 10:10, 12, 14), and there is nothing that the believer can add to that sacrifice. But living sacrifices of gratitude and praise are the appropriate (reasonable, spiritual) sacrifices to be made by those who live only by the mercy of God.

What does it look like to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice to God?

- Discuss how the world can shape us compared with the ongoing process of being shaped/transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Share examples of how this transformation and renewing is taking place in your life.

How does God transform our minds? What is our part in this process?

What has God promised in 2 Corinthians 3:18?

- What guidance does this passage provide regarding discerning the will of God? How can we surrender our wills to the Lord?
- What evidence can be found in my life of an unwillingness to be a living sacrifice?
- What disciplines do I pursue daily that will renew my mind in accordance with God's will?

If the first eleven chapters of Romans demonstrate God's mercy, the next four chapters are how believers respond to God's mercy by demonstrating sacrificial living. In the rest of chapter 12, sacrifice is expressed and evidenced in the body of Christ and in personal relationships. In chapter 13, sacrifice is seen as believers submit to civil authorities and to the dual commands to love God and neighbor. And finally, in chapters 14 and 15, sacrifice is seen as believers give up their personal preferences in the church so as not to cause a weaker Christian to stumble and sin.

To return to the point made in the introduction to this chapter, the contents of the next four chapters contain much practical advice for Christian living. But to disconnect these chapters from Romans 1–11 is to disconnect them from their power source, for the motivation to sacrifice in the Christian life is the mercy of God.<sup>1</sup>

## Prayer

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<sup>1</sup> Boa, K., & Kruidenier, W. (2000). [\*Romans\*](#) (Vol. 6, pp. 361–367). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.