

Romans 12.1,2

Dying to Live

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn > Soviet dissident > defected to USA in 1970's
 Became an American Folk Hero > Admired for surviving imprisonment in Gulags
 Commencement Address > Harvard University in 1978 > afterward IGNORED
 "Should someone ask me whether I would indicate the West is a model to my
 country, frankly, I would have to answer negatively...Through intense suffering
 our own country has now achieved a spiritual development of such intensity that
 the Western system in its present state of spiritual exhaustion does not look
 attractive...the human soul longs for things higher, warmer, and purer than those
 offered by today's mass living habits, introduced by the invasion of publicity, by
 TV stupor and intolerable music"

Cold Shower Solzhenitsyn offered the Media ended his 15 minutes of FAME
 25 yrs. later "mass living habits...TV stupor and intolerable music" NOW HERE!

LAST SECTION of Romans > Chs. 1 to 4 > Justification by Faith
 Chs. 5 to 8 > Life in God's Grace > Chs. 9 to 11 > God's Plan for History
 Chs. 12 to sixteen > God's New People > How shall we live for Christ?

LEON MORRIS "It is fundamental to Paul that the justified man does not live in
 the same way as the unrepentant sinner."

TYPICAL pattern of PAUL's Letters > Imperatives based on the Indicatives
 What God has done for us DOCTRINAL BASIS of How we Live in Christ

DOCTRINE is never given in Scripture for merely intellectual value
 JESUS: "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."
 John 13.17

DOCTRINE & DUTY > Lips and Life > Beliefs and Behavior > Creed & Conduct
 "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you
 will save both yourself and your hearers."
 1 Timothy 4.16

Examine Paul's Teaching: 1. Basis 2. Battleground 3. Body 4. Blessings

1. Basis: Paul's Urgent Plea

a. Reminder "therefore" > what is this word there for?

Word "therefore" is to help READERS REMEMBER flow of Paul's Argument

Word “Reminder” > left VIVID IMPRESSION on Me since 4th Grade
My Teacher > Mr. Woodenham > Paddle Impact “You need REMINDER!”

4th “Therefore” of Romans / 4th Reminder
CONDEMNATION > 3.20 “Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law”

CONFIRMATION > 5. 1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”

COMFORT > 8.1 “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”

COMMITMENT > 12.1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices”

b. Redemption “in view of God’s mercy” > OPERATIVE WORD: Mercy

IT IS THE MERCY OF GOD THAT MELTS THE HEART

WORD MERCY FIRST OCCURRED IN CHAPTER 9 > God’s Sovereign Grace
9.15 “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

9.16 “It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy”

GOSPEL > God’s mercy to inexcusable and undeserving sinners
Sending His Son to die our death / Sending His Spirit to make us alive

GOD’S GRACE > spring and fountain of righteous conduct

CALVIN “Paul teaches us that we will never worship God with sincere heart, or be roused to fear and obey him with sufficient zeal, until we properly understand how we are indebted to his mercy.”

c. Reconciliation - “I urge you, brothers” Appeal of Loving RELATIONSHIP

13 X’s Romans “brothers”> 9 to 11 > 1 FAMILY> 1 Olive Tree > Jews & Gentiles
GOD’S SALVATION CORPORATELY EXPERIENCED

Paul reminds them to Overcome the Prejudices of State and Society
 REMEMBER as we Anticipate Possibility of War in our World
 MOST BASIC ALLEGIANCE for Christian > To Christ and His Global Church

First words the new Christian God called Paul heard “"Brother Saul, the Lord--
 Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so
 that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Acts 9.17

God told disciple named Ananias to pray for the newly converted Saul of Tarsus
 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the
 harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority
 from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name. "But the Lord said, "Go!
 This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles”

DIFFICULT to MAINTAIN Brotherly UNITY IN CHRIST
 Had ANANIAS Refused > No Brother Saul > No Letter to the Romans >

E-mails Jokes about FRENCH, AMERICANS, IRAQIS > fuel hatred and hurt

d. Reasonable Worship - “REASONABLE or RATIONAL act of worship”

“spiritual act of worship” > Gk. ‘logikos’ > reasonable or rational
 Giving ourselves to God for His mercy is the most reasonable thing we could do
 “worship of mind and heart” REB / “act of intelligent worship” JBP

JIM ELLIOT “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he
 cannot lose”

MOST REASONABLE THING YOU CAN DO IS TO SERVE JESUS CHRIST
 Devote your life to the Savior who gave Himself for Your Salvation

“The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Psalm 14.1

C.T. STUDD “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too
 great for me to make for him.”

2. Battleground: The Mind

a. Command v. 2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world”

BEFORE WE CAME TO CHRIST > our bodies served sin

NEGATIVE COMMAND > “do not conform” > Unpopular NOTION / Negative
8 of the 10 commandments are NEGATIVE > because of sin in our world
“this world” > THIS WORLD IS NO FRIEND OF GOD AND HIS HOLINESS

v. 2 “world” or “age” / “Where is the philosopher of this age?” 1 Corinthians 1.20

2 Cor 4.4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers”

Gal 1. 4. Christ “gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age”

JOHN MURRAY “How far reaching is this indictment! If all our calculations, plans and ambitions are determined by what falls within life here, then we are children of this age.”

b. Conflict > This World < > God’s Will v. 2 “pattern of this world...God's will”

Direct Conflict: “The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” 1 John 2.17

The LORD said to MOSES, "Speak to the Israelites saying: `I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.”
Leviticus 18.1-5

JESUS: “when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”
Matthew 6.7,8

BARCLAY “We are not to be like a chameleon which takes its color from its surroundings”

J.B. PHILLIPS “Do not let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within”

JAMES DUNN “Do not adopt the external and fleeting fashion of this world, but be transformed in your inmost nature”

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

KARL BARTH > Swiss theologian > Christian Ethics “the great disturbance”
Violent challenge and interruption to the Status Quo

REAL WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION RIGHT IN OUR HOMES
Movies > Internet > Music >> which is NOT PLEASING TO GOD
Oh I know but > “Language / Sex / Violence does not bother me”
TRAGIC STATEMENT OF HOW DEAD IN SIN YOU REALLY ARE!

“I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds”
Ephesians 4.17-23

TRANSFORMED MINDS through the TRUTH THAT IS IN JESUS

Put FROG in cool water in sauce pan > VERY GRADUALLY INCREASE Temp.
FROG HAPPILY SWIMS AND PLAYS > doesn't feel any change in temperature
Thinks he is just Chillin' but the temperature is Killin'

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10.28

STOTT “Whether we are thinking about the purpose of life or the meaning of life, about how to measure greatness or how to respond to evil, about ambition, sex, honesty, money, community, religion, or anything else, the two sets of standards diverge so completely that there is no possibility of compromise.”

c. Change “be transformed by the renewing of your mind”

WORD “transformed” used 3 other times in NT > 2 X’s TRANSFIGURATION
Mark “Jesus was transfigured / transformed before them” COMPLETE CHANGE

2 Corinthians 3.18 “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

Transformation > BY THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND

World wants to CONTROL your MIND > God wants to TRANSFORM IT

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
Colossians 3.1,2

CANNOT LIVE CHRISTIAN LIFE BY OUR OWN WILL POWER

7.15-23 “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do...it is sin living in me...I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind”

WHAT FILLS YOUR MIND? > Do you read God’s Word Daily?

Are you watching more trash than listening to God’s truth?

Are you reading Christian books > seeking to bring every thought captive to X?

What kinds of songs have rooted themselves in recesses of your mind?

GREATEST POSSIBILITY FOR CHANGE LOCKED IN THE MIND

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
2 Corinthians 10.3-5

WAR > GUARANTEED RESULTS > Death, Destruction, Suffering

ONE MORE GUARANTEE > People’s Minds will not be Changed

ONLY GOSPEL of JESUS CHRIST HOLDS > “divine power to demolish strongholds...demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God...take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”

GREEK Philosophy > Ancient Relic / God's Gospel > Dynamic Reality
 ROMAN Empire > Crumbled Dust / God's Kingdom > Grows Stronger Daily

Jesus: "I will build my church, & the gates of hell will not overcome it." Mt 16.18

JAMES BOICE "True conversion makes a difference in a person's life. If there are no differences, there is no genuine conversion...Laws in themselves change little. Changed people change everything. And the only thing that ever really changes people is God himself through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you have been called to faith in Jesus Christ, you are part of a radically changed community, the new humanity. It is your privilege to begin to make changes in our world."

3. Body: Living Sacrifice

a. Picture > Background: OT Sacrifices

5 technical terms convey image of SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP

"offer" or "present" > our bodies as living sacrifices

"holy" > main requirement of the OT sacrifices / major theme of Leviticus

"pleasing to God" // physically unblemished, without moral defect, fragrant aroma

NEW NATURE > Body is now Temple of God's Spirit

New Nature BUT Holiness is Neither AUTOMATIC Nor INEVITABLE

We are ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS with God in the PROCESS

"You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men." 1 Cor 7.23

b. Physical > "Body" – INTENTIONAL WORD CHOICE > not just Person

BODY > blunt, earthly, Greek word > given for SHOCK VALUE > Body!!

Greek Platonic thought > "the body is a tomb" holds our imprisoned spirits

Greek view of SALVATION > spirit finally escapes the dungeon of our bodies

SCRIPTURE > Separation of Body and Soul is UNNATURAL > result of sin

Modern Evangelicals > "give hearts to God" / "God will save your soul"

Paul > presentation of our bodies to God > Spiritual Act of Worship
 Worship is NOT ONLY Inward, Abstract, Mystical > expressed on Concrete Acts

SINFULNESS has BODILY EXPRESSION 3.12 “There is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood... There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

SO OUR SALVATION MUST ALSO HAVE A BODILY EXPRESSION

6. 13. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

8.13 “For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live”

12.1 to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God

Paul wrote to Philippians from Prison Cell “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
 1.20,21

STOTT “Our feet will walk in his paths, our lips will speak the truth and spread the gospel, our tongues will bring healing, our hands will lift up those who have fallen, & perform many mundane tasks as well like cooking and cleaning, typing & mending; our arms will embrace the lonely & the unloved, our ears will listen to the cries of the distressed, & our eyes will look humbly and patiently towards God”

c. Paradox > Living Sacrifice > Spiritual Act

STRIKING DIFFERENCE > all OT sacrifices were slain and their blood shed

ANIMAL SACRIFICES of Old Covenant > Rendered Obsolete > X’s Once for All
 “we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus X once for all”
 Hebrews 10.10

BELIEVER presents a BODY RISEN FROM DEATH > Alive with Christ
 Living = CONSTANT DEDICATION > “Christ, who is your life” Colossians 3.4

JAMES BOICE “Other people may give God their money or time or even take up a new religious vocation, but only a Christian can give back to God that new spiritual life in Christ that he has first been given.”

Hebrews 13.15, 16 “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

1 Peter 2.5 “you...are...to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

SACRIFICE very unpopular word today > INDULGENCE leads to Happiness

John D. Rockefeller > one of world’s richest men in his day
was asked: “How much money is enough?” / answer: “Just a little bit more”

As we Die to our OWN DESIRES to serve Christ > We BEGIN to Live

Beatitudes > Blessed Life > Happy Life > OPPOSITE of WORLD’S Expectations
poor in spirit / mourn / meek / hunger & thirst for righteousness / merciful
pure in heart / peacemakers / those persecuted for righteousness > HAPPINESS!

Christian Man watched his non Christian mother die a BITTER & SAD woman:
“I am convinced that Christians and non Christians come to the end of their lives very differently. Those who are not Christians feel that they do not deserve to end their lives with failing health and pain, and they think their lives have been wasted. Christians are satisfied with what God has led them through and has done for them. It is better to die as a Christian.”

d. Pleasure > “Pleasing to God” to be LIVING SACRIFICES

NEW IDEA in Romans > God is Pleased with WHAT WE DO
PREVIOUSLY learned > what WE DID just got us into TROUBLE with God

NOW God SEES US IN CHRIST > We are BELOVED IN THE BELOVED
“The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”

Zephaniah 3.17

JUST AS BRIDE AND GROOM vow their bodies to one another in Marital Joy

GOD Pleased w/ ISAAC > died to self, willingly yielded to father Abraham's knife
When he got up, he lived as Risen Sacrifice to the Glory of God

JESUS > born to die > Obedience moved Him closer to God-appointed death

ACTIVE & PASSIVE OBEDIENCE of Christ >

ACTIVE > lived a perfect life > sinless > altogether righteous

PASSIVE > died a perfect death > paid sins full penalty > fulfilled righteousness

AT HIS BAPTISM in the JORDAN RIVER > FATHER in heaven said,

"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 3.17

4. Blessings: The Good, Pleasing, and Perfect

a. Know God's Will

NOT A FIRST CENTURY STRUGGLE – not a poor mans question / No Options

1980's - First Furlough from Mission work in Uganda

Four years in Remote Area / 150 miles from paved road / 6 months for mail
delivery / no email / no telephone / 3 military coups / constant dangers

Great Time > had 2 sons > Grew in Spirit and Service > Loved the People

Landed in Honolulu, Hawaii – met by family

To shopping mall > Needed: money > fast food > toothpaste IN THAT ORDER
FIRST TIME TO USE ATM MACHINE

Burger King > overwhelmed by choices: food selections, sizes, prices

Super Market > long way from open markets in remote Uganda

AISLE of TOOTHPASTES > brands, flavors, colors, functions, dispensers

OVERWHELMED by Choices > Ready to Get Back on plane to simple Africa

FINDING God's WILL > unique problem for the affluent > ALL believers NEED

GOD'S SECRET WILL > His Business > Hidden in Eternal Counsels

Known only by God AND Women Reading Cards in the Bazaars!

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us & to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law Dt 29.29

REVEALED > “It is God's will that you should be sanctified” 1 Thessalonians 4.3

He LEADS and GUIDES as we MOVE IN FAITHFULNESS & OBEDIENCE
 8.14 “those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons (and daughters) of God”

8.32 “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

b. Enjoy God's Will

“to test and approve” > NOT FIND OUT whether GOOD or BAD > ALL GOOD

Paul PRAYS FOR Philippians “that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may *be able to discern what is best*” 1.9,10

Renewed Mind can TEST AND APPROVE GOD'S WILL

TO LEARN GOD'S WILL BY EXPERIENCE > never fail or be found wanting
 If our life is AIMLESS, STAGNANT, FRUITLESS we are missing God's Will

COMMON IDEA > God's Will must be MOST PAINFUL, MISERABLE choice
 As PAINFUL as a LIVING SACRIFICE > Carrying your Cross

WILL OF GOD IS “THE good, THE pleasing, and THE perfect”
 7.12 “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good”

IF YOU ONLY THINK OF THE PAIN > you have NEVER SURRENDERED
 HARD PART > is Fighting Against what you KNOW IS RIGHT
 Those who SURRENDER / Living Sacrifices find Him to be for them >
 “THE good, THE pleasing, and THE perfect”

WE Surrender our WILL to God in Prayer > “Not my will, but yours be done”
 DAILY SURRENDER > of will, heart, mind > whole self each new day

SUMMARY > Appeal to the People of God grounded on the Mercies of God to be transformed by the Will of God

Elizabeth Howard > went to jungles of Ecuador > help 2 women translate Bible
 Language: Colorado Indians / Unwritten / Prayed for native language helper
 God sent perfect helper > Macario > Fluent in Spanish AND Colorado tongues

Shortly after beginning the project > Macario SENSELESSLY MURDERED Elizabeth CONTINUED the work > One Year > 1000's of Vocabulary Cards One day CARDS STOLEN > Never Found > Year's work Lost > for Nothing Then Elizabeth married JIM ELLIOT > also missionary in Ecuador / struggling Jim spent 1 year building mission station along river / one night flood destroyed it After 27 months of marriage Elizabeth's husband Jim killed by Auca Indians Some years later Elizabeth married Addison Leitch > Pres. Pittsburgh Seminary Not long after marriage Addison DIED > Slowly and Painfully of Cancer

Elizabeth's Testimony "The experiences of my life are not such that I could infer from them that God is good, gracious and merciful necessarily. To have one husband murdered and another one disintegrate body, soul, and spirit, through cancer, is not what you would call the proof of the love of God. In fact, there are many times when it looks like just the opposite. But my belief in the love of God is not by inference or instinct. It is by faith. To apprehend God's sovereignty working in that love is the last and highest victory of faith that overcomes the world."

CLOSING PRAYER >

Saint Francis of Assisi: "O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, To be understood as to understand, To be loved as to love. For it is by giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, And it is by dying that we are born to eternal life."