

Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2018 6:48 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB study on Romans 12:1-2

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God (i.e., in view of the mercies of God!) to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual (reasonable) service of worship! And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect!" (Romans 12:1-2)

What's the "therefore" therefore? It follows not only the majestic doxology of praise (a "burst of praise") in 11:33-36 but all of the great "theology" and doctrinal truths of the first 11 chapters of Romans! Referred to here as the "mercies of God"! God's grace, forgiveness, righteousness (imputed!), justification, reconciliation and peace with God, love, joy, hope, eternal life, security of the believer, and more! God's great redemptive plan!

The Psalmist would ask: "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?" (Psalm 16:12)

Romans 12:1-2 is the only proper response to God's redeeming work! The believer's call to commitment and worship is totally due God based on what he has done for us! Dr. Constable calls it "the most important way we can worship God!" MacArthur: the "supreme act of spiritual worship"! Duty always follows doctrine! Right belief leads to good behavior! And worship!

Moo writes that theology "includes in its nature an implicit call to transform one's life, to adjust his thinking and acting in accordance with the truth of God in Christ"! The moral life of the Christian grows directly out of the theology of the gospel!

But why the call to "present the body"? Why not the "soul"? Because, for the believer, God already has the soul! The soul--the inner, most invisible part of man, the very essence of his being--has been already been "redeemed"! Once and for all! (Romans 8:1) Now God wants the body--the "mortal body," or the "flesh"--which remains unredeemed, and where sin resides!

Remember Romans 6:12-14: "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lust; and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness! But (and here it is!) present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God! For sin shall not have dominion over you!"

I Corinthians 3:16 says that our body "is the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you..." and, in Philippians 3:21, that God will one day (ultimately) "transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself"!

But then there's the mind! It's in the mind, MacArthur notes, where "we make a choice as to whether we will express that new man in holiness, or allow our flesh to act in unholiness"!

Romans 12:2 says "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Phillips translation puts it this way: "Don't let the world squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude and mind is changed..."!

Colossians 3:2 says: "Set your mind (your affections) on the things above, not on the things that are on earth!"

And Paul adds in Philippians 4:8--'Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell (think!) on these things!"

And be "transformed"! The Greek word from which the English word "metamorphosis" comes, connoting a change in our outward appearance! Reminiscent (according to MacArthur), of how Jesus, for a moment, at His "transfiguration" (same word used in Matthew 17) displayed outwardly His inner, divine nature and glory! In the same way--although not once, but daily--Christians are to somehow "manifest outwardly their inner redeemed nature"! A kind of transformation, for the believer, which can occur only as the Holy Spirit changes our thinking through consistent study and meditation of Scripture (again, a MacArthurism)!

Colossians 3:16--"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thanksgiving in your hearts to God!"

Psalms 119:11 says: "Thy Word have I hid (treasured) in my heart that I might not sin against You!"

And so, with a redeemed soul, and a consecrated body--and a renewed mind--we will approve what is the "good and acceptable, and perfect will of God! It's our "living sacrifice" and totally reasonable based on what He has done for us!

Here's the summation! When we come to Christ, we enter a whole new realm of life! We're "born again"! Justified by faith! Receive the "imputed righteousness" from God because of Christ! But as Moo notes: "our minds are not immediately changed; our thinking tends to follow the well-worn ruts of the old way of life. Thus we are called to engage in the life-long process of changing the way we think, and thus changing the way we live! And the person transformed by the renewing of the mind is able to discern and put into practice (live out!) the will of God!"

Romans 12:1-2 is a basic call for the transformed life of a believer! And it sets the scene for more specifics which are to follow! It could be described as the "header" as we consider verses 3-21 in our next week's lesson! Moo labels it all as part of the "Christian's mindset"! It begins with a right relationship with God and ends in a right relationship with others!

Look over the next few for a survey from Paul Logan to use as a personal assessment of where you stand in your life as a believer!

Have a great week, men!

Lowell