

Romans 12:1-2

by Keith Price

The sermon emphasizes the importance of presenting ourselves to God as living sacrifices to experience true transformation through His mercy and the renewing of our minds.

Duration: 45:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1-2

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Christian Commitment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the first two verses of a chapter in the Bible. He breaks down the verses into five key words: who, why, what, and how. The first verse emphasizes the importance of committing oneself to God and offering one's body as a living sacrifice. The second verse highlights the need to be transformed by renewing the mind and being able to discern God's will. The speaker emphasizes that this commitment and transformation should not just be a one-time crisis experience, but a continuous process in the life of a believer.

Transcript

Let's pray together. Yes, Lord, you have said, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Lord, we can understand a little of the world looking at us, closing our eyes, talking to somebody they can't see, and thinking we're fools.

We can understand that, Lord, but, Lord, sometimes even we can't see. Oh, I know we can't see with our eyes, these physical eyes, Lord. One day that will be in a different sense from now.

But, Lord, sometimes we can't see you even because our faith seems to be shrouded in some way. We can't feel you. We can't hear your voice.

And, Lord, we're humans, so we pass through times like that. Thank you, Lord, that in those times we do right, not because it feels right, but because it is right. And we want to ask you this morning that that faith that sometimes is cold and almost gone, that faith will lay down its absolutes that says it is right, it is good, God is alive, whether I feel it or not.

And we thank you this morning in the name of Jesus. Amen. How many of you, now think of what I'm going to ask, how many of you are willing to do what I'm going to teach specifically this morning? Now, you don't know right now.

How many of you are willing to do it? Let me see your hands. Oh, we got one valiant person down there. Two.

Oh, you're speaking for your two sons, too, Pavel, are you? Well, not too many of you. You're very trusting. I mean, that's terrific.

But, look, let me tell you this, that what I'm going to teach this morning is from the Bible. How many of you will do what I'm going to say this morning? Oh, now we've got a few more, a dozen. I see several looking around to join the majority.

But, all right, what I'm going to teach this morning is from the Bible, it's from the New Testament, it's very clear, and I don't think it can be really misconstrued or misinterpreted. So, I'm just going to teach the plain sense of scripture. Let me see, not the one finger halfway up to the shoulder like some of you.

If you really commit yourself right now, before I even start, and you can be checked out after by your closest friend here, how many of you will commit yourself to do what I'm going to say? Wow, you are very trusting. Well, then I may as well finish, because they've got the message. I mean, that's all I had to say, really.

Well, I suppose I'd better go over it again for the sake of those who didn't get it. You see, you were right if I said, well, look, I don't know much about investments or stock or anything like that, but let's say I've got some stock here, and listen, I want you to trust me. Give me your money, and I'm going to invest it in something that I think is okay, you know.

I don't tell you anything about it, but I want you to give me ten thousand dollars to invest in that. I mean, you'd say, now, wait a minute, I want to hear a little about it first, then I'll decide whether I'm going to commit myself. And that would be human, that's normal.

Sixteen of the parables that Jesus spoke on are about money, and he talks about the wise use of that, so obviously he wouldn't want to use it unwisely. And yet, here's the interesting thing. When it comes to knowing and enjoying this will of God that I cringe about sometimes, you first of all have to commit yourself to do it, and then God says, you commit it, okay, that means your ears are open, I'll tell you.

And when God tells you, you say, wow, the speaker this morning at the Eccola Hour used Psalm 37, verse 4. Delight yourself in the Lord, and then he will give you the desires of your heart. So, first of all, it's a commitment, then it is that God will show you what is well, and you won't be able to believe it. So, I want you to turn to the passage we're going to look at this morning.

Indeed, we're going to look at it all the mornings this week, if you are here, and I want you to turn to Paul's letter to the Romans, the most famous chapter, I suppose, would be 8, but the most famous opening of the chapter would likely be chapter 12. But we're not going to limit ourselves to the first two verses. We're going to go right on all 21 verses, hopefully, this week, unless we get stuck in verse 13 or 14 and don't quite make it.

But I'll at least give you a summary and tell you what I was going to say. But what we're going to do this morning is we're just going to look at those opening verses, because this is all about how to be a transformed person. The first two verses, the rest of the chapter is how to live a transformed life.

That's what I want us to spend Monday, Tuesday, not Wednesday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. So what we're going to do, for those of you who are here all week, is we'll look at the first two verses this morning. Tomorrow morning, 3, 4, and 5. Then Tuesday morning, 6, 7, and 8. So tomorrow morning is all about what it means to really understand who I am and to have a proper view of myself.

And verses 6, 7, and 8 is how to find and cultivate the gifts that God has given me. Then we're going on, not Wednesday, but Thursday, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Five verses there, it's getting towards the end of the week.

Friday, wow, we've got to catch up, eight verses, 14 to 21. Now, what we're going to try to do is, the last 10 minutes each morning, I'm going to take this mic, this one without a cord, and I'm going to come down and ask if anybody's got any sort of answers to some of these difficult things. Maybe you've got some comments, and we'll do that during the week.

Anyway, this morning I want us to look at this first two verses, and notice, will you, as I read it, that the first verse is, are you willing to commit yourself to present yourself to me? You are? Before you, I've even asked you anything or told you anything, says God? Yep, you say, two-thirds of us put our hands up. Okay, then he says, the second verse, you'll be able to put to the test and say, wow, what a terrific thing God's will is. I didn't know it could be as exciting as this.

So here we go, let me read them, and I'm using the NIV. Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then, then, after you've committed, then you will be able to put to the test and approve what God's will is. You'll find that it's good and pleasing and perfect.

Well, very simply, all we're going to do is we're going to look at five little words, and they occur, one in the first verse and four in the second verse, and we're going to look at them, we're going to use those five little words as pegs on which to hang our points, our thoughts, rather. So it's normal if there's only one verse in verse one and it's just as long as verse two, which has four words, that the first point is going to take half of our time. So don't think you're going to have lunch at three o'clock.

I'll get through it, don't worry. So here's the first word in the middle of verse one. It's translated in the NIV as offer.

I urge you to offer, offer. But perhaps a better way for us to put it would be, what most of your versions may have, is to present. So the first idea is to present, because we normally talk about offering.

Well, you know, that's fine. Well, I've got a Canadian dollar or something here, and I'll offer it to you. I hope you don't take it, you know.

If I offer it, I'm saying, well, I'm going to offer it, but you know. But if I present it in our English language, although it's the same word translated here, and they're quite right to say offer it, because it's all about the offerings of the Old Testament, yet if I present it to you, there's a sort of finality which I don't get in the English where the word offering, right? So anyway, it doesn't matter whichever one you've got, it's really presenting. Okay, so here we are.

The first word is present. The second word is in verse two, then. All four, the next four words are in verse two.

Do not, here's the second word, conform. Here's the third word, be transformed. It's the third word, transformed.

The fourth word, almost next to it, renewing, by the renewing of your mind. And the fifth and final word, approve. Approve.

So let's put them all into the present participle form, those of you grammaticians or whatever you want to call yourself. Here we have it, presenting, conforming, transforming, renewing, approving. Five little pegs.

All right, let's start at the beginning. We'll carry on till we get to the end, and then hopefully we'll stop. So let's talk about the first one, then.

Presenting. And I'm going to take up all the first verse, all, in fact, this week we're going to see every phrase in this wonderful, wonderful chapter. So just look at it, it's exciting.

I mean, I don't believe I just need to do a running commentary, but frankly, that's much more exciting to me, to listen to a running commentary, but we'll have these little pegs. First of all, then notice verse one. I want you to notice who must present.

Then I want you to notice why we present. Then I want you to notice what we present. Then I want you to notice how we present.

Easy. Who, why, what, and how. First, then, who? He says, the Apostle Paul says, I urge you, brothers.

Now, in the last three chapters, nine, ten, and eleven, he's been talking about his Jewish brothers, but he's been talking about them in the third person, they. He's writing this book, he's writing this letter to Christians at Rome. Therefore, when he says brothers and he addresses them like that, he is addressing Christians.

That means that if he says, it's Christians that I'm urging to present their bodies to God. Hey, you can't come to any other conclusion then, than that it's possible to be a Christian and never to have presented your bodies to God. If that's who, then look at why.

Why do we present? Well, I urge you, brothers, here it is, in view of, in the light of, because of God's mercy. And you read about it in the last part of the previous chapter. The mercy, the mercies, the compassions of God, all that God has done, in the light of what God has done.

Look back particularly to the cross, two thousand years ago, where God broke into our little world of time and space, and radically transformed so many lives, because Jesus, who is God, took the wrap for us. God was satisfied, and now those of us that look to him by faith, and God alone will give us that faith. Then he says, you're forgiven, you're redeemed, you're off the hook.

The wrap has been taken by Jesus. So, looking back to God's mercies, highlighted and epitomized by that cross two thousand years ago, in the light of that, that's why we need to present, is because God has given us all that. You see, some people have a kind of a penny-in-the-slot idea with God.

God, you're going to present my body, eh? Well, think about it. Okay, I'll sort of condescend to you, God. You know, I'm really the boss, but I'll sort of allow you to have control of my body, maybe.

But I tell you what, if I put the penny in the slot, boy, you better give me something good. And you put the penny in the slot, and you wait, and no bubblegum comes out the bottom. You say, what's wrong? And you bang the machine, you bang it, you try another penny, it still doesn't come out the bottom, and you kick the machine, and it doesn't come out.

Why? Because it's already come out. Because two thousand years ago, God gave everything he could give in Jesus Christ, and in Ephesians chapter one, all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus arose. And if God has given all, what more can he give? So therefore, it's a not-to-please offering, this presenting.

This is a thank-offering. It's saying, thank you to God. I want to give you my life.

Now, you've given everything for me, and I want to offer to you whatever I have. Who? Christians. Why? Because of God's mercies.

But what must we present? Therefore, I urge you, I beseech you, my brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer or to present your bodies. Your bodies. You say, well, wait a minute, this, this, um, I mean, I'm living on earth, but this religion stuff for Sunday morning is something kind of inside, you know.

I mean, after all, uh, you know, you say, I'm, well, I'm British, you know, that kind of stiff upper lip, and that stoical kind of, uh, you know, keep this stuff to myself. I don't share with people on that. I mean, that's my soul.

I mean, what are you talking about present my body to God? Well, I know in a very real sense, we can say that it means to present our bodies means now to present our entire lives. Whereas we may have given God the religious part of our life before, now he says, I want you really to give me all that part of you that is involved in what you call your secular job, or this other thing, the non-Sunday stuff. I want you to give me all of your life now.

And yet there's a very real sense in which the body represents that. I want you to present your bodies. Here we are.

Imagine this microphone here, here, this part in the middle. That is my inner being, my spirit. In First Thessalonians, it talks about your whole spirit and soul and body, indicating, I realize people differ on this thing, and we won't spread a church over that, but frankly, let's see your whole spirit and soul and body.

But here is my spirit right there, right? Now, around that is my soul. This is the classical way of describing it. I mean, I don't think mine's that shape, actually.

It's probably a different shape. But anyway, here it is, my soul, right? And outside here is my body. Here it is, the outside circle.

This inside circle is my God consciousness. God speaks to me in my spirit. The very outside part is my world consciousness.

That's how you can see me up here, and I can see you down there, all looking at me for the first five minutes. I'll see a few not looking at me in a few minutes. You'll drop to sleep, but don't worry, I come down and wake you up.

And then, I didn't last night because you've been traveling, but no, it's all right. Anyway, here is the body outside, my world consciousness. I'm conscious.

I got these senses out here, right? These wonderful five senses, or if you're a woman, then sex and intuition, you know, that we men don't have. But you've got these senses, and you relate out there. So here's the God consciousness, my spirit.

Here is my world consciousness, and in here, the middle circle in the dartboard, my self-consciousness, my soul, my mind, my thinking process, and my emotions, my feeling process, and my will, my volitional faculties. And so here we have myself, but out here, world consciousness, self-consciousness, God consciousness. Now, what happened when you became a Christian? Look at this.

You can see all this, can't you? I don't use overhead signs. I have to use fingers. You understand why.

But anyway, out here, out here, can you see out here? Can you see a book with lines on it? That's the Bible, right? By here is like a dove, a bird, a dove. I can't draw it very well. It's got a beak, too.

All right. Here we have the dove and the Bible. This dove represents God, the Holy Spirit, who is represented as a dove, and also the Bible, of course, you know what it is.

So God's Word and God's Spirit are out here, wanting to have an impact on me. And if you don't know Jesus Christ yet, boy, you're in the right place. And this morning, he happened to come right at the right time, because I'm going to tell you a little bit about what happened when you became a Christian.

But I better be careful, because I want to get on beyond the Christian life and living. But this is tremendously important. I mean, if you don't come in the beginning, how in the world can you get to the rest? Verse one is a crisis.

Verse two is a process. If you're not going to have the crisis, then you're not going to have the process. And as I often quote George Rowe, where a crisis not followed by a process becomes an abscess.

So you've got to have a crisis and a process. But you can't start in the process without the... Anyway, here we have it. Here's the Word and the Bible.

The Bible and the Spirit. What they're doing is they're starting to work on you and have an impact, because you'll never understand God's truth. It'll be foolishness to you.

The Bible tells us it's impossible for you to understand it, except God, the Holy Spirit, illuminates your mind. He made your mind to have his thoughts in it. Kepler, the astronomer, said, Oh God, I'm thinking your thoughts after you.

And that's what God wants. He wants us to think his thought. But you can't.

You don't think that way. You read 1 Corinthians, the first chapter or two, and you find we don't think that way. So God, the Holy Spirit, is wanting now to invade your mind to say, Hey, you don't know what you're missing if you're not a Christian.

You look at these Christians and you say, Well, I don't want to be like that. You don't realize that what you've got won't be fulfilling. What we've got in Christ Jesus will be increasingly fulfilling.

And this is only chicken feed down here to what we're going to get. But frankly, here it is. So he wants to invade you.

How does he do it? He wants to get through to you. So he's got these senses, particularly hearing and seeing. You may hear somebody speaking about the Bible like this morning.

You've got a hearing sense. Or you may open a Bible when nobody's looking, you know, when nobody's looking. You just read it in the quiet.

You don't want anyone to know you're getting religious. But you read the Bible. And as you see it or hear it, God, the Holy Spirit, will start to what we call convict you.

You read it and you say, Hey, this has got the ring of truth about it. There's something there that makes sense. I've never thought it.

You mean God knew this about? Is this book written to me? And you look at it and you'll find, Wow, this is exactly what I'm like. And you begin to sense that what you're reading is true. That means that not only the seeing and the hearing out here in my body, but the next one in my soul, where my mind or my intellect is there, your intellect will now be affected.

And the Spirit of God is starting to convict you in your mind. Now, for you to become a real Christian, it mustn't only be an intellectual conversion. Your emotions must be involved.

Hate and love are the strongest. And you're going to have to switch around the things you hate and love. And the will will be affected because you may have remorse, which would be the emotions, or regret, which would be the mind as well.

But you need to have repentance, which involves an act of my will. So God, the Holy Spirit, will start to affect all these three parts of my soul. And as he does that, I say, this is fantastic.

This is what I've been looking for. God, I realized you came and died for me in Jesus Christ. I never knew that before you took the rap for me.

God, I want to do. What am I supposed to do? He says, as many as receive him, to those he gave the authority to become the sons and daughters of God, even to those who believe on his name. Lord, I believe.

He says, all right. What I'm going to do, you've got a blackened spirit. You can't communicate with me.

Your spirit is dead because of trespasses and sins. So the Spirit of God now comes down, gets a hold of that old-fashioned acorn at the bottom of the old-fashioned blinds that you had in your home for a hundred years. Remember the acorn at the bottom? He got a hold of it, and the Spirit of God goes, boom, and he lets go.

Up the blind goes, and suddenly all the light of God flashes into your spirit. And you say, I can't believe I've got a new set of eyes. These are eyes I never knew I had before.

Well, you didn't. God, the Holy Spirit has to open them. You have at that point become a Christian.

God, the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in your spirit. Now you say, that's wonderful. I've got a little life.

I have my quiet time. I'm going to read the Bible in the morning. I'm going to learn that new one, doesn't.

Stan, you amaze me how you can, you just know how, when to come in with all those different lines and how to say a repeat. You've got the precise second that you come in. Wow, that's a wonderful gift.

You did a great job. But you know, you can sing those hymns and say, I love singing that. That's great.

I'm a Christian now. But you say, my mind, oh well, I'm still going to read all the trash I read in my room and nobody sees me. Or I'm going to watch all that stuff that nobody else will watch, and it gets more permissive with every generation.

Or I'm going to pay, go about my business, and I won't have these kind of Christian principles. After all, that's for Sunday morning. You know, that's for my spirit.

Now then, that's exactly the situation the Apostle Paul is getting at. He says, all right, I want to urge you brothers, your Christian brothers and sisters, if you've gone through that process. You may not have understood it before, but very simply, God, I've given myself to you as much as I know how.

But now, he says, I urge you in the light of all that Jesus has done to offer your bodies now. And if you offer your body, you offer all. Because if you can keep control of this little thing in between my lips here, my tongue, I mean, that's a big thing in itself.

Much bigger with me than with you. But that's the way it is. And God says, I want you to give your bodies.

So he says, I want you to give all your life. That's what we have to present. Have you? Or do you live in two worlds, getting satisfaction from neither because the other side bugs you all the time? All right, who? Christians must present.

Why? Because of all God did. What must we present? Our bodies, our lives. But how must we present? As sacrifices.

Oh, wait a minute, mister. Look, it's just gone twelve o'clock anyway. Normally in our church, we finish at twelve o'clock.

I don't want to listen to any more of that stuff. Sacrifice? I don't want to die yet. Well, who said you were? Oh, but wait a minute, you do.

I'm sorry, you do. You do have to die. Although maybe not in the same sense as you're thinking of.

But it says, I want you now, and the word is what they use of all those animal sacrifices of the Old Testament. That's why they say an offering, those offerings presenting. They put that on the altar and say, here is my sacrifice.

God says, all right, I want you to take yourself now, all that you are, and I want you to offer yourself up to me on the altar, as it were, which is right here at Canna Beach this morning, and I want you to offer yourself to me. But wait a minute, not as a dead sacrifice, but as a living sacrifice, and as hundreds and hundreds of you will then say, that's why you always climb off the altar. But nevertheless, he's a living sacrifice.

It means that every day you're to be there on the altar, the continual burnt offering, as it were, and you're there on the altar. But you're living your life, but it's just like you've completely submitted yourself as if you're dead, and you've got no more saying things, because you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ

in God. I've been crucified with Christ.

There's no more rights in that sense. God is going to show me that the rights I had were taken away, but he's going to give me something far better than that, something that I was made for, which is much better than all those rights. God's going to show me that.

But it's a living sacrifice, day by day, every day as I go to work, and as I go to whatever I do, I am a sacrifice. Oh, Lord, so easy to speak about, so hard to do, and we look back on days. Every night I look back and say, blew it then, blew it at 11 o'clock, blew it at 12 o'clock, blew it at 3 o'clock, 3.05, 3.25. I mean, it's... But Lord, thank you, you're still working on us as we saw last night, but Lord, I want my life to be a sacrifice, a living sacrifice.

The sacrifice which is three things, living, but also holy notice. Holy! If your sacrifice is holy, do you know what that means? Well, you go out, and as you leave there, you've got a nice white circle they'll give you on the way out, and you just hang it above your head, it clips onto your ears, and you hang it up there, and they say you're holy now. Doesn't mean that.

A holy vessel was a vessel that was used only in sacrifices, or only in ritualistic things that went on in certain religious ceremonies. It was a holy vessel, and you didn't use it for anything else. A holy day is a day we used to set apart, especially for a Christian festival, or a day to worship God.

Set apart, that's what it means. But we didn't like that we set it apart for God. They didn't give us enough holidays, you know, so what we did was we changed the holy day into holiday.

That means just changing the why, means it's all yours, God, into I, it's all mine. So we changed, and that's how we got our word. Exactly! It became a holiday, but it was set apart a holy day for God.

Now then, he says, I want you to set yourselves apart holy. That means exclusively for me to use. I'm the only one that will call the shots, and the instructions I give are in this book, and any extra information you may want, and you really want to do it, and you commit yourself to it before you come to your quiet time, I will give it to you as you pray and commune with me.

Well, that's a holy sacrifice. No wonder it then says if you've got a living sacrifice, and it's set apart entirely for God as holy, then it's pleasing or acceptable in some of your versions. That's what God wants to see, a life that's pleasing and worthy of him as we saw last night.

Wait a minute, it says this is your, King James says what? Reasonable service, and you used to say, well of course that's quite reasonable, he gave himself for me, so I'll give myself for him, but that isn't what it means, of course. The word reasonable means whatever it is, I think the adjective I can find from the deepest part of my being, intellectual, no, soulish or soulless, soulish, no, no, spiritual, yeah, maybe spiritual would be better, deep down, logical, whatever the deepest part of my being is, that kind of worship. So this says a spiritual act of worship.

The reason they put act, we'll see in a moment, a spiritual worship, or a worship of, a service of worship, or we use the word worship and service interchangeably. You may go to the morning service today. I say, well I'm going to morning worship.

You see, depends on the ecclesiastical background, I suppose, but we use them interchangeably, but God says, all right, I want you to do this, and this is the deepest, deepest service you can ever give for me.

Forget all the things you think you can do for me, I could have got along quite well using other people, thank you very much, but frankly the greatest service you can give to me is worship, as Stan told us this morning, to say you are worthy, and because you are worthy, I will worship you, and that is the greatest service I can do, and the greatest way I can worship is not 20 minutes on a Sunday morning, that's praise, which is a part of worship, the fruit of my lips, which is a part of worship, but it's the fruit of my life, which is the other part of worship in the Bible that I need to think about. In fact, if the only time you worship is when we're singing, and that's marvelous, and then you say, oh well, that poor old, that, that, that guy that's going to open the Bible now, that, that boring guy up there, he's opening the Bible, and oh well, forget about it, way I go off to sleep.

If you think now the worship is over, no, the test as to whether you're worshipping God or worshipping worship is when that praise time is over, if that has drawn you out because God has rightfully given you emotions that he expects you to use and not suppress, but if when you then start to think about the character of God, you switch off, you're only emotionally involved in something called worshipping worship. If the character of God now gets to your mind, and together with that emotion says, oh, this is tremendous because I know I'm not worshipping only because it feels good, I'm worshipping now because I know it's good, it's in your word, so Lord, I want to worship you that way, but if when all of that is over, Sunday morning, that's the limit of your worship, then we've forgotten that most of it is Monday to Friday. Oh, you get Saturday off, by the way, I forgot to tell you that.

Oh no, you don't, sorry, that's wrong, you don't get Saturday off.

This is everything, all right, and by the way, you notice it says, and don't worry, my time's half gone, so I got the other four, we'll take the other half, but just notice, notice the word there, it says, I beseech you to offer or to present, right, that word is an interesting word, it's put in an interesting part of speech, it's not the normal one, keep on doing this thing, sort of like let's say, where's Lorraine, oh dear, would you close your eyes a minute, oh no, let's say I've got this, oh, close your eyes a minute, will you, okay, open your eyes now, all right, I say this is a wonderful, wonderful book, I'm an organist, and I'm a brilliant organist, and I've got all the pieces I composed in this book, all through my life, no other copies in the world, no other copies in this world,

I just haven't got any at all, but you know, Andy, it's been, it's great that you came from Yorkshire in England 12 years ago, and I appreciate you're marrying this Californian girl, and so on, and you've gone through a lot, and I care so much for you, that I want to give you this book, and it's all my treasure, it's all right, it'll come back, and this is my treasure, but I want to give it to you, so you say thank you, thank you, thank you very much, that's good, very nice, so he's got it, and he takes it home, and I've lost my treasure possession, but I've given to him, but two days later, I, where did I put those, oops, here they are, I thought we'd lost them for good, two days later, I'm going through my desk, and I find these, oh, that's in the book I gave Andy, those were pages that

were out of the book, I took them out because I wanted to upset Lorene, no, I put them out because I want, I mean, oh, so I go along and say, oh, by the way, Andy, these are yours, and he looks at them, he says, mine, they're not mine, I say, but they are, I gave you them the other day, he says, no, you didn't, I looked through every page you gave me the other day, and those weren't among them, I say, but Andy, when I gave you that, I had thought all the pages were in that book, but I've now realized they weren't, so I'm not going to say, oh, should I be a good boy, put in my thumb, and pull out a plumb, and say, what a good bum am I, I'm going to give this to God, God, guess what, I gave you all before, but I'm going to give

you a little bit more, 101%, Lord, you know, no, I say, Lord,

this is yours, I gave it to you before, I didn't realize I was stealing, I kept this back, but you hadn't shown me that I hadn't really handed this over to you, so Andy, don't even say, thank you, because you already said, thank you, when you did something to me long before I ever gave you that book, so those are yours, put them in the book, and put them in the right place, no, I don't trust you, we'll sort it out later, right, all right, so here we have it, then, this is the idea, this is the meaning of the word present, offer, because it's a once-only thing, you do this once, some people do that immediately, they become a Christian, other people, it takes weeks or months, sometimes years, and they realize they've not given everything to God, but it's a once-only thing, and once you've

done that, you're on the altar, you can't keep on saying, I'm going to get up there all the time, you're there on that altar, and therefore, this is the crisis, verse one, it's an act of thanksgiving and worship to God, either at the time of your conversion, or most of us, sometime later, when we realize we haven't given God our all, no, he says, all right, very quickly, there's something that's going to follow on, if that's all it is, and you're only going to sit in crises, because that's the thing, get up and give a testimony at the church, guess what happened at Cannon Beach, I went through this crisis, the church says, let's you act here in this church for a year, and we'll tell you whether the crisis was real or not, how will they tell that, well, because there will be a process that

will follow it, what's the process, verse two, the last four words, in fact, let's save time and take number two and three words together, there, I'm already almost on number four, so here we have it, do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, verse two of Romans 12, but be transformed, two words, our first word, conform, the second word, transform, actually, the better translation, and I don't know why the NIV has translated this in the active voice, do not conform, although it may be more the way we speak in English, but really, it's in the passive voice, don't be conformed any longer to this world, some of you will remember J.B.

Phillips's translation of 35 years or 40 years ago, it was the equivalent of Eugene Peterson's The Message today, and it was revolutionary, well, most people don't remember what it said, except a lot of people remember the expression in Romans 12, verse two, don't let the world squeeze you into its mold, that's the idea, don't be conformed, don't say, well, here's the world, you know, with all its requirements and so on, no, it means don't be conformed, but here, you've got then also the other word, which is transform, now, let's have a look at these two words together, conform here, transform there, and we'll be bent onto number four after that, so now, I want you to notice them, transformed over here, this is a loaf of bread, and so is this one, a loaf of bread, this loaf of bread, the transformed loaf, is made with yeast, isn't that nice, yeast, boy, like that stuff, this loaf of bread, hold on, don't eat it too quickly, is made of Play-Doh, plasticine, plastic, the difference is that this one over here, the shape that that loaf of bread is, is determined by the pressure of the hands on the outside, like the world puts pressure on you, particularly those of you who are at that difficult time, when it's hard to resist, you want to have friends, and you want to find the right mate in life, and oh, it's so hard, I tell you, if you're willing to stand up to this, the greatest person in any generation, well, the greatest person in any nation will contradict their generation, said G.K.

Chesterton, and I tell you to stand for the right things, but this one is moulded by the world, the world's got its hands on you, and shaping you, you depend on its priorities, you depend on its presuppositions, and what it believes in, that all truth is relative, and things of that nature, and frankly, you've got the world's props, and in order to get your resources, you're depending on what the world offers, this and that, and oh

yes, pop yourself up, no, that's what the world says, don't let the world squeeze you into its mould, because now, if this presenting is real, the first thing you'll do is say, I don't want to be a playdough, loaf of bread anymore, I want to be one with yeast, and the yeast, although not normally in the Bible spoken of this way, the way I'm using it now, is the influence that's inside your spirit, where the Holy Spirit came to dwell when he let the blinds up, that's God dwelling in you, that influence must now spread through like yeast in a loaf through your whole being, so now, you're going to say, yes, I present my body, that means that the Spirit of God will now transform my entire life, that's the meaning of those two words.

Let me ask you, have you gone through some crisis, even recently, of commitment and consecration to God, but it hasn't been followed up with a process? Be careful, because this is one of the greatest dangers in Western European and North American evangelicalism today.

The other one is, understanding the concept is equivalent to experiencing the reality. That's right, brother, right on that, you said it, right on, oh, sorry, I said it, all right, but that is true, that is true, you experience it right, you see, the thing is this, that we've just got to be careful of this, so important, I wonder where you are, are you allowing the Spirit of God who lives within you to spread throughout, or if you are, and you want your body now to be controlled, if I want my right hand to be stopped from punching somebody in the nose, which I'm not normally inclined to do, but, you know, because I usually get it back worse, but anyway, if I want to, then my mind has got to dictate that, so now he says, all right, I've got the first, second, and third words, present, yes, what do I do then?

Don't be conformed, but be transformed, but how you guys come along and you go to these conference grounds and you don't tell us how, oh, here it is, the apostle, why didn't you wait until the end of the sentence, be transformed by the renewing of your mind, here's our fourth word, renewing, renewing, it's the mind, so it's the mind in between my spirit, where the Holy Spirit is, and my punching fist, it's the mind in between that's now got to determine what I do, so if God gets control of your mind, he's got control of you, and it's by the renewing of your mind, you are a car, we are cars, you're a Cadillac, I'm a Volkswagen, the old type, and here I am, and we're going along, you're driving along, you see, you've got a steering wheel, so have I, the steering wheel is your mind, and the way your mind goes is the way your car will go of your life, you turn the mind this way, the car of your life will go that way, you turn your mind that way, the car of your life will go that way, who's the driver?

You say, well, I am, no, you're not, you're the car, so who's the driver? The Holy Spirit, he wants to get his hands on my mind, not to brainwash Hare Krishna type, no, no, no, but to get his hands on my mind, so gently to woo me, to urge me, to beseech me, to do the will of God in this book, and he wants to turn my mind in the direction of this book, as I do, the car of my life will go around, so I present my body, I must now enter the process by turning my mind, you are a computer, you were programmed wrong when you were born, you press the function key and all the bad stuff comes out, what happens is the word renewing, although a different word from repent, really means the same thing, it means that what I thought before, now has to be changed, when God gets a hold of us, he turns the whole world upside up, because it was upside down before, and he turns my mind upside down, what I hated before, I love now, what I loved before, I hate now, everything's the opposite way around, and he starts to renew my mind, and he does it with the database of this book, and he says, all right, take the principles, put them into your mind, feed them in one by one, and over the months of the years, you will find you'll increasingly be thinking my thoughts after me, and this will give us a clue as to why we're going to delight in the Lord's will after, so this is what happens, so he's renewing my mind, if you want, I don't, yes I do, just let, no need to turn to it, in case you take half an hour finding it, but it's Ephesians, you can write it down, if you're writing, I notice

some of you writing notes, look at Ephesians 4, don't, not now, 25 to 32, there you've got four things that you deprogram, you say, I don't want that stuff, when I press this key, I don't want that to come on my monitor, on my screen, I want something else to come, all right, you'll have to put some new software, and God will sell you that free of charge, Jesus paid the price, and as a result, you put that in, so that now, when you press that same key, something different comes out, in other words, now you're told not to steal this, but to look what it says, deprogram, put off falsehood, verse 25 Ephesians 4, well, do I leave it blank?

No, seven devils worse than the first will come in, if you leave your mind blank, fill it, fill it with the right things, put off falsehood or lying, so what do we do? Reprogram, speak truth to your neighbor, then the next but one verse, verse 28, steal no longer, deprogram that, well what must I do? Work, doing something useful with your hands, so you'll have something to share with people, the third thing, verse 29, deprogram, don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, what do I do?

Shut up, no, the answer to abuse isn't no use, but correct use, so don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, oh, that's what I reprogram, that's right, verse 31, deprogram, get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, along with every form of malice, all right, you leave my way, not do anything, no, reprogram, be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving as God, as in Christ God forgave you, you see, that's the idea, you're changing your mind, you're renewing your mind, you're reprogramming your mind, you're getting rid of the old stuff and putting the new stuff in, so when you press that key and a certain situation occurs in your life, you'll know what to do, the spiritual absolutes of that, therefore we come to our last word, look at our last word, now, I've forgotten what the other four were, oh, no wonder I'm in Ephesians, here we are, Romans 12, Romans 12, here we are, the first word, presenting, say them with me, the second word, conforming, uh-uh, don't do that, the third word, transforming, the fourth word, renewing and the fifth word is approving, then only at that point when you've done that, when you've committed yourself without knowing what that stock was going to do or what you're going to invest in, you've committed yourself to this God who is thoroughly trustworthy, who is always good, sometimes I recognize it and sometimes I don't, but God is always good, therefore, having committed myself to him, then, then, without even knowing what he's going to say, you'll be able to put to the test and approve what God's will is, that's one verb in the language of the New Testament and it means the two things, to put it to the test and say, wow, this is terrific, you say, wait a minute, I'm putting this to the test, hey, was that, was that you talking to me just now, God?

God said, well, yes, that was me, why do you think it wasn't? Well, normally, when you talk to me and tell me your will, I think, oh boy, not again, gotta go through that spinach three times a day, you know, no, I don't like, no, God, please, please, but God says, but it was me, but God, how can it be you, because always you tell me things that I don't want to do, that's your will, that's what it is, I don't want to be a Christian, but God says, that's because you never committed yourself to it first, if you commit yourself to my will first, what will happen?

What will happen is, over the months and years, gradually, God's will in this book, in little bits and pieces, will be funneled into your mind, and your mind will be renewed, so you will start thinking God's thoughts after him, and before long, you'll find most of what you think will be God's thoughts, so then, when God says, yeah, this is my will, you say, but how can it be, that's exactly what I think, and God says, well, of course, it's what you think, what do you think the process has been going on all the time?

The process has been the renewing of your mind, God, this is fabulous, delight yourself also in the Lord, Psalm 37, 4, we had early this morning, and he will give you the desires of your heart, no wonder it finishes up with, then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, his pleasing, and his perfect will, it is good, God is always good, you might not recognize that now, but you can tell him, I know you're good, whatever I'm going through this morning, despite the crisis that we've been through the last week, God, you are still good, always good, and I'm never going to question that, Lord, secondly, the last word is perfect, perfect, your will is perfect, Lord, you may not give me what I want this week, but it's because five years down the road, you who are the

omniscient one, who has foreknowledge and can see ahead, you are the one that knows, if I get that this week, I'll be messing my life up five years down the road, so Lord, I'm going to trust that your will is perfect, and you know best, you can see the end, you're at the top of the Empire State, in the middle, your will is pleasing, or acceptable, and here's the heading, here's the thing, if you went to sleep now, and didn't see anybody, don't worry, so you don't have to apologize to me, I didn't notice anybody, I was too concerned with what I was saying, I guess, but anyway, if you've got pleasing in that, in your version, at the end of verse two, then you will have pleasing in your version, in the second or third line of verse one, if you've got the word acceptable at the end of verse

two, you will have the word acceptable, as far as I know, at the beginning of verse one, all right, here it is, you want to sleep, wake up, I'm going to give you everything I said in one sentence, you say, why didn't you do that three hours ago, I could have gone, but here it is, all right, I'm going to sum it all up, this is what I've said this morning, here it is, what these two verses say, as best I can explain it, here it is, when my life becomes acceptable to God, God's will, verse two, will become acceptable to me, got it, people have all kinds of seminars on how to know God's will, I tell you, I don't know any part of scripture that's more precise and definite, but it's much far more foundational than what people want, they want all the superficial stuff up here, you tell me what I

should do now, tomorrow, next week, no, no, God said, this is the heart of it, and the rest of your life, and in eternity, you'll be in the center of my work, this is what I want, and it will be acceptable to you, because your life became acceptable to God, now then, if I were to ask you, tomorrow morning, which I'm not going to, how many of you will do what I'm going to say before I start, you say, depends on what you're going to say, oh, you're right, because with me, I'm a human, don't ever do anything that a human being asks without them explaining it, James and John came to Jesus, said, will you do whatever he asks, he said, what you want, what does he want to ask, but when it comes to God, will you do whatever I say before you open that scripture union, or daily bread, will you do

what it says, Lord, it's your word, and I can trust you, I will, then he says, you delight yourself in the Lord like that, and I can assure you, what I'm going to give you now, is exactly what you want, because God gives us the desires of our heart, amen, amen.

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