

CREATED TO WORSHIP TOGETHER

Worship in the Old Testament: Psalm 95.6 – often with outward actions, such as kneeling, bowing.

In the New Testament, John 4.24 – not just outward, but in spirit and in truth.

Whether we worship with outward expression or inwardly, worship must be genuine. We can't judge a person's spirituality by what they do, or by what they don't do. How does God see our worship? Much as God saw the king he wanted Samuel to anoint, 1 Samuel 16.7.

Romans 12.1-2 – key verses on true worship.

1. Offer your body

Verse 1 begins: 'Therefore...' This links these verses back to what has gone before in the previous 11 chapters. The gospel – God's righteousness – the impossibility of keeping the law – the need for trust in God – we are justified by faith, reconciled to God – consider yourself dead to sin but alive to God in Christ – freed from law, so set your mind on the Spirit(and much more)

Because of these truths, Paul **urges** the Roman Christians to present their bodies as living sacrifices. The Greek word translated 'urge' means to admonish, to encourage, to exhort, used in classical Greek of exhorting troops who were about to go into battle. (parakaleo). It's something absolutely necessary.

In view of God's mercy – or 'by the mercies of God' – What is God's mercy?

He has already given us his mercy, so because of that, we should give ourselves wholly to him.

(God's mercy is that he hasn't given us what we do deserve, but instead has given us his grace - what we don't deserve.)

Offer /present your bodies

What do you think this means?

We are to do this not out of duty, because we have to, but willingly, joyfully, because of all he has done for us. Jesus gave his body to bear what we deserved – death, so how could we not give him our bodies to serve him in any way we are able, now that we have received his life?

As a living sacrifice – this isn't a one-off thing, but is ongoing, hour by hour, day by day, voluntarily. We serve God by serving others. We don't always want to sacrifice ourselves – it isn't always comfortable to do so, but this is what we are urged to do. How can we do it?

Holy and pleasing/acceptable to God – How do we please God? Genesis 6.8

What was the difference between Noah and the rest of the people? See 6.5 and 6.9.

Pleasing him should be our greatest desire and accomplishment. Our motive in serving should be always to please God. All of us have circumstances in our lives that we could use as excuses for not serving – but in those circumstances as we trust in God, we are still able to please him. Going through difficulties with absolute trust in God is one way we can please him.

True and proper (spiritual/reasonable) worship The word translated ‘proper’ or ‘spiritual’ or ‘reasonable’ in various translations is *logikos*, from which we get our word ‘logical’. It is the obvious or logical reaction to what God has done for us, that we give him our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Do you think it is a logical response?

Worship in this sense is living our whole lives in thanksgiving and praise to God recognizing all he has done for us. Not just going to church, singing praise songs, reading our Bible, but those things and everything else we do should be part of our worship of God.

Applications:

1. Resolve to make lifestyle worship a priority
2. Seek out ministry opportunities
3. Commit yourself to a healthy lifestyle

Any comments on these applications?

2. Renew your mind

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world

In other words, break the mould the world has pushed you into. We are all shaped, patterned by the world – how can we break this mould?

The Holy Spirit will do the reshaping, if we allow him to do so. First we must let him show us how and where we need reshaping, then work with him in it.

Suggest some of the patterns the world shapes us into.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind

A caterpillar can be transformed into a butterfly – but it doesn’t happen by chance. The caterpillar can’t do it by itself.

Neither can we transform ourselves. But as we yield ourselves to God, he by his Spirit can bring about the transformation. It's not a sudden thing, but an ongoing process. However, it is also a command – Be transformed.

We must respond and intentionally give ourselves to allow the Spirit to work, and to work with him.

Applications:

1. Saturate yourself with godly thinking
2. Increase time and scope in the Word of God. Commit to read it, meditate on it and do it.
3. Slow down – Wait on the Lord, spend time with him.

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

Do you see God's will as good, pleasing and perfect? What is his will? Generally? Specifically?

His general will is that we walk with him, serve, obey and follow him. Specifically for each of us it will often be different, our job, who we marry, where we live, etc.

Thomas Schreiner sums up Romans 12.1-2 this way:

Give yourself wholly to God; do not be shaped by the old world order, but let new thought patterns transform your life.

When we think what God has done for us, how Jesus gave his life to save us, surely this is not too much to ask of us, is it?