

What God Wants

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

- **Sign nailed to the wall of a convent in Blassingame, California:** “No Trespassing! Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law!” signed, “The Sisters of Mercy” – GOD IS NOT LIKE THAT! AND THERE IS NO SIGN LIKE THAT IN HEAVEN!
- **I urge you, plead with you, encourage you, beg you, IN VIEW OF** the mercies of God ...
- **WHY would you give God what He wants?**
(until you understand **WHY**, the WHAT and HOW don’t matter to you)
- There are many facets of God’s mercy in our lives (**“mercies” is a plural word**)
 - Psalm 51:1 – **“tender mercies”**
 - Psalm 89:1 – **“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever”**
 - Psalm 106:45 – **“multitude of his mercies”**
 - Isaiah 54:7 – **“great mercies”**
 - Isaiah 55:3 – **“sure mercies”**

It is only because of God’s mercy that you are breathing, moving, thinking, and worshipping right now! *He has many mercies!*

- ***And if every one of His temporal/physical/earthly mercies were to suddenly disappear –***
so that all you had was **God’s salvation – He would STILL be merciful!**

How do you measure mercy like the mercy God shows to us?

- How high does it go?
- How far does it go?

Well, it's infinite ...

Psalm 103:11-12 For as the heaven is high above the earth, **so great is his mercy toward them that fear him**. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

But there is an easier way to measure God's mercy, because there is a point where those two immeasurable measurements meet ... in a CROSS!

- God measures His mercy with the cross!
- So, in view of, because of, by the mercies of God ... that's WHY!

Don't serve God because of His judgments,

- **Serve Him because of His mercies!**
- I'm not scared of Hell,
- I'm thrilled about Heaven!

Once you understand WHY you would consider giving God what He wants, here's WHAT God wants from you ...

Present your bodies (not just your spirit for an hour on Sunday, but your everyday life, your body, every minute you live) ...

1. A **living** sacrifice (the problem with living sacrifices is that they can choose to crawl off the altar!)

Romans 12:1b (MSG) Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.****

2. **Holy** (set apart, separated, sanctified)

2 Corinthians 6:17 (MSG) So leave the corruption and compromise; leave it for good, says God. Don't link up with those who will pollute you. I want you all for myself.

3. **Acceptable** unto God (God's idea of holiness, not yours!)

Proverbs 21:3 (KJV) To do justice and judgment is more **acceptable** to the Lord than sacrifice.

4. Which is your **reasonable** (rational, intelligent, logical) service ... **WHAT?!**
(that doesn't make sense to the natural mind)

1 Corinthians 2:14 (KJV) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

I CAN'T CONFORM TO THAT! That's exactly right, you can't.

- In fact, no one can, because conforming is not God's process, it is the world's process.
- God's process is transforming. **That's HOW God gets what He wants!**

BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.

The word "**conformed**" in this verse *means "to mold one thing into the shape of another."*

It refers to things that are temporary and unstable.

This word could not be used of inward change, **merely outward change.**

Romans 12:2 (NLT) Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world ...

Romans 12:2 (NJB) Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world ...

BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND.

The word "transformed" in this verse means "to undergo a complete change or metamorphosis."

- It refers to a process of the Spirit that results in permanent change to the character and conduct.
- This word is **not used** of mere outward change, but of real inward change that shows itself on the outside.

Romans 12:2 (NCV) Be changed within **by a new way of thinking ...**

Romans 12:2 (MSG) You'll be changed from the inside out ...

The world can't transform you, it can only conform you.

- That's why the world is full of self-proclaimed individuals that are identical in the way they think and act, and so afraid to be the least bit different!
- But the same token, you can't belong to the church just by being conformed – ***you have to be transformed!***
- **It's not enough just to** adopt the customs, worship style, activities, or dress codes of a church. ***That's just conforming,*** and there is ***no power in it!***

Unless you are transformed, you will never understand the Christian life.

- **You will never understand** worship, prayer, giving, forgiveness, holiness, or a thousand other things that **God wants to teach you!**
- **I don't like it when** they insist that everyone worship, pray and give!
- **I don't like it when** the church demands a lifestyle commitment!
- **I can't conform to that!**
- ***That's right*** – because **you haven't been transformed** ***by the power of God.***

HOW DOES GOD TRANSFORM YOU?

By the renewing of your mind, by changing the way you think. And only you can allow this. We call it REPENTANCE.

To change your life, **YOU MUST CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK.**

- Behind everything you do is a **thought**.
- **Every behavior** is motivated by a belief, and **every action** is prompted by an attitude.

Repentance goes even further – you repent whenever you change the way you think **BY ADOPTING HOW GOD THINKS.**

- That, and that alone, is repentance – **it involves the will much more than the emotions.**

Proverbs 4:23 (TEV) Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.

Ephesians 4:23 (NLT) There must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.

Philippians 2:5 (CEV) Think the same way that Christ Jesus thought:

CLOSE: Two parts to having the mind of Christ:

1. Stop thinking immature (selfish) thoughts

1 Corinthians 14:20 (NIV) Stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

Romans 8:5 (NCV) Those who live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want.

2. Start thinking mature (selfless) thoughts

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (MSG) Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end.

1 Corinthians 13:11 (NIV) When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

Spiritual growth is the process of replacing lies with truth!

Many of our troubles occur because we base our choices on unreliable authorities:

- Culture (everyone is doing it)
- Tradition (we've always done it that way)
- Reason (it seemed logical)
- Emotion (it just felt right)

All four of these are flawed by the Fall of man.

What we need is a perfect standard, and only God's word meets that need.

You don't have enough human strength to CONFORM to God's standards,

But through repentance you can be TRANSFORMED into what He wants.

REPLACE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH GOD'S THOUGHTS!

PRAISE TEAM