

## **A Word from Kathy**

Everyone knows what a sacrifice is; the very thought is often enough to stop us before we begin. In this chapter Paul discusses a “living sacrifice.” Read Romans 12 with the idea of sacrifice in mind. In light of God’s character (who he is) and in light of all he has provided for us, our lives should be lived in such a way to reflect our heart of gratitude. Read the chapter twice; pray before beginning this study guide. Ask God to open your heart to the treasure he has for you and the abundant life he longs for each of his children to enjoy.

## **Observation**

1. In Romans 10:14-15, Paul asked the question, how can people hear the gospel in order to believe without someone who will speak up and share this truth with them? He described the feet of those who carry the gospel message (the good news of Jesus Christ) as beautiful. In Romans 12:1, Paul urged believers to present their whole body to God, ready and willing to go forward in whatever way he chooses. What did he call this? (Check out several different translations of this verse to get a better picture of what Paul is saying.)
2. In light of everything he has been teaching in the letter up to this point, and now in Romans 12:1, what is Paul encouraging believers to do?

He uses the words **holy** (undefiled offering dedicated exclusively to the Lord and His purposes) and **acceptable** (well-pleasing sacrifice in that it honors God’s character) to describe the type of service that should logically follow the mercies of God.

3. In Romans 12:2, what is the warning? What is he encouraging believers to do?

The word **“conformed”** means to model after, to squeeze into a particular shape. The word **“transformed”** means to change into another form. Write Romans 12:2 in your own words.

What is the benefit promised us in Romans 12:2?

4. After spending time thinking about Romans 12:1-2, do you understand a bit better why some people have difficulty discerning God’s will for their life?

From just those two verses, what is the first step in being able to discern God's will?

*I have a precious friend and prayer partner Francene; each time she prays she begins by first "lining it up." I know exactly what she is saying.*

What is Paul urging us to do?

**Good** - useful, salutary, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy, excellent, distinguished, upright, honorable

**Acceptable** - well pleasing

**Perfect** - brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, consummate human integrity and virtue of men

5. Every believer and follower of Christ has been given a measure of \_\_\_\_\_ by God. Eph. 2:8-9 says this is a gift of God. So do we have anything to brag about? This gift is the conviction (the firm belief) that God exists and is the Creator, Ruler of all things, the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ.
6. In order for us to be effective in all God calls us to do, we must have a proper view of ourselves. Romans 12:3-8 compares believers to what?

How does this help you as you discern God's will for your life and carry it out?

7. In Romans 12:9-21, Paul clarifies the marks of a true Christian. List below what this life that is a true "living sacrifice" looks like. I will start the list.  
The marks of the truly transformed, dedicated Spirit-filled life:
  - genuine love for God and others
  - regard evil with the same hatred that God does
  - hold as dear everything that is excellent, upright and honorable

**Application**

8. The abundant life that God has for every believer goes deeper than changing our behavior and habits. This is a pivotal first step, but next we must renew, re-educate, redirect our minds. Notice how all encompassing this is to the believer; body, soul (mind, will and emotions) and spirit are all to be given to God. Have you consecrated yourself in this way to God for his plan and purposes for your life? Is he truly the master of your life? This is an ongoing transformation and consecration for the life of the believer. The world cannot and does not understand us when we live in this way, but our effectiveness as a witness of God's power can only come through our surrendered life.
  
9. A good friend of mine refers to this as taking down the old wallpaper that previously adorned our mind and putting up new paper. Discarding the old and purposefully applying the new. How are you renewing your mind?
  
10. Each of us has been given gifts unique to us, gifts that we are to use to fulfill what God calls us to do. This should eliminate jealousies in the body of Christ. Each functioning member is important to the health of the body. Do you know how God has gifted you? There are many ways to discover your gifts; one is a spiritual gifts survey that has a series of questions that help you evaluate areas that God has gifted you personally. Go online to "Lifeway Spiritual Gifts Survey" and follow the directions. This can be very helpful as you discern God's call for your life.
  
11. In Romans 12:9, Paul encourages us to be genuine in our love. Our love must be real toward God, our family, other believers, the community and the world. Charles Ryrie likened love to "a river that is bounded on either side by truth and discernment. Both banks are crucial." We reach out in love but are not to be gullible and accept everything that comes our way. It is not an act of love to allow sin and evil to run rampant when we know the truth and could possibly spare someone the agony and consequences of those actions. What will this genuine love look like in your daily activities?

12. Romans 12:10-11 has to do with our dealings with others. As you read these verses, is there a relationship that comes to mind which God is speaking to you about? Is it possible that God desires you to serve him by serving others?

For many years I did not like ironing all of the clothes our family needed ironed.

It was tedious and time consuming until a friend suggested that since everything belongs to God, it was really God's clothes that I was ironing. That helped me do it with a new pleasure. Today I am grateful for the gift of synthetic fibers that do not wrinkle, but you get the idea.

In what way is God speaking to you in the area of showing honor to others and serving them with zeal, as a service to him?

13. Romans 12:12 speaks to our focus. We all have times of trials and difficulty, but changing our focus from the problem to the problem solver can give us hope. We are to rejoice in this hope. How are we instructed to deal with the stress that comes our way? Ask yourself, am I patiently allowing God to work in the situation that comes to mind? Are you constant in prayer? Would you describe your prayers as fervent, zealous, ongoing displaying passion and intensity?

James 5:16 ...The fervent prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

We cannot control others, only our own response.

14. Romans 12:13 instructs us in our dealings with others. Are you generous and ready to help when others have a need?

Would you say you seek opportunities to show hospitality?

What is your definition of hospitality? Think of the last time you cooked a meal for someone or hosted a party. What was your focus? Watch for opportunities today to "practice" hospitality; start with those closest to you.

15. Romans 12:14-21 deals with those who oppose us. We might desire to have nothing to do with them, to put them out of our minds. Is that what we are instructed to do? Memorize verses 18 and 21; it will save you much frustration and grief.

16. Write a prayer to God expressing your heart on all we have seen in this rich chapter.