

YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE, 4 pgs

Lesson 1 - What the Bible teaches

This study falls under the category of truth: what the Bible **says** and what it **means** by what it says.

Rom.11:32 in speaking of all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, says *God enclosed all in disobedience in order that He may show mercy to all*. God shows us mercy by taking pity on us instead of treating us as we deserve. **12:1** continues *Therefore brothers, I urge you through the compassions of God [the inward feelings that that move Him to show mercy] to present your bodies a living holy sacrifice well-pleasing to God, your reasonable service*. This is speaking of what is the logical offering we bring as part of our worship as Christians. Naturally going along with this, *and stop being conformed to [molded to fit] this age, but instead be transformed ¹ [changed from within] by the renewal of the mind ² so that you may approve [validate, confirm] what the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God is*. We who began as disobedient and unappreciative of God are to undergo change so we come to approve His will as *good, well-pleasing, and perfect*.

1. The same word [translated *transfigured*] is used to describe the revelation of Christ's glory on the mount of transfiguration in **Mk.9:2**. **V.3** says *His clothes became radiant, dazzling white, whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them*. The parallel passage at **Mt.17:2** reads *There in front of them his appearance was changed [lit, he was transfigured]. His face shone like the sun. His clothes became as white as the light*. In **Lk.9:29** the correct translation is *the appearance of his face became qualitatively different, and his clothes became dazzling white, [True Spirituality p.47-49]*.
 2. Commands in the passive voice naming the instrument, agency, or means by which their corresponding required actions are accomplished in us.
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Compare this discussion to that of **Rom.6** where Paul is also addressing Christians

¹²**Let not sin therefore reign** in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³**Do not present** your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are ... under grace.

... you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or [notice the contrast] of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become [emphasizes the transition from one state to another] obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become servants [slaves] of righteousness. ¹⁹... For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness [rebellion], so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time **from the things of which you are now ashamed**? For the end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become servants of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is

death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Rom.6:**)

What is the result of this **molding** process in **Rom.12:2**? Disobedient and deceived people who fit right in and are a part of this evil age – the blind and deaf who are ignorant of eternal life

How does the molding process work? Since conforming is to this age [see Correlating our lives with the with the Ages <http://pop.eradman.com/>], something external to us must necessarily be inseminating us with its ideas and ways of thinking to effect hardening toward God from within surreptitiously.

How long has this process been going on? since long before we were born;

How do we resist or stop that continuing pressure to conform us? By embracing the truth with mind and heart, we reject the lie.

Questions about the transforming process¹

How long has this process been going on? since we were born again by the Spirit of God

List other terms and phrases that refer to being born again. Saved, regenerate³ (**Tit.3:5**); in Christ, new creation (**2 Cor.5:17**); heirs, children of God, reborn [by the will] of God (**Jn.1:12-13**); alive (**Col. 2:13**; **Eph. 2:4-5**); brought us forth [gave birth to us] (**Jas.1:18**).

What about Old Testament terms? New heart, new spirit (**Ez.36:26**)

How does the transforming take place? The **renewing of your mind** is complementary with repentance [change of mind, heart, and attitude and **rebirth**, and is knowingly and willingly embraced truth by learning about God and His ways. The truth works change in us regardless of the degree of molding we have already undergone]

3. Regeneration - rebirth; the work of the Spirit of God that makes us new creatures, alive to God

Lets continue in **Rom.12** to see if we can discover what the renewal of our minds is accomplishing and what we are being transformed into.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵so **we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another ...**

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with

all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. ²⁰To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head [not as a matter of retribution, but in the hope that his burning conscience will bring him to repentance. **Prov. 25:21-22**]. ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good**. (**Rom.12:**)

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God ... ⁸**Owe no one anything, except to love each other**... (**Rom.13:**)

What are your observations and conclusions regarding our transformation? We are joined to a community of believers by incorporation into a single body as an integral member. We no longer think of ourselves as autonomous individuals pursuing our own happiness. We belong to one another and our function is to serve one another by taking our place in the body of believers and ministering there by means of the gifts Christ gives us and in our dedication to mutual affection. **In serving one another we are serving His body and thereby the Lord** [see **GT#2, p.4**, the new man]. **Such is our worship** - the offering of our lives as holy and well-pleasing, our reasonable service to God. This is our new-life CALLING. See **Great Commission**.

We are also learning to think about and respond to events and circumstances throughout the world as well as those that affect our lives as being under God's providence. We are coming to trust Him and appreciate His wisdom and knowledge in all things rather than our own (**Rom.11:33**).

Lesson 2 – My obedience

This falls under the category of authority, the right of God's word to judge my heart and work.

Rom.12:3ff invite us to **ponder another set of questions in the area of wisdom and knowledge that are more personal and practical**. As always the important question is what does the passage mean by _____. Because the Bible isn't only concerned with truth, once we have some grasp of teaching of a passage, we are called to follow Christ and obliged to **allow the light of the truth to examine us**. Am I doing the things described and am I doing them with the right attitude and reasons? Since we are not perfect, we will often be in need of repentance. We will also find we need instruction on how to best proceed in these matters. Therefore our method is to formulate questions from the passage and to seek the Lord's help as we study His word.

How can I best go about serving in my place; How shall I respond to persecution and worldly authorities;

How shall I take heed to the repeated warnings about not becoming proud or high-minded?

What can I do to encourage _____ (name) _____ in the faith; What is the best way to exercise my gift in _____ or with _____?

What steps can I take that will help me to **be patient in tribulation**; etc.

It is here in doing our homework in preparation for seriously ministering that we first give ourselves to the service of others. In both the areas of truth and obedience or submission we enjoy the help of other Christians as they perform their reasonable service in ministering to us. Nevertheless **each of us is called individually to walk with the Lord regardless of what others are doing with the real**

possibility that we will even need to stand against our friends and/or the local or general consensus in order to be true to what we understand and believe.

ONE GUIDING PRINCIPLE, The Great Separation Mt.25:

³¹**When the Son of Man comes in his glory**, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²**All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another ...** ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴**Then the King will say to those on his right**, Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

³⁷**Then the righteous will answer him**, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? ⁴⁰The King will reply, Truly I tell you, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.**

⁴¹**Then he will say to those on his left**, Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.

⁴⁴**They also will answer**, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you? ⁴⁵He will reply, Truly I tell you, **whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.** ⁴⁶Then **they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.**