

Faith that Endures

(Online Study, Tuesday Evening at 7:00 PM)

Week 2: Resisting Cultural Pressure

Romans 12:1–2

After eleven chapters explaining the gospel—God’s righteousness, humanity’s sin, justification by faith, and the mercy of God toward both Jew and Gentile—Paul arrives at a turning point. The word “therefore” in Romans 12:1 connects everything that follows to everything that came before. Because of God’s mercy, believers must respond—not with token religion, but with the total offering of their lives.

Paul calls Christians to present their bodies as a “living sacrifice.” Under the old covenant, animals were killed and placed on an altar. Under the new covenant, believers offer themselves: alive, active, and daily surrendered to God. This is worship not confined to a building or an hour; it is a life wholly given over to God’s purposes.

But this kind of living requires a battle. The world constantly presses believers into its mold, shaping values, priorities, and moral standards. Paul’s antidote is not isolation from the world but transformation from within. The renewed mind, shaped by Scripture and submission to God, enables Christians to discern and follow God’s will even when the surrounding culture pulls in every other direction. Faith that endures requires a mind that refuses to be conformed.

Group Discussion: What are some of the most powerful ways our culture tries to shape the thinking and values of Christians today? Why is it often difficult to recognize when we are being conformed to the world’s patterns?

Personal Reflection: If you honestly evaluated your daily habits, media consumption, and decision-making, would you say your mind is being shaped more by Scripture or by the surrounding culture? What would transformation look like in your life right now?

Read Romans 12:1–2

Study Questions

1. In verse 1, Paul appeals to believers “by the mercies of God.” Why does Paul ground his call to holy living in God’s mercy rather than in obligation or fear?

2. What does it mean to present your body as a “living sacrifice”? How is this different from the sacrificial system of the Old Testament?
3. Paul describes this living sacrifice as “holy and acceptable to God.” What makes a life holy and acceptable in God’s sight?
4. Paul calls this offering “your spiritual worship” (or “reasonable service”). What does this teach us about the nature of true worship? How does it expand worship beyond the assembly?
5. In verse 2, Paul commands believers not to “be conformed to this world.” What does worldly conformity look like in the life of a Christian, and why is it dangerous?
6. What is the difference between conformity and transformation? Why does Paul frame the Christian life as transformation rather than simply avoiding bad behavior?
7. Paul says transformation comes “by the renewal of your mind.” What role does the mind play in faithful Christian living, and how is the mind renewed?
8. According to verse 2, the purpose of transformation is to “discern what is the will of God.” Why is a renewed mind necessary for discerning God’s will?
9. Paul describes God’s will as “good and acceptable and perfect.” How does this description challenge the assumption that following God means missing out on what is best?
10. Looking at Romans 12:1–2 as a whole, how do these two verses serve as a foundation for faith that endures under cultural pressure? What practical steps can a believer take to live this out?