



Sermon Discussion Questions  
August 4, 2024

## UNCONFORMED

Romans 12:1-8

1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may only want to choose one)
  - a. At some time, every parent of a teenager has probably heard “But everyone is doing it” and, if we’re honest most of us have probably said it. What is the best response you’ve heard to “everyone is doing it”? How did you respond if you have children who have said it to you?
  - b. Peer pressure is one of the difficult parts of the teenage years. As a teenager in what areas did you experience peer pressure? How did it affect the way you dressed, your hairstyle, the music you listened to, or the activities you participated in? Looking back, how do you feel about some of the choices you made that were mainly the result of peer pressure?
  - c. What is the best gift you have ever received from someone who is not a family member? What made that gift special? How did you treat their gift – did you use or display it or put it aside for safekeeping?
2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**
  - a. Be Transformed, Not Conformed
    - i. Be a living sacrifice every day.
    - ii. A living sacrifice must not conform to the spirit of the world.
  - b. Commit to Unity in Christ
    - i. Conformity leads to division in the church because it feeds our pride.
    - ii. The church must hold together as one body.
  - c. Use Your Gifts and Talents for God's Kingdom
    - i. Be united through devoted service
    - ii. Be the living sacrifice Jesus called you to be.
3. **Study/Discussion Points:**
  - a. *Sunday Afternoon*
    - i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
    - ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
    - iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
    - iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
    - v. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
    - vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

**b. Monday:** Therefore

- i. Start the week by reading the focal passage, Romans 12:1-8, several times (from different translations if possible). Read slowly, meditating on what each sentence means to you.
  1. What are the two or three main points you observe in this passage?
  2. What are Paul's appeals and commands? What reason does he give us for why we should obey? How would your life change if you truly obeyed these instructions?
- ii. Verse 1 begins with a "therefore" which points us back to something important that has already been written.
  1. Go back and read Romans 11:33-36. How do these verses, especially verse 33, provide the rationale for Paul's commands in 12:1-2? Why is a correct view of God necessary if we are going to truly give him our very lives.
  2. Paul uses "therefore" frequently in Romans (17 times in the ESV, 21 in the NIV and 22 in the CSV). You can get a good snapshot of what Paul is teaching by just reading the "therefore" verses: 1:24, 2:1, 3:20, 4:15, 4:22, 5:1, 5:9, 5:12, 5:18, 6:4, 6:12, 7:4, 7:13, 8:1, 8:12, 9:16, 9:18, 11:22, 12:1, 13:2, 13:5, 13:10, 14:8, 14:13, 14:16, 15:7, 15:9, 15:17, 15:28, and 16:19 (Note: not all translations will have a "therefore" in each of these verses but you can usually see what word or phrase has been used instead.)

**c. Tuesday:** Sacrifice

- i. Read and meditate on Romans 12:1.
  1. What do you find most surprising about this verse? Most challenging?
  2. How do you understand what Paul means when he says "bodies"? Do you think he is just referring to our physical being?
- ii. What is the significance of a "living sacrifice"? In what ways would it differ from that required by the Old Testament?
  1. Sometimes we see the Old Testament as only describing the importance of maintaining the sacrificial system provided in the law. What do 1 Samuel 15:22, Psalm 40:6-8, and Amos 5:21-24 tell us is really important?
  2. Read Genesis 22:1-18. What comparisons do you see between Isaac and us when considering what it means to be a "living sacrifice"?
- iii. Compare verse 1 with Hebrews 13:15-16 and 1 Peter 2:5. What additional insight do these verses provide about the sacrifices we are to offer?

**d. Wednesday:** Worship

- i. Consider Romans 12:1 again today.
  1. What is the nature of the sacrifice we are to offer? What does it mean to be "holy" in the sense that Paul is using the word? (see Leviticus 20:26 and Exodus 19:23)

2. What do these verses in Hebrews: 2:11, 10:10, 10:14, and 13:12 teach us about being holy?
  3. How does Peter amplify our responsibilities as “holy” in 1 Peter 1:15-16 and 2 Peter 3:11-13?
  4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. In view of these verses what might we conclude about how we should use, treat and care for our bodies?
- ii. Paul says that the objective of presenting our bodies as living sacrifices is worship.
1. How would you define “worship”?
  2. In view of what Paul says in Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 10:31, and Colossians 3:17 when should we worship?
  3. While we are to present our bodies, where must our worship actually originate according to Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 57:15 and John 4:23-24? How should the need to worship in truth affect our spiritual disciplines?
- e. **Thursday:** Conformed or Transformed
- i. Read and meditate on Romans 12:2.
    1. What do you think Paul means when he says to not be conformed to the world?
    2. What would be some examples of how a Christian might be conformed to the world? Read these verses and identify ways of thinking that the Bible says are conforming: Romans 8:5, 1 Peter 4:3-4, Mark 10:42-45, Luke 11:43 & 46-52, Matthew 16:26, 1 Corinthians 3:19 and James 4:4
    3. What do you think Paul means by “transformed”? The Greek word here is “metamorphousthe”. What does that suggest to you about the meaning of “transform”?
    4. How do Ephesians 4:17-25 and Colossians 3:1-11 expand on the command to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind”? How does the “renewal” of our mind occur?
  - ii. Christians are often heard asking how they can know God’s will for their life. How does this verse answer that question? Taking verses 1 and 2 together, what must happen first if we truly want to experience God’s will in our life?
- f. **Friday:** Self-Assessment
- i. Read Romans 12:3-8
  - ii. Paul begins this paragraph with a statement of his authority. Compare this opening phrase with Romans 15:15, 1 Corinthians 15:10, Galatians 2:9, and Ephesians 3:7. What significance should we give to these verses based on the fact that he felt the need to start with such a statement?
  - iii. In order to serve God, how should we think and how should we not think about ourselves? Why is this particularly important in our culture?

1. Paul taught about pride several times earlier in Romans. Read 3:27-28 and 11:18-20. Why is boasting about (pride in) our spiritual condition so dangerous?
2. Conversely, thinking too little of the gifts God has given us is an equally serious offense. How is this demonstrated in Moses' life in Exodus 4:1-13?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 7:17. How does this verse help us understand Paul's meaning when he says, "in accordance with the faith God has distributed"?
4. John Newton, the author of Amazing Grace, is famously quoted as: "Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior." How would possessing that same attitude help prevent us from making incorrect self-assessments? How does Paul's testimony in 1 Timothy 1:15-16 show that the same attitude was present in his life?

g. **Saturday:** Place in the Body

- i. Reread the entire focal passage, Romans 12:1-8 and reflect on how it could and should apply to you.
  - ii. Paul makes two points about our place in the body in verses 4 and 5 that every Christian should consider. Do you see what they are? Why do we tend to emphasize one (doing church activities) over the other (being part of fellow Christian's lives)?
    1. In what ways must we differ from one another? What unites us?
    2. Paul also uses the analogy of the body in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:7-16. Review these passages and consider what additional can be learned.
    3. Make a list of the gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8. How does it compare to the lists in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 & 28 and Ephesians 4:11? What should this lead us to conclude about a list of God's gifts?
    4. With which of these gifts do you feel strongest?
  - iii. According to Romans 12:6 what is the source of these gifts? How does that recognition promote the unity of the body?
4. **Application:** An anonymous author wrote about this passage: "The main problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar." Unfortunately, despite our best intentions we can all identify with this problem at points in our lives. When it occurs, we must apply 1 John 1:9 and resume our walk with Him. Spend time this week considering what you must do in your life, with the Holy Spirit's help and guidance, to live as Romans 12:1-8 instructs us.

5. **Prayer Points:**

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications – Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19