

**A Call To Total Commitment:
Living Under The Lordship Of Jesus Christ
Romans 12:1-2**

Introduction

1. I want to ask you a question - an important question, a weighty question: Do you want to make an eternal difference with your life? Do you want your life to really count? Are you really willing to be different and do whatever it takes?
2. Most Christians sadly are not willing. Many Christians live lives scarcely different than that of their lost neighbors.
3. The December, 1997 Barna report titled "The American Witness" noted:
 - a. 33% of non-Christians watch MTV.
26% of Christians watch MTV.
 - b. 40% of non-Christians watch R-rated movies.
30% of Christians watch R-rated movies.
 - c. 17% of non-Christians believe it is better to get even than get mad.
12% of Christians believe it is better to get even than get mad.
4. In the world in which we live, those who claim the name of Jesus have failed to demonstrate the difference He can make. We have ignored, forgotten or said "no" to God's call to live a life under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Transition

In the scriptures before us, Paul addresses this issue and in the process paints a portrait of a life that is utterly unique, a life that can, and will, make an eternal difference.

I. God's call is to consecration or complete commitment. 12:1

1. It is spiritual.

"*beseech*" - urge (gr. Parkalo) to encourage, earnestly ask
 "*mercies of God*" - looks back to 1:18 - 11:36 and the glorious salvation God has provided in Jesus Christ.

1:18-3:20 demonstrates the depravity and universality of human sinfulness.

3:21-5:21 explores the glory of our redemption won by Christ and appropriated by faith.

6:1-8:39 examines God's work of sanctification which culminates in our conformity to Christlikeness.

9:1-11:36 instructs concerning God's sovereignty, man's responsibility and God's covenant faithfulness to Israel.

**God's call is spiritual, based upon what He has done for us through His Son, the Lord Jesus.

2. **It is volitional.**

"You present"

Something you must do.

Something only you can do.

Something I cannot do for you.

Something you cannot do for me.

A technical term for presenting a sacrifice - meaning to "place aside."

This decision is nobody's business but yours.

This decision is one that only you can make.

God does not coerce - He calls.

He does not pressure - He pleads.

3. **It is total**

"Your bodies" (note 1 Cor. 6:19)

Means all of you - inside and out, mind, will, emotions, body, soul and spirit.

Partial obedience is total disobedience.

Partial faithfulness is complete unfaithfulness.

Disobedience - Moses striking the stone in the wilderness - it cost him the promised land.

Saul in 1 Samuel 15 and his battle with Agag and the Amalekites - it cost him his position of leadership.

****They missed God's best because they gave God less than their best.**

4. **It is sacrificial**

"Living sacrifice" an oxymoron

Living - alive sacrifice - dead

*We are to be alive to some things but dead to others.

Alive - to the Savior and His will for us whatever it is, wherever it leads.

Dead - to self, my wants, my desires, my plans.

*A sacrifice always involves cost.

*We sacrifice when we believe the cost is worth the sacrifice.

5. It is moral.

“Holy, acceptable to God”

There is a rightness to this commitment.

There is a beauty to this commitment.

Acceptable could be translated “well pleasing” - this commitment honors God and it is appropriate to who He is and what He has done. Anything less would be immoral, unholy and unacceptable.

Illustration - marriage and the unacceptability of 99% faithfulness.

6. It is worshipful.

“Reasonable service”

Reasonable - rational, intelligent -- intelligent worship

Worshipful service is the emphasis.

Your heart, your mind, your will come together as one and say “Yes, this is what my God deserves and, yes, I will give it to Him.”

Transition

God’s call is to consecration or complete commitment.

II. God’s call involves transformation or complete change. 12:2

In verse 2, Paul begins with a negative and then moves to a positive. He says first:

1. You must reject the pressure to conform outwardly.

a. *“conformed”* is suschematizomai.

We get our word “scheme” or schema, from it. It means to form or mold after something. It has the idea of squeezing or shaping by outward, external pressure. It is a present passive imperative. God is commanding us not to be continually shaped or molded by pressures and influences which come upon us. [Me with the imperative may be addressing an action in progress. “Stop being conformed.”]

Comment [51]:

b. We are not to be conformed to this world. Actually the word translated “world” is literally “age.” Do not allow yourself to be molded and shaped after the pattern of this age.

- c. This is an age that believes in itself. This is an age that is perfectly content to take a cafeteria approach to religion, even to the Christian faith, taking what it wants and leaving the rest.
- d. Marvin Olasky, a professor at the University of Texas, notes how pervasive this way of thinking is among Christian young persons he has taught. In a May 9, 1998 editorial in *World* magazine, he quotes various students who profess at least some type of commitment to Christ. The results can only be described as tragic.

“I believe in Jesus, but I do not believe the Bible is the Word of God. It is the word of man: imperfect, judgmental and overzealous.”

“Sometimes my personal beliefs contradict those taught by the church. I make my decisions based on what I feel is right.”

“The bottom line is I believe in me.”

“My governing belief is the only person you can really trust in life is yourself.”
- e. Such thinking results from being conformed to the age of this world and the danger of being led astray is far more dangerous than most of us imagine.

Transition

- 2. **You must accept the power which changes inward.**
 - a. “*be transformed*” is also a present, passive, imperative and translates the Greek word “*metamorphoo*.” We get our English word “*metamorphosis*” from it. It means to radically change, to alter by an inward process, to change into another form. The word is used four times in the New Testament, including Matthew 17:2 in reference to the transfiguration of our Lord.
 - b. This transformation is accomplished in quite a specific way: by the renewing - literally, making new again of the mind.
 - c. The greatest battles are not fought in the world but in the mind. Win the battles of the mind and you win everywhere. Lose the battle of the mind and you lose everywhere. Proverbs 23:7 reminds us, “as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”
 - d. In verse 1, God asks for your body: complete commitment. In verse 2, God asks for your mind: complete change.

Now Paul addresses a third and final aspect of God’s call.

III. God's call involves satisfaction. 12:2

- A. People are always interested in how do we know God's will? Is there a formula? Is there a secret? What is the key?
- B. In Romans 12, Paul teaches us that when we accept God's call to complete commitment, and when we choose to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ, in the process we come to know the will of God for our lives.

When we give ourselves to God in this manner, what do we discover concerning His will?

1. God's will is proven.

"*Prove*" carries the idea "to prove by testing" and "to approve after testing." By personal experience I came to know and approve the will of God for my life.

2. God's will is pleasing

It is "*good*" (for us).

It is "*good*" (if it comes from God).

"*Acceptable*" same word as in verse 1 (well-pleasing).

"*Acceptable*" again because its source is God.

God is directing, God is guiding, God is orchestrating the events of my life according to His good and acceptable and perfect will.

3. God's will is perfect.

- a. "*Perfect*" (*teleion*) is actually the last word of verse 2 in the Greek text. Interestingly, the verse literally reads, "to prove to you what the will of God, the good and acceptable and perfect." Because God's will for my life starts with God and not me, I can rest in the assurance it is divinely planned and will be divinely accomplished.
- b. My personal experience in the summer of 1985 cleaning out a dumpster in McKinney, Texas and my confusion and unhappiness with God. "What if it is My will for you to be in the dumpster? Do you think I was caught by surprise?"

1992-Dean of Students/Professor of Theology at SEBTS

1995-Speaking at the SBC Pastors' Conference in Atlanta

1996-Academic V.P./Dean, School of Theology, SBTS

I was the same Danny Akin in 1983, 1993 and 1996. I am the same Danny Akin in 1998.

Conclusion

God can be trusted every step of the way.

You can trust Him with your soul.

You can trust Him with your body.

You can trust Him with your mind.

You can trust Him with your life.

God gave His best. Give Him your best - it is the right thing to do.