

## **“The Spiritual Life”**

### **Romans 12:1-2**

Paul has completed his digression (9:1-11:36) and now returns to the main stream of his thesis, having discussed the PRINCIPLES of the gospel (1:19-8:39) and PROBLEMS of the gospel (9:1-11:36), he now begins to deal with the PRACTICE of the gospel (12:1-16:24). It is typical of the teaching of the epistles that belief is followed by behavior; doctrine, by deeds.

These early verses in chapter 12 (esp. vv. 1-13) speak of the spiritual life of the Christian. The first two verses of the chapter set the foundation for the believer’s spiritual commitment.

- I. How the Christian is CHALLENGED as a believer (v. 1) (deals specifically with the believer’s body).
  - A. The body as an UNBRIDLED SACRIFICE (v. 1a “...present your bodies...”)
    1. Presenting our bodies is the PROPER thing to do (Therefore, I urge you, ”)
    2. Presenting our bodies is the PRACTICAL thing to do --We live on one of three levels (1) sensual (physical), (2) soulish (mind, emotion, & will) and (3) spiritual (spirit). God’s Word is the only true test as to the level we are on. (cf. Hebrews 4:12)
  - B. The body as an UNBLEMISHED SACRIFICE (v. 1b “...a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, ...”)
    1. A LIVING sacrifice (vs. O.T. “dead” sacrifices)- the VICTORY of Calvary.
    2. A HOLY Sacrifice (under Holy Spirit control)- the VIRTUES from Calvary.
    3. An ACCEPTABLE sacrifice (“accepted in the Beloved”) - The VALUE of Calvary.
  - C. The Body as an UNBIASED SACRIFICE (v.1 “...your spiritual service of worship.”)
    1. No coercion, no high pressure, no forcing of the will, no bending or biasing of personality to make it conform to the divine will.
    2. It is only “reasonable” to give sacrificial worship to the Savior.
- II. How the Christian is CHANGED as a believer (v. 2)
  - We do not CULTIVATE the body like the ancient Greeks, who worshiped its beauty and its strength.
  - We do not CRUCIFY the body like the ascetics who considered it evil and starved and mutilated it.
  - We simply CONSECRATE the body that the Holy Spirit, who has made it His temple, might have free access to use it as He pleases. This verse implies that we are to be changed...
  - A. The believer is changed MORALLY (v. 2a “Be not conformed to this world...”).
    1. J.B. Phillips, “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.”
    2. I John 2:15-16
  - B. The believer is changed MENTALLY (v. 2c “...that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect”).
    1. “Transformed” is METAMORPHOOSIS from which our word “metamorphosis” is derived. “A change of form or change of character” (caterpillar into a butterfly).
    2. II Corinthians 5:17
  - C. The believer is changed MOTIVATIONALLY (v.2c “...that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect”).
    1. God’s will is GOOD –God will not ask us to do anything that is not for our eternal good.
    2. God’s will is ACCEPTABLE –God will not ask us to do that which we cannot accept.
    3. God’s will is PERFECT –No plan of ours can improve on the plan of God.

We are urged today to (1) PRESENT OUR BODIES TO GOD and (2) NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.