



## What is True Worship Part 3

February 9, 2025

Romans 12:1-2

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(video 46:17)

Romans chapter 12:1-2. We started out underscoring the fact that after 11 chapters again of orthodoxy and then breaking out in an anthem of praise at the end of chapter 11, we get our first and most basic commandment of orthopraxy from the Holy Spirit through the words of Paul to do what? Verses one and two, ***I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,*** (based upon the mercies of God, based upon what's been poured out for the last 11 chapters, the mercies of God that were poured out on you as one of his elect children before you ever came to know Christ, and then have been flowing from the throne of grace since you came to know Christ, by the mercies of God, do what's logical, do what makes sense, do what the only proper response would be, what?) ***present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable*** (that means well-pleasing) ***and perfect*** (that means complete and mature). We have seen that Romans 12, one and two is talking about worship, and it involves four aspects, if you will. It involves the **soul** (the spirit, the you that's you), the **body** (which is not just what you can touch, it's the emotions, it's the will, it's the passions of life, it's the seed of thought and all of that), the **mind** (which is your cognitive thinking ability), and **your will**, which is a part of it. And we said that you cannot begin, it's a presupposition, you cannot begin to follow this command if you don't already know Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, if you already haven't repented and given your life to Christ. He's speaking to believers, ***I urge you, brethren,*** and we went through all of that.



We pointed out in Romans 8:8 that it is impossible in the flesh to please God. It's impossible as a non-believer to please God, so you can't do anything to worship God that's gonna please Him if you are in the flesh, if you are unsaved. We talked about all that. I won't plow all over that again.

You'll recall I said that people do all these things, and they say that 'I'm doing these things for God'. If you don't know Christ, anything and everything you've done, you may have that mindset, but guess what? You didn't do it for God, and He's not receiving it. 1 Corinthians 13:3, *if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, if I give my body to be burned, but I don't possess love, it's worthless*, and what he's talking about there is possess the love of Christ. Well, how does that mean you have to be born again? What did Jesus said, John 14:15, *if you love Me, you'll obey My commands*. What was His first command? *Repent and believe on Me*. You cannot do this unless you know Christ. So that is an underpinning to all of it, and we went through all of that and explained it all in great detail.

One thing I thought was very interesting, because we don't usually look at it this way, you know in Matthew 13, the parable of the soils? The sower goes out and sows the seed and some on rocky soil and some on this. Some of the soil fell on ground, but it was underlaid, if you will, by bedrock, remember? It didn't have, just the soil was just on top of the rock, and it sprang up real quick, and as soon as the sun came up, it scorched it and it died because it had no root. Some of the seed fell on the weedy ground, if you will, and it sprang up, but then the weeds all choked it out. I never thought of it in this light, but what are we saying? You cannot sacrifice anything to God that He's going to accept if you're not one of His children. Well, what's the scorching sun and what's the weeds and all of that in that parable of the soils? It's pressure, it's hard times, and what He's saying is you don't have the capacity to sacrifice those hard times, to live for Almighty God because as soon as the pressure comes, it shows you're



not a believer, you die away. As soon as the pressure comes, you're choked out, if you will. The weeds choke you out, the sun scorches you out, the pressures of life. See, in other words, you cannot, when persecution strikes, live for Christ, you cannot sacrifice for Christ because you're not one of His children, and I never looked at it in that way, and I just wanted to go back and retread over that.

So, you gotta give your soul to the Lord, but He's got your soul. He's got your spirit, if you know Christ. You are totally 100% complete, perfect, holy. If you don't understand that, that your spirit's already perfect, you don't understand the point of death. When you die, what happens? The physical body separates from the spirit. Spirit goes immediately to be with the Lord. It can't go immediately to be with the Lord unless it's already holy and perfect. The you that's you, the spiritual you, is already perfect, but it's housed in this body of flesh, and you understand it. God doesn't want just your spirit. He wants your body, too. How do you know? Right here in Romans 12, one. *I urge you therefore, brethren, ... to present your body*, these are all temple terms, to Almighty God. One of the passages I wrote down, and I'm trying to figure out why, so I'll go read it, is Hebrews 13:15 and 16. Oh, it says this. This is similar concept, temple terms, if you will. **Through Him**, Christ, then, **let us...** oh, I know why I picked this... Somebody said, "John, where in the Bible did you say, 'When we offer up prayers that they're actually spiritual sacrifices to God, when we praise God, and when we serve others that it's actually a spiritual sacrifice to God?'" I got one of those questions last week. Well, there's many places, but here's one obvious one. **Through him**, Hebrews 13:15, **then, let us continually offer up a**, here you go, **sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips**, that what? **...that give thanks to His name**. I said prayer and gratitude and praise. Those are all spiritual sacrifices that we as a kingdom of priests offer to God that he finds acceptable, okay? **And do not**, what? **...neglect doing good...**, serving others, all the good works, Ephesians 2:10,



that were written beforehand that we might walk in them. Those are all spiritual sacrifices to God. He says, **and sharing**; that also doesn't just mean sharing your money or sharing your time, or sharing, it means sharing the gospel of Christ. It means witnessing... and witnessing. **...for with such sacrifices, God is pleased.** But again, those flow from the ultimate sacrifice that you start with of presenting your body to Almighty God.

So, He wants it. It's not always easy. It's a living sacrifice. It's not a dead sacrifice, remember? I said those living sacrifices are hard. It's hard to keep yourself on the altar. You always wanna, the flesh wants to crawl off. And that's why it's a present active verb there. It says keep, a participle, keep on presenting your body as a living sacrifice to Almighty God.

This is not the first time Paul has said this. I pointed out last time, Romans 6:13. You know, he says, **present your members as instruments of righteousness**, and not to wickedness and evil, and so forth. He's pointed those all out. He pointed out in 1 Corinthians 6:19, **know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.** We went through all of that. But there was a couple of more I wanted to give you. 1 Thessalonians 4:4, let me just read it to you. *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel*, excuse me, meaning his body, **in sanctification and honor, not in the lustful passion, like the gentiles who do not know God;**

So what? One commentator said it this way: *What we have to do then is to take our body and offer it to God as a living sacrifice. We cannot offer it to the world. We cannot offer it to its own desires. We cannot allow its lusts and passions to run rampant. Our redeemed spirit, already His, must make a presentation to God of our body.* And he goes on and says, *what an important thing, what an important thing.*



It's also, to me, a fearful thing. How much, after walking with Christ since 1975 (this August will be half a century), how, still, my flesh at times can take over and control. It's just scary sometimes to think how the flesh can still dominate, dominate. Paul gives us great insight into this. 1 Corinthians 9:27, *I keep control of my body. I bring it into subjection. Again, that's his mind, that's his thought, that's his passions, that's his lust, that's his feelings, that's his temperament, that's his desires, that's his pride, that's his ego. **I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.*** (nkjv) By the way, here's a great passage of scripture to write down, and the reason why I'm hitting this is I mentioned last week the Greek mindset on dualism, the body and the flesh is evil and the spirit is good, and therefore whatever the body does, the body's gonna do, don't worry about it. It even carries through in some church groups today that wanna teach, like I said last week, church discipline. Oh, that's a horrible thing to do, don't do it, because you know what? Jim in his body, he's just gonna do what he's gonna do. You should never discipline a genuine believer because it's only the spirit that counts, the body doesn't. Well, that's just absolutely biblically dead wrong. 1 Corinthians 6:13, ***Yet the body [is not for immorality, but] is for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.*** Meaning what? God can't work through you, believer, unless he works through your body. If you're gonna speak, you've gotta use your mouth. If you're gonna hear, you've gotta use your ears. If you're gonna talk, like I said, you gotta use your lips and your mouth, if you're gonna see, you've gotta use your eyes. If you're gonna go somewhere, you gotta use your feet. If you're gonna serve and help, you've gotta use your hands. If you're gonna counsel, you gotta use your mind, you gotta think, and so God wants this entire being, the body, the body.

So, the question becomes, how do you do that? How do you, oh, I love this, well, let me read this to you first. *Real worship is not elaborate prayers. It's not liturgy. It's not ritual, it's not*



*candles, it's not robes, it's not stained glass. It's not Bach music or any other kind of music. Real worship is not feeling spiritual goose bumps in a church service. Real worship is right here, the intelligent, spiritual act of giving to God my body in all of its expressions, holy, set apart to Him, that's what God wants. I love that.*

There's a girl, little girl, about eight years old in a worship service. Offering was being taken, offering plate was being passed and she was sitting on the end, about the third row. The offering plate came down the third row, she got it in her hand at the end of the pew, sat it down on the ground, the usher was stunned, got up and stood on the offering plate. The usher said, what in the world are you doing? She said, "I learned in Sunday school that I was to present my body to the Lord." You know, and I thought about that, she's actually got it right. I thought sometime maybe a communion service, you know we always take an elders fund offering and a regular offering, it might be fun sometime to have an insert in the bulletin and have us all write our name down, just as a reminder, and take a special offering. When the offering comes by, put our name in the bag. We need to be putting our all in an offering into God. And just take up a collection of all of us in that regard. In any event, how do you do it?

How do you do it? The key is right here. Okay, I'm a born-again believer. Okay, God wants me, you know, to act, speak, think according to the word of God, act in holiness. I get it, how? He tells you right here, ***...present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, mind. The mind is the key. The mind must be given over to the things of God. Renewing your mind, it's a key verse in enabling you and me to bring our soul under the control and our body under the control of Almighty God. I love what this one commentator said. He said, it's in the mind that our new nature, our new spirit, our life in Christ, it's in the mind that our new spirit, our new soul, and our fallen humanness***



*find their mix. That's where the battleground is, between the flesh and the spirit. It's in your mind.* All sin, friends, starts in the mind. Starts in your mind. And so, I love, he says, do not be conformed to this *aiōn* (G165), it does not be conformed to the world. It's not the typical word for world there, cosmos. It's the word *aiōn*. It means the age, this age, this fallen, unredeemed philosophy of life. It was a Greek scholar by the name of Trench, and he expressed it so well. He said this, this word, do not be conformed to this world, this *aiōn*, this age. That really word means *the floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world.* In other words, this whole pile of the world's stuff. German theologians and philosophers referred to it as the *zeitgeist*, *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age, the ghost of the age. Believe me, the world is an instrument of Satan. Now, I'm not talking about trees and flowers and birds. I'm talking about the world system, world governments, world philosophies, all that is constantly programmed in to feed our flesh is an instrument, a tool of Satan that has to be resisted.

You know, one of the best examples of the pride and the boastfulness, ugly ego of life. I remember when this concept first came to me back when I was a new believer in the 70s, and Wimbledon was going on. And any of you remember a tennis player they called "the brat", Jimmy Connors? You remember John McEnroe? I couldn't believe it, I had left church and was in my little apartment and I turned, and Wimbledon was on TV, talking about the boastful pride of life and the lust of flesh and the passions... And Connors is breaking rackets and screaming obscenities and yelling at the line judges and berating his opponent, and on and on and on. And then I started looking around and all the sports world was that way. All the entertainment world was that way. Everything was me, myself, and I, and I'm the greatest, and I'm the best, and I'm the baddest, and so on. And that is exactly what the world programs into us all the time. You understand, I had a pretty misspent youth in terms of a few things.



There was a group in the 80's called the Motley Crue. I was never a fan of theirs. They were a hard metal band, Motley Crue. But I do remember the incident. There was a radio station in San Antonio, Texas called KISS, K-I-S-S AM radio, or FM radio, and they had a contest if you'd write in and tell us what extreme bizarre thing you would do to spend an evening with the Motley Crue. And this radio DJ, when he read off some of the things that these 13 to 17-year-olds wrote back, it was like, you've got to be kidding me. I won't repeat some of them here, but the one, and this was mild, "I would shave their bodies, and where they bled, I'd suck the blood out of them." And it went on from there. And friends, this is 45 years ago. What do you think the movies, the computers, the TV, the radio... Oh, my goodness, TikTok! What do you think is being beamed out into people's minds at this time? What does he say? 1 John 5:19, ***...the whole world lies in the lap [power] of the evil one.***

Hey, I love sports, you know I do. Football, baseball, basketball, tennis on TV, whatever. I love sports, I love music. If you walked into our home yesterday, you'd have probably heard a very poor rendition of Bob Seger's old-time rock and roll coming from me. And so I love music, but the world has gone mad. And I'm 75 years old, and I'm a mature believer in Christ. And we got 11 and younger, 12, 13, 14, 15-year-olds that are spending an unbelievable amount of time getting indoctrinated from the world. Listen to these statistics. The average high school student, are you ready, spends seven hours and 22 minutes on his or her cell phone every day, that's 43% of their waking hours. Add in computer time to their cell phone time? The average high school student in America spends eight hours and 39 minutes, that's over 50% of their waking hours. And I got news for you, they're not reading the New American Standard translation of the Bible when they're staring at it, for the most part. Pre-teens, pre-teens, under 13 years of age, 5.5 hours a day. Garbage in, garbage out, the GIGO principal. To me, I kept thinking to myself, you know, this guy got radicalized to become an extreme Islamic



terrorist on the internet. Come on, what is with these people? Oh, my goodness gracious, there's a bigger harm than that. We've got teenagers and pre-teens being radicalized to the philosophy of the world, that many hours a day. And it doesn't have to be that they're gonna go throw Molotov cocktails at the White House, it's just the thinking of the flesh, the passion, the desires, the me, the me, the me, the self-consumed on me, the thinking of the world.

So he says what? How do you stop it? He says right here, **...do not be conformed to this world.** It's a command, he says stop it, stop being conformed. Now I love that word there, conformed in the Greek. *Syschēmatizō, syschēmatizō* is the way it should say. *Syschēmatizō*, sorry Lia, I'll have to spell it for you later, *syschēmatizō*, but basically it means scheme. It's quote, *it's the act of assuming an outward expression that does not come from within; to put on an act.* It's not what you are spiritually, you're masquerading, you're putting on the world's mask. He says stop doing that. The word also implies this conformity is like being stamped out. My brother-in-law Reese owned a metal stamping company at one time, had these thousands of pound presses, just bang, bang, bang, stamping these things out. And it has the idea of being stamped out in the world's mold, patterned after a definite model. He says don't allow yourself to be continually patterned after the world and the spirit of this age, which is not consistent and connected to what you really are spiritually if you genuinely know Christ.

You know, I was shocked that this would even be an issue. I don't know if it's a state or a local school system, maybe some of you saw it a week or 10 days ago on the news. They're now requiring in some schools, and I think it's good, I just couldn't believe we had to do this, that the children come in, the students come in, they take their cell phones and they do something with them, lock them in a can, and it goes in a box, and they go to class, and they're in class, and then they can get their cell phone after class again, so that they wouldn't be on their cell phones in class. And I'm thinking to myself, we got the prisoners running the prison, if you



will. I can't believe that the teachers have lost that much control that they're teaching math or science or history or whatever, and the kids are sitting there doing this on their cell phones, and they have no way of stopping it. I could not believe that that was such a revolutionary thought, and I had to think of some of you moms that, and dads, that homeschool your children. I was specifically thinking of you, Naomi, you, and she's got sweet baby James and singing Sammy home and the magnificent melodious Malia, her three kids. That's our little pet nicknames for them. Now, I can't imagine those three kids when she was homeschooling them, and they're sitting there trying to learn geography or mathematics, I cannot believe that Naomi Hohn would let her kids sit there and play on their cell phones the entire time. But they literally were reporting how that was the bulk of what the kids were doing in these public schools so much that they had to pass an ordinance and have these regulations, and the thing that amazed me, many of the parents were infuriated over it. Well, how will my child get a hold of me if there's a problem? They might get a hold of the teacher, or maybe the principal, and maybe the principal could get a hold of you. You know, it's gonna be a shock to some of the younger people in here, but you know what, I actually grew up, went all the way to grade school, went all the way to high school, went all the way to college, went to law school, never had a cell phone, never had a computer, never sat at the dinner table going. No, I actually looked across the dinner table and talked to people. You might say, well, good grief, what did you do? How could you possibly survive? I had a kid two weeks ago say that to me, 16-year-old, not really a kid, but how did you survive? I said, Bobby, are you kidding me? I said, we actually read books. We actually went out and played. We got engaged in pickup games and sports. We actually talked to people at dinner. Revolutionary concept.

Okay, I digress. What's the point? Stop, he says, and you stop it by informing your mind. How so? He says, you don't have to continue being stamped out in the world's mold. The mind is



the key. You have to start what? He starts with a negative. Stop it, don't be conformed. Then he gives you the positive. The way you do this is you have your, you become transformed. That word there, by the way, transformed, metamorphosis, *metamorphoō* in Greek is the same word that's used in Matthew 17 on the Mount of Transfiguration when it says Jesus was transfigured. He was metamorphosis. What was? He was holy God, a perfect God in perfect flesh. Somehow, He set His flesh aside and allowed them to see His glory. And that's what that word is saying there. Take the you that's you, the spiritual you, the redeemed you that's 100% holy and make sure you take off the world's mask and let them see the real you by what you say and what you do, let them see Christ in you. Be transformed, be metamorphosized, if you will. ***Be transformed***, how? ***By the renewing***, that word means renovation, ***by the renewing of your mind***. How, what does that mean? Well, I'll tell you what, Melonia, Melonia, ha, Melonia, I'll tell you what Naomi Hone taught her kids, and Abigail Lockard taught her kids, and all the rest of you taught your kids whether you homeschooled or not. If you were a good parent, I know what you taught them. You started out by teaching them Psalm 119:11. ***Thy word I've hidden in my heart***. What, ***that I might not sin against thee***. It starts, that's why I'm so excited about the fact that we've started this reading through the Bible in a Year program. Because I'm gonna tell you something, some of you are going to spend more time, if you consistently do that, you'll spend more time in the word of God than you've ever spent in one year in your whole life. And certain things will stick. And when those things stick, your mind's gonna be informed as to what God's truth is. And there's something about bathing and saturating your mind in the truths of God that have this effect on causing you to present your body a living sacrifice to God, how you think, what you say, et cetera. Colossians 1:28, Paul says, we teach every man all wisdom in order to present every man perfect, every man mature. Colossians 3:10, put on the new man, that is renewed in knowledge. Colossians 3:16,



let the word of Christ dwell in you. Richly, you know what that means? It means if the word of God dwells in you, lives in you, abides in your mind, saturates your mind and your soul, it will produce rich results. Let the word of God dwell in you richly. Do you spend much time in the word of God? Do you spend one-tenth of the time that you spend following the world's allurements in the word of God? People say, oh, John, you sacrifice so much in the time you spend to prepare those sermons. I sacrifice nothing. It's the greatest blessing of all time. I have to show up every Sunday, and I have 200 people, give or take, who expect to hear something from the word of God. I'm a scaredy cat. I fear showing up and not having something to say. And that fear, you know what, holy fear, drives me to the word of God. And those hours and hours and hours I spend each week bear fruit over the last 50 years in my life. I'm so thankful that I was privileged to teach a Sunday school class all those years. I'm so thankful I've been privileged to be in the pulpit of two or three churches now for all of these years, to have that constant discipline and at times when, oh, I wanna go do this or maybe I wanna go do that, no, Sunday's coming. And so, you better hit the books. It's been the richest blessing. No such thing as a sacrifice. Because why? Because over time, hey, I got things to deal with. I'm a fallen depraved sinner. I got a ways to go. That's what sanctification's all about. But I will tell you something. There's so many of the things, I was born a worrywart. I was born a worrier. I feared, I feared the St. Louis Cardinals might lose the pennant. I feared everything. And usually my fears came true. They usually did. But I mean, I feared everything. And there's some things that still I struggle with sinful fear about. You know, he says, be anxious for nothing. But there's so many things I used to fear, I don't anymore. Why? Because I'm so wonderful? No, because of 50 years of having the Word of God poured over your soul.

You know, I'll give you one recent example because I can't offend anybody but me on this one. Saturday before last, I'm sitting down talking to Teri. I'm thinking, this is so fantastic. No



honey-do's, no this, no errands to run, groceries are in, got the day. All I have to do today is finish up the balance of the sermon, spend a little time with you, honey. It's just gonna be so great. I got up about 30 minutes later and I walked down the hall and I heard what I thought I had heard when I got up to use the restroom at about two o'clock in the morning. Water running. Where's that coming from? It's still running. I walked out into the garage only to find that my water heater had broken and Niagara Falls was flowing over the top of the water heater and all across the floor and had been going on since two o'clock in the morning. We got a carpet on one side and some things that were sitting on the floor and it is just absolutely a disaster. Now, did I immediately go, hey, praise God? No, no. I was shocked, jumped up. Fortunately, I had enough, enough physical skills to know where the water valve was. Got the water turned off and I started to get all panicked and everything and I will tell you, it took about five minutes because I was gonna have to go back in and tell Teri, "Saturday just changed", and I real, wait a minute. What have we been talking? We've been talking about the sovereignty of God. We said there was no maverick molecule in the universe. You've been standing up in front of 150, 200 people every week for three or four weeks now talking about how they should bring every thought captive to Christ, present your body a living sacrifice, it includes your mind. You're gonna do it. Wait a minute, is God sovereign? Is He in control? Does He know about water heaters? Does He know about carpeting? Do He know about these things in the garage? Does He know about your finances? Does He know about, yeah, He does. Okay, I can't figure it out, but okay. So, I had a much better attitude when I went back in and told Teri what was going on and then things started happening. I called my next-door neighbor. I am fortunate enough to be living next door to Mr. Home Depot. He has every tool, every this. Actually, he's changed out my hot water heater two times before in the 26 years we lived next door to each other. Not under such drastic circumstances as this. I called him



10 minutes before he was gonna be driving away for several hours appointment. The guy's kind enough to drop everything, comes over. We unhook everything and so forth. And then we got the thing over to Home Depot. And lo and behold, I was still within the warranty. \$900 water heater, I got a \$578 credit after I'd used this thing for seven years. I got that much of a credit on a new water heater. He's got the trailer, he's got the everything. We bring it back. By nine o'clock that night, the garage floor that I'd been wanting to have clean for four years, you could eat off of it. The carpet was dry. Some of the cabinetry that Teri had wanted to move for 20 years have been relocated. All this stuff is back. Everything is fine. The few things that got damaged needed to be thrown away anyhow. And then I started thinking, not only I had an opportunity to talk about Christ again with that neighbor, I realized, oh my goodness, thank goodness this happened on a Saturday when I had no errands. On a Saturday when the sermon was already almost completed. Thank goodness it didn't happen when we were on vacation out of town. Thank goodness it didn't happen on Sunday morning. Thank goodness it didn't happen when I was at a hospital appointment. Thank goodness it didn't happen when I was in a courtroom. Thank goodness she didn't find it and panic when I'm in court downtown on a Wednesday or whatever. All of these various things that we ended up praising God for.

Now, I'm only sharing that because I would never, I don't believe, I know, I would never have looked at that that way. Even as a Christian, I don't think I would have looked at it that way 25 years ago. Maybe even more recent than that, I don't know. But that is exactly what this passage of scripture is telling us to do. Telling us exactly what to do. Your body needs to be, your mind, excuse me, needs to be saturated in the word of God. The time you're spending in the word of God informs the body, the rest of your soul, your spirit, as to what you are to do.



And that brings up the fourth aspect of our worship, **the will**, the will. It doesn't happen automatically. It's not like rubbing a rabbit's foot. Well, I'm a born-again believer and I'm spending time in the word of God and therefore I'm automatically going to respond in a right way. Remember I said it took me a few minutes because I had to win the battle in my mind. My flesh was saying this is horrible, this is terrible, this is a financial disaster, it's ruined the whole day. I had one day to cruise and now I don't. All of that went through my mind and then I finally got to a point where I said, wait a minute, you believe the word of God or you don't? But had I not been as steeped in that truth and the sovereignty of God as I now believe I am, I would never have acted that way. But what's he say? So what? So the battle goes on in the mind but you still have to exercise your will to choose to follow God's word. And by the way, that's where the grace and prayer comes in as well in praying by the grace of God that you are enabled to do that. But he says, ***do not be conformed [to this world], but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*** Now look at this into verse two, ***that you may prove what the will***, there's the will (of God, though). It says ***will of God is that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*** Why do you say "your will" when it's referring to the will of God? Quote, *you show the world the approved will of God by doing it. That's not the idea, it's not the idea to test and see if God's will is good or bad or right or wrong, he says. It's always good, it's always right. It is to put on display to be the living proof that the will of God is good and lofty and noble.* Romans 8:28 is what went through my head that last Saturday, Saturday, yeah, week ago Saturday. And look at all the good things that came. I got a new water heater for a really discounted cost. I got a clean garage floor. I got an organized garage floor. And by the way, I know where a lot of things are now that I didn't even know I owned that I know now where they are.



So, but what does it mean to prove what the will of God is? You prove it. How do you prove something? Okay, you're a prosecutor in a courtroom and you wanna convict Jeff of first-degree murder. What are the elements of first-degree murder? Jeff unlawfully took another human being's life premeditated with malice aforethought. If I can show premeditation, if I can show malice aforethought, and if I can show he did the deed itself, then I can convict him in front of that jury of first-degree murder. So, what do I do? I just stand up and say, ladies and gentlemen, the jury, he had premeditation and malice aforethought that killed the guy and throw him in jail. No, I gotta put on evidence to prove each of those elements. Well, how do I prove premeditation? Well, I bring on the witnesses and the documents and show three weeks before he killed me, he went and he bought a bag of cement. He bought a rope. He bought some plastic sheets to wrap the body up and then bury it in cement somewhere. He did that three weeks before the murder. Oh, by the way, 10 days before the murder, he buys a handgun illegally on the street and files the serial numbers off that he used to kill the person. And then he sits outside the guy's house from midnight to 6:30 in the morning waiting for the guy to get in his car to leave to go to work. And he walks up in the driveway and shoots him cold dead, throws him in the back of his car, drags him off and you get the point. The point simply is this. It wasn't in the heat of passion. It wasn't in the heat of the moment. It wasn't an automatic, he had time. He thought it through. He bought these things. He had plenty of time to cool off. He had plenty of time to change his mind. He had plenty of time not to go through with it. He continued on and on. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, we proved to you it was premeditated and with malice and aforethought, thought all through and planned. Okay, so what's the point? What you're doing when you obey the word of God in the crisis, moments, times of sacrifice, times of heartache, times of trouble, times of life, you are giving evidence that your will is submissive to the will of God. You're proving. And here I am, I



submitted my will to God's will. I didn't get angry. I didn't get bitter. I didn't shake my fist. I said, "I'm gonna trust you, God, even though I don't like this. I hate this. It ruined my Saturday. Okay, I know You're in control." I submit my will to His and what happens? Well, all the things that we've already talked about. Look at all the good that's come out of it. Look at the fabulous sermon illustration I got now. All right, but, and so what's he saying? You prove what the will of God is because what? God's will for your life, if you're obedient to it, is always good. It's always well pleasing to God and it's always the thing that perfects you, matures you. You will never ever be sorry for obeying the word of God.

Well, again, I ended last Sunday's sermon with a quote from David Livingston about how he never ever sacrificed anything for God, that it was all a privilege. And I certainly feel the same way. As Brian comes up to lead us in this closing hymn, I wanna close with this great poem. It's by an anonymous poet. I don't know who wrote it, but it talks about how we never really sacrifice anything for God in light of the constant flow of mercies He gives us moment by moment. The poet said this:

*I counted dollars while God counted crosses.*

*I counted gains while He counted losses.*

*I counted my worth by the things gained in store.*

*He sized me up by the scars that I bore.*

*I coveted honors and I sought for degrees.*

*He wept as He counted the few hours I spent on my knees.*

*I never knew until one day by a grave*

*how vain are the things we spend our life to save.*



Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You for the privilege of sharing Your word. Thank You for the significance, the importance and the deep truths that are contained in Romans 12, one and two. And Lord, if You be pleased and if You will, if we have the privilege to be together next week and journey on into verses three, four, five, six and beyond in Romans 12, I pray, Father, that You will bless us again with a deeper knowledge of Your word. I pray that we walk out of here today renewed in our souls because we've been renewed in our minds in such a manner that it will transform us and cause us to present our thoughts, our speech, our actions, our entire body to You. And that truth deeply embedded in our soul will win the day, the battle of wills when we say no to our flesh and no to the world and yes to the things of Christ. Father, we ask all of this again in the matchless name of You in the person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen and amen.