



## What is True Worship Part 2

February 02, 2025

Romans 2:1&2

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(video 50:20)

I'd like you to turn to Romans 12, no surprise there, verses one and two. And as you do, I'd like you to follow along as I read those first verses from the New American Standard again just to reorient us. Or maybe you can start reading them on your own as I walk down here and grab this coffee to put on a throat that is starting to drive me crazy. Hold on. Pardon me.

Romans 12:1&2. ***I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, excuse me, a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*** We're gonna dial in on that again today. ***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 and perfect.***

Like I said, I wanna home in, on the time I have this morning, the prayer time went a little longer than I anticipated. I usually try to control it when I have it, but I think you know why I did that, and hopefully God is pleased. But I wanna home in, for the time I have, on that last phrase, ***spiritual service of worship***. Worship is a popular subject. It has been more and more, I think, for the last 25, 30 years, really. It's talked about a lot. There's a great amount of activity and commotion still in the church over worship. There's the so-called "worship wars", if you will. Most people view music and worship as synonymous. If you fell asleep, wake up, and hear this, they're not. They're not.

If you said to some congregation right now, maybe most, I don't know, we're gonna worship the Lord together right now, they would expect music to start playing. That's immediately



where they go. There are people who believe that music is inseparable from worship, and that it's critical what style of music you use. If you don't use the right music, if you don't use the right music that appeals to a certain group, better do those old hymns for those gray hairs. Nope, better do that rock and roll for the younger group. If you don't use the right music, if you don't set the right tone, if you don't induce the right mood, there won't be worship. The battle rages fiercely, so much that churches split and fragment over this. Groups of people on all sides of the issue. And the basic underlying idea, again, that some people have in their mind is that music produces worship, or at least at the very least, is inseparable from it. And that if you don't have the right style of music, worship won't happen. It's either gotta be loud and repetitious and over and over again to create that mood, or it's gotta be somber. And don't think of using a guitar, because you gotta create another mood. That's an illusion, and it's an error. And this may sound strange to some of you. I love music. I love all kinds of music. I love the hymns we sang today. I even turned around to PJ to tell her something about, now I've forgotten the hymn, not *Standing On the Promises*, whatever the one was, and about that hymn, because the guy who wrote it had a connection with our home state of Indiana. I love it. As a matter of fact, I walk around our house singing all the time to my wife's great dismay, I might add. But let me tell you something: Music cannot produce worship. Music does not induce worship. It's not, and I mean in and of itself, music is not the origin of worship.

So, your worship, if it's genuine worship, must start from another place. You say, well, okay, then where does genuine worship come from? This text answers that. The reason why we are camped on verses one and two for so many weeks is because you've had 11 chapters of orthodoxy. By the way, I might add, and the end of those 11 chapters is what? An antiphon of praise that Paul breaks out to. I don't think anybody was strumming a guitar or playing a



piano when he did that. He just started praising God. The very first thing he says after that is critical. What does he say? ***I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a holy and a living sacrifice, acceptable to God,*** and make sure that there's some music in the background, because that's your spiritual service of worship. No, there's nothing about music in that text. And again, I'm gonna get there, I love music. It's great. It can aid our worship. It can assist our worship. It's an outward manifestation of our worship. And praise God, we've got somebody as talented as a Brian Lockhart, and a choir, and people like that, and great voices, and so forth, who can aid our worship with that. But where does worship come from? This text tells us.

First of all, what's it say? Your worship is spiritual in the first instance. *Logikos* (G 3050), in the realm of the soul, in the realm of the spirit. The King James translates it *reasonable*. I said this last week. It doesn't mean, man, that's logical, although it is, like I said. It means in the realm of reason. Worship in the first instance is cognitive, because it comes from the spirit, from the soul, in the realm of reason, in the realm of intelligence. The word worship there, *latēria* (G2999), is a word for priestly activities. *Logikos*, ***your spiritual service of worship***, *latēria*, is a priestly activity. Worship is something we render to God. And in the first instance, is spiritual, internal, that ultimately manifests itself in external things, such as singing sometimes. But you can worship without music. You can worship with music. And I know because of our moods and sensitivities, we all know there's certain types of music that we feel might induce better worship for us personally, but that's a side issue. It's not critical. It's the soul, in the soul, in the spirit of man, where worship begins, ***that is acceptable to God***. That means utterly satisfying to God. Keep in mind, worship is an act, whereby we offer praise to God. It is not a mood, it is not a feeling. It's nothing induced or encouraged or started



because of the beauty, or lack of beauty, of the music involved, okay? I think I've hit that hard enough. Romans 12, one and two says nothing about music.

So, what is acceptable worship to God? True worship comes from the soul. And the more your soul grasps aspects of the glory, the person, the character, the work, the dynamic of Almighty God, the more your soul will worship, and it infuses your worship. Now, I agree. What we just did up here, I was singing my heart out to you. As a matter of fact, I was looking for something in the scriptures, and I know most of those hymns by heart. I'm sitting there singing my heart out as we're doing. It's joyful, it's exhilarating. I love that kind of corporate worship, but let me tell you something: The more you infuse knowledge of Almighty God into your worship, the deeper and richer your worship experience will be. That is why I lament so much the death of the hymns in the evangelical church and why I appreciate the paradigm that we've established in Reformed Living Bible Church where primarily we're using one of these two hymnals that have these hymns of the faith. Let me tell you something, and you all know this maybe better than I (I don't know, because I don't go to other churches), but you can go to a lot of churches around the valley and around the country and never hear what you heard this morning. Never hear it. That's sad. Now, why is that tragic? Here you go. Because hymns carry a profound theology in a very profound manner, and sometimes that theology is very subtle, and believers, they're an inch deep in their knowledge of the scripture and 90 miles wide, and they don't appreciate the many subtleties that are in those hymns, and that's why it is so critical that you see that, and that's why I made that big case that you got 11 chapters of the deep... the mercies of God, the grace of God, the righteousness of God... all those things you got when you came to know Christ, and Paul gets overwhelmed with it, and he breaks out at the end of chapter 11 and goes, oh, the depth of the riches and the glory of God! He's overcome



with it, and that's exactly what a deeper theological knowledge of God causes in the human soul. We sing these hymns because we're already worshiping in our heart the knowledge and the depth of those character qualities of God.

Last week, I didn't get there to it, we did Robert Robinson's hymn, *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*. Do you realize how theologically accurate, in many respects, that hymn is? Now let me show you some of the subtleties that you may not pick up on, depending upon the depth of your biblical knowledge and what you know about God. *Come thou fount of every blessing. Tune my heart*, stop right there. Get my heart right. Get my soul, my spirit right, so I can do what? *Tune my heart to sing your grace*. Grace, what has Paul told us for 11 chapters? The mercies, the grace of God bestowed upon us that should motivate us to act and present our bodies this living sacrifice to God. Get my heart right, tune my heart so I can then sing about your grace, *to sing thy grace*, and then what's he say? *Streams of mercy*. That's all those mercies, that's those 25 mercies I set out for you in the pastor's letter that I didn't get out until eight o'clock last night, by the way, sorry about that, it was a crazy week, but at least I got it for you in print. That's that righteousness, that's that love of God, grace of God, peace of God, reconciliation, adoption of sons, ability to pray, intercession of Jesus Christ, intercession of the Holy Spirit, your ability to pray, on and on and on and on, all those things that he's for 11 chapters told you get that package when you come to know Christ. You got it all right there, streams of mercies, he says. So what's he say? Come now, fount of every blessing, get my heart right. That's where it all starts, it's where we're saying get my heart right, why? So then, then I can sing of your grace. Starts in the heart. *Streams of mercy, never ceasing*, that's what calls for what? *Songs of loudest praise*. It's those streams of mercy, never ending, that prompts us to want to praise God. That's what he did for 11 chapters. He talked about that *stream of*



*mercies, never ending* and took them all apart for us. And then what's it do? He *calls for a song of loudest praise*. That's why he breaks out at the end of 11. Oh, the depth and the wonder of the world and so forth. So that's what he's talking about. And I love to sing the hymns because quite frankly, they draw me into the deeper things of God and you pick up on those subtleties and you pick up on those nuances and therefore they enhance your worship.

Now I'm sorry, everybody gets a joke out of it, they get a laugh out of it, those 7-11 choruses, seven words sung 11 times over. I'm not saying that for a laugh. I'm saying it to make a point. I've gone to churches where every other week we spent 10 minutes singing *I am a friend of God, I am a friend of God, I am a friend of God, I am a friend, I am a friend of God, I am a friend...* to try to create a mood that literally had no theological content whatsoever. I'm telling you, I'm putting that down in a loving way, I hope, that is not an aid to worship. It may aid somebody with a kindergarten knowledge of truth, but as mature believers, we are to go into the deep things of God and to appreciate the mercies of God and ultimately our praise springs from all of that which ultimately breaks out in an anthem of praise and if there's singing we sing to God and if there's music we sing and if there's no music, hey, then we just praise God in our heart and mouth with life and lip as it is. But I wanted to underscore and get away from this music battle, and I wanted to underscore why, because the question came up, you know, you guys, you're really cast in concrete, you don't have just one old hymn, no, you got two. Yeah, because there's great truth in those hymns and we want to underscore that and remember that.

Okay, so having said that, so what? Let me read it to you. *What generates and what produces true worship*, this one commentator said, *is a grasp of salvation's richness, a grasp of the glories*



*of saving grace*, close quote. And that's why I believe Paul broke out in his anthem of praise at the end of chapter 11.

Okay, so let's go on. We got an answer then. It's spiritual, it starts in the spirit, it's cognitive, and it comes from what? The motivation is what? Focusing on the mercies of God and all that that means. And that should motivate us to do what? To present our bodies. Now we already have said, this is, you gotta be a believer to do this because in the flesh you can't please God, he calls them brethren, et cetera, we've underscored that he's talking to believers. So first of all, you worship the Lord your God with soul, mind, body, and spirit, and the soul, excuse me, soul, mind, body, and will. And the soul or the spirit is already redeemed, is a given, is an underpinning to all of this. So, ***I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God***, based upon all these mercies, what? ***present your bodies*** a living sacrifice, ***a living and holy sacrifice***, excuse me, ***acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship***.

Now, we went through a lot of things and all that that implied, but the next question in my mind becomes: Okay, how and what does it mean to present your body to Almighty God? That the body must be given to God as a part of your worship. I can't underscore how important this is. "*present*" here, again, is a temple term. It's a priestly term. It's your spiritual sacrifice to God. And when he says "*body*", yeah, he's talking about skin, flesh, and bones, but he's talking about emotions. He's talking about thought processes. He's talking about our humanness. Your spirit is redeemed, but your spirit is now called upon to present the rest of you, your body physically, your mind, your will, to Almighty God as a living sacrifice. These are, like I said, temple terms. I don't wanna assume anything more than what the text says. It's exactly what he says, present your body. He wants the body. He's already got the soul, the



spirit. He wants the body. The new me inside is to present this fallen sinful me to Him outside. It's not always easy. I said last week, it's not a dead sacrifice, it's a living sacrifice. And a living sacrifice wants to crawl off the altar. That's why he says in the text, to present, it's an ongoing word in the Greek, continually present your body moment by moment by moment to Almighty God. Your body is the place where humanness resides. It's also the place where sin resides. That's where the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life, as he calls it in 1 John, all reside. This is not the first time, by the way, that Paul has not hinted at this, has even said this. Back over in Romans 6:12, what's he say? Now you've been redeemed. Your soul has been given to God. So *let not sin, therefore reign in your mortal* what? **body**, it says. Sin should no longer reign in it. Present your members, he says later, as instruments of righteousness to God. Quit presenting your members, meaning the aspects of your body, your humanness, your mind, your will, and your fleshly body to the world, to the flesh, to the devil. Present them to Almighty God as instruments of righteousness. That's why he says, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6(:19), ***know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?*** And he, just a reminder, we don't have to go back to all of this, but Romans six, seven, and eight underscores how your spirit is totally redeemed, but it's housed in this body. Don't sacrifice it to the world, he says. Sacrifice it to Almighty God. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:4, ***every one of you should know how to possess his vessel***, meaning his body, ***in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of evil desire like pagans who know not God.*** That tells me, and by the way, this is so important. There's actually church groups, fortunately not many, but they're out there, who say, oh, disciplining anybody, church discipline, total waste of time. You should never do that, because that's just the body, and the body's gonna do what it's gonna do. It's the spirit of man that counts. Do you know where that stems from? That stems from a Greek mindset and philosophical thought of *dualism*, where anything that's material or fleshly or



earthly is bad and doesn't mean anything. It's only the spiritual and the mind or the thought that counts. That's not biblical, and that's not what the word of God says. And by the way, just so you know, when he says possess your vessel in honor, walk in personal holiness, don't indulge the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and so forth, the people that Paul wrote to in Ephesus, they had to walk past these temples to Diana and others where before they were believers, they used to go in there and commit all sorts of unspeakable sexual practices with temple prostitutes as a part of their worship of all things. And the mind, those things are cemented in the mind. And every time they, and so I know our culture's vulgar, and it shocks me how blase we have gotten to certain things. And this is a command to all of us to wake up and to sharpen up and to start presenting our bodies, which includes your mind (garbage in, garbage out), to do what is... you know, I cannot tell you, this is one of the advantages of being older, I guess, to see the change, it's sad. I am shocked still. And I'm thankful, by the way, that it still bothers me because a lot of believers I rub elbows with, it seems like it doesn't bother them anymore because they're getting used to it. I can't believe the horrific vulgarities. I know they bleep them out, but every one of us knows exactly what they're saying. And that impression goes into your head every time. And it's gotten so common. I grieve over our youth. I grieve at how sexual immorality and everything you read, everything you say, every advertisement... the things that are advertised on television today, in our advertisement ,makes me blush and would have absolutely caught my dad, a non-believer and mother, non-believers, would have thrown the television out of the house to think that that was broadcast in front of their children, let alone themselves. And they weren't even believers. We are called upon to walk in holiness. By the way, the Greek gods that they believed in, they use the word *hagiōs* (G 40), means set apart. We translate it many times, *saint*. We call believers *the hagiōs*, set apart ones. That never meant pure and holy in the Greek mindset. All of their gods were



fallen depraved people that they believed in, you know, Zeus and Apollo and all these people. They were all committing adultery and sins and all this stuff. And so when they were set apart to one of those gods, they had no concept of that meant you should possess your body in holiness and your thought life and your speech and so forth should be... they didn't even think of it that way. Christianity with the advent of Christ and the gospel of Christ and the new covenant scriptures, and the old covenant scriptures as well, but the flesh that was put on it by the new covenant scriptures is where the Koine Greek word for *set apart ones*, *hagiōs*, actually took on the concept of holy, pure in terms of morality. It only took place then. So just a little historical thing on the words that I wanted to... And, by the way, this is so critical, so critical, that you put it into practice and we're gonna talk about what that means. I think, what does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 9, I think it is, I buffet my body, I discipline my body, lest after being given the privilege of preaching the word of God to some, I myself would get disqualified. And I cannot help but continue to think of a guy who in my lifetime, I would say, was the most dynamic, powerful, expository preacher of the word of God I ever had the privilege to sit in front of in my life, a guy named Steve Lawson. Who is he? This guy, think about this, on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, of every preacher alive on this planet, Steve Lawson was picked to preach in Calvin's pulpit on that 500th Reformation Sunday. R.C. Sproul had him as a prominent board member on Ligonier Ministries. John MacArthur had him as the head, right where Vernon goes to seminary, at the master seminary, the head of the preaching practicum course. For 28, 29 years, I've gone to shepherds' conferences, he has been the one pulpitier that all of us couldn't wait to hear, see, and he was masterful in his understanding of the word of God, but he failed to do what Paul's command to Timothy. Pay attention to your teaching and guard your heart. Somewhere along the line, he quit relying upon the grace of God and walking in humility before God to guard



his, excuse me, his heart. It's tragic, and quite frankly, it's not uncommon. I think there was eight or 10 pastors in the Dallas, Texas area alone in the last 18 months who've resigned their pulpits or been asked to step down because of moral failures. I don't know if all of them are born-again believers, but the bottom line is it's there. So, God cares so much about the body that he says your first and fundamental and primary activity you're to do after coming to know Christ, and then the rest of your days, the chief end of man is to glorify God. You are to worship me, you are to glorify me, and you start by offering your body to me, ***holy and acceptable, which is your spiritual service of worship.*** Again, I cannot believe how much believers who are called upon to possess our temple, our body, our flesh in holiness literally just turn another eye.

I had Ben read Genesis 22 as our corporate reading time, I did that for a reason. I wanna show you something unique in Genesis 22 that ties into all of this. We know the story, he read it to us, take your son, your only son, the one you love, God just grinds it into him, and I want you to take this thing you love more than anything in the world. As a matter of fact, this is the thing that you waited for, that I told you about, this is the child of the promise, this is the one through whom Messiah ultimately is gonna come, this is everything to you, it isn't just your kid, it's the Messiah's forefather if you will, and I want you to take him and kill him. Whoa, are you kidding me? And he goes and Ben read the account for us there in Genesis 22, and he did all of that. But I want you to see something that perhaps you haven't seen before. All of those sacrifices in the Old Testament, I said this last week, were dead sacrifices. They killed them and they were dead, but they were all to be done with a heart attitude that evidenced what - Jonathan, good to see you my friend, all the way from the Caribbean, I did not know you were here, we need to talk, - sorry. What were they all to evidence? They were to evidence the



heart, a heart that was right with God, right? So, what does God say? I want you to give a living sacrifice, a living one which is a perpetual sacrifice because your soul, your spirit, you're gonna live on forever, and so you're gonna give me a sacrifice that's a living sacrifice. Okay, here's the point. If Abraham were to plunge that knife into Isaac, you know what he's got? He's got a dead sacrifice. Isaac's gonna be all dead. Now I understand the point being he believed that even Almighty God could raise him from the dead. And so in a left-handed way, so to speak, it's actually a testimony to Abraham's faith in the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of Messiah, and you can make all those arguments for that. But the thing I wanted you to see is this. What Abraham was saying by that sacrifice, Isaac, he thought, might end up a dead sacrifice, but Abraham was presenting his heart in killing Isaac, if he did, as a living sacrifice, as a living sacrifice. I love what this one commentator said. I wish these thoughts were original with me. I don't have any original thoughts. I just steal them from dead guys. This one guy said this. *What Abraham, he says, was saying is this: I'll live the rest of my life without anything I hold dear if that's what you, God, tell me to do.* That was Abraham's commitment. He was gonna have Isaac be a dead sacrifice if that's what God wanted, but in doing so, he was declaring that I am gonna be a living sacrifice. That's, by the way, Lordship salvation. That's the only salvation there is. You're Lord, and when you come in to that, and that's why the scriptures say what? Abraham believed God, and it was accredited, accounted to him, as righteousness. I love that. I love that truth. This is what Paul is saying, and I wrote them down. Where are they? Oh, here we are. In Philippians 1:21, he says, ***for me to live is Christ, but to die is*** what, Joan? Say it loud. ***Gain. For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain.*** He's talking about spiritually dying to self is gain. But I mean, and physical as well. What do we always say? Present your body a holy sacrifice to God. Well, my goodness, they might literally physically kill me. That's the greatest thing that could happen to you. Greatest thing



that could happen to you, because as soon as you die, you're in the presence with the Lord. He also says this, 2 Corinthians 4:10. He says, you know, he talks about we're crushed, but not destroyed, despairing, but not defeated, and so on and so forth. Then he gets to 2 Corinthians 4:10, and he says, ***always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also might be manifest in our body.*** What was he saying there? I'm constantly presenting myself a living sacrifice to God. I'm constantly mortifying the flesh. I'm constantly saying spiritually, I'm a dead man. You can't hurt a dead man. I'm dead to the world. I'm dead to the lust of the flesh. I'm dead to the lust of the eyes. I'm alive unto Christ. And by the way, that's spiritual gain in the ultimate eternal reward you'll receive, and it's spiritual gain when the physical death comes, because you'll be in the presence of that Lord whom you are dying to serve and literally died to serve.

I'll close with these. There was a great Christian in China by the name of Lu Fooks. That was his name. He was moved with compassion for his own countrymen, and some of them were taken off to be coolies, to be miners in African mines. This very wealthy individual sold himself into slavery so he could go with those 200 or so Chinese slaves to work as a slave among them. He became a coolie, a slave, in order to reach them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He died as a slave in South Africa, reaching those people with the gospel of Christ. I don't know if the name Devereux Spratt is familiar to many of you, and he was a very wealthy Englishman. In 1641, he was captured by Algerian pirates. While he is imprisoned in Algeria, he is privileged, by the grace of God, to found a church for these Algerian slaves that he was imprisoned with. 15, 18 years later, through tremendous efforts of the English Parliament and Devereux Spratt's own brother, they made arrangements through these Algerian pirates and the Algerians to release him. He refused to leave. He counted it such a privilege to stay



and to minister to these individuals in that church. He remained there. There's a plaque in that church in Algeria to this day to Devereux Spratt. I'm gonna end with a quote from David Livingston. You know David Livingston, the Scottish missionary who, with all the infectious diseases and all the various things he was treating with the tribal individuals in Africa and so forth, and his journeys and his adventures and all that were lost to the world, and so the London Times appoints a guy, his name was Stanley, a reporter to go and to find Dr. Livingston, this missionary to Africa and explorer and so forth, and ultimately, you know, is where the famous phrase, Stanley walks in and there's Livingston around a fire treating a bunch of natives. I think he was doing something on a patient at the time by firelight, and all these people are standing around, and Stanley walks in and says, "Dr. Livingston, I presume?", you know, and that famous phrase is always quoted. Well, Livingston ultimately returns to, they says bury my heart in Africa, and it's a long story. It's a tremendous missionary story. If you ever get an opportunity to read anything about David Livingston, do so, but the reason why I brought it up is that I love this quote from one of his biographers quoted him as saying because it ties into this whole idea of presenting our bodies, a living sacrifice to God. As Brian comes up to lead us in our final hymn, I'm just gonna read this quote with you and close in prayer, and Lord willing, we'll pick this up next week. Livingston, now you gotta understand, this guy's gone through dysentery, disease, almost eaten by cannibals, beat up, clubbed, without creature comforts, to say the least. Weather, mosquitoes, you name a physical malady, a disease, a problem with people you can think of, in his years on the mission field, he had it deluxe, okay? Here's what Livingston wrote in his diary. *People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we could never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward of healthful activity, the consciousness of doing*



*good, peace of mind and bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with such a word, it is emphatically no sacrifice, it's a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of life may make us pause and cause the spirit to waver and sink, but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this, we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His father's own throne on high to give Himself for us, close quote.*

Let's pray, Father, we thank You for this time in Your word. Lord, we realize that it is Your glorious mercies that motivate us to break out in anthems of praise and if there's music to sing those praises to You from hearts overflowing in worship. And Lord, we're called upon to present our lives, every aspect of our lives as a sacrifice to you moment by moment, day by day, holy and acceptable, pleasing to You, which means in accordance with Your word. Father, may You instill a renewed fervor in all of us this day by not forgetting those mercies we have experienced and by realizing that we are privileged to be priests, a kingdom of priests unto You, presenting spiritual sacrifices, holy offerings of prayers of praise, prayers of gratitude, gifts of our treasures, service to others, but most importantly, all of it by starting with giving You our very lives, presenting our bodies as a holy sacrifice to You. We thank You for it all in Christ's name, amen and amen.