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Romans 12 marks the transition from Paul's theological teaching to his practical teaching. Within that chapter there are three major sections: Transformed and living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2), service in the Body according to our spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8), Kingdom lifestyle (Romans 12:9-21) We will focus predominately on the first and part of the third sections today.

TRANSFORMED | Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but **be transformed by the renewing (renovation) of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's (singular) will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.*

1. **Conform** | To press into the image of the world, it's values, appearance, etc.
 - 1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the **lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*
 - **Question:** Name some ways the world attempts to press us into its shape.
2. **Transformed** | While the world conforms us outwardly, the Spirit miraculously transforms us inwardly, reshaping us from an earthly nature into a heavenly creation. This is the very same word used when Jesus was *transfigured* on the Mount of Transfiguration.
 - Matthew 17:2 *...and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.* (2 Corinthians 3:18)
3. **Renewing our mind** | This is to be made new by the active work of the Holy Spirit. The mind, heart and motivational drive are changed and made completely new.
 - A transformation is not merely an outward change but a completely different creation from the inside out... much like a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. There is nothing new that *even resembles the former*. And this is ONLY accomplished by the power of the Word of God as we allow it into our hearts and minds and put it into practice.
 - Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is **alive** and **active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword,*...

- **Alive:** God's Word is living and breathing, having Resurrection Life in itself. The Greek word describes it as having the very Life of God! This power is not static but literally infused with the Spirit (pneuma: breath) of God!
- **Active:** The original Greek word is *energes*, from which we get energetic. The Word is energetically at work in those who hear, receive and put it into practice! The Word lives because God lives and acts through it.
- Psalm 33:6,9 *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth... For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.* (Genesis 1:3-31)
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate (to gaze at) the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
- **Question:** How has God's Word changed you?

OUR BEHAVIOR AS BELIEVERS | Romans 12:9-21

1. The Word of God renews us as we apply our thinking to line up with God's Word AND walk it out and act on it, making it a very real, consistent part of our everyday life.
2. Romans 12:9-21 reveals the characteristics of a transformed life that reflect Christ's heart.
3. This ability is **ONLY** possible through the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8: Romans 8:14 *For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.*)
 - They reflect genuine love, hating evil and holding tightly to what is good.
 - They are devoted, honoring others above themselves.
 - They are passionate, keeping their spiritual fire burning as they serve the Lord.
 - They are joyful in hope, patient in trouble, and faithful in prayer.
 - They are generous and practice hospitality.
 - They bless even those who persecute them.
 - They rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.
 - They walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8), associating with all people and avoiding pride.
 - They don't repay evil for evil but leave vengeance to God, showing kindness to their enemies.
 - Transformed believers don't react in human ways but overcome all evil with good.

PRAYER | *Thank You, FATHER, for the gift of eternal salvation, the forgiveness of all of our sins, and the power of the Holy Spirit living in us. Help us grow into mature followers of Christ, reflecting Your likeness wherever we go. We know this is impossible in our own strength, but we trust in Your empowerment through the Spirit. Our desire is to please You in all our thoughts and ways. Continue, LORD, to do a deep and lasting work in us.*