

THE ROAD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

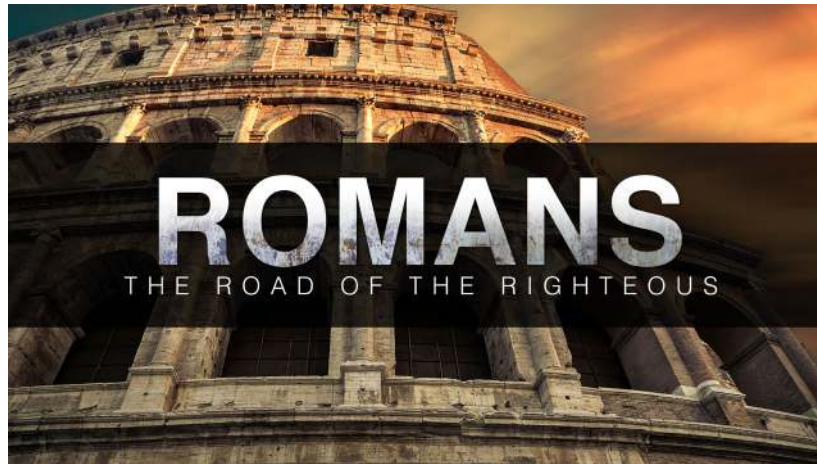
Expositional Study Of Romans

Romans 12:1-2

Written By

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So what is the Christian life all about? What is its main point and objective? Let's put it another way. Since we are, as Paul teaches in Romans chapters 1 through 11, justified, as sinners, before a holy God *solely* by faith, what does this pragmatically mean?

Paul answers this all-important question starting in Romans 12:1-2, which are probably two of the most well-known verses in all of the NT. After I was saved in 1967, I attended a new believers class to learn how to live as a Christian. I still have the mimeographed copy of the small booklet containing all the verses the pastor wanted us to memorize. Of course, this text from Paul was rightfully included because it tells you all you need to know of what it means to be saint. Listen and learn from the wise disciple of Jesus:

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12).

We could easily boil Paul's words down here into this one central motif:

Radical Transformed Living Leads To Radical Informed Living
(Rom. 12:1-2)

The opening grammatical connective *therefore, oun* (οὖν) is employed by Paul to move from what he has just taught to its logical and/or practical ramifications for life and living (Rom. 2:21, 26; 3:1, 9, 27, 31; 4:1, 9, 10; 5:1, 9, 18; 6:1, 4, 12, 15, 21; 7:3, 7, 13, 25; 8:12, 31; 9:14, 17, 18, 19 (2x), 30, 10:14; 11:1, 5, 7, 11, 13, 19, 22; 13:10, 12; 14:8, 12, 13, 16, 19; 15:17, 28; 16:19). Here the pivotal term is designed to cause us to look not just at the content of Romans 9 through 11, but the entire theological import of all the preceding chapters. Hence, we, who were once caught in the downward spiral of sin (Rom. 1), were born sinners (Rom. 5:12-21), were formerly enslaved to sin (Rom. 6), are now, for the first time in our lives, equipped and called to live radically changed spiritual and moral lives. Couched in different terms, justification should, by definition, lead to a life of sanctification, or holiness.

What is the difference between justification, which comprises the thematic emphasis of chapters 1 through 11, and sanctification, which encompasses chapters 12 through 15? Perhaps a chart can aid your understanding:

JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION
Objective: Declared righteous	Subjective: Being made righteous
A legal act	A life process
God's work for us	Gods' work in us
Imputed righteousness	Imparted righteousness
Based on past death of Christ	Based on present ministry of Christ
Basis of sanctification	Result of justification
Finished at the moment of conversion	Finished at the moment of glorification
Remains constant	Can be interrupted
Based on faith	Based on obedience
Positional	Practical

Simply put: chapters 12 through 15 tell us what our response should be, on a daily basis, to the redemptive and gracious work of Jesus.

Paul's opening verbal word in the Greek text, "I urge you," *parakaleo*, Παρακαλῶ (NASB), serves, as it always does in his writings (cf. Rom. 15:30; 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; 4:16; 16:15; 2 Cor. 2:8; 10:1; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:2; 1 Tim. 2:1; Philemon 1:9-10) to strongly implore you, as a Christian, to move from spiritual infancy to adulthood, from immaturity to greater maturity. For Paul, doctrine must lead to practice or else the doctrine devolves into mere intellectual arrogance, lost-ness or both. Yes, for Paul, doctrine should, ipso facto, be reflected in a new spiritual life which seeks to reflect and emulate the character of Christ and, really, the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The fact, however, he must place the main verb here in the present tense, followed by imperatival verbs demonstrates the saint (that's hopefully you) has a free will to determine just how committed her or she is to the radical transformative process. You can guess what Paul's heart desire was, and is, for saints.

Doctrine matters, doesn't it? It matters greatly for it shows us how we are saved from sin, and then, and only then, are we properly prepared to start moving toward a radically changed and transformed life, one which reflects the person of God. To educate us regarding God's goal in redeeming us, Paul methodically moves through three points which validate his major premise:

The Reason For Radical Living (Rom. 12:1a)

Before he teaches us about how God wants us live differently now that we are saved and justified, Paul first reminds us of the foundation, or motivation, for this spiritual life pursuit:

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,

Hold it right there. The preposition, *by, dia* (Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ) gives us the reason for Paul's desire to challenge us to live contrary to our old sinful ways. That reason is all wrapped around one key word, viz., *oiktirmon*, or mercy (οἰκτιρμῶν) . . . it also connotes compassion (2 Cor. 1:3; Col. 3:12; Phil. 2:1; Heb. 10:28). Based on the use of a synonymous use of this word elsewhere in the book (Paul employs the Greek word *eleeo*, ἐλεέω, which denotes merciful action, Romans 9:23, 11:30-31), Paul is most likely underscoring how our salvation is all founded and grounded upon the absolutely, inexorable, loving mercy of God for us as former objects of His holy wrath.

Think back. We were radically lost, as Paul demonstrated in chapters 1 and 3, with absolutely no hope of redeeming ourselves, as we saw also in chapter 2. Yet even in this state of open and flagrant opposition to God, in this state when we loved darkness and not light, when we worshipped the creation instead of the holy, eternal Creator, He loved us to the point of showing mercy to us by sending His Son to bear our sin so he could potentially, at the moment of confessional faith (Rom. 10:9-10), be our Savior and Lord. God's salvific mercy moved former sinners like Isaac Watts to write lyrics for a song they wanted all saints to sing:

Alas! And did my Savior bleed and did my Sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head for sinners such as I?
But drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away—'Tis all that I can do.¹

Watts was so overcome by the power of God's mercy, he wrote another hymn to capture not only the wonder of this divine mercy, but what this mercy calls a saint to do. I'm sure you'll remember the old tune. I do. It's burned into my soul.

1. When I survey the wond'rous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory dy'd,
My richest Gain I count but Loss,
And pour Contempt on all my Pride.

5. Were the whole Realm of Nature mine,
That were a Present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my Soul, my Life, my All.²

Ah, there is it. Christ's mercy demands "your Soul, your Life, and your All." Isn't this the way holiness in our lives is supposed to work? Indeed. Hence, the more you truly understand His fathomless mercy to save you, the more you will be moved to live a humble life dedicated to making sure your life reflects His . . . as recorded in the Word. No wonder, then, that divine mercy serves

¹Isaac Watts, *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?*

²*Ibid.*, *When I Survey The Wondrous Cross.*

as THE foundation, or THE motivation, for radically righteous living. Once we grasp this, or should I say, the more we grasp this, the more we can't help but want to be like Him before the watching world.

Paul, being a skilled instructor, doesn't leave us just understanding the basis of a new type of living as Christians. Far from it. With the next short statements, he makes sure every saint is clear regarding . . .

The Road For Radical Living (Rom. 12:1b-2a)

Since God has been extremely merciful to us, what does He want from us? He wants us to live contrary to our old, sinful, carnal, worldly lives. How do we go about doing that, again, for the first time in our lives? An infinitive clause gives us the road map we need to follow toward holiness by showing us what God requires,

to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.*

In the Old Testament period, sacrifices were called for by God to accomplish coverage for sin, plus other concepts (Lev. 1-7). Those sacrifices had to be living, holy . . . insofar as they did not have blemishes or diseases, and they, in turn, were acceptable to the priests and to God. Those sacrifices were also offered up once and then that was it, at least, until the next time a worshipper needed his or her sin covered by blood sacrifice. Most people, at this day and time, vividly understood what religious sacrifice involved. It was total and complete, not limited and partial.

Paul takes this concept of religious sacrifice and weds it to the believer's obligation to Christ. He is not called to lay his physical body down in death, but to be an unusual sacrifice because he/she is to live as a daily as a sacrifice. I'm sure this concept raised a few eyebrows in the Roman church. Ostensibly, this means the believer lives a life sacrificing everything about himself to God; his mind, his passions, his loves, his talents, his talents, his monies and so forth. Yes, to be Christ's living sacrifice means you offer your life as a holy life cut off from sinful things so God can use you and mature you. When you do this on a daily basis He, of course, finds this all acceptable.

Let me ask you, then, a personal, probing question: What did you sacrifice for Christ this day? What have you walked away from which is sinful so you can put Him first? What have you given up so you can serve Him more effectively? For all those who step forward this time of year and tell our large children's department, "Here I am, use me to impact children," are they not making a sacrifice? For those who feel led to open their homes for a Life Group, and to perhaps lead it for the next year, are they not living sacrificially? Indeed. For those who stop hanging out with a group of the wrong kind of people, even though they don't have many friends, is this not a sacrifice to God of the first order? To those who decide to give financially to God in a way they never have done before because it will, in fact, impact their bottom line, is this not a holy sacrifice? No doubt.

Our lives are to set apart to God, first and foremost. Our lives are to be focused perpetually on the concept of sacrifice. I know this is a hard concept in 'our pamper me and give to me' world, but it is the path of the cross. I think I know a great prayer you might need to pray before the end of this day, "Lord, show me where in my life I need to be living sacrificially for you. Show me and then empower me to live radically to your glory, not mine."

God wants all of your life. When you start giving it to Him is when you start moving toward radical righteous living, the kind which He finds most acceptable. This type of living is also, as Paul says, the *logical* way to worship. We encounter this concept in the last clause of this verse:

to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.*

The Greek is most interesting: τὴν **λογικὴν** λατρείαν ὑμῶν. The second word can connote, especially to Greek minds, logic or that which is logical and/or highly rational since it is built on the noun *logikos*, λογικός. Understood in this fashion, Paul emphasizes how living sacrificially for God is nothing less than your logical worship of God. You might need to read that again. Worship can, and does, occur when you come into a worship center like ours. But here Paul underscores how a perpetual sacrificial life is one which is logically and continually worshipping God. Think about the practical ramifications of this. No matter where you are or what you are doing, you are worshipping God when you willfully chose to live sacrificially.

- When you permit another to increase while you decrease, you are worshipping.
- When you chose to forgive someone who has wronged you terribly and move on, you are worshipping.
- When you give away an earthly item you love so someone else's need is met, you are worshipping.
- When you take time out of your busy schedule to drop by and visit a lonely shut-in, you are worshipping.
- When you give up something you love to do to spend quality time with your children and wife, you are worshipping.
- When you get up early to meet a struggling buddy for breakfast, you are worshipping.
- When you, well, I'll let you fill in the proverbial blank because I'm sure God is talking to you.

The road to radical living God calls us to now that we are saved starts with constantly looking in our lives for areas where we can make costly sacrifices in our quest to follow God. When we do this the logical result is we have worshipped the Lord in the most graphic, natural fashion. And you thought you just worshipped Him on Sunday mornings. No. Worship is a constant opportunity which is wedded to how well and how often we sacrifice something for Him.

Perhaps you've been too self-centered, as a saint. Perhaps you've spent too much time as a husband, as wife, as a son or a daughter looking for others to live sacrificially for you so you can enjoy life. Today is the day to turn this around into some amazing worship of God. You can do it by committing your life to being a living sacrifice for Him. Your prayer along these lines should be simple: "Lord, here I am. Show me where I've been stingy, and help me to be sacrificial so my worship of you is rich and complete."

For those who might need help learning how to be a living sacrifice as a saint to God, Paul gives a negative and positive command.

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,

The first command (not it is not a suggestion, either) contains a negative followed by a present tense imperative (καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ). Dana and Mantey's *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* informs us how this grammatical combination forbids an act in progress. Here is their precise definition: "The purpose of a prohibition, when expressed by the aorist subjunctive, is to forbid a thing before it has begun; i.e., it commands to never do a thing. But a prohibition in the present imperative means to forbid the continuance of an acts; it commands to quit doing a thing."³ Translated: the Roman church was guilty of conforming their lives to the godless Roman world.

What does it mean to be "conformed to the world?" First, we must understand the pivotal verb, *to be conformed*, *syschematizo* (συσχηματίζω). Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich's *Greek Lexicon* offers this helpful definition:

συσχηματίζω to form according to a pattern or mold, form/model after someth. (Aristot., Top. 6, 14, 151b, 8 τὶ πρὸς τι; Plut., Mor. 83b) pass. w. act. mng. be formed like, be conformed to, be guided by (Plut., Mor. 100f; Eunap., Vi. Soph. p. 111) w. dat. of thing to which one is conformed τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ Ro 12:2. ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις 1 Pt 1:14.—DELG s.v. 1 ἔχω 3.⁴

When I worked as a janitor for Azusa Pacific University while I attended the school from 1976-1980, I always enjoyed cleaning the art room. Why? Because I could see the progression of the work of many new budding artists. The room always looked the same. The professor placed some object at the front of the class, and the students' positions all of their easels in rows so they could copy said object onto their white canvases. By doing this, they followed the schema, the form of the object. With each pencil stroke they, therefore, conformed their drawing to that object, or that, at least, was the goal.

A chameleon is another apt illustration of what it means to conform. A Rayban sunglasses commercial certainly puts this in bold relief. I know they took some artistic license; however, you get the point. Every color of Rayban's placed near the chameleon and it quickly conformed to it. The message is for you to conform to Rayban's too.

Applied theologically *shema*, in a command form, means we, as Christians, are to constant be wary of places in our lives where we are conforming to the twisted, erroneous, evil, and false ways of this passing age. We are commanded to not color our lives according to the carnal color of the world, which naturally calls for minute by minute monitoring. The only other usage of this unique term is found in 1 Peter 1:14, "Like obedient children, do not act *in compliance* (μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι) with the desires of your former ignorance" (1 Pet. 1:14). Paul's caution, along with that of Peter, is for believers, who are positionally holy (1 Cor. 1:30) but are still susceptible to the pull of the sinful world and flesh, to conform their lives rather to Christ and His holiness. It is to constantly monitor (like a radar screen) and resist embracing the evil desires of this age, be what they may.

³ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1955), 301.

⁴ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 979.

Not all desire, by the way, is good and holy. Just because you desire something does not make it permissible. It matters greatly what the object of your desire is. To desire something God clearly says is evil and off limits is to court evil desire, which will most likely result in you enjoying this desire and rationalizing it by calling it good.

This evil age has its share of schemas it is calling us and tempting us to daily conform our lives to so we fit in and make other sinners not feel like sinners. The sordid, false, wicked schemas are all too familiar it we pause to ponder.

- Join us as we believe, with broad smiles on our faces, that truth is relative, meaning that all views are true and should be accepted.
- Join us as we believe no value or view has a higher priority over others.
- Join us in our lofty view of tolerance where all things are tolerated, except for views which don't embrace our view.
- Join us as we believe rhetoric (read yelling, screaming, taunting) should replace reason.
- Join us we label everyone who opposes our unchecked openness for any and all thinking and lifestyles as mean-spirit and hateful.
- Join us as we show utter disrespect and disregard for duly elected officials because they do not represent our values (not our virtues, of course, because values can change, while virtues cannot).
- Join us as we break our marriage vows more readily and quickly than not.
- Join us as we live for the party, for the happy hour, for the next drink.
- Join us as we nurse our nasty, addictive, and highly destructive habits, be what they man.
- Join us as we believe and teach that whatever is legal must be moral.
- Join us as we reclassify the baby in the womb so we can destroy it if he/she serves as a hardship on our selfish lives.
- Join us as believe the roles of women and men are interchangeable, and that sex and gender have absolutely nothing to do with each other.
- Join us as show disrespect to parents, taunt police officers, and openly defy the laws of the land.
- Join us as we watch things we should not watch in the privacy of our homes, or on our I Pads, computers, and/or cell phones.
- Join us as we get hooked on opioids, krank, meth, cocaine and the like because they ease our inner pain.
- Join us as we brainwash you in our universities into thinking the founders of the Constitution were evil, godless, self-serving men.
- Join us in being angry and verbally violent at the drop of a hat.
- Join us as tap into your materialistic desire to have more even though you can't afford it, to make sure you wear all the best and most expensive name brands, drive a car you can't afford, and live in a home which is certainly beyond your means because, after all, the outer appearance is everything, right?
- Join us . . . well, you fill in the blank. It's not hard.

There is not a day which goes by that you and I are not tempted to conform various aspects of our lives to the evil age in which we live. Perhaps the Holy Spirit has right now placed His finger on a few of those areas in your life right now (John 14; 16). Confession is in order if you hear His soft voice (1 John 1:9).

If you struggle with confessing what evil thing/concept you have conformed to, I have a question: Why do you want to mold or copy your life after that which is truly passing away? Yes, you are focused on the temporal, not the eternal. It should be the other way around (Matt. 6:33-34; Col. 3:1-5). A few verses will suffice in illustrating the temporary nature of this world:

¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat (2 Pet. 3)!

for the form of this world is passing away (2 Cor. 7:31).

¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (1 John 2).

What is God's will but for you and I to stop conforming to the world and start conforming our lives to His holy life. That is radical righteous living . . . pure and simple. How could we who have tasted of the power of the world to come ever think this temporal, tainted world is what life is all about?

Paul teaches us how to head in the right direction with how we live with his second, and this time, positive command:

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .

Again, our understanding . . . and eventual application . . . of this command is dependent upon the meaning of the verbal concepts. Before we look at these verbs, I'd first like to point out that the NAS translation is not as powerful as the Greek text. The first word in the clause is the word but or *alla* (ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ), which represents the most emphatic way to state a contrast. By placing this word in this grammatical position, Paul basically grabs his readers by their shoulders, shakes them hard, and then says, "Stop doing this . . . but really start doing this."

Start doing what? This is the question. The answer is wrapped up in the verbs. The command to *be transformed* is from a word we probably know quite well: *metamorpho-o* (μεταμορφώω), which is built on the root word, *morphe* (μορφή). Lexically, the base form means to change a form, shape, or outer appearance.⁵ When you apply/affix a preposition like *meta* (μετά) to the front of the verb, you intensify its meaning exponentially.⁶ Hence, the word means to be radically transformed from what something used to be. Think of a Chip and Joanna Gaines' *Fixer Upper* before and after home and you have the idea of *metamorpho-o* down. Think of

⁵Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 659.

⁶Benjamin Chapman, *New Testament-Greek Notebook*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 8.

a *Fast N' Loud*, the Discovery Channel TV show where Richard and Aaron, working for in their Gas Monkey Garage, take run-down cars and trick them out for profit and you understand this biblical word for change. Think about Robert Irvine's *Restaurant Impossible* where he comes in a saves a place headed for bankruptcy by radically altering it and you understand biblical morphing. It is a change which is, well, off the grid. Think of Jesus's earthly body being transformed to reveal His heavenly, divine nature, and you have another biblical reference to what this word, *metamorphe*, means.

And He was **transfigured** before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light (Matt. 17:2).

καὶ **μετεμορφώθη** ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, τὰ δὲ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο λευκὰ ὡς τὸ φῶς (Matt. 17:2).

One minute Jesus looked like an ordinary Jewish man, and in the next brilliant light emanated from His face as His tunic started pulsating with radiance.

This is the kind of radical life/character transformation Paul is talking about, and he says it is what should be happening perpetually in your life. The present tense nature of the verb tells us this much. You've never arrived until you've arrived in glory. You might need to read that again. You've never arrived until you've arrived in glory. In the meantime, the old you should constantly be replaced by the new you. That's word another read. In the meantime, the old you should constantly be replaced by the new you.

- The old way you used to love your wife, should be replaced by the new, godly way.
- The old way you used to treat your friends, should be replaced by the new, godly way.
- The old way you used to think about what life is all about, should be replaced by the new, godly way.
- The old way you used to let your up and down moods control everyone's life around you, should be replaced by the new, godly way.
- The old way you used to lower your moral living, should be replaced by the new, godly way.
- The old way you used to wallow in low self-esteem, should be replaced by the new, godly way.

You get the picture. God has one major goal for you as a saint: for you to radically change into His likeness. How does this happen? It happens by willfully choosing to not conform to the evil thinking and actions of this old world anymore, but to conform your life to God's Word and ways.

Radical transformation also comes, as Paul teaches here, when you are committed to a continual renewal of your mind.

² And do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind** . . .

Once more, the meaning of the Greek, here a noun, is intrinsic to our answer. Renewing comes from the Greek *anakainosei* (ἀνακαινώσει). And, once more, we have a preposition, viz., *ana*, wedded

to a word, and we all know what this means now. It underscores a radical change/alteration in one's mind. Now please come with me on this grammatical excursion. Because the verb, *to be transformed* is a present *passive* imperative, it means the subject, i.e., you, is being acted upon from the outside. And since this process is wedded to the renewal of the mind, which has been corrupted by sin and the desires of the flesh (Rom. 1:28 . . . the godless mind is called *worthless*), it tells us the renewal is ultimately God's job through the inner ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8) . . . and through the power of the Word of God, as well.

- He is the active force working on us, the passive agent, to enable us to possess a mind which is less and less contaminated by our old sinful self, and is more and more dominated by our new godly self. Put differently, you can't fix you, but God can. Say it again, you can't fix you, but God.
- He will re-program your mind throughout your life.
- He will take your selfish, sinful, a distorted way(s) of looking at things and change them into holy and healthy ways to think.
- He will seize your twisted view or morals and untangle them so you have clear insight as to what is truly moral and what is truly immoral.

Thinking. It is so important for from our minds come our actions, correct? So, when that thinking is focused on non-conformation to evil, transformation into holy thinking, then we are, by definition, not the same people we used to be prior to salvation. Can you say that? . . . I am not the same person I used to be.

When you live radically contrary to the wicked ways of the world, when God begins to shape and hone everything about you, especially when He begins to fine-tune your mind, something amazing occurs. Paul describes this in the last verse. Based on the use of the preposition in the second to last clause, *so that, eis* (εις), plus the presence of the infinitive, *to prove, dokimazo* (δοκιμάζω),⁷ we can easily identify the nature of this consummative thought . . .

⁷ Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 255-256; **δοκιμάζω** (s. four next entries) fut. δοκιμάσω, δοκιμῶ LXX; 1 aor. ἐδοκίμασα; pf. 2 sg. δεδοκίμακας Jer 12:3, pass. δεδοκίμασμαι (Hdt., Thu.+)

① **to make a critical examination of someth. to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine** (so mostly LXX.—EpArist 276; Jos., Ant. 1, 233; 3, 15; TestAsh 5:4; Tat., Ath.; Iren. 1, prol. 2 [Harv. I 3, 9]) w. acc., *test oxen* for their usefulness **Lk 14:19** (Hdt. 2, 38 of the Apis bulls). *ἐαυτὸν examine oneself* **1 Cor 11:28; 2 Cor 13:5**; one's own work **Gal 6:4**; the works of God **Hb 3:9** v.l. (Ps 94:9); of God's self (w. *πειράζω*); ApcPt (Ox 849, 25); τὰ διαφέροντα **Ro 2:18; Ph 1:10**; φθορμαίσις (cod. φθορμεισις) λόγοις, οὓς σὺ (cod. σοι) δοκίμασον *destructive statements, which you must evaluate* AcPICor 1:3; everything **1 Th 5:21**; spirits (of bogus prophets) **1J 4:1**; cp. D 12:1; Hm 11, 7, 16; 1 Cl 42:4; believers in general Hs 8, 2, 5; fig. οἰκοδομῆν 9, 5, 2; heaven and earth **Lk 12:56a**; τὸν καιρὸν **56b**; *be convinced* of someone's faithfulness 1 Cl 1:2; *try to learn* τί ἐστιν εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ *what is pleasing to the Lord* **Eph 5:10**.—Of the examination of prospects for special service in the Christian community (acc. to Attic usage: Lysias 16, 3; Pla., Leg. 6, 765c; Attic ins) **1 Ti 3:10**. Of God **1 Th 2:4b** (Jer 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Ps 7:10; 26:2; Jos., Ant. 1, 233).—Of opponents Βαρσαββᾶς . . . δοκιμαζόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀπίστων *Barsabbas . . . was put to the test by the unbelievers* Papias (11:2).—For **Ro 2:18**, and **12:2** s. 2b below.

② **to draw a conclusion about worth on the basis of testing, prove, approve**, here the focus is on the result of a procedure or examination.

ⓐ *prove by testing*, of gold (Isocr., Panathen. 14, 39; SIG 334, 45 [on monetary assoc. s. other reff. in SEG XLII, 1851]; Pr 8:10; Sir 2:5; Wsd 3:6) **1 Pt 1:7** (on testing of character cp. Pind., P. 10, 67f); Hv 4, 3, 4; cp. **1 Cor 3:13** (JGnilka, Ist **1 Cor 3:10–15** ein Schriftzeugnis für d. Fegefeuer? '55). τὰς ψυχὰς ApcPt 3.

The Purpose Of Radical Living (Rom. 12:2b)

Let's read the verse one more time.

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12).

The purpose of your Christian life is to, of course, to be molded into the likeness of character of Christ. That is a given. But, as Paul teaches here, when we live sacrificial, non-conformative, transformed lives, when our minds are renewed to think as God would have us think, something wonderful and spectacular occurs. We are able to discern God's will, God's mind in relation to that which moral, verses that which is immoral.

Our day is a day of blurred moral lines, when that which is immoral is being called moral, when cults proliferate because there are truths but no truth, when evil desire trumps holy, virtuous desire, when relativism has led to people living however they so desire and arrogantly judging those who'd dare speak up against them by shaming them, by doxing them, and so forth. If ever our nation, if ever our people needed help, it is today. That help comes when one is justified by faith in Jesus, the Christ. Once that sinner is made a positional saint before God, then radical spiritual things being to occur as they are empowered, for the first time in their lives, to live as God intended. And how is that? Righteously radical.

ⓑ *accept as proved, approve* (PEleph 1, 10; POxy 928, 7 ἵνα ἔαν δοκιμάσης ποιήσης; PTeht 326, 10) w. acc. τι ISm 8:2. οὗς ἔαν δοκιμάσητε *whom you consider qualified* **1 Cor 16:3**. ἐδοκίμασαμεν σπουδαῖον ὄντα *we have tested and found him zealous* **2 Cor 8:22**. ἐδοκίμασε γὰρ ὑμᾶς ὁ κύριος καὶ ἐνέγραψεν ὑμᾶς εἰς τὸν ἀριθμὸν τὸν ἡμέτερον Hs 9, 24, 4; cp. λίθους v 3, 5, 3. δ. τὸ ἀγάπης γνήσιον *prove the genuineness of love* **2 Cor 8:8**. ἐν ᾧ δοκιμάζει *for what he approves* **Ro 14:22**. δ. τὰ διαφέροντα *approve* (or *discover* s. under 1) *what is essential* **Ro 2:18; Phil 1:10**. W. inf. (Appian, Iber. 90 §392, Bell. Civ. 2, 114 §475; Jos., Ant. 2, 176, Vi. 161 simply = intend, wish) οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει *they did not see fit to have a true knowledge of God* **Ro 1:28** (anticipating the opposite in **12:2**.—WReiss, 'Gott nicht kennen' im AT, ZAW 58, '40/41, 70–98). W. indir. quest. foll. δ., τί τὸ θέλημα τ. θεοῦ *approve* (or *discover* s. under 1) *what God's will is* **12:2**. Pass. (Prov. Aesopi 171 P. φίλος καὶ ἵππος ἐν ἀνάγκῃ δοκιμάζονται=stand the test; Jos., Ant. 3, 71) δεδοκίμασμεθα *we have been found worthy* w. inf. foll. **1 Th 2:4a**. δεδοκίμασμένος *tested, approved* of genuine prophets D 11:11 (Diod S 4, 7, 1 δεδοκίμασμένος of the story writer who has a good reputation; cp. SIG 807, 9; PFay 106, 23; 2 Macc 4:3); cp. Hm 11, 7, 16 (s. 1 above); πνεῦμα δεδοκίμασμένον v 2, 4; of Jesus **Ac 2:22** D.—B. 652. DELG s.v. δοκᾶω etc. EDNT. M-M. TW. Spicq.