

# Transformation

## TEACHING NOTES



### A Living Sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1)

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. –Romans 12:1-2*

**Presenting every aspect of our lives as a sacrifice**

**Not a one time decision, but a continuous act of surrender**

**Our motivation comes from knowing what He has done for us (Romans 1-11)**

### KEY VERSES

Romans 12:1-2

### KEY THEMES

God is my owner  
God's mercy motivates us  
Response of faith

## True worship, our lives lived surrendered to Him



### Conforming to the world is idolatry (Romans 12:2)

Idolatry is anything that takes God's place in our lives.

## Spiritual transformation is a metamorphosis

To become like Christ

To live like Christ

## Changing the way we think

## The role of faith in surrendering

## What is keeping us from surrendering our lives?

**Lesson objective:** *To surrender our lives as living sacrifices and allow God to transform us*

**PERSONAL STUDY****Study 1****Prepare your heart and mind**

Open your time with God by asking Him to help you focus on what He has for you.

**What's your "Isaac?"**

Picture a ninety-nine-year-old Abraham and a ninety-year-old Sarah. That's how old they were when the Lord appeared to them (Genesis 17). Right from the outset, God says "I am the Almighty God" as if to say "Remember, nothing is impossible for me." Then the Lord reminds them of His promise. He assures them this promise will be fulfilled and Sarah will bear a son within the year. Not surprisingly, Abraham falls over laughing. Without missing a beat, God tells them to name the child Isaac, which means 'he laughs'. Isaac will be a source of great joy to this old couple. Later that year, the impossible happens and Isaac is born. To Abraham, Isaac is the embodiment of God's faithfulness, he is a miracle child, and he is the beloved son. For all these reasons, Abraham could easily idolize Isaac.

The reality is we all have an "Isaac." God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22). Whether or not we are tested, we too need to be willing to examine our hearts and lay aside anything we've made an idol.

What's your "Isaac?" It could be something that brings you joy and laughter. It might be "the one," the person you believe God put on earth just for you. Your "Isaac" may be the investments that ensure you have a comfortable life when you retire. Or it may be your free time or your thought life. It could be your family. Take a little time to reflect on your "Isaac." What is something you are tempted to idolize above Jesus Christ?

*"God's best gifts must be sacrificed and surrendered back to God to be properly used. So as with Abraham, God will bring us to a Mount Moriah, a place where we have to sacrifice our Isaac, lay down the very best gifts he has given us. Of course, God gave Isaac back to Abraham, and he wants to give our surrendered Isaacs back to us. Having placed them on the altar of sacrifice, we can then love them and use them, no longer in an idolatrous way but in the way God intended all along." – Stephen Seamands*

**Offer your lives too**

Not only does God want us to be free from idols, in Christ we can offer our whole lives to God. The twelfth chapter of Romans in the NIV begins with an important word ‘therefore’. It is a key to understanding how we could possibly offer our lives as living sacrifices. In Romans 1–11, Paul went to great lengths to show us all that Christ has done for us—eleven chapters on the Gospel as the power to save and empower us to live new lives through the Holy Spirit. Take the focus off of you. Living sacrificially is about keeping your eyes on Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of your faith (Hebrews 12:2). Using the prompts below, reflect on Romans 1–11.

I know I can trust God with my whole life because...

I know my life has more meaning & purpose in Him because...

I read about Christ’s sacrifice in Romans 1–11 which shows that living sacrificially means...

**Key verse**

Put to memory Romans 12:1.

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

**Prayer time**

Give thanks to our God who gave a son to a ninety nine year old Abraham, who gave His Son for us, and who certainly can do the impossible in you by His Holy Spirit. Ask Him to daily help you focus on His great mercy and grace and empower you to be a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to Him.

## Study 2

### Prepare your heart and mind

Begin your time with the Lord asking Him to quiet your heart and mind. Thank Him for the chance to spend time with Him and His Word.

### Know, Consider, Surrender

Throughout our study of Romans we've spent a great deal of time discussing the process of knowing, considering, and surrendering. Previous passages have helped us unpack the concepts of knowing and considering. But what about surrendering? Well, Romans 12:1-2 get to that point. Let's look at surrender within the context of that passage.



### Read Romans 12:1-2

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

Thinking about the concept of surrender, what words in the verses above stick out to you? Underline them in the passage and then write them down in the space below.

### Let's unpack some of these words of surrender

*"And so..."*

"And so" means that what's coming next hinges on what came before. Well, we know what came before: Romans 1-11, the book of Acts, the Gospels, and the Old Testament. Through *Equipping the Church* we've gained a lot of knowledge. We've spent time considering or coming to terms with what we know. And this process now leads us to surrender.

*"Give your bodies to God"*

There has to be an element of surrender in the act of giving for it to actually be giving. If there were no surrender, there would be no motive to give – only the motive to cling to, hold on to, or never let go of. Once you've surrendered you can freely give.

*"Let them be" & "Let God transform you"*

What is true about the idea of giving is also true for the idea of letting. If surrender hasn't occurred, why would we let God transform us? Only in a trusting, surrendered relationship can we truly let God transform us.

*"Living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will find acceptable"*

Letting your body be a living and holy sacrifice to God is the ultimate expression of surrender. Sacrifice requires everything. It requires surrendering your life to God. And this verse says to be

a living sacrifice – that requires both an initial moment in time surrendering to God and then a continual process of daily surrendering to Him.

*“This is truly the way to worship Him”*

Worship requires a relationship, but not just any type of relationship. You wouldn't (or shouldn't) worship your spouse, child, boss, friend, or pet. But you should worship the one who created you and saved you – the one you are surrendering to.

*“Into a new person”*

Letting God transform you into a new person means that you're surrendering your life to Him – your hopes, dreams, preferences and plans. This means that you are surrendered enough to want what God wants. This requires both the initial decision to surrender and the moment-by-moment surrendering. Letting God transform us into new people means that we have to daily surrender ourselves to Him. That way He can transform us into people we never thought possible because God's ways are so much bigger and better than anything we could ever ask for or imagine.

### **Surrender**

Giving our lives as a sacrifice is not something we do on our own. It's a walk of faith. Christ is at work in us. Just as salvation was through God, sanctification is through Him as well. And a key element to our sanctification is our surrendering.

Reflect over the last few days. When was a time that you surrendered to God?

Can you think of a time when you didn't surrender? What kept you from trusting God in that situation?

### **Key verse**

Continue working to memorize Romans 12:1. Attempt to write it out from memory below.

### **Prayer time**

A key element to daily surrender is prayer. We need God's help in this process. We need to be reminded of our quest for daily surrender. End your time with a prayer of surrender. You could pray through Romans 12:1-2 or share some of the ways or areas you're struggling to surrender.

## PARENT GUIDE

There is so much truth and wisdom in the first two verses of Romans 12. How we take this passage and apply it to our lives should reveal what is going on in our heart. It should lead us to think and wrestle with the question of “what owns my heart?” The scriptures tell us that our heart is the spring from which our lives flow. It is the source of our words and motivation. Spend some time this week sharing with your children what you are learning through these

### Discussion Questions

What does your heart do? *(If they don't know help them find their pulse on their wrist or neck and talk about how the heart pumps blood throughout the entire body. Without the heart pumping blood through the body a person could not survive.)*

We also talk about the heart as the core of who we are. The Bible talks about the heart this way a lot. We believe and love from our hearts.

Read Proverbs 4:23 together. *(If your child is able, have them read the verse aloud.)*

Talk about the truth of these verses and how everything in our lives flows from our hearts. The heart is more than just a muscle that pumps blood. It is the core of who we are.

Read Luke 6:45 together.

What do you think this verse means? *(If you have younger children you can read it aloud and then explain that what we store in our heart is important because it will come out.)*

Give everyone a blank piece of paper, parent included. Everyone should draw a picture of a large heart. Once everyone finishes, tell them to make a list or draw pictures inside the heart of the things they spend their time and money doing. *(Depending on the age of your child you may have to help with this part.)*

Once you feel like everyone has a good list have them stop and share what they wrote or drew.

Are these the things that own your heart?

Are these good things? Do these things get in the way of our love for God?

If we love God with our whole heart, what are some things we might spend our time and energy doing? *(You might even have everyone turn their paper over and make a new list together of the things that should own our hearts. You may have to discuss how you can go about making changes.)*

Take some time to pray for one another by name. With younger children you can encourage them to say a one-sentence prayer.

*(continue on back)*

**Ideas for further engagement**

Encourage your child to keep their list in a safe place where they can revisit it.

Have everyone hang their heart pictures in a special place that will remind them to make an effort to put God first each and every day.

Each night at either dinnertime or bedtime take a moment to revisit this topic with your child. Ask them if they had moments you could celebrate together where they really put God first in their lives. Be sure to pray with your child for guidance in putting God first in their lives.



**ADDITIONAL STUDY****Read Romans 12:3-21****Observation**

*(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)*

**Interpretation**

*(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer's intended meaning? What is the context? What questions do I have?)*

**Application**

*(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)*

