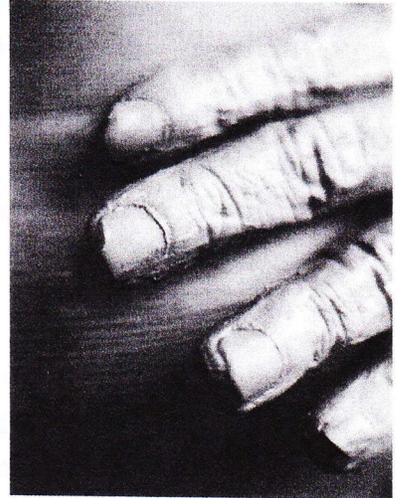


• **LESSON 18 (August 17)** •
Romans 12:1-2
I Appeal to You
Therefore, Brothers



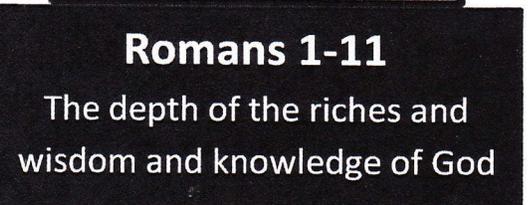
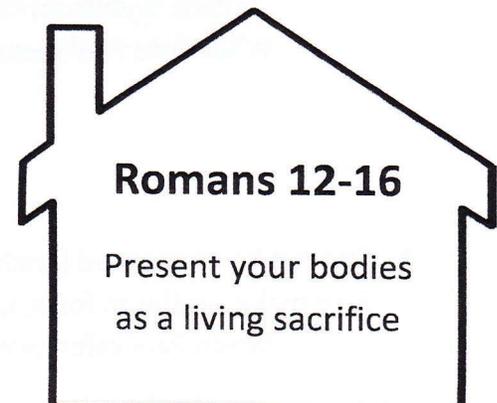
With the beginning of Romans 12, we have reached *the* turning point in Paul's letter to the Romans. Take a moment to look back and reflect on the massive doctrinal foundation that has been laid by the Spirit of God.

- ❖ Romans 1: Gentiles are guilty before God
- ❖ Romans 2: Jews are guilty before God
- ❖ Romans 3: None is righteous, no, not one
- ❖ Romans 4: Justification depends on faith
- ❖ Romans 5: Grace can reign through Jesus
- ❖ Romans 6: How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- ❖ Romans 7: We are released from the law that we may serve in the new way of the Spirit
- ❖ Romans 8: If God is for us, who can be against us?
- ❖ Romans 9: Not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring
- ❖ Romans 10: Israel has a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; as a result, they are not submitting to God's righteousness
- ❖ Romans 11: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

One of the key words in Romans 12:1 is "therefore." It serves as a connective link between the doctrinal foundation of Romans 1-11 and the practical application called for of "living sacrifices" in Romans 12-16.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom 12:1-2)

Why does it make sense that Paul would methodically lay a solid foundation of teaching before making this appeal to his brothers and sisters in Christ?



- ❖ Paul is making his appeal “by the mercies of God” (12:1a).
 - What does it mean to make an appeal “by” something?
 - Of all the things Paul could root his appeal in, why “the mercies of God”?

- ❖ Paul’s appeal is that we, as sons and daughters of God, would “present” our bodies “as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (12:1b).
 - What does it mean to “present” something to someone? Specifically in this context, what does it mean to “present” to God?
 - In everyday terms, what will it look like if we present our bodies as a “living sacrifice”? Both of those words are significant. What are they communicating?
 - “Holy and acceptable” are key words in Paul’s appeal. What do they add to his appeal?
 - “Which is your spiritual worship” (*spiritual service*, ASV; *reasonable service*, NKJV). What does Paul mean by describing our sacrifice in this way?

- ❖ “Do not be conformed (*syschēmatizesthe*, Greek) to this world...” (Rom 12:2a). To *conform* is to make similar in form, nature, or character; to mold or to pattern.
 - When Paul references “this world,” what does he have in mind?
 - How does this world exert powerful shaping influence? Think in terms of a potter with a lump of clay or a cookie cutter used on dough.

- Why would it be devastating, in light of Romans 1-11, for a Christian to be conformed to this world?

- ❖ “But be transformed (*metamorphousthe*, Greek) by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (12:2b).
 - In your own words, what does it mean to be “transformed”?

 - Why do men and women *need* to be transformed?

 - The Spirit of God links this transformation to “the renewal of your mind.” What is this “renewal”? How does it take place? Why does transformation hinge on it?

 - What does it mean to “discern” something? In this context, why does Paul bring up the idea of “testing”?

 - God’s will is described as “good and acceptable and perfect.” What are the opposites of those qualities? In what way do the opposites perfectly describe the qualities of this world?

CLOSING THOUGHT: God is willing to show such incredible mercy to us! Rendering “the obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:25-27) to him involves so much more than weekend attendance in an assembly of Christians. Offering the occasional “religious” thought or action to God does not honor him and will not transform us. He is calling for a fundamental change in our very manner of daily life. If we will present ourselves as clay in his perfect hands, we will discern that his way is the best way. We will be transformed and he will be glorified.