

***Finding God's Will - Romans 12:1-2***  
**Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

**Notes from the Sermon**

At the Hubbard home yesterday we sat around and discussed our New Year's Resolutions. Nothing out of the ordinary, better health, more exercise, more consistent Bible reading. Well, there was one bizarre one as one of my twins had as their goal to own a duck, a resolution that I can promise will not come true. The New Year is naturally a time to reflect and set new goals, and there is nothing bad or wrong with that. Yet, it is another reminder that we as humans see ourselves as our own hope and answer. But what if we made a resolution to know and follow God's will for our lives. Is that even possible?

To begin with, we need to shake the idea that knowing God's will is something like a man listening to Google Maps giving directions. We start a journey to our desired destination and then ask the map program to get us there. Meanwhile, for men, we are constantly evaluating the directions thinking we might have a better and faster way to get there. Way too often we desire to hear God's will so we can evaluate how His plans fit into my plans, and so we can decide how and if we are going to incorporate His plans into the New Year. God's will never works like this, we can never know God's will through negotiation and consideration of the options. But we can know God's will, Paul said so!

In Romans 12:2, Paul makes an incredible statement. He clearly says I can know and prove God's will for my life. But that will is not a destination, it is a journey. It is more like having a person in the front seat and going on a drive designed to spend time with someone you love, allowing that person to give directions, yes. But more importantly, spending time knowing the person in the car. Paul lays out four keys here to knowing God's will for 2022, or for any time in life.

He begins by pointing us to the mercies of God. Paul does this in two ways. First, he reminds us to remember the mercies of God, a reference to God's unending love for you and me that never treats us on the basis of our failures and sin. God's mercy is the expression of His love for His people poured out on the undeserving and granting them every good and perfect gift. But the second way Paul does this in our text this week is through the word "therefore". OK, a simple rule for Bible interpretation. Whenever you find a "therefore" you have to know what it is there for. And in this case Paul is referencing the continual and building argument that began in Romans 1:16 and runs through the end of chapter 11. This section of Scripture is Paul's magnum opus and may be the deepest and most glorious explanation of the Gospel and its implications in all of Scripture. Consistently contrasted in these chapters are those who approach God on an earning economy placing those people in the position of receiving what they deserve. The outcome is death and justice. But the grace of God allows us to approach God in a completely different way, in a gift economy whereby God sheds His mercy on us sheerly as a gift of His grace. For the believer, this is a continual reminder that our identity and hope flows from God's grace and mercy, that we are loved and accepted, and nothing can snatch us from His love, not even our worse year. God's mercy truly means that we wake up each morning with a new opportunity as our sins are forgiven and God's mercy gives us another chance, another day, another year to live out His purpose. So we start 2022, and each day reminding ourselves of the glorious Gospel of grace, repenting of our sin, and living in view of the mercy of our God securing our salvation at the cross.

But he then says we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices. Paul is referencing the offering of thanksgiving sacrifices in the Old Testament, offerings given by people when they realize in gratefulness the great gifts of God's mercy. Yet, the offering of these sacrifices was either a type of grain that had been picked or an animal whose life was taken. Yet, here the offering is my body, the part of me that wants to be lazy, eat Cheetos, and use my strength to get my way. It is offering all of me on an altar given to Christ as an act of thanksgiving, not by taking my life but by living wholly in faith and obedience to Him. Still, the

problem with living sacrifices is that we want to crawl off the altar.

So Paul then reminds us that we are not to be conformed to the mold of this age (world here means the times, the age), but we are to be transformed (Greek word metamorphose which we get metamorphosis) by the renewing of the mind. The world around us is always trying to shape us, mold us, tell us how we are to believe and behave if we in any form want to "be on the right side of history." There are so many ways the culture around us is shaping and molding us and we don't even recognize it, and worse, sometimes we even baptize things that are actually a denial of God and His Word. So Paul tells us to be shaped by God through His Word so that we can have our lives transformed and changed into the image of Jesus.

We can live in God's will for 2022, and it happens like this. Each day we wake up and remind ourselves of God's grace and mercy secured at the cross of Jesus and offered to us in our redemption. Because of this we crawl on the altar, offering all of myself to Christ as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Meanwhile I recognize that the world around me is seeking to force me into a mold, so I learn to recognize those things through the reading and study of God's Word so that Christ can bring the metamorphosis of mercy He has promised. And then I do all of that again on January 3, then on the 4<sup>th</sup>, then on the....

### **Bible Reading for the Week**

#### **Daily Bible Readings**

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Isaiah 32	Isaiah 33	Isaiah 34	Isaiah 35	Isaiah 36	Isaiah 37	Isaiah 38

Reading from this past week: Romans 12:1-2

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Matthew 16;13-20

### **Family Worship**

Song - *Who You Say I Am*

[https://youtu.be/lcC1Bp13n\\_4](https://youtu.be/lcC1Bp13n_4)

#### **Gospel Project**

Unit: Into the Wilderness

Story: God provided manna

Big Picture Question: What is worship?

Answer: Worship is celebrating the greatness of God.

Scripture: Exodus 16-17

#### **New City Catechism**

Question #1: What is our only hope in life and death?

Answer: That we are not our own but belong to God.

Verse: Romans 14:7-8

#### **Scripture**

Romans 12:1-2

- What are your New Year's resolutions?
- Do you believe we can know God's will? What does Paul say about this?
- What are some things that you have in life solely because of the mercy of God?
- What are some ways the world around us seeks to mold us into its image?
- Why is God's Word important if we are going to be transformed?

#### **Prayer**

\*Pray that we would honor Christ as a church in 2022.

\*Pray that you would be able to test and approve God's will for your life in the coming year.