

A Church With Open Arms 1
“A Living Sacrifice”
(Romans 12:1–2)

Introduction: We are beginning a brand-new sermon series today that we are calling: “A Church With Open Arms.” Over the next several weeks, we are going to walk through portions of Romans 12 through 15 and ask a very practical question: *What does the gospel look like when saved people actually live it out in relationship with other people?* The apostle Paul starts this entire section at an unusual place, *A renewed mind produces renewed relationships.*

I. The mercy that moves us: (Rom. 12:1a)

Note: The “Therefore” is the bridge between Roman 1-11 and 12.

A. Think of the mercies Paul has already described (Rom. 3:23–24; 5:1, 5:8; 8:1, 8:26–39; 11:33)

1. In view of these mercies, live like this.
2. God’s grace becomes our motivation for our consecration.

B. God’s mercies are our motivation for our surrender

God’s mercy is the engine of transformation. It fuels surrender, not guilt.

Dr. Jerry noted that we ordinarily think of surrender as defeat—the loser lays down his arms before the victor. But surrender to Jesus is different because *the One to whom we surrender is the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.*

II. The members we must surrender: (Romans 12:1b)

This is sacrificial language... Paul’s readers knew what a sacrifice was, but Paul’s not talking about animal sacrifice, he writes...

A. You bring yourself –

1. Paul mentions bodies – because you cannot serve God in this world without one.
2. Your body is how your inward commitments become outward actions.

B. Put your whole embodied life on the altar. (Rom. 6:13, 1 Cor 6:19–20, Gal 2:20, Lk 9:23)

1. We are to do it daily, living, holy, acceptable to God.
2. Paul calls it our reasonable service.

Charles Stanley: presenting ourselves as living sacrifices is not merely a one-time emotional event; it is expressed in continuing submission in the ordinary details of life.

Our bodies are not our own—they are vessels of worship. Real sacrifice is practical.

III. The mold we must refuse: (Rom. 12:2a)

A. The word translated “world” here has the sense of this age—the present order in rebellion against God.

1. Paul is not saying don’t love the people of the world – (Jn. 3:16)
2. Paul is saying don’t love the pattern of thinking of this world (1 Jn 2:15–17, Eph. 4:17–24, 1 Pe 1:14–16)

Lucado: We can conform, or we can be transformed (but we cannot do both).

B. Either the world or the Word will shape our thinking and relationships (Rom. 12:10, 16; 14: 15:1)

We must stop letting the age squeeze you into its pattern.

We either conform to the world or are transformed by Christ—there is no middle ground.

IV. The mind God must renew: (Rom 12:2b)

A. Notice the contrast.

1. Conformity works from outside in.
2. Transformation works from inside out.

B. Transformation – Is God changing the person.

1. Biblical mind renewal is deeper than positive thinking or self-improvement. (Rom 8:1; 12:3–21; 14:1–15:7)
2. How does God renew our mind? (Jn 17:17; Ps. 119:11; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Phil 4:8; Col 3:10, 2 Cor 3:18)

Wiersbe and Stanley: Romans 12:1–2 describes a life increasingly able to recognize God’s purposes through surrendered, renewed thinking.

God reshapes our thoughts so we can discern His will and live for His glory.