

Discussion Guide

Romans 12:2

Opening Prayer

Guided Prayer: Pray asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance in understanding and applying the truths discussed.

Recap

Recap of the Sermon and Summary of the Text

In Romans 12:2, Paul urges believers not to conform to the patterns of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. This transformation enables Christians to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will. This exhortation follows his plea for believers to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, framing a life of service to God as one that defies worldly values and is characterized by a pursuit of divine truth and wisdom. The verse challenges believers to critically evaluate the influences shaping their lives and to embrace a process of continual spiritual growth that aligns with God's desires rather than with secular norms.

Understanding the Text

1. **Conforming vs. Transforming:** What does it mean to conform to the pattern of this world? What is the pattern of this world according to the context of Romans?
2. **The Renewed Mind:** What is involved in the renewing of the mind? How does Paul suggest this happens?
3. **Discerning God's Will:** How does a renewed mind help a believer discern God's will?
4. **God's Will Described:** What does Paul mean when he describes God's will as good, pleasing, and perfect?

Practical Application

1. **Personal Transformation:** Reflect on areas of your life where you might be conforming to the world. What steps can you take to begin transforming these areas?
2. **Renewing Your Mind:** What are practical ways you can renew your mind daily? Consider habits like prayer, Bible study, and other spiritual disciplines.
3. **Testing and Approving:** How can you put into practice testing and approving God's will in your decisions and lifestyle choices?
4. **Influence of Media and Culture:** In what ways can you critically assess and manage the influence of media and culture on your mindset and values?
5. **Community Influence:** How can your church community help each other in not conforming to the world but instead renewing the mind?
6. **Witness to Non-Believers:** How does living in light of God's will, as opposed to conforming to the world, serve as a witness to non-believers?
7. **Seeking God's Will:** What resources or practices have helped you discern God's good, pleasing, and perfect will in the past?

God Has More to Say

Romans 12:2 encourages believers not to conform to the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they can discern what is God's will—his good, pleasing, and perfect will. This verse is pivotal for understanding Christian ethics and spiritual growth. Here are related biblical passages that illuminate these themes:

1. **Ephesians 4:22-24:** Paul instructs believers to put off their old self, which belongs to their former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
2. **2 Corinthians 3:18:** This verse talks about believers being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit, aligning with the theme of transformation through spiritual renewal.
3. **Colossians 3:9-10:** Paul tells the Colossians to put off the old self with its practices and to put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator, mirroring the idea of transformation through a renewed understanding.
4. **1 Peter 1:14-16:** Peter exhorts believers as obedient children not to be conformed to the passions of their former ignorance but to be holy in all their conduct, echoing the call in Romans 12:2 to resist worldly patterns.
5. **Philippians 2:5:** "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus," Paul urges, pointing to Jesus as the model for thinking and behavior, which is crucial for the transformation of the mind mentioned in Romans 12:2.
6. **Galatians 5:16-17:** This passage instructs believers to walk by the Spirit, and not gratify the desires of the flesh, which contrasts worldly patterns with spiritual transformation.
7. **John 17:16-17:** In His prayer, Jesus states that His followers are not of the world, just as He is not of the world, and He prays for their sanctification by the truth, which God's word is.
8. **Titus 3:5:** Paul speaks about the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, which richly saves us through Jesus Christ, emphasizing the transformation that comes through spiritual renewal.
9. **Matthew 12:33:** "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit." Jesus' teaching underscores the principle that internal change (renewal of mind) leads to outward actions (fruit).
10. **Psalms 51:10:** "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." This prayer of David after his sin with Bathsheba expresses the desire for internal renewal, which is necessary for living a life pleasing to God.

Prayer - End with prayer, focusing on specific requests related to the sermon's themes, personal struggles, and applications.