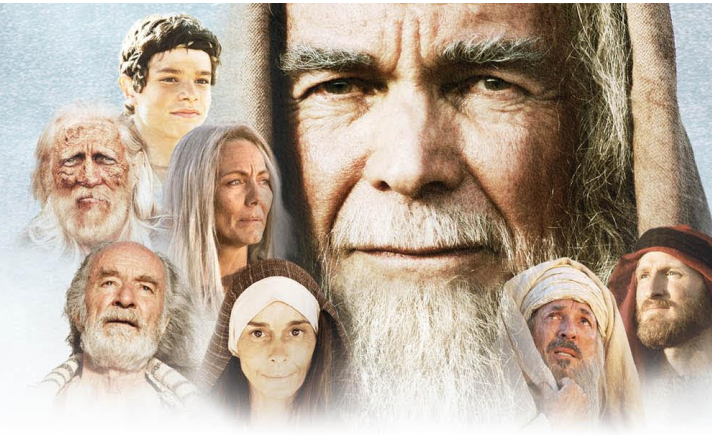


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Reflections on Romans 12:1-2

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

In Old Testament times, the Israelites were commanded by God to offer animal sacrifices to atone for their sins. God accepted these sacrifices, which were pictures of the ultimate, final sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Today, as followers of Christ, we should be willing to sacrifice everything for Him.

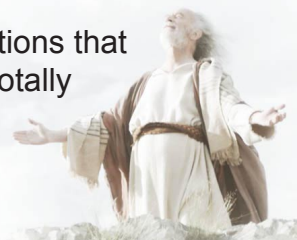
Notice the word *“Therefore”* at the beginning of Romans 12:1-2. This word refers to the final verse of the previous chapter, in which Paul says, *“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen”* (Romans 11:36).

If everything is for His glory, then we should be *“living sacrifices”*—living every aspect of our lives in a way that glorifies Him. To do this, we must *“not conform any longer to the pattern of this world.”*

Those who don’t know Christ live according to the world’s pattern, excusing behavior that the Bible condemns and ignoring its warnings about life and eternity. But to us Paul writes, *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:31). This verse covers everything, from eating and drinking to handling money and possessions.

The category of money and possessions is one of the greatest temptations that Christians face. In fact, compared to many other temptations, it may appear totally

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harmless. That's why it's so easy for this temptation to sneak in, divert our affections from the Lord, and hinder our relationship with Him.

Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21). He also said, *"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money"* (Matthew 6:24).

In the course of a lifetime we'll see many things that we want to possess: more money, a car, a house, jewelry...the list is endless. The danger is that because these things don't necessarily appear as "sins," we can become very involved in pursuing them—to the detriment of our relationship with the Lord. Ultimately, our passion for these things can replace our passion for Christ and lead us to a lifestyle of debt and financial bondage.

We can avoid this trap by managing what God has entrusted to us according to His financial principles, which are found in His Word. Living by God's Word also is the key to avoiding other sins. Paul says, *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind,"* and this transformation occurs as we become faithful to study the Scriptures and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in applying them to our lives. As a result, we *"will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

Scripture quotations in this article are from the New International Version of the Bible.



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