

# Conformed or Transformed:

## Who Do I Resemble More?

### A Study in Romans 12

#### Group Discussion questions:

What does it mean to “resemble”?

What does it mean to “conform”?

What does it mean to be “transformed”?

### Romans 12

**Historical Background** — AD 56 or 57 (some as late as AD 60). Nero was emperor of Rome from AD 54 to 68. His rule was characterized by tyranny and extravagance. It is widely understood that persecution against Christians became widespread during Nero’s reign. Paul wrote this letter to the Church at Rome most likely as he was finishing his third missionary journey. Martin Luther wrote of Romans *“This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes.”*<sup>1</sup>

**Form** — Paul’s letter is written as a legal treatise. It contains legal verbiage and really builds as a legal argument for Christianity. It really must be read in its entirety to get the full flavor of what Paul is seeking to “prove” through building his “case” for Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther. “Preface to the Epistle to the Romans” (1522), in Works of Martin Luther (1932), Vol. VI, p. 447.

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Let's take a look at each section and make some observations.

#### **Romans 12:1-2:**

*1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform 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.*

Write down some observations from these verses:

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#### Romans 12:3-8

**3** *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*

**4** *For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **5** so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **6** We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; **7** if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

Write down some observations from these verses:

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#### Romans 12:9-21

**9** Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. **10** Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. **11** Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12** Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. **13** Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. **17** Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. **18** If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. **19** Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. **20** On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Write down some observations from these verses:

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#### Study Questions:

#### Verses 1-2

1. Why should we be a **living sacrifice**, and what does it mean to be one?
2. What are the implications of **conforming to this world**?
3. How does Paul say that we can be **transformed**?
4. What are the implications of being **transformed**?

#### Verses 3-8

5. What does it mean to look at ourselves with **sober judgement**?
6. Why would Paul compare the Church to a **body**? (see *1 Corinthians 12*)
7. What should we do with our **gifts**?
8. What **kinds of gifts** are mentioned in Scripture?
9. **Do you know your gift**?
10. How might you **discern** your gift?

