

FOUNDATIONS OF TRUTH

How Can We Live a Supernatural Life?

Romans 12

INTRODUCTION: In Romans chapters 1 - 11 we discover, “How a person is saved eternally.”

In Romans 12 - 16 we read, “How an eternally saved person should live.”

The first is the root of salvation. The second is the fruit of salvation.

And if we drop down to the second half of the chapter to verse 9, we read a list of 25 of these fruits. Twenty-five ways that a saved person ought to live.

Romans 12:9–21 9 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.* 10 *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;* 11 *not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;* 12 *rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;* 13 *distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.* 14 *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.* 15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.* 16 *Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.* 17 *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.* 18 *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.* 19 *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.* 20 *Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”* 21 *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Now, all of you who are saved, let me ask you, “How are you doing with this little list?”

- Do you pretty well have everything nailed down?
- If the folks who know you best were to give you a score from 1 to 10 on each of these, would you get at least a 9 on each of them?
- Or, are you more like me?
- I don't have to go very far at all down this list to find out I have a long way to go.
- I love a lot of people. I really do. But if I am honest, there are some ...

There are some that if in trying to really act Christian I said, “I love you,” well, let's just say I would not be completely without hypocrisy.

- When I read through the list, the second one stopped me too. Abhor what is evil. I was kind of grading myself. That is a whole lot more fun than having others grade you. And I was thinking “pretty good score on this one.” And then I think the Holy Spirit stirred a thought: “Mike, if you really hated evil, you would never be tempted. How could you be tempted to do something you really strongly abhor in your heart? It would have no attraction for you.”

But I am tempted. I do have to battle temptation. I do have to look for God’s way of escape. So maybe my score is not so great on abhorring evil.

- How about you? Look at that list. Do you struggle with some of these things like I do?
- Wow, take your enemy to lunch? Really?
- Bless people who are persecuting you?

I will tell you that I concluded that the man or woman who genuinely does well in all twenty-five of these ways that a saved person should live, is living a supernatural life.

HOW DO WE DO THAT? **HOW DO WE LIVE THIS SUPERNATURAL LIFE?**

That is what this chapter is really about. It tells us how every one of these characteristics that God intends to be developed in our lives as believers, how they can become a reality in our day to day living. There are three steps and we read them in the first two verses of Romans 12.

Romans 12:1–2 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

HOW DO WE LIVE THIS SUPERNATURAL LIFE?

First notice that this instruction is addressed to believers, to people who have been saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

I beseech you therefore, **brethren**, by the mercies of God...

Paul is only urging those who have been saved by grace through faith in Christ to bear the fruit of their salvation. **It is impossible for those who are not of the root, who have not been truly saved, to produce the fruit.** Any attempt to bear the fruit of salvation without having come to faith in Christ will only meet with failure. Jesus said in

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, **by the mercies of God**...

It is by God's mercy and grace that we enter salvation, and only by His mercy and grace are we able to live saved lives that are pleasing to Him. Folks, living the supernatural life of the follower of Christ is not just a matter of trying harder.

So to born again believers, the Spirit says through Paul

I. PRESENT YOUR BODY AS A LIVING SACRIFICE TO GOD.

Now begins the instruction of how we saved people can live the lives that saved people ought to live. Present means to place on the altar as a priest places a sacrifice on the altar to give it to God.

And we are priests as Peter says in

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, **a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The sacrifice we are to offer is not one for atonement, for Christ has offered His blood once for all to redeem us to God. But the sacrifice we are to make is a living sacrifice. And that living sacrifice that God wants is for our bodies to be surrendered to Him.

So, why our bodies?

Remember **how death came to Adam and Eve** as the penalty for their sin.

They died immediately in their spirit.

They died progressively in their soul. (mind, will, emotions)

They died ultimately in their body.

When people get saved, the process reverses, and in the same order:

They are made alive immediately in their spirit.

They are made alive progressively in their soul. (mind, will, emotions)

They are made alive ultimately in their body.

The body is the last part of man to fully yield to the Lordship of Christ. **Ultimately the body of the saved will be resurrected and glorified, and conformed to the image of the Master. But before that time, the body remains the residence of the flesh, which includes our old sin nature and evil desires.**

That is why God wants us to offer our living bodies to Him, as a holy sacrifice. Holy means separated to God. **When we offer our bodies to the Lord, we say, "I dedicate the members of my body for Your service God."** Such a dedication of a living, separated body is the sacrifice that is acceptable to God.

Paul says this act of presenting our bodies as a living, holy sacrifice to God is our reasonable service. Certainly this is true. In light of all Christ has done for us, it is reasonable of the Almighty to expect this service from us.

But the words translated “reasonable service” can also be rightly translated “spiritual worship.” Offering God the members of our body for His purposes is both – reasonable service and a true act of spiritual worship.

Did we come today to worship God?

- We worship when we sing, if our concern is for the expressions of adoration, love, and devotion to the Lord and not just whether or not we like the song.
- We worship when we pray, if indeed we personally enter into prayer, and don't just listen to someone else pray or think of other things until they are finished.
- We worship when we hear the Word of God, if we hear it with a mind and heart to apply it to our own lives and obey it.
- But maybe today, the greatest act of worship we could do would be to bow humbly before our God and say with all sincerity of heart, **“Out of gratitude for Your mercies to me Lord, I dedicate the members of my body to Your service.”**

HOW DO WE LIVE THIS SUPERNATURAL LIFE?

II. DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.

To be conformed means to be formed or molded. In fact, this word in Greek is the word from which we get the English word scheme. Paul is saying, **“And do not let yourselves be molded into the scheme of the world.”**

*The word the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use here, *suschematizo* carries a secondary meaning which is **“being formed on the outside in a way contrary to the inside.”** It is used to describe a masquerade or putting on an act.*

The world cannot change the inside of the born again believer. The spirit of the saved person has been made alive. The soul is in the process of becoming more Christ-like. So, Paul says, as you offer the members of your body as a living sacrifice to God as an act of service and worship, do not allow the world to make you look different on the outside, conforming your outward person to look like the lost world around you.

The next significant word here is world. The specific word breathed by the Holy Spirit is *aion*, which means age. The best understanding of the word *aion* is that it refers to the present “world system” dominated by Satan.

This world system is severely influenced by Satan, reigning as he does as lord of the lives of the lost, who constitute the vast majority of the world's population. We should

thus not be surprised that the “world’s” music, entertainment, philosophies, priorities, desires, and aspirations are tainted with evil. As the apostle John wrote,

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and **the whole world** lies *under the sway* of the wicked one.

There is an inner difference between the redeemed and the lost. There should be an outer difference as well. If we look, talk, act, choose, live, just like the rest of the world, something is wrong. “Do not allow yourself to be conformed to the world...”

HOW DO WE LIVE THIS SUPERNATURAL LIFE?

- **PRESENT OUR BODY AS A LIVING SACRIFICE TO GOD.**
- **NOT BEING CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.**

Third and last instruction:

III. BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND.

Rather than be conformed, be transformed. Be transformed is an imperative, a command, and it is in the passive voice. This is true because we cannot transform ourselves, but we can be transformed by the Holy Spirit Who lives within us.

However, **while we cannot transform ourselves, we can block or hinder the transformation the Spirit desires to do within us.**

So as **we are not** to allow ourselves **to be conformed** to the philosophies and desires of the world, **we are** to allow our minds **to be transformed** by the Holy Spirit of God. The Greek verb for transform is *metamorphoo*, from which we get the word “metamorphosis.” The word means to change, or to change appearance. This same word was used to describe Jesus in the transfiguration.

Matthew 17:2 and **He was transfigured** before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

Unlike the verb translated be conformed which signified a change contrary to the inward nature, thus a pretense or masquerade, **the verb translated be transformed means an outward change that is consistent with the inner nature.** Thus when the outer appearance of Jesus was transformed in brilliant light and brightness, the disciples were seeing on the outside what Jesus really was on the inside.

That is exactly what is supposed to happen to us who have passed from death into life and from darkness into light. The new man on the inside is supposed to be increasingly and constantly visible from the outside, not as a pretense or masquerade, but as a genuine manifestation of who we really are now that we are in Christ.

This transformation is neither instantaneous nor automatic. Otherwise, we would not be commanded to allow it to happen. The Holy Spirit who lives within us is willing to make it happen, but He requires our cooperation. He will not force us to be transformed. He transforms us as we are willing to be transformed.

When we are willing to be transformed, how does He accomplish this change?

BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. The Holy Spirit transforms us by renewing our mind. The mind is part of the soul which can be described as the mind, the will, and the emotions. The soul is where we think, decide, and feel. The mind is far more than the brain or nervous system. Those are instruments of the mind, but the mind goes beyond the electro-chemical reactions that carry communications within the nervous system and the brain.

The mind is the connection between the spirit and the body. Thus if the body is to be transformed to outwardly manifest the inner spirit, it must be accomplished in the mind. To accomplish this, the mind must be renewed, because it was corrupted when man chose to sin. This corruption of the mind was passed on to all the descendants of Adam and Eve. When they sinned, their spirit died immediately, but their soul (including their mind) began to die progressively. When we are saved, our spirit is made alive instantly, but our mind is made alive progressively. This is the renewing of the mind. The Bible also calls it sanctification, the process of being made holy or being made more like Christ.

renewing of the mind = sanctification = being made holy = being made like Christ

How does the Holy Spirit renew our mind, making us more like Jesus and thus transforming the outer man to be like the inner man? Jesus Himself told us.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

The role of the Word of God in the life of the believer is to help us think, decide, even feel as our Savior thinks, decides, and feels. **For the Word to renew our minds we must** do several things.

We must **read it**. We must **study it**. We must **meditate upon it**. We must **hide it in our heart**. We must **obey it**.

Remember the story Jesus told comparing the wise and the foolish man?

Matthew 7:24–27 24 “Therefore whoever **hears** these sayings of Mine, and **does** them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and **does not do them**, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Both of the men heard the Word of God; only one obeyed it.

If we do these five things with God's Word, the Holy Spirit in us will renew our mind and transform our outward person to be increasingly like Jesus. It really is that simple!

CONCLUSION: If we want to live lives like people saved by the grace and mercies of God ought to live, we must do three things. Do you want that kind of supernatural life? You can move toward it right now.

1. Tell God right now, that you are dedicating the members of your body to Him and to His service. Tell Him.
2. Tell God you will resist, you will not allow the outer man, the outer woman to be conformed by the world controlled by Satan.
3. Tell God you will do more than you are presently doing to allow your mind to be transformed by the Word of God. You will read, or study, or meditate, or memorize more of the Word, and you commit yourself that as you engage the Word, you will obey.