

LEADER OVERVIEW - JANUARY WEEK 1

Text: Romans 12:1-2

Objective: Home Group members will embrace being a living sacrifice as the process of living in God's will.

Text Overview: Paul outlines the believer's transformation process by using the example of a living sacrifice. He explains that a living sacrifice (aka our whole lives) is acceptable and pleasing to God. This contrasts the Old Testament practice of animal sacrifice to cover over sins. Where in the past God needed animals sacrificed for sins, now that Jesus has come we are called to be a sacrifice ourselves for His Kingdom and for the good of others. Paul goes on to say our living sacrifice is "true spiritual worship." He then calls for Christians to be transformed and in doing they seek Gods will.

Text Explanation: One major reason Paul uses the living sacrifice illustration is because sacrifices were commonly used during this time period. The Greeks, Romans, and the Jews all would make sacrifices to please God of the gods they worshiped. The second reason that Paul uses this phrase is because Jesus was the ultimate living sacrifice. He willingly gave himself to be sacrificed for us. We are supposed to model our lives after his example, which is no easy task. D. L. Moody famously said, "The problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar." This is why Paul goes from using this illustration to a warning not to be conformed to the world. Our natural tendency will be to become more like the world, but Paul commands us to instead be transformed by the renewing of our minds (basically to "think different"). This is a process of growing to see the world more how God sees it through understanding and believing the words in Scripture. Through the process of submitting our lives to Christ, we become living sacrifices.

Discussion Instructions: The last question "What is God's will for your life?" is intentionally an open question. Members of your Home Group will respond a number of ways. The intention is to realize that living in "God's will" in this sense means doing anything that is pleasing to Him (also called His will of *desire*). We want Home Group members to realize that living for Christ and having their minds transformed is God's will for their life and will help them determine where He may be leading them in any given season.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - JANUARY WEEK 1

Read: Romans 12:1-2

1. What does it mean to be a living sacrifice?
2. Why is it easy to conform to this world? What areas might you be conforming to the world?
3. (Question Alex thinks should be removed, seems similar to 2 and 4 and a little jumbled wording) Without being the typical religious Christian how do we stand out from the world?
- 3b (Alex's add-on). Think about renewing your mind. How does Christ want you to think differently about the world and about people?
4. How does the life of Christ inform how we should live in this world?
5. What is God's will for our lives?

