

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

Read Together

In Romans 12:1-2, Paul calls his Christian audience to faithfully live a Gospel-centered life.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The way of life that disciples are called to live is marked by the transformation that comes from the “renewal of your mind”. In theological terms, “renewal” is consistent with the concept of sanctification. In the work of salvation, sanctification is a progressive work of God *and* man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives.

Disciples grow up in Christ through the renewing of their minds. How does Scripture describe this act of renewal? And what does that process look like in the life of a 21st Century disciple? How can disciples today become more like Christ?

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- Read Romans 12:1-2. Identify the most significant questions you need to answer to understand its message.
- The Triune God is always the main character of Scripture. What does Romans 12:1-2 teach us about God?
- Knowing what Romans 12:1-2 teaches us about God, what does the passage teach us about humanity?
- Paul grounds his appeal of Romans 12:1-2 “in view of God’s mercy” or “because of God’s mercy”. The mercy of God is an important theme throughout all of Paul’s writings. Read the following passages and discuss how God’s mercy is on display in each.
 - Romans 9:15-23
 - Romans 11:30-32
 - 1 Timothy 1:12-16
 - Ephesians 2:4-7
 - 2 Corinthians 1:2-4



- Because of God's mercy, disciples are made alive to God in Christ Jesus and should live sacrificial lives of worship that are pleasing to God (Romans 12:1). Genuine commitment to God embraces His Lordship in every area of life. How does a proper understanding of God's mercy impact how *you* live? Share an example of how God's mercy changed *your* life from being self-centered to God-centered. Give testimony to God's mercy toward *you*.
- In Romans 12:2, Paul exhorts his audience to be "transformed by the renewal of your mind"...but does not explain how the renewal of the mind takes place. Read 2 Corinthians 3:16-4:6 and Ephesians 4:21-24. Discuss the process by which disciples are transformed into the likeness of Christ by the renewal of their mind. Contrast the disciple's renewal with the lives of those who are far from God.
- One influential theologian has suggested that the primary evidence of a transformed and renewed mind, is the ongoing practice of repentance. "Repentance is the 'primary' ethical action upon which all 'secondary' ethical conduct depends and by which it is illuminated." Why is repentance essential to sanctification—being made more like Christ? How does repentance impact everything else?
- An ongoing theme in Romans is that mankind's fundamental sin is their failure to worship. But those who worship God are called give their lives to Him so He is honored and praised in everything they do.
 - Stated negatively: spiritual worship involves a disciple's refusal to be "conformed to this world".
 - Stated positively: spiritual worship involves a disciple being "transformed by the renewal of your mind".
 Discuss some spiritual disciplines you have practiced to "not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." How has your worship of God been affected by the practice of these disciplines?
- The outcome of this transformation by the renewing of the mind is clearly stated: "that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." One theologian comments, "The Christian is not meant to rely simply on lists of ethical commands, but to be able to discern, to test and approve, what God's will is." How has the Holy Spirit's progressive transformation of your mind provided freedom and life as you discern the will of God?

Do Life Together

These questions are designed to be asked in a smaller group of 2-4 people. The smaller setting will provide better opportunity for authentic responses. In your smaller group time, take notes to help others remain accountable to their answers. Grow together!

- How is God calling you to "grow up" in Christ this week?
- How can Jesus redeem this area? How has Jesus proven that in Scripture?
- Who will keep you accountable to this commitment this week?

Pray Together

Pray through Romans 6:12-13.

