

God's Top 40 devotionals are simple ...

WHAT – What was written, by who and what does it say?

WHY – Why is it important?

WOW – What things should I take notice of? What other scriptures are related?

28. Rom 12:1-2

READ Romans 12:1-2

What – Paul wrote this well known verse to the church at Rome. The letter of Romans is one of his longest, and in my opinion, most complete theological treatises. In many letters that Paul wrote in the New Testament, he was addressing specific troubles in a church. To Rome, he wrote a timeless letter to promote proper doctrine and action. This part of his letter begins what is called the *paranesis*. Simply put, in many letters, Paul points out ideas and follows them with application. Chapter 12, starting with an emphatic “Therefore”, is the start of Paul describing to the Romans how to live their life for Christ, referencing all of the theology and Christology he laid out in chapters 1-11.

Why – This scripture is important for several reasons. Besides being placed at the intersection of the Roman epistle, it defined for us several very important aspects of the Christian life. Paul urged us, “in view of God’s mercy” to follow Jesus. Rather than acting on our own, everything we do should be motivated by what God is doing for us. In view of God’s mercy reminds us that we are not the originators, but God is. He is the source, the motivation, and the purpose behind our very lives. But there is more. What are we being motivated to? We are called to offer our bodies as “living sacrifices” to God. WOW. This is not simply going through the motions. This is far from the habitual, Sunday only Christianity that we are far too familiar with. **THIS IS YOUR VERY LIFE.** Following Jesus is not a command, and it is not a part of your life, it is the very essence of who you are. Paul reminds us of what will get in the way. The world and the thoughts that world puts into our heads. We need to guard our hearts and minds very carefully. God wants us to change, more precisely, be changing, so that we reflect His glory. I say be changing because Paul uses the “perfect tense” verb “renewing” here. The change you make is a process, not an event. This life in Jesus will change you.

WOW – The most stunning part of this verse, however, occurred at the end. How many of us have asked God, “What are you doing?” or “What do you want from me?” This verse answers that question. Paul said point blank, “then”, referring to the directives laid out just prior, “then you will know God’s will.” **DID YOU HERE THAT?** If we buy into the program, if we give it all up for Him, if we fight against the world and push on towards the prize, sacrificing all for the sake of the one who loves us, **WE WILL BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD HAS PLANNED.** This is beyond amazing. Obedience leads to a peek into heaven. Let that idea settle in today.