

# Romans 12:2

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Date: 02 December 2012

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you would, you know, chapter 12 is going to be the chapter we're going to be in today, but I'm going to start with chapter 1. So, just move your Bibles to Romans 1, please. And as we're doing this, let me just say a couple of things here.

Let's not forget that Romans is a letter. When it was originally written, it did not have chapters, it didn't have verses, it was just one letter. And it was meant to be read in one sitting.

Okay, so we chop it up, we try to unpack the truth of just a few verses at a time, but if we're not careful to kind of revisit what Paul's already been saying for the previous 11 chapters, then the overall sweep and the momentum of the text can be lost.

So, think of it like watching five minutes of a movie. You wouldn't really feel the force of the scene if you hadn't watched what led up to that point. And this is kind of the same thing. We have to go back and kind of just give you guys a brief overview of kind of where we've been, so you guys can really feel the weight of the text that we're at today.

And this is also why I'm kind of a big advocate of reading a large portion of Scripture at one time. I think it's good to just kind of get a sense of what the overall sweep of the text is saying. So, just a footnote. Okay.

[ 1 : 17 ] So, prior to chapter 12, verse 2, if you had to pick one verse out of Romans to kind of sum up, I guess, what Paul is writing about, I think you'd have to select Romans 1, verses 16 and 17.

So, let's read that together and see what he says. And there are four kind of clear things that Paul begins to build on top of that verse through the next chapters leading up to chapter 12.

First, through chapters 1 through 3, he details kind of the need of every single man for salvation. Every single person is in need of salvation.

Every single person starts off in a sinful state and in need of God's grace. And I get that from chapter 3, verse 10, which is just one of many we could point to, so we'll just keep flipping the pages here.

3:10 says this, There is none righteous, there's not even one. We're not going to go further than that. We're just going to stop at that. There's not one righteous, there's not even one. That is a definitive statement about the fact that everybody is in need of salvation.

[ 2 : 43 ] The second thing, kind of at the end of chapter 3 and then going into chapter 4 of Romans, explains the way of salvation. How you are saved. And I get this from chapter 3, verses 23 and 24.

Let's read that. He says, For all have sinned, everybody sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You haven't attained it. Being justified or declared innocent or made right with God as a gift by God's grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

So that's the way of salvation. It's through Christ, His sacrifice on the cross, His death, burial and resurrection. Us believing and embracing and trusting in that for our only hope is the way that you're saved.

Okay, so it starts with the need, it goes to the way. And then thirdly, I think it goes from in chapters 5 through 8, He begins to unpack the hope of our salvation. Okay, we'll just read one verse.

Go to Romans 5, verse 1. He says, Therefore, so in light of the need, in light of the way, Therefore, having been justified by faith, made right with God by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 52 ] And that means a lot of things that He details in the next 3 to 4 chapters. But that's kind of where He's been as well. And then lastly, I think in chapters 9 through 11, He reveals to us, Paul reveals to us, the plan of salvation for all peoples.

All kinds of people, Jews and Gentiles alike. Both the Jews and then all of us who are probably Gentiles. God says, everyone's invited to the party. Everybody gets a free shot. Everyone's

included in this plan of salvation.

It doesn't mean everybody's saved. It just means everybody is included. And I get this from Romans 10, verses 12 and 13. He says this, For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.

For the same Lord is Lord of all, or everybody, abounding in riches for all who will call upon Him. For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Whoever, right? Anybody. Any kind of person. And Paul, at the end of all this doctrine, begins to just shout out and praise. And he does a doxology.

[ 5 : 01 ] It's called a doxology. And he just begins to praise God at the end of chapter 11. And that brings us kind of into chapter 12, where we start today. And so I'm just going to kind of briefly revisit for you guys verse 1.

And just talk about what that kind of meant. And then we'll actually begin exploring verse 2 today. And hopefully it'll be a nice segue for whoever's teaching next into the rest of the chapter as well. So let's just read verses 1 and 2 of chapter 12.

I urge you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship, or your reasonable service of worship.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove or discern what the will of God is, that which is good, that which is well-pleasing, that which is perfect.

So early on in Jesus' ministry, he was actually asked by a Pharisee named Simon to come over and to have dinner with him. And he did. And while he was there, a woman approached Jesus at the dinner table, and she was a very immoral woman.

[ 6 : 14 ] Some scholars think this was Mary, if you know your biblical characters. She was known by all in the community to be so. She was immoral. Everyone knew it. But when she learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she came to him, and she brought this alabaster vial of perfume.

Really expensive. Really costly. And standing behind Jesus with the vial in hand, she was weeping tears of sorrow, and began to wet Jesus' feet with their tears, and then wipe the tears off with their hair.

She kept wiping, and she kept crying, and she kept wiping. And she would kiss his feet from time to time. And then she would even anoint his feet with this costly perfume. Now the Pharisee saw this, and he said to himself, if this man were the prophet that everybody thinks that he is, if he were really the prophet everyone thinks that Jesus actually is, he would know what sort of person this is, that this woman who was touching him is an adulteress, an immoral person, is unclean, is not worthy of his time.

But Jesus knew the scorn that was in Simon's heart, and so he says to him, I have something to say to you, Simon. And he replied, say it, teacher, and I'm sure he kind of said it like, say it, you know, teacher, prophet, call yourself that.

Jesus spoke back, a certain moneylender had two debtors. He tells this story. A certain moneylender had two debtors, people indebted to him. One owed him 500 denarii. One denarii was equal to about one day's wage.

[ 7 : 43 ] So, over a year's worth of salary, right? Owed him that. The other debtor owed him 50 denarii. When they were unable to repay, Jesus says, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them, therefore, do you think will love him more?

Simon answered and said, I suppose the one whom he forgave more. And Jesus said, you've answered correctly. That's right. The person that you forgave more is the person that's going to love you more. Jesus then turned towards the woman and looking at her, he was speaking to Simon still and he says this, do you see this woman?

I entered your house a while ago, yet you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time that I came in, has not stopped kissing my feet.

You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with perfume. For this reason I tell you, Simon, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven.

For she has loved much, but he who is forgiven little, loves little. And he said to her, your sins have been forgiven. And that's the end of the story. It's in Luke 7. It's a true story.

[ 8 : 59 ] It really happened. And I think this story really embodies the truth of Romans 12.1. Okay? Who do you think we are in the story?

Which character do you think represents us? You're the prostitute. You're Mary, if that's Mary. You're the sinner.

You're the fornicator. You're the defiler. You're the rebellious person. The rebellious and disobedient fornicator, who upon feeling deep conviction over her sin, and the desperate need for forgiveness, pursues Christ, and offers Him her broken heart.

She doesn't cry in the corner. Okay? She doesn't wait until there's an opportune time to go talk to Jesus. She bursts onto the scene with the same boldness in her confession that she typically had in her rebellion.

And she begins to even offer Him this costly perfume, anointing His feet with it as a sign of her sincerity. There was nothing that this woman would not do to have the Savior.

[ 10 : 07 ] Nothing she wouldn't give the Savior. Right? Nothing she would keep for herself. No public humiliation was going to keep her from Him. No fear of others' disapproval was going to keep her from Him. No embarrassment, no earthly possessions.

Would stand in the way, no crowd of eager onlookers that were boxing her out would keep her from Him. No love of her sin would keep her from Him. Nothing would keep her from Him.

Because she was committed to this idea that if Jesus was the Savior, if He was the one that could truly forgive sin and make her right with God and cleanse her of all this filth that she had upon herself, she was committed to that idea and she knew, if this is the one that I'm supposed to communicate with, then no.

Then I'll do anything. I'll die to anything if it meant forgiveness of my sin. And I think that's true of a lot of you. Some of you. Right? You can relate. Those of you who are similarly in a state of rebellion, in a state of sinfulness, in a state of rejection, in a state of hate towards God, in a state of selfish ambition, but you heard Christ say your sins are forgiven.

You were so moved by that. That idea that you could be forgiven for the sin that you know you were guilty of, that you would do anything to have Christ, you would suffer anything to have Christ, you would confess it all to have Christ, you would, it didn't matter.

[ 11 : 32 ] And what other reaction is there for a soul who feels the weight of judgment upon them? Right? But to forsake everything, go to the Savior, and do whatever must be done in order to have Him.

And once you have Him, is there any other reaction but to worship Him with your life, to live in submission to Jesus with all of your heart, and all of your soul, and all of your mind, and all of your strength, because He died for you.

And when you think of these things, aren't you compelled by love and by gratitude for Christ to serve Jesus, right? Because of His merciful sacrifice.

I think that's exactly what Romans 12, 1 says. Listen to it. I urge you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, by that reality of Christ, I urge you, because you've been forgiven of this great infinite debt, I urge you, by that mercy, to present your body as a living and a holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service and worship.

It's the reasonable conclusion of that. What other reaction can you possibly have when you've been forgiven like you've been forgiven? There is no other action or reaction. So that's where Paul's been so far, okay?

[ 12 : 51 ] He's been kind of building this case up against mankind for many, many chapters and then talking about, hey, now here's the answer to your problem. And now here's kind of what happens to you in light of that. Here's your hope in God in light of these truths, in light of this way of salvation, this acceptance in Christ or through Christ before God.

Okay? So then, now we come to verse 2. With those truths in mind, let's kind of explore this. And just, if verse 1 is kind of the what, you know, how we're supposed to respond, then verse 2 kind of tells us actually how that happens.

How we actually do that. How we respond by actually offering a body to God that's living and holy and pleasing to Him. Okay? Let's just read 12-2 once more.

So it says, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

If we can successfully answer, I think, three questions, I think we'll have this passage. The first question is, what does it mean to be conformed to this world? The second question is, what does it mean to be transformed by the renewing of your mind?

[14:08] And then the third question is, what does it mean to prove the will of God? Okay? So we just take them one at a time. The first way in which we offer our bodies to God in a well-pleasing way is by not being conformed to the world.

That's what the Scripture says. So what's considered the world? That's kind of the first question, I think, to ask underneath that. A better rendering, actually, of that word, world, would actually be age.

Okay? The age. The Greek word here is aeon, and it literally means this period of time. Okay? And I think that's a great rendering because it doesn't limit the text to a certain kind of world.

It refers to any world in which any person is living at any time. the spirit of whatever that age is.

Whatever time that you live in, don't be conformed to the generic age or world or world pattern.

The world, ever since the fall of Adam, has always been corrupt, and the age has always been evil.

Okay? There has never been a time in the world that tended toward righteousness.

[15:19] Ever. It's always been a world filled with selfishness and greed and pride and lust and idolatry and a lot of other things that were driving it on. That's at the core of our world, the core of our age.

Those kinds of things. That pride and that selfish ambition and that lust that you feel, those things at the core of you even define our age. This idea is that we are not to become like the world in which we presently live.

So think of the world like a stream that naturally flows downhill, right? We are in it and for a long time we ran with it but God through Christ has now saved us and called us to swim upstream.

That's essentially what it is. It's just a simple illustration to kind of depict that. The best cross reference I think in the scripture is actually from Galatians. So turn there real quick. I just want to show you this. It's the exact same word but it kind of just more clearly states what exactly God is asking of us Galatians 1 verses 3 and 4 here.

Galatians 1, 3 and 4. So here we go. It says, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us out of this present evil age according to the will of our God and our Father.

[16:44] God has saved us. God has saved us. God has saved us. God has saved us. God has called us out of this world. God has called us out of this present evil age or at least living in light of this present evil age into some kind of new status or some kind of new way of living.

God has saved us and the last thing I'll kind of say about what the term world really means if you want to define it it's very easily definable by its goals.

The world is. If you consider what men and women are actually living for in this world I think you'll clearly see what God means by the term world in this passage.

For instance, four obvious goals of our world. Fortune, fame, power, and pleasure. Just to name a few.

Fortune, fame, power, and pleasure. That's four obvious goals of our world and what they're striving after. And these fortune, fame, power, and pleasure are not in and of themselves evil. They're not wicked by themselves but when a person without Christ seeks these things for themselves and makes them the primary objects of their life or their primary goals in life to obtain these things instead of the byproducts of living a life for God then as one author put it he actually says life becomes warped because mind and heart and life are turned to the pursuit of that which can never glorify God nor truly satisfy the human heart.

[18:20] When you turn your mind towards that and you actually focus all of your efforts and energies on obtaining fortune or fame or power or pleasure it can be good I mean you can make a good thing an ultimate thing right?

That's a common phrase you can make even family or girlfriend or boyfriend or school an ultimate thing and you can so crave it and so desire it and so seek it that it becomes God to you and when that happens you warp yourself it naturally just warps and kind of it almost internally combust your own heart and it just inverts you it turns you away from the path that you were meant to go it's a cool illustration that C.S. Lewis once actually coined was that the human machine think of your body as a machine the human machine was meant to run on God he created it that way so when

you don't do that you'll find it's not working very well right?

So there's all kind of I mean you've heard another phrase that's popular the you know power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely right?

I mean it's not necessarily a one to one correlation but I think that you know there is a sense in which we begin to pursue these things as God they begin to corrupt us they begin to undo us because we weren't created to live like that we weren't created to operate like that Paul says it this way in Romans 1 in fact professing to be wise they became fools and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man they begin to idolize things of man right?

this world things in the world they begin to idolize that then he says they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and they worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator that's what happened to you that's what happened to the world in Romans 1 in fact Paul is describing for us what exactly has gone wrong with the world and what the wrath of God is going to be coming down upon what for?

[ 20 : 29 ] because everybody in creation has been corrupted by this one central theme they took God and they displaced him and they put themselves on his throne and they said you know what I'm going to follow me I'm going to do my thing and they stopped listening to God and everything has been crumbling ever since so we should not and we shall not be conformed to these things these ways right?

we should pursue Christ secondly that's what I think it kind of means to be conformed to the world that idea I mean if you really get the idea of world and you get the definition down I think it makes it very clear what it says to not be conformed to don't pursue these things as ultimate pursue Christ as ultimate let him be what you are living for now if he blesses you with fame blesses you with fortune blesses you with pleasure blesses you with power those things are not inherently evil I'm not saying that millionaires cannot be Christians okay I'm just saying that those kinds of things when pursued ultimately result in corruption and destruction and evil and all kinds of other things second way by which we offer our bodies to God in a well pleasing way is by being transformed by the renewing of your mind okay the second way in which we offer our bodies to God in an acceptable or well pleasing way is by being transformed by the renewing of your mind I think two questions underneath that main heading there will help us really see the truth of this portion of our verse the first one is what are we being transformed into what are we being transformed into and I think secondly how do we renew our minds okay so let's just deal with those two questions what are we being transformed into firstly the word is it's not conformed right it's actually transformed and there's a very important distinction in the

Greek between those two words that I want to just point out to you we are not being conformed to the world or going along with their schemes or pursuing their goals any longer right like we've just discussed that but we have the word transformed which is actually metamorphome in the Greek metamorphome right which sounds just like metamorphosis or morph okay meaning to change into an entirely new thing entirely new thing 2nd Corinthians 5:17 right if any man is in Christ he is a new creation a new creature altogether an entirely new entity a new thing the old man has passed away behold new things have come okay the idea here is literally it's kind of that of a tadpole changing into a frog okay or a grub changing into a butterfly of some sort it's that I mean it's that different okay it's a morphing into something that you once were not it's a creature that you once were not God is not merely making additions and subtractions to you he's not just trying to make you more moral or make you more sweet or make you more kind to be around or make you more humble he's not just trying to make you less angry it's not just additions and subtractions here but is in the business of transforming you into an entirely new creation eventually with a body and a mind like that of the risen Christ with a mind that's identical or not identical but a mind that's like Christ in a body that's like the risen Christ unlike anything you know right now think about it this way the seed is the Holy Spirit the growth is your sanctification and then the bloom is your glorification think of it that way okay the seed is the Holy Spirit he's been planted inside of you for the purpose of creating life and growing the growth you actually becoming what you already are that's sanctification that's you becoming set apart for God that's you actually offering your body to God in a living sacrificial way that's pleasing and smelling good to him and then lastly the bloom right when you actually come to full fruition in heaven that's your glorification it's a simple little illustration to kind of think about what's happening here so transformation transformation in our text refers to

God's purpose and God's means of transforming us more and more into the image and the likeness of the risen Christ that's exactly what that means okay what are we being transformed into again I'm going to read some text here in a second we are through the text okay God's purpose and God's means of transforming us more and more into the image and likeness of the risen Christ is what he means by that word transformation all right so let's just kind of deal with it again back into that the seed the growth and the bloom analogy here so the seed or the Holy Spirit let's look at Romans 8 just so you know what God's doing kind of in order here the seed is the first thing the Holy Spirit is implanted inside you this is Romans 8 verse 11 but if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells inside of you he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who indwells you okay see that the Holy Spirit was given to you to breathe life in there's potential now for life inside of you the life of God unlike anything that we've known secondly the growth let's go to

[ 26 : 13 ] Romans 8 29 look at this this is again what it looks like in your life Romans 8 29 for whom whom he foreknew he also predestined to become what conformed to the image of his son conformed to the image of his son that's what it looks like the way that it looks to everybody else the way that it should eventually begin you know being look or looking to you is that you'll be becoming conformed to the image of Christ you'll be growing into Christ likeness and then lastly the bloom 1st John 3 verse 2 1st John 3 verse 2 listen to this beloved now we are children of God and it is not appeared as yet but we shall be we know that when he appears when Jesus appears when he comes back or when we see him we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is so that's what is ahead of you if you're a Christian to be like

Jesus to see him as he is to reflect him without all this sin and the filth in our life ok so that's kind of the first point there what are we being transformed into Christ likeness and eventually very much Christ likeness a lot of Christ likeness alright secondly how does this transformation take place the verse tells us by the renewal of your mind which leads us to the second question how do we renew our minds how do we renew our minds this is a huge question huge the first thing that I kind of thought about when I read that portion of the text again let's just read it together so we really are clear it says and do not be conformed to this world but be transformed how by the renewing of your mind the first thing that came to my mind was why the mind why what about the mind is going to transform me that was my first thought okay and I think it is because your thoughts dwell there it's because that's where your thoughts dwell and your will or your ability to choose things acts according to your thoughts okay did you guys get that

I'm going to give you an illustration here so you got to understand those two concepts I think the reason why he says the mind is because your thoughts dwell there that's where you think in your mind and then your will what you choose to do if you choose to do this versus choosing to do that that is dictated by what's in your mind it acts on the thoughts in there okay think of your thoughts as ingredients and your will as a cook okay follow this illustration think of your thoughts as ingredients and your will as a cook you can make from the same ingredients something that tastes or something that smells sweet and tastes good or you can make something that smells awful and tastes terrible okay it just depends on the cook we all have a mixture of thoughts in our minds right some good thoughts and some bad thoughts it's just the reality everybody does depending on which thoughts we choose to act on will determine what kind of body we offer to God holy or unholy just depends on the cook depends on your will which you choose to do now take the illustration further imagine the holy spirit within you as a master chef okay there to guide you through your cooking and the bible as the cookbook okay the cookbook informs the cook how to create a tasty meal so the bible informs the christian how to please god however and there is and here this is my main point okay so get this this is the however statement the master chef can only help you cook with the ingredients that you provide him right if you give him raw squid and celery there's only so much that a master chef can do with that okay the holy spirit likewise can only help you according to the thoughts that you provide him see that so a lot of you are wondering why is there no power in my life why do

I see no change in my life why do I see no growth in my life because your holy spirit cannot use there's no meditation there's no consideration of christ there's no memorizing scripture there's no reading there's no considering there's no praying through the bible to come to an understanding that changes your life every person that you admire in the christian realm is a student and a theologian of the word of god they know what god's word says they memorize it mathan quotes

george!

muller all the time he prayed through the bible they say 200 times is there any wonder why his life was so powerful why the holy spirit did so much through him it's not because he was that kind of guy he devoted himself to the word of god so what kind of thoughts are you providing him is it pornography is it movies that are just filled with!

[ 31 : 39 ] is it music that's filled with sin and evil and corruption what's the holy spirit going to do with that nothing he can't he won't but if you fill your mind with the word of god then he will there is a purging process let me just give you some verses Jesus said this in john 17 17 sanctify them my disciples in truth your word is truth it could not be clearer your sanctification your growth in holiness your power in your life is dictated by truth not just knowing it but believing in it and entrusting yourself to it and acting!

according to it and your word is truth he says to god 2nd timothy 3 16 and 17 all scripture is god breathed and profitable for teaching and for reproof and for correction and for training and righteousness that the man of god may be adequate equipped for some good works no every good work every good work the word of god is adequate for everything in your life you don't need some special premonition the word of god is adequate okay to guide you to give you a sense of where to go to give you a sense of how to glorify god in every decision you make the bible even goes as far as saying you can eat and drink to the glory of god because your heart is right it's been changed by the scripture and lastly!

john 15 15 no longer do i call you slaves for the slave does not know what his master is doing but i called you friends for all things that i have heard from my father i have made known to you and then he goes on the very next words to talk about how how the fact that you know what my father likes and what my father approves of is meant to bear fruit within you how incredible right Charles Spurgeon once said ignorance is not bliss in Christianity it's misery it's misery we are transformed by renewing our mind that is by knowing truth and acting according to it it's not anything deeper than that it's not anything deeper than that and the

Holy Spirit it's not going to be like you have to not only memorize but then actually just work yourself into this frenzy of activity to actually glorify God it's when your mind is changed and the things within you begin to change the desires within you begin to be perfected your life will just naturally become pleasing life it's so much richer that way the third way that we offer our bodies to God in a well pleasing way is by proving the will of God with our life this is a really short one it's very simple I think in light of what we've already talked about so what does it mean to prove the will of God let's read the verse once more do not be conformed to this world will be transformed by the renewing of your mind why why would I care about a renewed mind that you may prove what the will of God is that which is good and well pleasing and perfect and again if you understand what has been said so far okay that we have been saved out of conformity to this world saved out of that conformity to this world and into

Christ likeness which comes by way of knowing the truth and entrusting our lives to him then this last point is very simple proving the will of God is simply proving through your life that God is better that's it proving some of your Bibles may say discerning or by testing discern what the will of God is essentially it's getting at the idea of proving by testing okay proving that the will of God is good and acceptable and well pleasing and perfect so you will then prove through your life through that renewed mind life that God's will all along was good and well pleasing and perfect that his will for us is actually good and it's not destructive like the world what the world wills okay even though it doesn't it doesn't title it like this what the world I was going to talk about how the world is in [ 36 : 37 ] Satan's hands 1 John I think it's 3 19 I can't remember but exactly he basically says that Satan is the ruler of this world there's many other passages just like that the world is in the power of the evil one the Bible says that many times John 13 says that okay so the idea here is that if you follow the will of the world you will find yourself destroyed by the devil but if you follow the will of God which is actually good for you you won't find that same destruction you'll find blessing you'll find abundance secondly another thing that is kind of speaking to is that that is will for us as well pleasing or complimenting to God okay don't overcomplicate this it's just like a husband from pleasing her that's what it means by the well pleasing part right it's just like a husband desires to please his wife and then out of that gets a lot of joy when she's happy it's the same exact thing with God and then lastly that his will for us is perfect or without defilement God purely desires to display through his people his perfect plan of redemption and that he will do that more and more as we

resist the temptation of the world to go its way and submit ourselves joyfully to him as a holy and living sacrifice does that make sense I hope that's clear that's essentially what verse two says after this we'll be getting into what that specifically means literally the rest of the book leading into 16 is just kind of about how what the specific will of God is for us in terms of our life and relationship with other people to government to conscience to others just everything so that's kind of what the rest of the book is about specifically how we can actually live our lives to the glory of God okay so let's pray