

## **A Reasonable Response**

This article on Romans 12:1-2 is taken from the Ligonier Ministries

Nearly everyone loves to receive compliments, but not every compliment that we receive is equally memorable. Usually we remember in the long term only those commendations from the people we highly respect. Because we can sense insincerity, we often do not trust those compliments that come from foolish individuals or those who are not looking out for our best interest. These comments are quickly forgotten, but sincere compliments can be remembered for a lifetime.

As much as we disdain flattering words that are spoken insincerely, it is clear that the Lord hates false honor all the more. Jesus tells us the Father has always been looking for those who will worship Him “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23), and God is displeased with those who do not give Him glory with pure and sincere motivations (Isa. 29:13–14). Our Father wants us to imitate His Son, who, being without sin (1 Peter 2:22), sought to please God at every point in His life.

On account of the great salvation Christ earned for those who have not deserved it, worship is the most reasonable response to His grace. Paul makes this point explicitly in today’s passage. In Romans 1–11, Paul has explained the gospel and the salvation it gives to those who trust in Christ alone. In chapters 12–16, he explains the practical applications of the doctrines of sin and grace. The conjunction that opens chapter 12 reveals that what he will tell us in this chapter is the logical consequence of his earlier teaching. It is inevitable that the truly converted will worship God because they are thankful for their redemption.

Paul’s emphasis is on “spiritual worship” because, above all else, the Lord wants for our hearts and minds to be devoted to Him. Yet worship and praise have never been mere internal exercises. No one under the old covenant was permitted to neglect the sacrifices God ordained. Still, the Lord was pleased only when the hearts of His people were in the rituals old covenant Israel performed.

The need to sacrifice to God continues today, although we no longer offer up the blood of bulls and goats. Instead, in gratitude to Jesus for our salvation, we offer our bodies as living sacrifices (12:1), surrendering to Him all that we have, do, and are. This kind of heart-directed worship is what pleases the Lord.

God is not interested in just a portion of our time, energy, thoughts, or money; rather, He wants it all. This does not mean that we cannot enjoy what He has given us, but it does mean that we must have a continual attitude of thankfulness toward Him for our blessings. Offering ourselves as living sacrifices also means that we continually think on Him and those things that are pure, lovely, and commendable (Phil. 4:8).