

Transformed!
Romans 12:1-2
Small Group Guide

Opening Icebreaker Question:

- (Keeping in mind that this is an icebreaker question,) is there some small opportunity that you feel you've squandered during your life? Share at your own level of comfort.

BACKGROUND: The author of Romans is the Saul/Paul that we learned about in TVC's sermon series on Acts, who was called to be an Apostle to the Gentiles.

Before we get to our main passage, READ Romans 7:15, 22-23 (below):

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate, I do... For in my inner being, I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members."

1. Can you identify with Paul's struggle against indwelling or habitual sin?
2. How is the battle against sin like a "war"?

Now that Romans 7 has shown us how great the struggle against sin is, READ Romans 8:1-2:

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

3. After hearing Paul describe our war against sin in Chapter 7, what is your initial reaction to hearing these first two verses of Chapter 8?
4. Do you really feel this "no condemnation"? Why or why not?
5. How do you think the Spirit (mentioned in this verse) helps us battle sin?

Now, TAKE TURNS READING Romans 12:1-2:

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God— this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is— his good, pleasing and perfect will."

6. "In view of God's mercy": Would dwelling on the truth of "no condemnation in Christ" (8:1) help motivate us to seek transformation? Why or why not?
7. What two other motivations to be transformed do you see in 12:1-2, which Andy alluded to in his sermon?
8. Have you ever thought of your efforts to "sacrifice" or kill sin as an act of worship to God? If you did, would it change your thoughts, feelings or behavior on giving up certain sins? Explain.
9. Do you struggle with discerning God's will? Andy stated that sin can obscure God's will in our lives just like a wall of water hitting our car's windshield obscures our vision. Is this possible to any degree

in your life? Describe.

Andy mentioned three practical, CRITICAL ACTIONS for the “renewing of your mind” (12:2):

10. The first step is calling sin by its name.

- a. Someone once defined confession as *agreeing with God* that your action (or thought) is wrong. How does naming one’s specific sins as sinful (such as gossip, pornography, anger, idols, etc.) help transform you?
- b. One step to cure rationalization of sin is to name your sin to God regularly. Do you have this practice? Why would it be so hard to do regularly?

11. The second step is to get it on the record.

- a. Andy mentioned the passage below. What does it say about the effect of sharing our sins with those we trust?

James 5:13-16 “Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. **CONFESS YOUR SINS to each other** and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”

- b. Do you have someone in your life that you can trust to request prayer over sin? If not, how can we go about building that kind of relationship or what type of person should we look for? (Ideally, someone who takes sin seriously and would hold you accountable [Romans 7], but who won’t condemn [Romans 8:1-2], and believes in the Spirit’s power to transform [Romans 12:1-2]).

12. The third step is to recognize your “mirage”.

- a. Are there any lies that you are buying into that foster your sin, such as “THIS will make you happy, THIS will satisfy your longing, THIS will bring you peace,” or “THIS temptation is too strong for me”?
- b. The premise is that sin is powerful because it promises us things that we deeply, and often legitimately, long for. How does Jesus give us what we ultimately long for, in a way that takes the power away from sin?
- c. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “Look how God cares even for the lilies of the field, he will certainly care for you, his beloved child! So seek FIRST his kingdom, and his righteousness, and these things will be added as well!” Does this statement have any effect on dissolving your mirages? How can we keep truths like this foremost on our minds as we go about our day?

- 13. Share and Pray:** Among our prayer requests, let’s pray that we will grow in our experience of God’s care, of Jesus taking all our condemnation onto himself (Rom 8:1-2), and of seeing our efforts at transformation as one way to worship God. (Leaders: if your group is tightknit and transparent, you may want to allow opportunities for specific confession—perhaps in same-gendered groups. But you will have to be the judge of whether your group is ready for this. Don’t force it if you’re not there yet).