

# Logiken Worship

Romans 12:1-2

What is it that God wants from you?

For 11 chapters Paul has been making a case that nothing that you can ever do will make you right with God and gain you entrance into his eternal kingdom. By your failure to give God full and complete obedience you have earned his anger and wrath.

And by grace alone received by faith alone in Christ alone is the only means by which you may be saved.

Salvation is a gift that comes from God to us. The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Gospel is more about what God gives “to” you rather than what God wants from you. But the truth is this: God does want something from you. And what he wants is “Logiken” worship.

Logiken is the Greek word that we find translated in Romans 12:1. The ESV translates it as “spiritual” worship. The KJV translates it “reasonable” worship. I have chosen to keep this strange word because both “spiritual” and “reasonable” are correct translations. But neither word seems to capture the sense of the other word. And hopefully, if I say it enough, this new word will lodge in your mind.

Romans 12:1-2 make perfectly clear that when God gives saving grace to someone, the intention of that grace, that mercy, is to produce logiken worship in them. The fact that God wants something from us may make some of you uncomfortable. Understanding God’s sovereign and free grace removes a tremendous weight off our shoulders. Talking about something that God wants from us feels like we are strapping that burden back on again. I hope by the end of today’s message that you will better understand how this is not really the case. In reality, logiken worship is both freeing and purpose producing.

Read Romans 12:1-2.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers,

The Greek word translated “appeal” is parakaleo. This word can be used in various ways. Sometimes it means comfort. Other times it can mean exhort. Literally it means to call alongside. In the noun form it is used to describe the Holy Spirit – the paraclete. Generally, its meaning lies somewhere between request and command.

It is not as if Paul is shy about giving commands. Commands are throughout both the Old and New Testaments. But it is significant that Paul does not use the language of

command here. The motivation for logiken worship must come from deep within the heart. No outward conformity to a command will ever suffice.

Paul himself practices logiken worship. And he is calling all who believe in Jesus to the same sort of worship. No force. No manipulation. Paul is making an appeal to his brothers and sisters in the Church at Rome. That same appeal is being made to you here today. The fact that Paul makes this appeal makes clear to us that Logiken worship is not automatic. Just because you believe in Jesus Christ, does not automatically mean that you will also engage in this sort of worship. Paul is making his appeal to Christians. If you are not a Christian, you cannot give Logiken worship. But not all Christians are giving Logiken worship. The grace of God is working in every believer to produce in them Logiken worship.

Paul makes his appeal, “by the mercies of God,” The NIV translates this “in view of the mercies of God.” While I think that this is true, I do not think it goes far enough. “In view of the mercies of God” places the weight on our ability to appreciate the mercy and act accordingly. In view of all that God has done for you in forgiving your sins, now you should do this in response.

This is true. If your heart, your mind, knows little of the mercy of God, you will never respond with logiken worship. We should be striving to know the mercies of God. But I still believe by this phrase Paul intends more.

**ESV Romans 11:32** For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

The mercy that God is having upon us includes his working in our hearts to bring about new desires that were not there before. God through his mercy implants within us the seeds of righteousness. Mercy includes God’s forgiveness of our sin. But mercy also includes God awakening within us a desire for holiness. Mercy is always the driving force of anything good in the Christian’s life of obedience.

So, “by the mercies of God,” is more than simply appreciating God’s kindness to you. Your logiken worship is really the fruit of God’s mercies to you.

**Titus 2:11-12** <sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

The Grace of God (the mercy of God) is an active force working in your life, enabling and producing logiken worship.

What is logiken worship? Logiken worship is consciously, voluntarily, surrendering your whole being into the hands of God, your Father. to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.  
Logiken worship

Paul teaches that Christians no longer bring animal sacrifices to God. Instead of an animal, we bring ourselves to God. We offer our own bodies as a sacrifice to God. It is best to understand body as referring to the whole person, especially as you live your life in the present world. Calvin says, "By bodies he means not only our skin and bones, but the totality of which we are composed". God is not so much concerned with the things that you give him. He wants you. God is seeking your unqualified commitment to Him. God wants you to be "all in."

The verb "to offer" is in the aorist tense. This implies a completed action. But then Paul speaks of the offering as a "living" sacrifice. Living implies ongoing. As a definitive action of the will, Paul appeals to you to lay your whole person into the hands of God. Paul wants you to decide to surrender your whole life to God. This is not a one-time decision. It is a decision that you choose to make every day of your life. You wake up in the morning, and you choose to lay your whole person at God's feet to do with what he wants. "I am yours. I belong to you. Do with me whatever you want." Paul then encourages us that when we offer ourselves to God in this way, that our offering is holy and acceptable to God. It pleases him. The imagery that Paul uses comes from the OT sacrificial system. Most often, the NT speaks of the OT sacrificial system as having been fulfilled by the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

There is nothing that we can add to the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus, and Jesus alone has removed the wrath of God over us. But, through faith we are joined together with Christ. And the attitude that filled Jesus Christ is now being produced in our own hearts. God is working in us to will and to act according to his purpose.

In the OT, the worshipper brought an animal sacrifice to the Temple as an offering. God required that the animal be holy and without blemish for it to be acceptable to God. To bring a blemished animal was an indication of not really caring to bring one's best to God. This worshipper was saving his best animals for his own use and giving the leftovers to God. An unholy animal was not acceptable to God. God was not pleased with it. How can you be considered "holy and acceptable" before a holy God?

There are two considerations. The first is that you are not holy – not in yourself anyway. If you could be holy, then you would not need the Gospel. Paul would be contradicting everything he just taught in the first 11 chapters. You are only holy and acceptable in Christ. Jesus is continually washing you and making you acceptable to God. Otherwise, we would be the most pitiful and deformed offerings ever. And God would spit us out of his mouth.

As you give yourself to God, remember Christ. He is the Great High Priest washing your offering and making you acceptable to a Holy Father. So, if you think to yourself. I have been marred by my sin. God could never be pleased with me. Think again. In Jesus Christ, when you offer yourself, God accepts you as holy. He smiles over your offering. The second consideration has more to do with your sincerely giving your whole self to God. This is the rub. God does not want a part of us. He wants all of us. R.C. Sproul correctly says, “It is easy to see, but hard to do. Our spiritual growth is weak, so we hold back. We want to keep for ourselves a part of ourselves.”

Paul does not appeal to us to give a little bit more than we did last week. He encourages us to lay our whole self on the altar. God is not impressed with your talents. He does not need your money. He wants you, all of you. Are you offering your whole self to God today? What keeps you from offering your body to him as a living sacrifice?

Wholehearted “logiken” worship is not being perfect. If God required perfection from us in this life, not one of us could offer worship that God would accept. But logiken worship is possible. You can give to God logiken worship today.

If you choose this moment to offer yourself to him, he will not reject you. He will not find fault with your imperfections. He will accept your offering as a pleasing aroma to his nostrils. The decision in your heart to offer your whole being to God, even with your present blemishes, is true worship in which your Heavenly Father finds great pleasure. Now you are ready to better understand Logiken.

Logiken is only used one other place in the NT. (I Peter 2:2) But it is frequently used in Greek and Jewish literature during the NT era. Logiken comes from the word Logos meaning “word” or “reason.” God is a reasoning being. God has thoughts and he makes decisions based upon those thoughts. Humans, made in God’s image, are also reasoning beings. This is why the KJV translates the phrase “reasonable worship.” Think with me a moment: Does not all of creation give praise to God? The heavens declare the glory of God. The trees sing forth praise. The animals praise God. But none of these offer to God “reasonable worship.” One writer says it this way:

“If I were a nightingale, I should be singing as a nightingale; if a swan, as a swan. But as it is, I am a rational being (logikos), therefore I must be singing hymns of praise to God.”

The Christian response to the Gospel is not automatic or thoughtless. As a human being, made in the image of God, and redeemed by grace alone, you have the ability to consciously, as an act of your volition, to offer yourself to God. The truth is that no human being will ever surrender themselves to God apart from Grace. But as grace works, this is the intended fruit of that grace. This is usually what we begin to see when someone is truly saved. They are not perfect in character, but there is a surrender that occurs, a devotion that was not there before. But life is long and full of trials. And very often these trials beat us down. And we get up off the altar. We decide, in the depths of our soul, to no longer lay our lives down on the altar. We may still be going to church. We have not left God entirely. But neither are we daily choosing to offer our whole self to God.

Maybe this is where you are today. God is not asking you to fix your whole life before you can give yourself to him. But he is making the appeal to you, “offer your whole self to me.” I love you. And I will accept your offering as a pleasing aroma.

Logiken worship is a motion of the soul, a decision of the heart. This is why the ESV translates it “spiritual worship.” Here is the beauty of this sort of worship: The new born Christian can give logiken worship. The crusty old Christian can give logiken worship. It does not matter where you are in life. A child, a teenager, an adult single, married, divorced, widowed, an empty nester... the situation does not matter. God is not concerned with past or future at this point. He simply calls you to offer yourself to him – just as you are. That is refreshing. That is not burdensome. This is not God telling you to get your act together and then he will decide if He wants you with him, if you are good enough to be with him. No way!

Jesus says, “Come to me just as you are. I am already lying on the altar. Come lay down on it with me.” The reasonable choice that you make to offer yourself to God is what God finds pleasing. You never get beyond this. This is the heart of true worship.

But offering yourself to God as a living sacrifice is not all there is to sanctification. Sanctification is learning how to rightly apply God’s law, God’s standard, to your particular situation. This is the process that Paul describes in verse 2.

2 (And) 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.

Not every English translation includes the word “And”, but it is clearly there in the Greek. In addition to offering yourself to God as a living sacrifice, Paul wants you to “not be conformed to this world” but to “be transformed.”

The offering of yourself to God is not the end of the process. If it were, then we could all go home. We would have no need for the ongoing teaching of the whole counsel of God.

On the day that a person gets married they offer themselves to their spouse. And hopefully every day after that. But learning what it means to be a good spouse is far more complex than having the right attitude. The same is true of our sanctification.

What does it mean to “not be conformed to this world”?

Well, first off, Paul does not use the typical word for world – cosmos. He uses another word that means “Age” or “Time”.

We are not to be of the world, meaning the evil of this particular age, this particular time. Every age in this world has its own particular issues. We know this keenly in our own day. Our kids wrestle with issues that we often struggle to understand. Our world sought to squeeze us into its mold. And so does their world. But each age has some of its own unique struggles.

And the idea of purposely fighting to not be conformed implies that if you are passively living in this world, you will be conformed to it. We have all to some degree been squeezed into the mold of this age from the start.

This past week, I taught in our Church History class the Greek Apologists. Some of them purposely sought to use Greek philosophy in their Christian thinking (Justin Martyr). Others purposely opposed Greek Philosophy. (Tatian) But even as we read Tatian, we can see from a distance, that he too was greatly influenced by the world in which he lived. As much as he tried to be completely free from the mold of the world in which he lived, that world still influenced him.

The same is true of us today. But while we must accept some degree of being squeezed by the world in which we live, as believers we are bound by God to a daily struggle to not be conformed to this world. The pressure to conform to the traditions and ideals of the culture around you is powerful.

“The single greatest social pressure a teenager faces is conformity.” Sproul I would add that the inclination to conform is wrapped up in your continuing to have a sinful nature. The old man still desires to conform to the world around you. A huge portion of not conforming is putting to death what is evil within you.

“‘This world’ literally ‘this age’ is the sin dominated, death-producing realm in which all people, included in Adam’s fall, naturally belong.” Moo

On a basic level, we should ask the question: Am I trying to fit into the Age in which I live? The difficulty is that not everything within this world is evil. Learning to discern what we must reject and what should even be embraced in this life is challenging.

The example of the Amish is helpful. While I can applaud their desire to not conform to the world, I do not believe that their decision to shun electricity in the home was the way to go. In our own day, I sometimes feel like I would like to throw my cell phone into the Catawba River. But most of the time I think God wants me to take dominion over my cell phone. That is not to say that I ought to condemn those who have gotten rid of them altogether. At the same time that we are fighting to not be squeezed into the mold of this age, we are also seeking to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

Be conformed and being transformed are both passive imperatives. There are forces that are working upon us. In the first case it is the world, the flesh, and the Devil. But in the second case, it is the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference though between these. You do not have to exert any effort whatsoever if you want to fit into the world. It will be natural and easy. But if you want to be transformed, you will soon realize that requires determination and effort. But ultimately, only God can transform you. You cannot transform yourself.

But Paul does give us insight into the process of true change. Transformation comes as our mind is renewed. It is important to recognize that the biblical definition of mind really includes more than the intellect. The intellect is absolutely a part of what is called mind. But also included is what we often call “heart”. The mind is that part of you that is involved in thinking and choosing and acting.

To renew the mind is to think differently and to feel differently about the world in which you live. The question to ask is this, “Is the Word of God affecting the way that I view the world in which I live?” Is my study of God’s Word changing the way I think and feel about life? I find that if I am not combining my study of the Scripture with a life of prayer, it does not have the intended effect.

“This re-programming of the mind does not take place overnight but is a lifelong process by which our way of thinking is to resemble more and more the way God wants us to think.” Moo

Every passage of Scripture calls me to think differently.  
Every passage of Scripture calls me to feel differently.  
Every passage of Scripture calls me to do differently.  
Think, feel, do.

Pick a topic, any topic. What is it that God’s Word says I ought to think, feel, do about this topic? It could be something so basic as my marriage. How does God call me to think, feel, do towards my wife? But it could also be the use of my cell phone. Or it could be how I relate to the person next to me in the pew, or at my work.

The process of being renewed in your mind is painfully slow. This is one reason why we all need to be sitting under the regular preaching and teaching of God’s Word.

But Paul does not think that listening to good teaching must not be passive. Paul does not say that by learning you may discern what is the will of God.

What does he say?

that by testing  
you may discern  
    what is the will of God,  
        what is  
            good  
            and acceptable  
            and perfect.

What does Paul mean by “testing”?



Testing is part of the process for being able to “discern the will of God.”

The will of God here must mean God’s moral will.

But why do we need to include “testing” in the process of discerning God’s moral will? Do we not simply have to learn God’s Moral Law in the Ten Commandments and the teaching of Jesus Christ and the other writers of Scripture? Yes and no.

Learning God’s moral law is necessary. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Honor your father and mother. The law of God gives us absolute norms for life. Without these our moral compass gets broken.

But the law of God does not always give us how to apply that norm in my specific context. What should your use of the cell phone be? How much time is too much? What apps are good? What apps are not? Is this device helping or hurting when it comes to God’s command to love my neighbor, family? Is this device helping or hurting me in my own fight against being conformed to this age? Is this device helping or hurting me in my battle to renew my mind and experience true fellowship with God?

In my own life, I am increasingly trying to find ways to use my cell phone less. I try to put limits on its use. I have times and places where I avoid using my cell phone altogether. And I seek to use my cell phone rather than have my cell phone use me. I want to use it better. And I have to regularly assess and evaluate my heart and life. I am testing my life to discern if what I am doing with the cell phone fits into the “good, acceptable, and perfect” will of God for my life. I am learning as I go along.

For years, I typed out my prayers on the computer. I could type faster than I could write and I could focus my thoughts so much better typing them out. But recently, I have realized that I spend so much time on my computer putting together sermons and lesson plans that for my spiritual health, I needed to unplug from the computer for my prayers. I am back to having a notebook in which I write out my prayers. It is slower. But that is what I need. That is God’s good and acceptable and perfect will for my life.

One of the most important ongoing areas of testing is how do you use your time? There are not two people in this room that use their time in exactly the same way. And you do not use your time in the same way this week as you did last week. You are constantly evaluating all sorts of factors to determine how you will choose to use your time in a way that is in accord with God’s will. This is not an exact science. But it is an ongoing process in which every Christian ought to be engaged.

I hope you are beginning to see that offering yourself to God as a living sacrifice is the non-negotiable core. But working out the specifics of how you will spend your time today, or tomorrow, or the next is not simple or uniform. But through testing, through

living and evaluating and adjusting, you are learning to bring your life into conformity with God's will in your specific context.

So, we are back to Logiken worship. Are you offering yourself to God as a living sacrifice? And then, as you offer yourself to him, are you diligently using the means of grace to renew your mind such that you think and feel and do in accordance with the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God? And finally, God does not want us to be working these things out in isolation. God has called us together as a Church so that we can encourage one another in love and good deeds.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Hebrews 10:25** Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.