

Sharing Communion- 1 Corinthians 11:25 NLT - 25 In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people--an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it."

Studying Jesus' Teachings-2 Timothy 3:16 NLT - 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

Prayer- Colossians 4:2 NLT - 2 Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

*Some of these may be easy for you, and others more challenging. Share some ideas with your group about how you can incorporate them regularly into your life.*

## WRAP-UP

Paul pleads with us to give ourselves as a living sacrifice to God, not because we are coerced to follow the rules and regulations, but because we really grasp the depth of his love and mercy. We don't have to let the world shape us, we can choose to let God change our way of thinking and transform us more into His image.

## Memory Verse

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

*- Romans 12:2 NLT*

## PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

---

---

---

*Challenge- See if you can identify some of the tugs of the world pulling at you this week.*

## "Shaped by Jesus"

*Focused #2*

## INTRODUCTION

Although we are called a new creation when we become Christians, the change doesn't end there. The Christian life is a journey of constant transformation from "who we were" to "who we are becoming". When you consider how we are shaped to be Christians you might think it is following the rules and regulations, like the Ten Commandments, that shapes us into the image of God. But just following the rules is not the path to real transformation. It turns out our recognition of God's mercy and love is what leads us on the path to being shaped by Jesus.

## Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Have you ever undertaken a program intended to reshape you physically? How did that go?

## STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

### 1. A Living Sacrifice

*Romans 12:1 NLT - 1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

Paul asks us to give our bodies as a sacrifice. The word used by Paul for sacrifice here is *thysia* and means "that which is offered". It was used of the animals offered at the Temple, and it was also used of Jesus on the cross.

*Although sacrifices in the Old Testament were made to atone for sin, that is not the reason we offer our bodies to God. It's not for "fire*

insurance". What does verse 1 tell us is the reason we give our bodies to God?

As a living sacrifice, we are giving God authority over our lives, day after day, moment by moment- totally. That can be a scary proposition, unless we really grasp of how much God loves us.

Take a few moments to list some of the many ways God has expressed His love to you personally. What are some of the things that would be different in your life if you hadn't become a Christian?

Paul concludes this verse with the statement that by offering ourselves as a living sacrifice, we are worshipping God.

How would you define worship? When and how have you experienced your deepest form of worship?

## 2. Don't Be Conformed

*Romans 12:2 NLT - 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

God is not the only one that shapes us into the people we are becoming. There are many things in our lives that have influence over the way we live. When Paul says not to copy the behavior and customs of the world, he was actually referring to the period of time in which they lived. Especially the spiritual or moral characteristics of that culture.

What are some of the ways we can avoid joining in the behavior and customs of our day and age that are counter to how God wants us to live?

*John 15:19 NLT - 19 The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.*

Unfortunately, when we disagree with the world, we won't be making many friends. John tells us the world hates us because we no longer belong to the world.

What can you say when you decline joining with others, without becoming confrontational- for example when invited to a movie of questionable content?

*Matthew 5:10 NLT - 10 God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

If doing what is right causes us persecution, how does God respond (Mat 5:10)?

## 3. Be Transformed by God

It is natural for us to want to be changed more into the image of Christ, but how exactly does that happen? Romans 12:2 says that God changes the way we think. Our perspective is changed, and our eyes are open.

Do you remember having your eyes open to God's perspective? Can you recall an instance when you realized that you saw things differently than you did before you were a Christian- perhaps something that once seemed acceptable wasn't really acceptable anymore?

*2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT - 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord--who is the Spirit--makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*

Have you seen a notable difference in someone after they have spent time with God? Do you think others can see this transformation in you? Maybe you don't glow like Moses, but how can we position ourselves so that Jesus can shape us into citizens of His kingdom?

Paul's conclusion in Romans 12:2 was that we could know God's good, pleasing and perfect will for us. We can start with a few things we know are God's will for us.

Meeting regularly with other believers -Hebrews 10:25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.