



FOR THE WEEK OF AUG 17

WEEKLY WORD

Read Romans 12:1-8

If you have been doing these Weekly Walks since the beginning of summer, you may be thinking to yourself, "*FINALLY! Paul has moved on to a new topic!*" Paul has been making quite a case to his Jewish sisters and brothers about the ways Jesus fulfills the law and, by our

adoption as God's sons and daughters, we are given the grace of freedom from the burden that the law brings. Yet, in the first verse of this new chapter and topic, Paul uses the word, "*therefore*," with a definite intent to connect what he has extensively written about with what is coming next in these verses.

As you read these verses, I would suggest first reading them in a NRSV or NIV Bible (or any other *direct* translation Bible) and jotting down the things that you wonder about or question as to what exactly Paul means. Then read the same text in *THE MESSAGE* or some other paraphrase translation of the Bible and see if that doesn't help with some of your questions. Please feel free to share any remaining wonderings and/or questions on our facebook group discussion. Maybe we can make sense of Paul together!

WEEKLY CHEW

Please wrestle with these questions during the week and feel free to offer your thoughts or questions on our LIVING WATERS LUTHERAN CHURCH SR WEEKLY WALK page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/251008952628293/>.

1. Paul challenges us to present our bodies as a "living sacrifice." *THE MESSAGE* talks about offering your everyday, ordinary life to God. When we talk about offerings, what first comes to mind? Your financial resources? Your abilities? Your time? Have you thought about your entire life as an offering to God? What does that look like?
2. Verse 2 is one that is often quoted and used. The whole tension between conforming and transforming is one that we all know well. Sometimes our transformation takes place slowly...slowly enough that we may not even recognize it until we look back to where we used to be or how we used to respond to life. Think to a time you realized transformation had been taking place, only after looking back and realizing that you were very different from the "you" of your past. How has God's hand been experienced in shaping that transformation? Who are the people; what are the events that helped in this process? Share as you feel comfortable sharing.

3. As mentioned above, Paul connects these verses to his earlier writings about our justification by grace. What difference does God's grace make in your day to day, ordinary lives? How does it show up? Get practical...what practical ways is that grace known and experienced?
4. This text is one of several places, across several letters, that Paul talks about the Body of Christ and its individual members, each with unique gifts for the good of the whole. Paul makes a case that we are each uniquely gifted and important to the whole. How are you at remembering that, yourself? Are there practical ways we can keep ourselves from selling short our worth and ability to contribute to the whole?
5. Paul reminds us that God works to bring the very best out of us. Think to your own life. Can you see ways God has been instrumental in bringing out gifts and abilities that have served the greater body? Please share as you feel comfortable.

WEEKLY PRACTICE

This week, challenge yourself to take an inventory of the ways you conform to the world and other ways you live with a renewed and transformed heart and mind.

Perhaps jot both lists down, thinking and praying about them. Challenge yourself to find something on the conforming list to reframe.

PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for choosing me to be a member of your body. Help me to recognize the role I play in your kingdom. Give me strength to withstand the pressures of the world that coax me to blend in to what is expected and, instead, place my worth and calling in your hands. Amen.

