

## The Renewing of Our Minds

*Romans 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, [a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect (NRSV)*

We are into the Lenten season of this year 2018. Lent is a 40 day period that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Saturday, the day before Easter. Since every Sunday is a celebration of Christ's resurrection, we do not include Sundays in the 40 days. During the last week of Lent, we experience Holy Week, which includes Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Many of us have taken on this time the practice of self-denial, which origins goes back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, by giving up or abstaining from a creature comfort, habit or practice that we feel will represent a sacrifice for us. We also believe that by giving up these things we demonstrate our unity or solidarity with Christ. The Lenten season is typically a season for reflection and spiritual renewal.

The first two verses of Romans 12 gives us much to reflect upon and consider this Lenten season. We may ask, what does it mean to present our bodies as a living sacrifice? How can we ever see ourselves as holy when we know all too well from our personal experiences that we all fall short of the glory of God? We often equate holiness with perfection. God is not requiring perfection of us but a focused mind and a willing heart to live faithful for him daily. Paul tells that we can achieve this by not being conformed to this world, but by the renewing of our minds which will lead to inner change and transformation. Paul encourages us to put aside those things that distract us and are not pleasing nor acceptable in the sight of God.

What better time to begin the renewing of our minds during this Lenten season! Transformation can begin prayer and meditation. Transformation can begin with what the great mystic, Howard Thurman called, "centering down." In his book, *Meditations of the Heart*, he says,

How good it is to center down!  
To sit quietly and see one's self pass by!  
The streets of our minds seethe with endless traffic;  
Our spirits resound with clashings, with noisy silences,  
While something deep within hungers and thirsts for the still moment and the resting lull.  
With full intensity we seek, ere the quiet passes, a fresh sense of order in our living;  
A direction, a strong sure purpose that will structure our confusion and bring meaning in our chaos . . .

It is in this season of Lent, we can experience the will of God—what is good, perfect and acceptable for our lives.

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