

Happy ReNew Year

Discussion Questions for Community Groups

Opening Question: What's the longest trip you've ever taken?

Tell them: This week we looked at Romans 12:1–2. Let's read:

“Therefore, I exhort you, brothers and sisters, **by the mercies of God**, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—alive, holy, and pleasing to God—which is your reasonable service.

Do not be conformed to this present world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.”

Pastor Michael asked us what we can learn about God and humanity in this passage. He said: **God is merciful and humans are not naturally sacrificial.**

Ask them: *Do you see anything else that this passage teaches us about God and/or humanity? (we are to serve God, to be transformed, to test what is God's will. God's will is good and perfect.)*

Tell them: Pastor Michael talked about the idea that we are to present our bodies as a sacrifice to God; alive, holy and pleasing. The passage says that is a reasonable request. As a result of this sacrifice, we will no longer take the #1 place in our lives.

Ask them: *How do you think you do in this ranking system? Are you prone to put yourself in the #1 place, to think about yourself first before others? Why do you think that is the tendency for humanity?*

Tell them: Let's read on in Romans:

“**Do not be conformed to this present world**, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

CONFORMED

Ask them: *What do you think it means to be conformed to this present world?”*

Tell them: Pastor Michael used the analogy of a railroad service truck. Do you remember? The truck with an extra set of steel wheels that come down so

they truck can drive on a track. What did you think of that as an analogy for our lives? He says we are born on the rails of selfishness and self-interest.

Ask them: *Would you agree? Do you remember how he said we can get off of those rails? (by surrendering the driver's seat of our lives to the Holy Spirit)*

TRANSFORMED

Tell them: The passage says that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

RENEWED

Ask them: *Do any of you have an experience with renewing your mind? If so, tell us about it.*

Tell them: Pastor Michael called renewing your mind a shift in your thinking; going **from self-interest to being others-centered**. Moving from wanting your will to wanting God's will.

Let's look at [Romans 12](#) again picking back up at verse 3:

For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you **not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think**, but to **think with sober discernment**, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith.

Ask them: *What do we learn about humanity from this passage?*

Tell them: *What did you think of Pastor Michael calling Romans 12:9–16 a list of ways to resist conformity to the world and a Christian's list of New Year Resolutions?*

Let's have a look: **Love must be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil, cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another. Do not lag in zeal, be enthusiastic in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in suffering, persist in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, pursue hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Do not be conceited.'**

Ask them: *How would your life be different if you set out from today on, to live out these 'resolutions?'*

Ask them: *Which one would be the biggest challenge for you?*

1. Love without hypocrisy. **Ask them:** *What do you think it means to love without hypocrisy?*

2. Be devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another. **Ask them:** *What are some ways we can honor one another? (Making eye contact with others, talking to strangers, calling a friend, serving, ministering, etc.)*

3. Contribute to the needs of the saints, pursue hospitality.

Ask them: *What are some ways we could contribute to the needs of other believers or show more hospitality? What are some things that get in the way of these things?*

4. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse.

Ask them: *How hard is this to do?* Tell them: Jesus is our example. He did not curse those who crucified Him, or retaliate. (see 1 Peter 2:22-24) **Ask them:** *What are some ways that Christians in our culture seem to be comfortable with retaliation and cursing our enemies?*

5. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that being empathetic is selfless. **Ask them:** *What do you think of that idea?*

6. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Do not be conceited.

Tell them: Pastor Michael asked us a diagnosis question for selfless love. Ask yourself, "Who is someone "lowly" you associate with?" **Ask them:** *What did you think of that diagnosis?*

7. If possible, live peaceably with all people.

Tell them: Remember, selfishness and love are opposites. If we are acting selfishly, we are not loving. So, selfishness is a good gage for our level of love.

To this point, Pastor Michael asked, "How harmonious are you with people that you disagree with? How proud are you for being right or better than others?"

Ask them: Do you think these are good diagnostics for selflessness? How selfless do you feel right now?

Tell them: Pastor Michael said: “One party can surrender more than the other for establishing or maintaining peace.” In other words, Peace isn’t always fair. In fact, if you want to live peaceably with all people you will probably be compromising your desires many times over. Not everyone gets what they want on the road to peace. But peace should be the goal of every believer in every relationship, if possible.

Ask them: *What do you think about this idea of peace? Are you up for it? Do you have a relationship that you need to bring peace to by not getting all that you want from the relationship?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael asked these final questions, and I thought we could talk about our answers to them today. Did you think about them? Are you willing to share?

- How is God convicting you of your conforming to this present world?
- How is God wanting to renew your mind?
- How can you live in more sobriety about who you are and who God wants you to be in 2021?