

Small Group Guide: Living Worship

Based on Romans 12:1-2

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when someone showed you unexpected mercy or kindness. How did it make you feel, and how did you respond?

Sermon Recap (5 minutes)

Pastor Ryan challenged us with six guidelines for embodying living worship:

1. Grasp the appeal
2. Let God's mercies generate a response
3. Give it your all
4. Do not go with the flow
5. Grow in godly thinking
6. Gain wisdom through transformation

Key Scripture: Romans 12:1-2 - "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding the Appeal

1. Context Matters

- Pastor Ryan compared the Roman culture to our culture today (diverse, entertainment-obsessed, sexually liberated, idol worship). What specific parallels do you see in your daily life?
- What "worldly distractions" most often pull your attention away from living as worship?

2. The Mercies of God

- The sermon mentioned several mercies: a new day, provision, protection, and most importantly, salvation through Jesus Christ. Which of God's mercies do you tend to take for granted?
- Pastor Ryan challenged us: "Do we reflect on how good and precious the gospel is?" When was the last time you sat and truly reflected on what Christ did for you?

Living as Worship

3. Living Sacrifice vs. Dead Sacrifice

- What does it mean practically to be a "living sacrifice" in your everyday life?
- Pastor Ryan mentioned that we often identify ourselves by what we do (our jobs, hobbies) rather than as children of God. How would your conversations change if you led with your identity in Christ?

4. Conforming vs. Transforming

- The sermon used the "lemming phenomenon" to illustrate going with the flow. In what areas of your life do you feel pressure to "follow the herd" rather than stand out for Christ?
- What does it look like to be "the light of the world" in your specific sphere of influence (workplace, neighborhood, family)?

Renewing the Mind

5. Four Approaches to Mind Renewal Pastor Ryan gave us four practical approaches:

- Memorize and treasure God's Word
- Set your mind on godly promises
- Keep it pure and positive
- Remember the gospel
- Which of these four is easiest for you? Which is most challenging?
- What specific steps could you take this week to practice one of these approaches?

6. Discernment: Good vs. God

- Pastor Ryan shared about being asked to be a youth pastor - something that seemed "good" but wasn't "God's will." Have you ever faced a decision where something seemed good but you sensed it wasn't God's direction? How did you discern the difference?
- How can we develop better discernment between what the world says is "good" and what God says is His will?

Key Takeaways (10 minutes)

Have each person share:

- **One truth** from this sermon that stood out to you
 - **One area** where you feel God is calling you to change or grow
 - **One practical step** you can take this week to live as worship
-

Practical Applications (15 minutes)

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE

Option 1: Identity Shift Practice introducing yourself or thinking about yourself as a "child of God first." Journal about how this changes your perspective on your daily activities.

Option 2: Mind Renewal Plan Choose one of the four approaches to renewing your mind and create a specific plan:

- Memorize one verse this week (suggestion: Romans 12:1-2)
- Write down 3 godly promises and post them where you'll see them daily
- Do a "thought audit" - what are you feeding your mind? (media, music, podcasts)
- Each morning, spend 5 minutes remembering and thanking God for the gospel

Option 3: Worship Audit Answer these reflection questions from the sermon:

- How do I worship when no one's watching?
- How do I worship when I'm tired or frustrated?
- How do I worship when things aren't going my way?
- How do I worship when I receive bad news?

Write down specific ways you can turn these moments into worship.

Option 4: Be the Light Identify one specific place where you tend to "conform" rather than "transform" (workplace conversation, social media presence, spending habits, etc.). Pray about how to be different this week and take one bold step to shine Christ's light there.

Prayer Focus (10 minutes)

Pray for one another in these areas:

1. **Gratitude** - Thank God for His mercies, especially salvation through Christ
2. **Transformation** - Ask God to renew minds and break patterns of worldly conformity
3. **Boldness** - Pray for courage to live differently and be light in darkness

4. **Discernment** - Request wisdom to know God's will vs. what merely seems good
5. **Mission** - Pray for opportunities to be living worship in your community this week

Special Prayer: Lift up the Brunsetter family in Slovenia and their new student ministry. Pray for the upcoming mission trip and for God to continue preparing the way for this church to witness beyond its walls.

Closing Reflection

Memory Verse for the Week: *"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."* - Romans 12:2

Final Thought: Living worship isn't about what we do on Sunday morning - it's about who we are every moment of every day. This week, let the mercies of God generate such a response in you that worship overflows into every conversation, every decision, and every action.

For Next Week

- Share testimonies of how you practiced living worship this week
- Discuss any challenges or victories in renewing your mind
- Continue praying for one another's specific transformation areas