

Introduction

A number of years ago Karen and I had the privilege of taking a vacation in Europe. We spent a few days in Barcelona, Spain. We spent three days in Italy, visiting Naples, Rome, and Florence. And we spent half a day in Cannes, France. The rest of the time we were onboard a Norwegian Cruise Line. We had a wonderful time, and I would do it again in a heartbeat, only with different destinations. While we were in France, I was going to show off my French, and so we went up to a man and I started speaking French with him. "Ils etait quarante-six ans depuis J'ai etudie Francaise, et J'ai oublie beaucoup de mons francaise." That means that it has been forty-six years since I studied French and I have forgotten much of my French. So, I started speaking with this man and he shrugged his shoulders and turned his palms up, indicating that he had no idea what I was saying. After a few awkward minutes, we discovered that it was not my French that was so bad, the man did not speak any French. He was Hungarian and did not speak any French and very little English. He "accidentally" dropped what appeared to be a gold ring on the ground, and I politely picked it up and handed it to him. He indicated that he wanted to sell it. He needed some money and was willing to sell this ring for a few dollars. I ended up giving him a few dollars, and he gave me the ring. A few minutes later we saw him drop another "gold ring" by another tourist. This was the man's gig. He had a bunch of these cheap gold imitation rings and he would get tourists to give him a few dollars for something that was worthless. Karen and I laughed when we saw him execute his plan the second time on another tourist. He was a shyster.

Karen and I knew it was not a real gold ring. How did we know it was not real gold? If it was gold, it would have been worth six to eight hundred dollars, so any person in their right mind would not sell a gold ring for that cheap. We knew it was counterfeit. For us, if the man needed a few dollars for some food, we didn't mind helping him out. We did not want or need the ring, but he insisted we keep it. Now if the price were right, there are other ways of testing to see if something is pure gold or not. There are a number of tests to prove whether something is gold or not. There is a visual test. There is a density test. Gold is one of the heaviest metals and weighs. The density of gold is 19.3 grams per cubic centimeter. Gold is a soft metal so some people use a bite test to see if their bite leaves an impression. There is a ceramic plate test, where you rub the object on the ceramic plate. If it leaves a gold mark, it is gold, and if it leaves a black mark it is fake gold. Since gold is not a magnetic metal, you can perform a magnet test. Jewelers use a nitric acid test. They put a drop of nitric acid and observe the color. A green reaction indicates your item is either a base metal or gold plated. A gold reaction indicates your item is gold-plated brass. A milk-colored reaction would indicate gold-plated sterling silver. If there is no reaction, you mostly likely are dealing with real gold. These are just ways of proving if an object is gold or not.

The Bible says that we are to prove God's will. The Scriptures teach us that we are to test, examine, and approve many things. Just as there are various ways of proving if something is gold or not, there are a number of ways of proving God's will in our lives. As believers, we need to know these various methods, and we need to use them regularly. The word for prove in our text is dokimazo (Strong's G1381), and it is used twenty-three times in the New Testament. It means to examine, analyze, test, prove, or approve. It is not used exclusively for God's will. We are to test (dokimazo) a deacon before setting him in office (1 Tim 3:10). We are to examine ourselves and judge ourselves rightly before taking the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:25-32). We are to judge what foods we will eat, and whatever foods we approve to eat, we should eat from faith (Rom 14:22-23).

(1 Tim 3:10) "These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach."

(1 Cor 11:27-32) "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. {28} But a man must **examine (dokimazo)** himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. {29} For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly."

(Rom 14:22-23) "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he **approves (dokimazo)**. {23} But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is* not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin."

Our text today is Romans 12:1-2, where Paul tells us to present our bodies to God as living and holy sacrifices, which is acceptable to Him, and not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we can prove what the will of God is, that which is good, acceptable and perfect. God wants us to prove God's will in our lives. It is that same word, dokimazo, which means to examine, analyze, test, and approve things in our life to make sure that we are doing God's will.

(Rom 12:1-2) "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may **prove (dokimazo)** what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Before we get started I want to look at Philippians 1:9-11. This was a prayer of Paul's for the church, and I want to pray it this morning. He prayed that the Philippians would examine, test, and approve the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless, and to be filled with the fruit of righteousness. We saw in 1 Thessalonians 4 that God's will for us is to be sanctified or holy. That is my prayer today, that we would learn to approve the things that are excellent and prove God's will in our lives.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may **approve (dokimazo)** the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

In proving God's will in our lives, there are some steps. First, we must present our bodies as living and holy sacrifices; that is called consecration. Second, we must renew our minds; that is called transformation. Third, we must examine and approve of the things that are good, acceptable and perfect; that is called determination.

Proving God's Will In Our Lives

1. Consecration
2. Transformation
3. Determination

1. Consecration

The first step that Paul urges us to take is to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God. He says this is acceptable to God. This leads me to think that there are possibly some offerings that we give to God that are not acceptable. Malachi gives us some further indications of offerings that were not acceptable.

In Genesis 4:1-5, when Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord, the Lord delighted in Abel's offering, but He had no regard for Cain's offering. What was the difference? Abel brought in the fat portion. In other words, he gave the very best of his flocks. He gave the most choice animals he had. The inference that we have is that Cain did not give the very best of what he had. He gave, but he did not give his best. The one offering was acceptable; the other offering was not acceptable.

Paul shares with us that when we present our lives to God as an offering, it is an acceptable offering to God. That is good to know, because I would hate to lay my life down as an offering only to find out that it was not an acceptable offering to the Lord. The first step in proving God's will for our lives is to consecrate it. We need to present our lives as a living and holy sacrifice to God. When Karen and I pray together every morning, we take time to pray this verse and present our bodies as living and holy sacrifices to the Lord. Everything that we do each day is a part of that living and holy sacrifice. Our service to Him and to others is a living and holy sacrifice. Our work is an offering to God. In Colossians 3:23-24, Paul wrote, "*Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as unto the Lord rather than men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*" Our work is done unto the Lord and is a holy and living sacrifice.

In Hebrews 13:15-16, we are commanded to continually offer up sacrifices of praise, sacrifices of thanksgiving, sacrifices of doing good and sacrifices of sharing. As we go through our daily activities, we are to make these sacrifices. In Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8, and 8:3-4, our prayers are like the incense that was continually burning in the temple; they are counted as sacrifices and offerings, and these sacrifices to God are pleasing. Intercession is not just for those who feel they are called to the ministry of intercession; it is part of our priestly responsibility. As priests, we are called to a life of prayer and intercession.

(Heb 13:15-16) "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. {16} And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

(Ps 141:2) "May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering."

(Rev 5:8) "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."

(Rev 8:3-4) "And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. {4} And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand."

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Paul shares about the churches in Macedonia, which would include Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. He said they had given liberally, even beyond their ability, and had begged to participate. Then, Paul tells why they had this attitude. He said they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. The Macedonian churches had consecrated themselves to the Lord. When you present your lives to the Lord, it is natural to present yourselves to God's workers who are doing God's work. Notice that Paul ends by saying this was "by the will of God." It is God's will for us to present ourselves to God, to give ourselves to God. If we are going to prove God's will in our lives, it begins with consecrating ourselves to Him.

(2 Cor 8:1-5) "Now, brethren, we *wish* to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, {2} that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. {3} For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, {4} begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, {5} and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."

2. Transformation

Proving God's will in our lives begins with consecrating our lives to Him. If we are not living for Him, we are not going to prove His will in our lives. The second step is transformation. Paul wrote that we are not to be conformed to this world, but we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The New International Version translates this verse very accurately. It says not to conform any longer to the pattern of this world. The Greek word used here for conform is *suschematizo* (Strong's G4964), which means to conform to the same pattern. It is a combination of two words. The word *sun* means a union or joining together between two things. The other word is *schema* means a figure or condition, a fashion. Therefore, we are not to be united with the pattern or mold of the world.

(Rom 12:2 NIV) "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will."

How do we recognize what is the world's pattern and God's pattern? The word of God is our plumb line. The word of God gives us wisdom, knowledge and discernment. In order to differentiate between the two, we need to renew our minds, which is the second part of transformation. We must renew our minds so that we think like God thinks. We need to think His thoughts. We need to see things from His perspective. We need to embrace His frame of reference. His standards need to be our standards. His judgments need to be our judgments. We need a Biblical worldview, which most do not have today.

If Paul were preaching today, he would preach the same message. The church needs transformation. Much of the church is worldly and conformed to the world. Our dress largely conforms to the culture we live in. Our finances are often carried out in worldly ways. Our lifestyles conform to cultural standards. Our sexual and moral standards reflect the world. When Israel left Egypt, they were supposed to leave Egypt behind. When they crossed the Red Sea, it was a picture of baptism. Unfortunately, they continued to worship the idols and gods of Egypt. In Acts 7, Stephen preached about this just before getting stoned to death. He said that Moses led

them out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. But, they took their foreign gods with them and worshipped Moloch and Rompha. Even though they had crossed the Red Sea, they had not been transformed; they were still conformed to the world.

(Acts 7:36-43) "This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years...{41} "At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. {42} "But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'It was not to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel? {43} You also took along the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship. I also will remove you behind Babylon."

Paul wrote in Romans that when we are baptized, we are buried with Christ. Our sins are buried with Christ, and we are to be raised up as new creations. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we are to be raised from the dead to walk in newness of life. We are to leave behind the ways of the world and to be transformed into a new creation. When we follow Christ, we are to leave the ways and things of the world behind. We are to set our minds on God and on things above.

(Rom 6:3-7) "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? {4} Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. {5} For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, {6} knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; {7} for he who has died is freed from sin."

The Greek word for transformed is metamorphoo (Strong's G3339), which means to transform. We get our English word metamorphosis from it. Metamorphosis is the process of transformation from an immature form to an adult form in two or more distinct stages. We commonly think of a moth or butterfly. They change from an egg to a larva (or caterpillar). Then, the caterpillar eats and goes into a pupa stage. Finally, it turns into a beautiful butterfly. Just as there has been a transformation of the insect, our lives are to be transformed into this new creation.

Paul wrote that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Paul does not go into detail here about the renewal process. He does talk about the new life in Christ in many other places, and the emphasis is on setting our minds on the things above. We are to set our minds on the Spirit, not on the things of the flesh. How do we set our minds on things above? We saw in the message on the General Will of God that we must saturate our minds with Scripture. Peter said that we are to be like newborn babes and long for the pure milk of the word so that we might grow in respect to salvation (1 Peter 2:2). We need to read the word of God every day. It is not enough to read it; we must meditate on His word day and night so that we are careful to do according to all that is in it (Joshua 1:8). Memorization is a good thing to do in conjunction with meditation. In Psalm 119:148, it says, "*My eyes anticipate the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word.*" We anticipate the night watches by reading and memorizing the word so that we can think and meditate on it during the night.

James adds to this discussion by saying that we have to receive the word with humility. He also adds that we need to look intently at the word. Otherwise, after just glancing at the mirror, we see our natural face and then forget what kind of person we were. James' main point is that we have to look intently and become a doer of the word, not just a hearer of the word. When we become doers of the word, we are transformed from the natural man to the spiritual man. Church, we must read, memorize, meditate, study, and apply God's word in our lives. When we become doers of His word, our lives are transformed and a metamorphosis takes place. Church, if you are not spending time reading and saturating your mind with God's word, I urge you to begin spending time in God's word. I urge you to consecrate yourselves and to set aside time to read God's word. I urge you to spend time meditating on His word.

(James 1:21-25) "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. {22} But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. {23} For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; {24} for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. {25} But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

3. Determination

The third step in proving God's will for your life is determination. Romans 12:2 says that we may prove what the will of God is, that which is good, acceptable and perfect. The root word of dokimazo is dokeo (Strong's G1380), which means to think. At the root of determining, we have to examine things to make a judgment or determination if this is God's will or not. Paul gives us three keys to focus on when examining and proving what the will of God is for our lives. He said that God's will is good, acceptable and perfect.

(Rom 12:2c) "...so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

A. Is it good?

Is what I am considering doing good? In 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, Paul exhorted us to examine everything carefully, to hold fast to that which is good, and to abstain from every form of evil. Paul uses the same word, dokimazo, only this time it is translated as examine. God expects us to examine everything and hold fast to that which is good. If something is counterfeit, like that "gold" ring, we are not to be fooled by it; we are to abstain.

(1 Thess 5:21-22) "But **examine (dokimazo)** everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; {22} abstain from every form of evil."

In Ephesians 5:7-13, Paul is writing about this transformed life. He said that we were formerly darkness, but now we are light in the Lord, and we are to walk as children of light. Notice that he says that the fruit of light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth. The first test to see if something is genuine gold or counterfeit is to ask if it is good. God's will is full of goodness and righteousness and truth. Notice in verse ten that Paul writes, "trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." For some reason the NASB translated it as learn rather than prove. The

KJV has it correct, and they translated it as “proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” How do you know if it is acceptable? It must be good and righteous and full of truth.

Ephesians 5:7-13 {7} Therefore do not be partakers with them; {8} for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light {9} (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), {10} trying to **learn (dokimazo)** what is pleasing to the Lord. {11} Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; {12} for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. {13} But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

(Eph 5:10 KJV) “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”

Are the words that I am about to speak good words? Is what I am about to do good? Would my spouse say this is good? Would my pastor say this is good? Most important, would God say this is good. God's will is always good. Notice in Romans 8:28 that God works things together for good in our lives, to those who love God and have been called according to His purpose or will. God's will is always good. His ways are always good. God's results are always good. In proving God's will, ask yourself is this a good thing or not.

(Rom 8:28) “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.”

B. Is it acceptable (to God)?

Is the action that I am considering doing acceptable? The Greek word is *eurastos* (Strong's G2101), which means acceptable or pleasing. The root words mean good (*eu*) and fully acceptable, pleasing, or fitting (*arestos*). Is it acceptable to the authorities in my life? Is it acceptable to other people around me? Will the results of what I do be acceptable? Most of all, is this acceptable to God? Notice that Paul has already mentioned that a living and holy sacrifice is acceptable to God. We also saw in Ephesians 5:7-10 that when we walk as children of Light, which consists of all goodness and righteousness and truth, this is pleasing or acceptable to God.

(Eph 5:7-10) “Therefore do not be partakers with them; {8} for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light {9} (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), {10} trying to **learn (dokimazo)** what is pleasing to the Lord.”

The word acceptable is used forty-six times in the Bible. A good word study to do is to look up all those Scriptures and meditate on each one. You will begin to see the things that God says are acceptable. One of those references is in 1 Peter 2:5, where we are called living stones and are being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood. That is the church. God is not wanting people who just come occasionally to a church.

(1 Pet 2:5) “you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

In Matthew 16, Jesus said He is building His church and the gates of hell will not prevail. God is building His church with living stones. These stones are being fit together and built up as a

spiritual house for a holy priesthood. What do these holy priests, that is you and I, do? They offer up spiritual sacrifices, and these sacrifices are acceptable to God. What are these spiritual sacrifices? These sacrifices include many things, but according to Hebrews 13:15-16 these include the sacrifice of praise to God and the giving of thanks to His name. They include doing good and sharing, for with these sacrifices God is pleased.

(Heb 13:15-16) “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. {16} And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

One of the main jobs that priests do is to represent a holy God to a broken people and a broken people to a holy God. They intercede and offer up sacrifices of prayer or incense. Our intercessions for others are acceptable and pleasing sacrifices.

Throughout the Bible we are commanded to honor our mother and father. It is one of the Ten Commandments, and it is a foundational truth. Paul said it is the first commandment with a promise, that we may live a long life and things will go well for us (Eph 6:1-3). In 1 Timothy, Paul is addressing the treatment of widows. He tells the church to take care of those who are true widows and he gives certain requirements. But, if a widow has children or grandchildren, they are to practice piety and make some return to their parents. Honoring your mother and father does not stop when you turn eighteen or twenty-one. Honoring your parents is a lifetime commitment.

Children and youth, let me encourage you to honor your parents. That means with your heart attitudes and obedience. That also means financially when they get older and need assistance. Notice what Paul ends with: “for this is acceptable in the sight of God.” If we want to prove God's will in our lives, learn what things are acceptable and pleasing to God and devote yourself to those things.

(1 Tim 5:3-4) “Honor widows who are widows indeed; {4} but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

(Eph 6:1-3) “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. {2} HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), {3} SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

C. Is it perfect?

Here is the third question to ask when proving the will of God: Is what I am considering perfect? The Greek word for perfect that is used here is teleios, which means complete in labor, growth, mental or moral character. It means completeness. It is the same word used in Ephesians 4:12 that is translated as mature. Is it complete? Does it have integrity? Will it make me more mature? Will it bring me closer to the goal of transformation in my life? Will it help those around me become more mature in their faith?

(Strong's G5046) teleios, tel'-i-os; from G5056; complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); neut. (as noun, with G3588) completeness:--of full age, man, perfect.

In the Old Testament the priests had a breastplate of judgment as part of their priestly garments. They were to put the Urim and Thummin in that breastplate. When they were unsure about what to do, they would consult the priests and they would use the Urim and Thummin to determine God's will. For example in Ezra 2:63, they had a question about what they could eat, and the governor said that they should not eat the most holy things until a priest stood up with Urim and Thummin.

(Ex 28:30) "You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually."

(Ezra 2:63) "The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until a priest stood up with Urim and Thummim."

When kings were about to go to battle, they would consult the priest and he would use the Urim and Thummin to determine if it was God's will. It was not the only way, but it was one of the ways that they sought out God's will. They used the prophets extensively, but they also used the Urim and Thummin. The Urim mean light, and we have seen that we are to be children of light and walk in the light. The word Thummin means perfection. It is God's will for us to do things that lead us to perfection and maturity in our lives. We see the same principle in the Old Testament as in the New Testament.

God's will is for the body of Christ to come to maturity. In Ephesians 4, the five-fold ministry is to equip the saints for the work of service so that the body can grow and become mature.

(Eph 4:11-13) "And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; {13} until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

Sometimes we go through trials and it is according to God's will because He wants to mature us. Notice in James 1 that we are to rejoice when we encounter various trials. Why? We are to rejoice because these trials and the testing of our faith makes us more mature, which is God's will. Sometimes we look for the easy way out, but God is looking for what will help us become more mature. Here is the third question we have to ask when proving God's will: Is this perfect and will it lead me to becoming more perfect and mature?

(James 1:2-4) "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. {4} And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Conclusion and Applications

As we come to a close today, God wants us to prove His will in our lives. It begins with consecrating our lives to Him. Next, we must renew our minds and be transformed. God wants us to leave behind our old way of live and live a new life in Christ Jesus. Third, we are to examine our lives and the things we do in our lives and prove His will every day. We have to ask ourselves questions about all these areas.

In the area of being consecrated:

- Have I given my life to Christ? Have I received Christ into my life?
- Have you presented your whole life to the Lord or are there parts of it that you have withheld from Him?
- What is the hardest area in your life to put on the altar or to present to God?

In the area of being conformed to the world or being transformed:

- What is the difference between being stylish and being worldly?
- How do we relate to the world and yet not become conformed to the world?
- What is an area of my life that needs transformation?
- How much time do I spend renewing my mind each day?

I want to finish with Romans 2:18. Paul said that *"we know His will and approve (dokimazo) the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law."* We learn what is good, acceptable, and perfect by being instructed in God's word. Let me encourage you to spend time in God's Word. It is where we find God's General Will. It is where we find God's Specific Will. It is how we prove God's Will in our lives. But, we must consecrate ourselves to the Lord. We must present ourselves as living and holy sacrifices. Second, we must be transformed. We will not prove God's will in our lives when we are conformed to worldly patterns. We must be transformed. We must saturate our minds with the Word of God and be doers of the word.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for Your word. Thank You for Your promises. You promise that when we do not lean on our own ways, trust in You, and acknowledge You in all our ways, You will make our paths straight. Thank You for leading us in paths of righteousness and goodness. Father, as a church, we want to do Your will. We want to learn to do the things that are acceptable and pleasing to You. Help us to prove Your will in our lives. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction (1 Tim 3:10, 1 Cor 11:25-32, Rom 14:22-23, Rom 12:1-2, Phil 1:9-11)

1. **Consecration** (Rom 12:1, Col 3:23-24, Heb 13:15-16, Ps 141:2, Rev 5:8, 8:3-4, 2 Cor 8:1-5)

2. **Transformation** (Rom 12:2, Acts 7:36-43, Rom 6:3-7, 1 Pet 2:2, Josh 1:8, Ps 119:148, James 1:21-25)

3. **Determination** (Rom 12:2c)

A. **Is it good?** (1 Thess 5:21-22, Eph 5:7-13, Rom 8:28)

B. **Is it acceptable (to God)?** (Eph 5:7-10, 1 Pet 2:5, Heb 13:15-16, Eph 6:1-3, 1 Tim 5:3-4)

C. **Is it perfect?** (Eph 4:12, Ex 28:30, Ez 2:63, Eph 4:1-13, James 1:2-4)

Conclusion and Applications (Rom 2:18)