

## **Five-Day Devotional: Faith stops holding pieces back.**

What happens when faith stops holding pieces back? This 5-day devotional based on the sermon “On The Alter,” goes through Romans 12 explores a life fully surrendered to Christ. Discover how God’s mercy becomes the foundation of worship, how renewed thinking transforms daily living, and why true surrender is not loss—but a joyful response to His grace.

### **Day 1: Starting with Mercy**

#### **Devotional**

When we think about our relationship with God, where do we begin? Many of us start with what we need to do better, how we've failed, or what God expects from us. But Paul starts Romans 12 with something completely different - mercy. God's mercy isn't something we earn or deserve; it's His unmerited favor freely given to us through Christ. This changes everything about how we approach Him. When we truly grasp that God has already shown us incredible mercy, our response shifts from obligation to gratitude, from fear to love. We don't have to perform to earn His acceptance because He has already accepted us. We don't have to hide our failures because He has already forgiven them. This mercy becomes the foundation for everything else in our faith journey. Until we receive and rest in God's mercy, we'll always struggle with surrender because we'll be trying to earn what has already been freely given.

#### **Bible Verse**

'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.' - Romans 12:1 (English Standard Version)

#### **Reflection Question**

How does understanding God's mercy toward you change the way you approach Him in prayer and daily life?

#### **Quote**

He doesn't begin with guilt. He doesn't begin by trying to pressure somebody. He doesn't begin with trying to say, you need to be more perfect, you need to try harder and God will love you. He begins with mercy.

#### **Prayer**

Father, help me to truly receive Your mercy today and let it transform how I see You and myself. Thank You that Your love for me isn't based on my performance but on Your grace.

## **Day 2: Beyond Sunday Faith**

### **Devotional**

Faith isn't just something we think about or feel on Sundays - it's meant to be embodied in every aspect of our lives. When Paul calls us to be "living sacrifices," he's using powerful imagery that would have resonated deeply with his audience. Unlike the dead animals placed on ancient altars, we are called to live our entire lives as an offering to God. This means our faith shows up in our Monday morning meetings, our Friday night decisions, and our Saturday afternoon conversations. It influences how we handle money, treat our families, and respond to stress. Too often, we compartmentalize our faith, keeping it separate from our "real" life. But authentic Christianity transforms everything - our habits, relationships, work ethic, and future plans. When we truly understand God's mercy, our whole life becomes an act of worship, not just the hour we spend in church on Sunday.

### **Bible Verse**

'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.' - Romans 12:1 (English Standard Version)

### **Reflection Question**

What areas of your life have you been keeping separate from your faith, and how might God want to transform those areas?

### **Quote**

Faith is not just something we think. Faith is not just something we feel, and faith is not something we just simply believe. Faith becomes embodied in every aspect of us.

### **Prayer**

Lord, I don't want to be a Sunday-only Christian. Help me to live my entire life as an offering to You, in every decision and relationship.

## **Day 3: Trusting Without Understanding**

### **Devotional**

One of the greatest challenges we face in faith is trusting God when we can't see the full picture. We want to understand His plan before we surrender to it. We want guarantees before we take steps of obedience. But faith doesn't require us to understand everything God is doing - it requires us to trust His character. Think about the times in your life when God's ways didn't make sense to you. Maybe it was a closed door that seemed like the perfect opportunity, a difficult season that stretched on longer than expected, or a prayer that seemed to go unanswered. In those moments, faith isn't about having all the answers; it's about knowing that God is good, wise, and trustworthy even when His ways are beyond our understanding. This kind of faith trusts God's character more than our circumstances, His wisdom more than our feelings, and His timing more than our preferences.

### **Bible Verse**

'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.' - Romans 12:1 (English Standard Version)

### **Reflection Question**

What situation in your life right now requires you to trust God's character even though you don't understand His plan?

### **Quote**

The central lesson of Romans is that faith trusts the character of God even when it can't fully see what his plan is.

### **Prayer**

God, help me to trust Your character when I can't see Your plan. Give me faith that rests in who You are, not in my ability to understand everything.

## **Day 4: Renewed Thinking**

### **Devotional**

The world is constantly trying to shape how we think - about success, relationships, money, and what really matters in life. Social media, advertising, and cultural pressures all work to conform us to worldly patterns. But Paul calls us to something radically different: the renewal of our minds. This isn't about becoming anti-intellectual or checking our brains at the door. Instead, it's about allowing God's truth to transform how we think about everything. A renewed mind doesn't ask "What do I want?" but "What does God want?" It doesn't follow the world's definition of success but seeks what is good, acceptable, and perfect to God. This transformation happens as we regularly fill our minds with God's Word, spend time in prayer, and choose to see life through His perspective rather than the world's lens. When our thinking is renewed, our choices naturally follow, and we begin to live in a way that honors God.

### **Bible Verse**

'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 (English Standard Version)

### **Reflection Question**

In what specific areas has the world's thinking influenced you more than God's truth, and how can you begin to renew your mind in those areas?

### **Quote**

The renewed mind does not ask, what do I want? It asks, what is good and acceptable and perfect to God.

### **Prayer**

Father, transform my thinking to align with Your truth. Help me to see life through Your eyes rather than the world's perspective.

## **Day 5: Joyful Surrender**

### **Devotional**

When we truly understand God's mercy and character, surrender stops being about losing our life to a harsh master and becomes about placing our life before the One who has already shown us incredible love. The altar isn't where God destroys what is good in us - it's where He receives what already belongs to Him. This changes everything about how we view obedience and surrender. Instead of reluctantly giving up things we love, we joyfully offer our lives to the One who loves us most. When we choose obedience over compromise, that's worship. When we forgive because God has forgiven us, that's worship. When we trust God with our future instead of trying to control everything ourselves, that's worship. This kind of surrender flows naturally from a heart that has been captured by God's love and mercy. It's not about trying harder or being more disciplined - it's about responding to the incredible grace we've already received.

### **Bible Verse**

'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 (English Standard Version)

### **Reflection Question**

How does viewing surrender as a response to God's mercy rather than a demand change your perspective on obedience?

### **Quote**

Surrender is no longer losing my life to a harsh master. Surrender is placing my life before God, who has already shown me mercy.

### **Prayer**

Lord, help me to see surrender not as loss but as the natural response to Your amazing love and mercy toward me.