

MESSAGE OUTLINE

True Self / False Self – Living from God's Love

True Self

Romans 12:1-2 (MSG)

¹⁻² So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform 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.

NOTES:

The True Self is discovered as we surrender to God, live in the Spirit, and allow Him to transform us from the inside out.

"Abide in Me" -John 15:4

Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame. -Psalm 34:5

"When we have nothing that masks us, that makes us look like what we are not, then we have everything. Then there is nothing anyone can take from us that will leave us bereft or embarrassed or undone" - Joan Chittister

Remembering that the Bible teaches us that God is love, reread the verses from 1 Corinthians with God in place of the word love.

"God is patient; God is kind; God is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. God does not insist on God's own way; God is not irritable or resentful; God does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. God bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

"The hands of the king are the hands of a healer, and so shall the rightful king be known." - The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (p.844)

NOTES:

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

February 8, 2026

True Self - Romans 12:1-2

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, resources and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in the passage this week, ask one another: What word best describes how you are showing up today?

CONNECT WITH GOD (Choose the below practice or select a practice from another week.)

Prayer and Journal Practice (10 minutes) Follow the steps below in your journaling time. Begin and end with prayer.

- Pray expectantly and with a posture of openness. Consider using this short prayer from Psalm 51.
"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love."
- Then, read Psalm 103:1-12. Take your time.
- Journal by writing or drawing. There is no prompt. Let your response flow—whatever it is.
- Pray once more and ask God to lead you throughout your week in reflection and discernment as you remember the mercy of the Lord.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Alone:** Read Romans 12:1-2 in the NIV and The Message versions. Reflect/journal on one of the following prompts, considering mercy as Paul's frame for Romans 12:1-2 (NIV).
 - What images or experiences of God's mercy come to mind for me right now?
 - Where do I struggle to believe that mercy truly applies to me?
 - What do you sense God is inviting you to today in light of this passage?
- **Together** as a whole group: Read the passage once more together. Then, share your own reflections from the prompts.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the sermon outline.
- What words or phrases from The Message translation stood out to you? Why?
- What does it mean to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice (v. 1)? How does The Message version help you understand this phrase?
- What's the Old Testament way of sacrifice vs what Paul is suggesting here?
- Why do you think mercy comes before sacrifice and transformation (NIV)?
- How does this passage challenge the idea that change comes from trying harder?
- What parts of your "ordinary life" feel easiest to offer to God? Hardest?
- What were the dominant patterns of the Roman world? What about the dominant patterns of our world today?
- How are we called to live differently from the patterns of the world?
- What are some specific ways you can live within the wider view of God's mercy at work in the world?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote below, in connection with the passage this week. What does transformation really look like in your everyday life?

"As Ezekiel says, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh' (Ezekiel 36:26). The 'heart of flesh' is not just a transfer into a new group that confirms our specialness and salvation. It is an utterly honest recognition that *I am not the primary 'doer' in the world of love. It is being done unto me.*" –Richard Rohr, The Tears of Things

PRAYER

Share prayer requests with one another. Close your time with this prayer by Rich Villodas.

"Lord Jesus, the world we inhabit is often marked by superficiality and easy answers. The temptation to engage the world from this place is very real. But you have called me to witness to the depth of life made available by your grace. Help me open myself to the beneath-the-surface transformation of the Spirit. May I dare to look at the places I'm often afraid to give my attention to, for you are with me. In Jesus' name. Amen."