

## Mind, Body, and Soul

An old saying goes, "*mens sanus in corpore sano.*" See? It's so old it's written in Latin. We are much more familiar with its English version: *a healthy mind in a healthy body.*

I've experienced this in my own life, and I bet you have too. Once, for example, I was so stressed by some things going on at work that I hardly slept for a week. Of course, how I felt emotionally and mentally directly affected how I felt physically: *awful.* As I worked through the stress – prayer, reading God's word, seeking good advice – my body returned to good health. By God's will and through his mercy, I got better.

This week's study concerns the connection between our minds, our bodies, God's mercy and God's will. Let's explore God's desire for our lives, his desire for every single part of who we are.

### Monday – God's Mercy

*"Grace is the free, undeserved goodness and favor of God to mankind."*

-Matthew Henry, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c. English pastor and Bible commentator

1. Please read Romans 12:1-2. What view of God's mercy does Paul have in mind? What is your view of God's mercy?
2. What does verse 1 tell you about mercy and sacrifice? How does one lead to the other in your life?
3. Psalm 103:8-14 gives a concise description of the extent of God's mercy. What characteristics of God do you find comforting in this passage? How would you describe the truth of verse 10 to a friend?

**Making it Personal:** In light of God's mercy, what can you do today to live as a sacrifice to God? Make it a goal to memorize Romans 12:1-2 this week.

### Tuesday – Spiritual Act of Worship

*"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling 'darkness' on the wall of his cell..."* C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

1. Please read Romans 12:1-2. What is "your spiritual act of worship"? How are you to perform it?
2. Take a look at John 4:19-26. How does Romans 12:1 give some insight into the meaning of John 4:23?

**Text insight:** The Samaritan woman and Jesus' Jewish disciples each considered sacrifices on an altar to be necessary for true worship: the Samaritans offered sacrifices on Mount Gerizim in Samaria, while the Jews sacrificed at the temple in Jerusalem on Mount Zion.

3. According to Psalm 51:17, what type of sacrifice is God interested in? Where can someone offer this type of sacrifice? Under what circumstances?

**Making it Personal:** How can you offer a Psalm 51:17 sacrifice, and worship according to Romans 12:1?

### Wednesday – Be a Non-Conformist

*"The Word of God tends to make large-minded, noble-hearted men."*

-Henry Ward Beecher, 19<sup>th</sup> c. American minister and abolitionist

1. Please read Romans 12:1-2. What does verse 2 say about the world's ways and your own mindset?
2. What does it mean to renew your mind?
3. God has been directing people toward himself and away from the ways of this world for millennia. How does Deuteronomy 12:1-4 and 12:29-30 apply to you?

**Making it Personal -** The Israelites took drastic action to purify themselves (verse 3). Is drastic action needed in your life so that you do not become "ensnared" (verse 30)?

### Thursday – Examining God

*"The joy of the Lord will arm us against the assaults of our spiritual enemies and put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks."* Matthew Henry

1. Please read Romans 12:2. What does Paul say you will discover if you offer your body as a living sacrifice and renew your mind?
2. According to Psalm 34:8, how do we discover God's goodness? What do you think it means to "taste" and "see"? How does that passage relate to the words "test and approve" from Romans 12:2?
3. Many Christians agonize over discovering God's will. How would you use Romans 12:1-2 to help relieve that agony for yourself or a friend?

**Digging Deeper:** Read 1 Tim. 3:16-17 and 1 Thes. 5:16-18. What can you do today to live out the will of God in your life?

### Friday – Mind and Body

*"We ... take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."* 2 Corinthians 10:5

1. Please read Romans 12:1-2. How do the mind and body work together in this passage?
2. What worshipful behavior can you find in Psalm 34:1-22? In what ways is the mind at work? The body? Both?
3. What "spiritual acts of worship" would you like to adopt from Psalm 34 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18?

**Text Insight:** Psalm 34 is an acrostic poem, so that as originally written in Hebrew each verse starts with the successive letter of the alphabet. The writer thus engaged in yet another type of worship by choosing only certain words and then carefully crafting them into this psalm of praise.

### For the Weekend

1. Through the ages many believers have benefited from memorizing Romans 12:1-2. Use this weekend to finish memorizing these life-changing verses.
  2. How do Romans 12:1-2 and 1 Samuel 15:22 shed light on one another? Spend time in prayer considering how you can apply them to your own life.