

# Daily Readings

*Please note: This week we start our study of the letter of Paul to the Philippians. This letter was composed around 61 A.D. by the apostle Paul. It is considered a “prison letter” as Paul writes in the final years of his life imprisoned in Rome.*

**Monday, August 17**– Read Philippians 1:1-1 – Paul writes this letter to his beloved friends at Philippi who have assisted him materially in the spread of the gospel by their gifts for his work. **“I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me”** (4:10). We see this love in verse 3 as Paul says, **“I thank my God every time I remember you.”** Paul also includes the promise that... **“the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”** What “good work” has God begun in you? What do you need to do to join with God to bring it to completion? Have you offered it to God in prayer?

**Tuesday, August 25** – Read Philippians 1:12-30 – Paul refers to the abusive unfair treatment he has received from the Romans and Jews as an opportunity to share the gospel. He reminds the Philippians that as long as he gets the chance to share Christ then he can endure anything. Verse 21 says, **“For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.”** Paul is looking forward to heaven knowing that the rewards of being with Christ are far better than anything on this earth. But he lives in victory knowing his life is in the hands of Christ. How is your life being lived for Christ?

**Wednesday, August 26** – Read Philippians 2:1-11 – Paul continues by now encouraging his readers to live as Christ – **“in humility regard others as better than yourself”** (verse 3). In living for Christ, do you include others? When you think of yourself as a Christians, do you think of others as better than you? According to Paul how can we do this?

**Thursday, August 27** – Read Philippians 2:12-18 – The duties of Christians include being blameless, innocent, children of God in **“crooked and perverse generation.”** We are to rejoice at the opportunity of sacrifice and the offering of faith. Did you find a reason to rejoice today? Where was God in your day? If Paul were in your shoes, how would he have rejoiced?

**Friday, August 28** – Read Philippians 2:19-30 – Paul planned to send Timothy to them to find out how they were faring. He praised his assistant by saying that he had been tried and proven to be a worthy servant of the Lord. Timothy cared for the Philippians more than he cared for himself. By comparison, Paul is encouraging the Philippians to live for each other. How do you live for others? Would Paul say about you that you care about other Christians more than you care for yourself? How do you show this concern?



TRIETSCH

## STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, August 23, 2009

Gospel on Broadway (*Week 3 of 4*)

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# High School Musical — Transforming Not Conforming

### **Romans 12:1-2**

*The Word from the Bible (Today's New International Version)*

**Therefore, 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 true worship. Do 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.**

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### **Life as a Living Sacrifice for God**

At the center of Paul's theology is the human struggle between the pressures of our culture and a genuine self-giving response to God. Paul sees our response as a form of worship. In the first verse, he uses the analogy of a sacrifice. His appeal is to present your body as a living sacrifice to God. Both the pagans and the Jews were well aware of animal sacrifices in worship as a means of making atonement for sins. Now Paul insists that God no longer needs the animal sacrifice, but requires the full dedication of one's life.

The basic meaning is that we are to make a total response to the grace of God, who has acted in Christ. The sacrificial metaphor made this very meaningful for the first readers of the letter. Significant differences from the usual practice of sacrifice are implied, however: first, Paul is talking of living persons, not dead animals. Second, Christians offer themselves to God as a living sacrifice, not the blood human sacrifice of the pagans. It is not a case of a priest performing ritual acts with the dead body of an animal. Worship is still corporate, and there is still a place for the guidance of priest or minister. But something is lacking without the personal participation of each individual.

Further, Paul wants his reader to know that whatever ritual acts may be performed, Christian worship is essentially spiritual. Worship in this sense is the whole of life. It is our adoring response to God, of whose mercies we are aware. We who would otherwise be unable to rise to our duty can do so because God has had compassion on us. A new humanity has been inaugurated.

### **The Struggle between Conforming and Transforming**

In verse 2, Paul refers to the new quality (6:3-5) for those who are incorporated into a life with Christ. The true follower makes a break from the casual secular ways of the world (6:6-14). As such, they no longer conform to this world but rise above it to live according to God's will. The measure of this change is emphasized by the re-

markable expression **“the renewing of your mind.”** Paul is using formal language here to bring out the distinctive character of responsible Christian living, for which perfection is God’s will, work is prayer, and duty is privilege. His conception of the Christian’s growing likeness to Christ is also in the background here (8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:21).

## **Application**

Last week, we dealt with the beast that is within all of us. That part of us that wants to be in control – that wants to be God. We all have those character traits that embarrass us; addictions we keep secret; selfish desires that separate us from each other; or the need to control our life and the lives of others. In II Corinthians, we looked at the transforming power of Christ that, as Paul puts it in the fifth chapter, changes us on the inside to make us a **“new creation”**.

This week, we look at the pressures of our society to be something other than the person God created us to be. Do you know who you are? Do you know the person God created you to be? Are you allowing the pressures and influences of our society to shape your life? There is a battle between the person God made us to be and the person the world tempts us to be.

We will look at Romans 12:1-2, where Paul challenges Christians not to conform to the standards of this world. Instead, make a complete commitment to God as a **“living sacrifice.”** He says to be transformed by the **“renewing of your mind.”** By focusing on the mind, Paul draws attention to our decision making. Are we choosing God or the things of this world?

## **Guiding Questions for This Week’s Sermon**

Do you know who you are?

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What are the pressures you face everyday to be something other than God’s creation? How do you deal with those pressures?

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Are you willing to accept those around you as they are with all their faults? What does it look like to be a church as a loving and accepting community?

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## **High School Musical Overview**

*High School Musical* is an Emmy Award-winning American television film. Upon its release on January 20, 2006, it became the most successful movie that Disney Channel Original Movie ever produced. *High School Musical* was Disney Channel’s most watched movie that year with 7.7 million viewers in its premiere broadcast in the US. Globally, *High School Musical* has been seen by over 225 million viewers.

With a plot described by the author and numerous critics as a modern adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet* and *West*

*Side Story, High School Musical* is a story about two high school juniors from rival cliques – Troy Bolton, captain of the basketball team, and Gabriella Montez, a beautiful and shy transfer student who excels in math and science. Together, they try out for the lead parts in their high school musical, and as a result, divide the school. Despite other students’ attempts to thwart their dreams, Troy and Gabriella resist peer pressure and rivalry, inspiring others along the way not to “stick to the status quo.”

*High School Musical* is a beautiful wholesome story of two young high school student’s struggle against the pressures of the society to be the person they were meant to be.

## **The Gospel on Broadway**

In *High School Musical*, Troy and Gabriella struggle with their past identities. Troy is a basketball player. Gabriella is the smartest girl in her class. These two are struggling with what people are expecting of them. Neither of them wants to be just a “jock” or just a “brain.” The question for them is, “Are they going to be defined by what other think or want them to be?”

The Bible says there is more. There is something we all start with that was created by God. Psalm 139:114 says, **“For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”** Jeremiah 29:11 says, **“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for good and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”**

## **Prayer Focus**

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our worship center. We believe that prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God. We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. We believe these prayers will have an immediate impact on those for whom you are praying. Remember... someone is praying for you.

This morning, let the spirit of God lead you in your prayers. Some prayers will come immediately to mind because of a known need. Let other names come to mind, pray for these persons even if you do not know why God is leading you to pray for them. Spend time counting your blessings and giving thanks to God for all God’s good gifts. If there is a difficult situation in your life right now, we invite you to release it to God during this worship service. It will be there after the benediction.

Please consider making the following part of your prayers this morning:

***Lord, guide my thoughts as I hear your word today... Show me that, no matter what kind of person I’ve been or what I’ve done, in you I always have the hope of changing for the better, of making a fresh start. Guide me in the decisions I make that my life may always be a reflection for you.***

***I pray for our nation and its leaders as it struggles to find its way economically and socially***

***For our world torn by war and strife***

***For our community and the challenges each household faces***

***For our Church –***

***That God will lead our church deeper into prayer***

***That God will lead each person here into deeper relationship with Christ through worship and study***

***That God will use our the coming concerts as an opportunity to reach others for Christ***

***That God will continue to provide adult volunteers for the children’s Sunday school***

***That God will bless and lead our church leaders, pastors, and staff***

***That God will lead every participant into a deeper walk with Jesus***

***In Jesus’ name, Amen.***