Dear Open Door Family,

I am married to an amazing woman. Carol has been, and continues to be, the one who encourages me, believes in me, and challenges me, to pursue God. She challenges me to be REAL and to LIVE OUT my love for God in practical ways. I love the fact that after 35 years of marriage there are times that I do not even bother to ask Carol about something because I know what she will say. There are also many things that regularly take me by surprise. So each day is a new adventure, she is always changing and growing, and always fresh and new. And I love that. Looking at Romans 12:1 is little like that. There is so much there that I already get and understand - and yet it is new and fresh each time I look at it. Let's look at it together:

Romans 12:1 (NET) ...I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice - alive, holy, and pleasing to God - which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1 (HCS) ...by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.

God's amazing Mercy is the basis of this command. Jesus died paying the price for ALL my wickedness from my sinful thoughts, to my twisted motives, my harmful words, to ALL my sin-filled actions. Though I have earned condemnation I was offered Forgiveness. My response should be to GIVE myself to God each and every day. If I do, it can be one of the ways I worship God. MacDonald said it this way: "...as believer-priests, we do not come to God with the bodies of slain animals but with the spiritual sacrifice of yielded, SURRENDERED lives." Watts expressed it this way: "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my heart, my life, my ALL."

PRAYER: Lord, thank You for Your extravagant, lavish Mercy. You have forgiven the unforgivable in me, thank You. Please Lord God, I offer myself to You today as a sacrifice that is ALIVE, a sacrifice that is on-going. May I be pleasing to You today. Please accept my offering of myself as an act of worship.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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