

## ***Align (1)- Alignment with what or Who?***

*Romans 12: 1-2*

Today I want to start what I am calling ***“Align Series”*** based upon Romans 12. I want us to look more closely at what Paul says in God’s Word about aligning ourselves more closely with God while living in a world which is going in the opposite direction.

Today’s Title:

### ***Alignment with what or Who?***

*“<sup>1</sup> 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 your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> 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.”*

As I am speaking about being Aligned with God, perhaps some of you may have noticed that in March of this year, five (5) planets aligned for a spectacular show. They called it a Planetary Event, meaning something special and rare. Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Uranus and Mars formed an arc, or an almost straight line, on one side of the Sun all at one time. It took place on March 25-30 of this year. In my opinion, it reminds us of the greatest of our God. Today, I am not speaking of that kind of alignment, nor am I speaking about “Align” which is a popular name for a probiotic, I am speaking about aligning our lives and souls with the Creator. Why, so we worship the Creator, and not the Creation. So, as we look at this passage, I pray that we will have ears to hear and a heart ready to receive, because we are living in desperate times.

God says that it is important that we be aligned with Him, so that we can be effective in whatever we seek to do, where ever we are, to everyone we seek to minister to, as believers in service unto Him. We align ourselves so we might find our identity, which is not in our families, our careers, our ministries, our things, or even the climate, political or other worldly issues being thrust upon us, it is found in Him. God allows us to be exposed to these things as we live in this world, but they are not who we are at our core. Our identity is found in **God**. If **He is not first, He is not on our list**.

As we look at what is taking place all around us, it isn’t that hard to find many distractions are here to capture our attention and thus our lives. Yet, in my opinion, these are taking place to mislead people and keep them from discovering the truth about what real life is. Look at the world around us, people are becoming enraged by the words spoken, the actions taken, and events seen on TV, or in the NEWS, which are often sensationalize, with the intent to get people agitated and upset. We need to align ourselves with Him to find the peace we need right now. As we watch all of this taking place before our eyes, it is causing a great deal of struggle for many. Even to the point of devastating some, causing them to go to extremes in a multitude of adverse ways. Distracting many others from the ONE who should be at the core of everything we are and do, God! Most people today know that the only way to get to God is

through Jesus. So, the thought then comes, **“How do we Align ourselves more with Christ?”** Because if we are seeking God and need to be close to Jesus to reach Him.

***I read something recently that stated, there are 3 steps in aligning ourselves with Christ. May I share a little bit of what I read?***

### **1. Intentional prayer before our feet hit the floor**

We are at war with sin! In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 it tells us, we don't wage war as the world does, but rather through divine power given to us by God, which can demolish every stronghold. ***This verse reminds us that our battles start with prayer. Because with prayer, we can take captive every thought, and make it obedient to Christ. (Listen to this again - repeat)***

***Why do we need to do this?*** The enemy doesn't really care what we call ourselves. If we call ourselves Christians, what does that mean for us? Who or what we are in name if we follow Him diligently. Some will follow, and some will slide back to the old ways of living. Titles are one thing, living for Christ is another.

The enemy wants to weigh us down with so many meaningless battles, that we are spiritually drained, and make little to no impact in places that really matter to the heart of God. God gave us an incredibly powerful gift in prayer, and it's vital we use it to discern the battles we must fight, and request divine power for the war. That our titles match our lifestyle for Him. Prayer offers us His POWER, which has already defeated Satan, so that might live victoriously for Him.

***Intentional PRAYER before our feet hit the floor every morning.***

### **2. Train ourselves to study scripture**

In so many ways, most of us study to gain knowledge when it comes to our careers, politics, our health, or how to make as much money as we can, in the time we have, etc. And those are fine and well, but they will never fill our hearts and souls as they need to be filled. Question, why don't we hunger for, and study, to gain knowledge of the God-breathed words of scripture more than anything else? After all, we are HIS children, right? We put a lot of effort in our worldly pursuits, why not in our spiritual pursuits.

If we want growth, if we want to love better, and more, if we want peace and strength for life, to be able to lead our families well, then we must study God's message to us. ***Studying like our lives and livelihood truly depend on it.*** Training ourselves each day, to implement it, in every word and decision we make. Every day, one day at a time. We should not allow what might happen tomorrow, to overwhelm us so much, as to destroy what we do today. By studying the Word, we stay focused on the Lord as we seek to apply it daily.

### **3. Worship so our realities change**

The Bible uses the words ***‘Worship God’*** over 8,000 times. Romans 12:1 says, ***“Therefore, brothers, 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.”*** Why would Paul say ***“I URGE YOU?”*** Why, because we desperately need to discover how to offer ourselves fully to Him. A continual work.

Worship is a way of offering ourselves to our Creator as a living sacrifice, ***(living upon earth, walking around every day, doing the things we must do, so we might survive in this place)***, as we worship the creator. As we do, the Holy Spirit begins to dwell inside of us, helping to change us and our perspective. Providing us strength to stay the course. Otherwise, we will start seeing just what the enemy wants us to see, and hear what he wants us to hear, and we will align our lives with the world. Not with the Lord, with the world. Our natural tendency is to drift toward the world, not toward the Lord. Worship draws us toward Him, intentionally...

I know this, because I speak with many people during the course of my week, who say things like, ***“there are so many times when I feel like God is distant from my situation,”*** or, from their lives. If we would genuinely worship Him, not just talk about it, practice it daily, finding moments of uninterrupted focused worship in our lives, we would begin to understand and feel He is as close as the air we breathe. In those moments, we are as near to Heaven as we can be on Earth, and once again, we will focus on the realities of an eternity with Him, rather than the realities of this world. So, I ask, ***“Who or what is captivating our attention?”*** That may well be who or what we are worshipping. Are we seeking Him or the world around us?

When we don't apply these steps, sin works its way into the cracks of our lives, and the enemy manifests himself into every aspect of life, leaving us crumbling from within. But our Lord tells us, we can take our sin captive and focus on aligning with Christ as we never have before.

***“<sup>1</sup> 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 your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> 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.”***

So, let's break this passage down in a simple way for all of us today:

**1-Make the choice to offer ourselves to Him....** He is giving us this chance right now, today! His mercy is here. His Grace is here. ***His invitation is now!*** Make the choice.

**2-Become a living sacrifice** – that means we are willing to follow Him even when the world around us is screaming at us to do as they do, live as they live. Do not listen to the world, listen to God.

**3-Do what is Holy and Pleasing in His sight.** Stop following what everyone else is doing, how they are acting, living, and accepting what they say we should accept. Start right now, seeking the Lord's leading in life for yourself. The life HE created for us to have. We will never know the fullness of His joy until we do this. Seeking to do what is ***“Holy and Pleasing in His sight!”*** Don't know what that is – get into the Word, and start asking those who are seeking for the same thing and search for it together. God will reveal it if we seek for it.

**4-Discover TRUE and Proper worship.** We all worship something in this world. As humans, we tend to create a worship acceptable to us. We do what we wish to do, give what we think is

enough, and serve whatever or whomever when it is convenient to serve. That is not TRUE, or PROPER worship, it is human worship, created by our own desires and worldly influence. Worship in truth and Spirit, what does that mean? Many Christians are familiar with the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in [John 4](#). But not everyone can explain what Jesus meant when he said the Father is seeking men and women who will worship him ***“in spirit and truth”*** (v. 23).

To say that we must worship God ***“in spirit”*** means, among other things, that it must originate from within, from the heart. It must be sincere, ***motivated by our love for God and gratitude for all He is doing and has done***. Worship cannot be mechanical or formalistic. *That does not necessarily rule out certain rituals or liturgy*. But it does demand, that all physical postures, or symbolic actions, must be infused with heartfelt commitment and faith, love and zeal. But the word ***“spirit”*** here, may also be a reference to the Holy Spirit—there’s disagreement among good Bible scholars about this. The apostle Paul said that Christians ***“worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh”*** ([Phil. 3:3](#)).

It’s the Holy Spirit who awakens in us an understanding of God’s beauty, splendor and power. It’s the Holy Spirit who stirs us to celebrate, rejoice and give thanks.

It’s the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to see and savor all that God is for us in Jesus.

It’s the Holy Spirit who, I hope and pray, orchestrates our services, and leads us in corporate praise of God.

This worship, however, must also be ***“in truth.”*** I think this is easier for most of us to understand, for it obviously means that our worship must conform to the revelation of God, or, what we have discover about God in Scripture. It must be formed by who God is and what he is like. Our worship must be rooted in and tethered to, the realities of biblical revelation.

***God forbid that we should ever knowingly embrace heresy. Worship is not meant to be formed by what always feels good, but by the light of what is true.*** Genuine, Christ-exalting worship, must never be mindless, or based in ignorance. It must be doctrinally grounded, and focused on the truth of all we know of our great Savior, Lord and God. We are called to discover TRUE and PROPER worship. In our world today, we need to be careful. Our Lord is here to guide us, if we seek for, and allow Him to do so.

**5-Conform to God.** Paul states clearly, ***a second time***, as we read this passage in hopes we hear what is being saying, ***“Stop living by what everyone around you is living like in this world.”*** ***“Do not conform to the world, rather be transformed.”*** How are we transformed? Maybe, by following the three steps to aligning ourselves with Christ we just heard about. By deciding, ***“I’ve had enough of this world, and its battles and struggles. I am going to commit to following Jesus.”***

***Renewing of our minds....*** How do we renew our minds? It has to do with what we put into our minds, it’s as simple as that. ***Garbage in, garbage out.***

Once we take these steps, once we decide to start fresh with God, we will begin to see and discover God's will for our lives, and it will be like a breath of fresh air. ***"Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."***

***So, as I close, who or what have we aligned our lives with?*** The answer to that question will help us discover ***the direction we are moving***, and ***the direction we should be moving***.

God allows us to be exposed to many things. What is at the core of who we are? Is it ***God***. If is not – oh no... And- ***He is not first, He is not on our list***.

***Closing Prayer:***