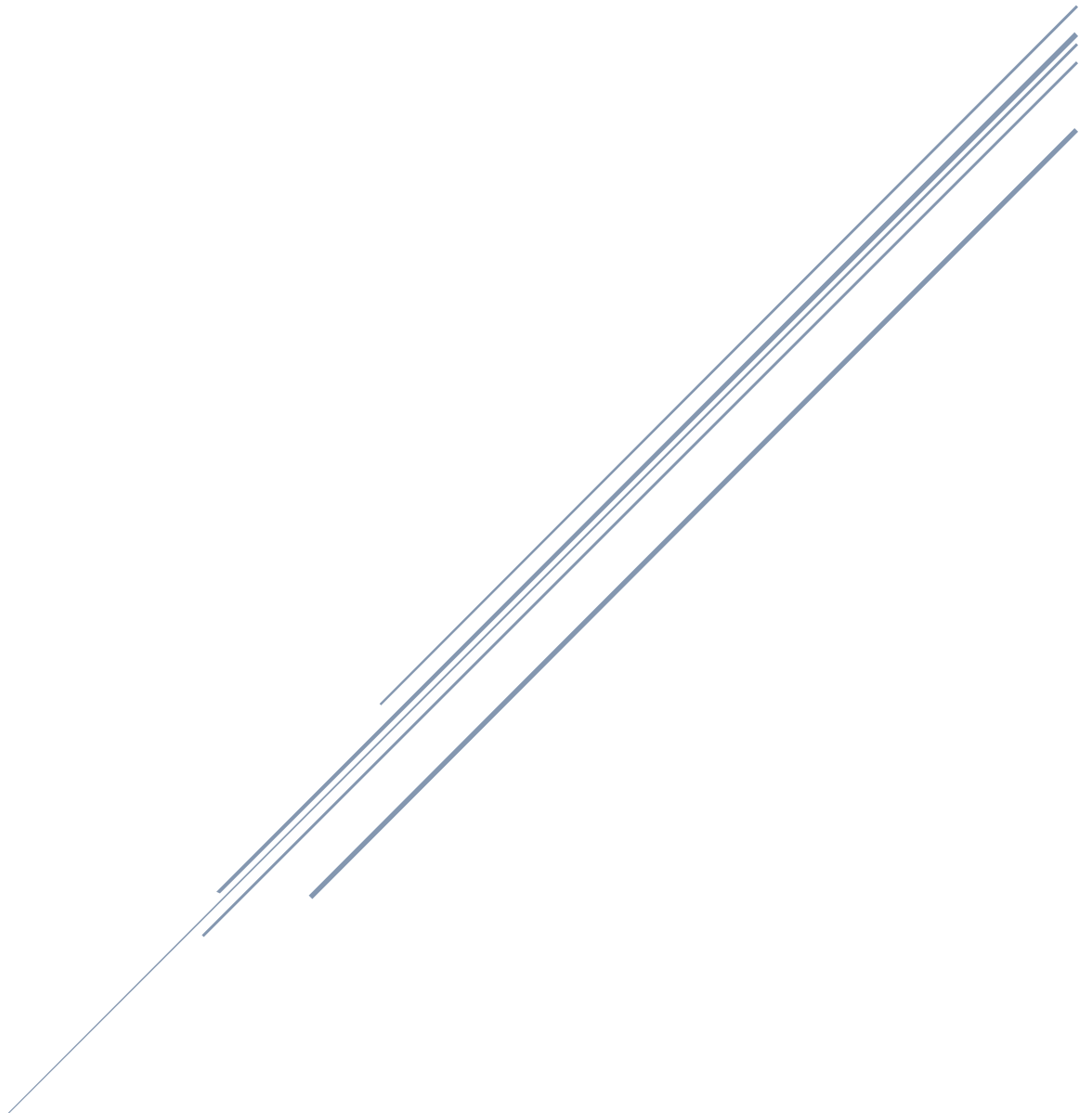


# A Living Sacrifice

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All scripture verses are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

Explanatory insertions with scripture verses are enclosed in brackets [ ].

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## A Living Sacrifice

The past couple weeks in the teaching segment we have looked at God's love and many of the great spiritual blessings He has given each of us.

Today we will take a look at some of what our response to God's love is to be as detailed in Romans chapter 12.

### **Romans 12: 1 – 2**

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

In verse 1 the word beseech is to lovingly request or implore by means of the mercies of God. God is merciful, He withholds the judgment mankind rightly deserve because of His love and grace found through the life of Jesus Christ.

He is requesting that we present our bodies a living sacrifice. In other words, in light of all that God has done for us in Christ Jesus, now...lets you and I, by the freedom of our will choose to do His will by bringing our lives into alignment with His Word.

“...holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.”

We are holy because we have been set apart by God because of the spirit we have received. We also know from Ephesians chapter 1 that God has already made us accepted in the beloved and holy and without blame before Him. Now we are to live out that holiness and acceptance in our day-by-day living. It is our reasonable or logical service. It's the only proper response.

God will not take over your freedom of will and force you to do anything. Because we recognize His great love for us we freely give of our lives in service to Him.

<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are not to be conformed or fashioned according to this world. When we put on in our mind by thinking the thoughts and ideas of the world are lives are molded by the world.

What is it to be molded to this world? To be molded or fashioned to this world is to think and live according to the wisdom of this world. For the most part this world is in direct opposition to the truth of God's Word.

For instance, to believe that you can get to the one true God without Jesus Christ is to be molded to this world. To think that by your good works you can stand approved before God and receive eternal life is to be molded to this world. To believe that God makes people sick as punishment and that He kills people is to be molded to this world.

There are many moral issues in our culture today that are contrary to the truth of God's Word.

The great majority of people don't even know that they are controlled and conformed by this world. Their minds are fashioned by the TV and movies they watch, by the music they listen to, by the material they read. The words, ideas and images presented by the world are shaping the hearts of unsuspecting souls.

**BUT** "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

To be transformed is to be transfigured. It is a change of a very dramatic kind. The word transformed in the Greek text is the word from where we get the English word "metamorphosis." If you remember from your high school biology class – metamorphosis is the process that a caterpillar goes through when it enters the cocoon and about 4 weeks later emerges as a beautiful butterfly.

Just as the lowly caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly – so we too are to be transformed from the fashioning of this world to a loving, kind, powerful son of God.

How are we transformed? By the renewing of our minds. We put God's Word in our minds to the end that our hearts are changed. Remember the Word of God is a living Word. It's not a dead word. It's living, it's powerful, it's energizing. It is alive!

We have the responsibility to renew our minds. The *living* Word of God and the spirit from God will bring about the transformation. When you combine the living Word of God in the heart of a man or woman along with the spirit of God within that individual – then you have a true transformation.

God will never take over your freedom of will. God does not control our thinking nor does He control your actions.

When we received holy spirit at the new birth we received all that God has to give spiritually in order for us to live a life that is akin to the life of Jesus Christ when he walked the earth. To live that life practically, day-by-day, we must become transformed by the renewing of our minds!

Let's read some more verses that pertain to being transformed by the renewing of our mind.

### **Philippians 2:5**

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

The word mind is thoughts. Let the thoughts be in your thinking which was also in Christ Jesus. In order to do that we must read the Word of God and hold that Word in our minds. And it's more than just memorizing scripture, it's building a relationship with your Heavenly Father. It's talking to Him throughout the day and making Him a part of your life.

### **Ephesians 4:24**

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

What is the new man? The new man is the Christ within. We are to put that on in our thinking. We think what the Word says. We find our true identity in Christ and we think and live accordingly.

### **Colossians 3:1 – 4**

If [**Since**] ye then be risen with Christ, seek [**diligently pursue after**] those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

What are the things that are above? There are many.....but just to name a couple – that your heart would be enlightened to the end you would know what is the hope of His calling ... or what is the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in you .... Or what is the exceeding greatness of His power that is available to you and I when we believe!

Or make full proof of the ministry you have been called to.

Those are just a few of the things which are above we could diligently pursue after.

<sup>2</sup> Set your affection [**your thoughts**] on things above, not on things on the earth.

<sup>3</sup> For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

In our identification in the accomplished work of Jesus Christ we have died with him. Our life is now hid with Christ in God. Our life is concealed in Christ. As you come to know the living Christ within, by seeking those things which are above, you will live the supernatural life you are intended to live!

<sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ shall appear, shall absolutely return in the fullness of time. At that moment you shall absolutely appear with him in glory. What a motivation to seek those things which are above! What a hope we have!

### **Colossians 3:10 – 15**

<sup>10</sup> And have **put on the new man**, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

The new man is put on in our mind – in our thinking. Have you ever felt like you needed a fresh start in life? Here it is! Right now! Put on the new man. Think the thoughts of who you are in Christ! You control your mind...you decide what you will think about! Put on the new man.

<sup>12</sup> **Put on** therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

<sup>13</sup> Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

<sup>14</sup> And above all these things **put on** charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

We are to put on charity. Charity is the Greek Word for God's love. We are to put on the love of God in the renewed mind.

<sup>15</sup> And **let** the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye **thankful**.

Back to Romans 12, verse 3.

### **Romans 12:3**

<sup>3</sup> For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

For many, because of the King James translation of this verse, it has been confusing and this verse has been used to knock people down in the sense that "they shouldn't think too highly of themselves but rather think that they are nothing more than a sinner or lowly worm."

That's not what it's saying!

It is literally saying "think about yourself what God says." Don't think less of yourself than what the Word says and don't think you're something great outside of God's love and grace and mercy.

We all have received of the same spirit. That spirit from God is the foundation for all that is available in our walk with the Father, in our service for Him to the world.

Then the remainder of this chapter goes on to encourage each of us to live our calling in Christ.

### **Romans 12:4-21**

<sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office [or function]:

<sup>5</sup> So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

We are all members of the body of Christ and Christ Jesus is the head of the body. There should never be any competition between ministers of God's Word. God has placed each of us in the body as it has pleased Him. I can't be you and you can't be me. Each within the body are to function within the calling that God has called you to.

Why would there ever be any ego, pride, disdain or jealousy displayed toward a brother or sister in Christ. It could only be because that person has not been transformed by the renewing of their mind and they specifically do not recognize their identity in Christ. They have looked at others and been dissatisfied instead of looking to the Father living a life of purpose with joy.

<sup>6</sup> Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

<sup>7</sup> Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

<sup>8</sup> Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Where God has called you in the body ... if it's prophecy, then get busy prophesying, if it's a ministry of service to others, then get busy serving.....if it's teaching, then start teaching.....if it's exhorting and encouraging others, then start exhorting.....don't be negative because you'd rather be doing something else.....if it's giving because God has blessed you with abundance then give generously.....if you've been called to lead or guide others then do it diligently without partiality..... if you are called to show mercy toward others do it with cheerfulness, not begrudgingly.

<sup>9</sup> Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Let your love be without hypocrisy. Don't play a part, be your genuine self – the Christ within. You love because God loves, not because maybe you can get something out of it.

Avoid evil at all costs and hold onto that which is good.

<sup>10</sup> Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

We are to walk in love toward one another. The love of God covers a multitude of sins. I only know one man that was perfect in the flesh ... the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God does not gossip regarding the shortcomings of others.

<sup>11</sup> Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

We are to work heartily unto the Lord whether it's in the business of the world or whether it's being about our Father's business. We are to be zealously fervent for the things of the Lord serving with all that we are.

<sup>12</sup> Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

We rejoice in the hope of the return of Jesus Christ! We will have pressures in this life, yet we remain patient no matter how intense the pressure and we are to be quick to pray. Always praying both in the spirit by way of speaking in tongues and with our understanding. Look how patience in tribulation is sandwiched between rejoicing in the hope of the return of Jesus Christ and praying. When the hope and prayer are in the forefront of our lives and thinking then we can endure any degree of pressure.

<sup>13</sup> Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Love of God with the mind of Christ will fully share in fellowship with the saints. Hospitable to all of God's family and not playing favorites.

<sup>14</sup> Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

<sup>15</sup> Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

<sup>16</sup> Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

We are to have empathy with people. We rejoice when one has a victory and we comfort and console in times of sorrow.

<sup>17</sup> Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

<sup>18</sup> If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

<sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance **[Justice]** is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.



<sup>20</sup> Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

The “coals of fire upon the head” is not a hurtful thing but rather it means that you warm the heart of your enemy by loving them with the love of God. If he hunger ... feed him. If he thirst ... give him something to drink. Justice is God’s job.

<sup>21</sup> Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Overcome evil with the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation. How are we to love? By putting on the mind of Christ and not being conformed to this world. We are transformed from the inside out as we renew our mind by controlling it to think the living Word of God.

This world is not our home! We represent our Father, God to this dying world. It’s the love of the Father that will lead men to repentance and we have the privilege to live with that love!

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