

A Living Sacrifice
Part V
March 4, 2018
by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Romans 12:1-2

1 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*.

2 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.

As we wind up our series on the presenting of our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, this morning we are going to zero in first on the word “reasonable”; **your reasonable service**.

As we have been examining some of the spiritual gifts the Lord places in His Body, some of them (actually all of them) are nothing short of amazing.

Ordinary people using their God-given spiritual gifts are become powerhouses for God’s glory.

Men you wouldn’t even otherwise notice step in the pulpit and are transformed into the very power and authority of God as they preach the Word.

Ordinary people, many with modest lifestyles and average education, find themselves contributing tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of dollars to the work of the Lord.

Servants, often behind the scenes, keep all the things others take for granted running smoothly.

Others, by their very presence, bring hope and encouragement where there was none before.

We could get the idea that those who present their bodies a living sacrifice to the Lord are the superstars of Christianity; like the Apostle Paul and Charles Stanley and Billy Graham: not so.

God says that this is your “reasonable service”.

The Greek word for *reasonable* means *rational or logical*.

Today most Christians and most Churches are, to put it mildly, dysfunctional.

What we are reading here in **Romans 12** is what normal is supposed to look like.

God is not inviting us to be self-sacrificing, die for the faith heroes; although that may be required of some.

He is asking of us **only what is reasonable**.

Spiritual gifts differ from one member to another.

Beginning in **Verse 9**, God gives us the spiritual characteristics that are to be found in every member of the Body.

I do realize that we all came to Christ with all our baggage from our past, thus, these characteristics are not going to come quickly or naturally; they must be developed.

We read of these beginning in **Verse 9**:

Romans 12:9-21

9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

11 *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*

12 *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*

13 *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

14 *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*

15 *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

16 *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.*

17 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

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

20 *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.*

21 *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

God's Word tells us that:

I. The success of our Church depends on the quality our relationships with each other.

A. Our relationship with other members is critical to the building up of this Body.

1. Ephesians 4:15-16

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even Christ*:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

2. You are each one of those parts, one of those members whose behavior to one degree or another affects the increase of this Body.

B. Look at this verse broken down:

1. "the whole body fitly joined together"

2. This speaks of

1 Corinthians 12:18 How that ...God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

3. It says that we are "compacted by that which every joint supplieth".

4. The joint is the connection between two members, they are those relationships you have with other members, which is compacted or brought closer together by what each one contributes.

II. What are the characteristics that cause the Body of Christ to grow?

A. The 1st is real love.

1. **Vs. 9** Let love be without dissimulation

2. Without dissimulation means real and genuine, not fake.

3. Who wants to stay around a bunch of fake friends who just pretend they love you?

4. Sooner or later the truth will come out.

B. We must also have standards in our lives.

1. We are to, **Vs. 9**, Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

2. We all deal with our own besetting sins; it is those we abhor the most.

3. This means we must love the sinner while hating the sin.

4. This doesn't require a special gift, this is just treating each other the way Jesus treated you.

5. Don't forget why God hates sin so much...it is simply because sin hurts His children.

C. We are instructed to show our affection.

1. **Vs. 10**, *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;*
2. Hugs, handshakes and even a holy kiss now and then.
3. All in a clean and pure way, like family.

1 Timothy 5:1-2

*1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;
2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.*

D. We should choose each other first.

1. **Vs. 10** ...in honour preferring one another;
2. My close friendships and those with whom I choose to fellowship are other Christians; especially members of this very Body.
3. Preferring one another leads to other things; notice how the very next characteristic is that we be...**Vs. 11 Not slothful in business.**
4. You will likely end up doing business with other members: keep it businesslike and don't get sloppy about it.
 - a. Don't ask other members to work for free or give big discounts.
 - b. Don't give other members less than your best when they choose you.

E. We keep our attitudes up and positive.

1. Vs. 11-12,

*11. ...fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;
12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*

2. Remind each other that the Lord loves you and He is in control.
3. Be ready to pray with your brothers and sisters anytime.
4. Encouraging each other, especially when they are going through trials, is not just for the gifted, it's for all of us.

F. Next God tells us to share what we have when real need requires it.

1. **Vs. 13** Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

2. **James 2:15-16**

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

3. This word “hospitality” literally means to “entertain strangers”.

4. **Hebrews 13:2** Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

5. I don't think God expects you to give money to everybody with a sign under a bridge...but when He speaks, you need to be ready to respond.

6. Many times God has told me to help someone: He doesn't need words to make it clear.

6. There are a couple of areas I'll caution you about here:

a. Some people are going to take advantage of you because you want to do right.

b. Don't worry too much about that; God will hold them accountable and He will replace whatever you give them.

Proverb 19:17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

c. There are those who will go quietly and privately with a sad story asking numerous members for help; it has happened many times. Unless you know the situation, just tell them, “I'll get back to you after I check with Pastor”.

d. If you spend all your money on cigarettes and beer and can't pay your rent; we might help you once but I wouldn't recommend asking more than that; that kind of situation doesn't quite rise to the condition of “naked and destitute of daily food”.

Conclusion:

Asking yourself, “what would Jesus do” will decide most issues you will face; love will usually take care of the rest.

Romans 12:14-21

- 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.
15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
16 *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.
17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.
18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
20 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.
21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

This may seem a lot to live up to; even a lot for the Lord to ask; but the one who knows says this is our reasonable service.

The Lord knows you won't do a perfect job, but we sure can work on it as we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God.