

CONSECRATION

TEXT: ROMANS 12:1, 2

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is a pattern found in all of the apostle Paul's epistles. First comes doctrine, then comes duty.
2. Referring specifically to Romans 12:1 and 2, Warren Wiersbe said, "The better we understand Bible doctrine (Romans 1-11), the easier it is to obey Bible duties (Romans 12-16)."
3. Having finished the doctrinal section of this epistle, Paul proceeds to close it with a practical application (12:1).
4. D. Edmond Hiebert wrote, "The first eleven chapters fairly revel in the great mysteries of the plan of redemption. But when we come to chapter twelve the tide turns. Now it is the practical, the everyday. It is a clear reminder that true Christianity involves both 'believing' and 'behaving' the gospel. The history of Christendom reveals the tragic results when the vital relationship between doctrine and conduct is lost" (*Vital New Testament Issues: Examining New Testament Passages and Problems*).
5. It has been noted that in Romans 12:1, the apostle says, "I beseech (ask, entreat, beg) you therefore, brethren..." He does not say, "I command you therefore, brethren..."
6. In II Corinthians 10:1, Paul says, "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ..."
7. In Ephesians 4:1, Paul says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."
8. In I Thessalonians 4:1, Paul says, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren..."
9. Paul wrote to Philemon, "Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee... I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds" (Philemon 9, 10).

10. One preacher said, "Moses commands; the Apostle exhorts" (Bengel).

11. Paul could not demand that Christians be consecrated, and neither can we. So we beseech.

I. THE GROUND OF CONSECRATION

II. THE CHARACTER OF CONSECRATION

III. THE EFFECT OF CONSECRATION

I. THE GROUND OF CONSECRATION

1. The word "therefore" (12:1) connects these verses with all that has gone before. Therefore, because we have been justified, and because we have been sanctified, we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice.
2. This is the ground – or the basis – of consecration.
3. "Therefore" means, "as the result of the doctrine taught in the first eleven chapters."
4. Because of our union with Christ; because we are in Christ Jesus and free from all condemnation; because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit; because we are sons of God by adoption; because we are the elect of God, predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ; because there is no separation from the love of God for those of us who are in Christ Jesus – "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice..."
5. Albert Barnes said the whole argument of the first eleven first chapters of Romans is "suited to show the obligation on us to devote ourselves to God... After having fully stated and established those doctrines, he concludes that we ought therefore to lead holy lives, and on the ground of them he exhorts people to do it" (*Barnes' Notes*).
6. Just as Paul uses the word "beseech" rather than "demand," he uses the words "mercies of God" rather than "authority of God" (12:1).

7. The Bible often refers to God's "tender mercies" (Psalm 25:6; 40:11; etc.) and "the multitude" of God's tender mercies (Psalm 51:1; 69:16).
8. Ephesians 2:4 says God "is rich in mercy."
9. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
10. God's grace and mercy is the ground of all Christian consecration and morality. It is because we are already recipients of the mercies of God that we must, and we can live the Christian life.
11. Romans 1:16 says the gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
12. This "power" enables us to present our bodies a living sacrifice (12:1).

II. THE CHARACTER OF CONSECRATION

1. The word "present" (12:1) is used in different ways in Scripture. For example, we read in Luke 2:22 that Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, "to present him to the Lord."
2. And just as Joseph and Mary presented the baby Jesus to the Lord, we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service (12:1).
3. The word "present" often refers to bringing and presenting an animal or other sacrifice before an altar. This implies that the action was a free and voluntary offering.
4. The Old Testament sacrifices were offerings of dead animals, but today the Christian's sacrifice is "living" (12:1).
5. The Greek word translated "present" in Romans 12:1 is translated "yield" five times in Romans 6. Romans 6:13 says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God..."
6. The sincere Christian wants God's will for his or her life. We want to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (12:2).

7. Therefore, we present our bodies to God for the purpose of carrying out that perfect will of God.
8. This consecration is voluntary ("I beseech you" -- 12:1), and it is sacrificial -- "a living sacrifice" (12:1).
9. Albert Barnes said the Jew offered his animal, "slew it, and presented it dead. It could not be presented again. In opposition to this, we are to present ourselves with all our living, vital energies. Christianity does not require a service of death or inactivity. It demands vigorous and active powers in the service of God the Saviour."
10. This consecration is voluntary, sacrificial, and reasonable. It is reasonable to be devoted to God. It is unreasonable to live for self and the things of this world.
11. A. W. Tozer said, "Present your bodies, that is, present your vessel. That must come first. A vessel that has not been presented will not be filled. God cannot fill what He cannot have."
12. You are either consecrated or you are worldly. To be "conformed to this world" (12:2) is to be foolish. Galatians 1:4 says Christ died for our sins, "that he might deliver us from this present evil world."
13. Ephesians 2:2 says, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air..."
14. The spirit of the world is absolute selfishness. Its object is the gratification of self rather than doing the will of God.
15. We must be very careful not to allow ourselves be influenced by the world. It is sad but true -- the majority of churches here in America are being influenced by the world (its philosophy, its music, etc.).

III. THE EFFECT OF CONSECRATION

1. This brings us to my third point -- the effect of consecration. We are to be "transformed" (12:2). When a person is born again a great change takes place. And the process of sanctification continues till we get to heaven.
2. We often talk of spiritual growth, but here we see spiritual transformation.

3. Growth suggests progress, but transformation indicates change.
4. The Greek word translated "transformed" is translated "changed" in II Corinthians 3:18 -- "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."
5. Second Corinthians 3:18 says this transformation is by the Holy Spirit. Romans 12:2 says, "transformed by the renewing of your mind."
6. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to transform our thinking.
7. The mind of Christ takes the place of the mind of self.
8. Why is there so much confusion and disorder in this wicked, mixed-up world?
It is because people have left God out.
9. This is the essence of worldliness – it is life without God. It could be the world of education, or the world of art, or philosophy, or politics, or religion, etc.
But if God is left out there will be trouble.
10. We have to be sensitive to the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is to be allowed continually to work in our "mind" (12:2).
11. The "mind" in Scripture is much more than mere intellect. There is a moral aspect as well.
12. Romans 1:28 says, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."
13. Colossians 2:18 refers to the sinner who is "vainly puffed up by his fleshly (sensuous, carnal) mind."
14. Sin has darkened people's minds. That is why they are stubborn, stiff-necked, sensual, selfish, self-centered, self-absorbed, self-obsessed, self-seeking, and self-serving.
15. Only the Holy Spirit can renew the mind, and control the mind, and transform the mind.

16. This inward transformation inevitably leads to spiritual discernment -- we can "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (12:2).
17. In their commentary on the epistle to the Romans, William Sanday and Arthur Headlam said this: "The result of this purification is to make the intellect, which is the seat of moral judgment, true and exact in judging on spiritual and moral questions."
18. The will of God can be known, and can be proved, and can be done, and can be enjoyed. As we yield ourselves to God, and allow Him to transform us, He deepens our capacity for greater blessing.

CONCLUSION:

1. Someone has said that we have here in Romans 12:1, 2 a formula for how to avoid a wasted life.
2. A. T. Pierson explained it this way: "Supposing you had one thousand acres of land and someone approached you and made an offer to buy your farm. You agree to sell the land, except for one acre right in the very center, with provisions for a right of way. Do you know that the law would allow you to have access to that one, lone spot in the middle of that thousand acres? You could build a road all across the remainder of that farm to get to that small plot of ground. And so it is with the Christian who makes less than a one-hundred-percent surrender to God. You can be sure that the devil will make an inroad across that person's life to reach the unsundered portion and, as a result, his testimony and service will be marred and have little effect upon others."
3. The Biblical order is: salvation, surrender, service.