

WHAT IS A LIVING SACRIFICE?

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Romans 12:1



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Newport, Tennessee
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over!

WHAT IS A LIVING SACRIFICE?

(Rom 12:1) - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies ("all of yourselves") a living (Present, Active) sacrifice, holy, acceptable ("fully well-pleasing") unto God, which is your reasonable ("spiritual") service ("service of worship").

(Rom 12:2) - And stop being conformed to this world ("To the superficial values and customs of this world"): but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ("focusing of Godly Vales and ethical attitudes"), so that you may prove to yourself what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will of God.

The word "sacrifice" in our text presents somewhat of a problem to the minds of many devout Christians. They look upon

a sacrifice as something that is painful and difficult and unpleasant.

Perhaps the difficulty that many have when they think of sacrifice is a result of their false concept of the nature and purpose of our God. A proper understanding of the nature and character of God does not come accidentally or instantaneously. Man can behold the greatness of God by studying the universe. He can discover the beauty of God by a study of the flowers. Man can come to understand God's nature, character, and purpose only as he experiences Him as a loving Father through faith in Jesus Christ, His unique and divine Son.

Some look upon God as being tyrannical and unconcerned about the welfare of human beings. They unjustly blame Him for all tragedies and catastrophes. This

kind of an attitude toward God causes them to react negatively when they are challenged to sacrifice themselves completely into the service of God.

Words have many different shades of meaning, and particularly is this true with the word "sacrifice". In its verbal form, to sacrifice is to make sacred. As a noun, it can be used several different ways.

1. Generally speaking, a sacrifice is anything offered to a deity - any deity - whether true or false; and it usually is considered to involve a loss of profit to gain something.

2. Specifically speaking, a sacrifice is anything consecrated and offered to God as a surrender of something desirable to attain something desired, regardless of its value.

It seems to be true that most people use that last definition - it means taking a loss in order to attain something. To hold this concept of sacrificing alone will wreak havoc with one's Christian consecration and service to God.

If we would realize that sacrifice does not always involve suffering, we might be able to make a more positive response to the challenge of full dedication of all that we are in The Plan of God. Paul is affirming the Spiritual Level of sacrificing; emphasizing that success is built on sacrifice. For example, whether you wish to be successful in the field of athletics or mathematics, you must make certain sacrifices in the area of discipline and put the game or the study before his own personal safety and/or comfort at times.

It is pretty much a foregone fact that he

who makes no sacrifice at this point will never be an effective participant in his chosen endeavor whether it is a Rocket Astronaut or a Rockette Dancer.

Success in business, music, agriculture, science, or ministry requires a degree of sacrifice. There must be educational preparation for vocational efficiency. A number of enjoyable or fun things might have to be declined in order for a man to achieve success economically in business.

Both home and family life that is successful is built on sacrifices that are made by each member of the family for the total well-being of the group.

In securing an education, a student has to make certain sacrifices in order to secure that which is most desirable. He will have to decline some invitations to social or recreational events so that he

might study and excel in his chosen field. Apart from sacrifice there is no success in any area of life.

Paul is declaring that if the child of God is to become a true servant of God, he must dedicate his total being to God and consider God's Will as being the highest possible goal. He declares that the purpose of God for us should have top priority over all other claims. A number of things could be said concerning the nature of a living sacrifice.

I. THE LIVING SACRIFICE IS A SACRIFICE THAT IS ALIVE.

In the Old Testament we read about the animals that were offered as burnt sacrifices. These sacrifices involved death, so that which was offered as a sacrifice was indeed a victim. We know

that Jesus The Christ offered Himself as a Sacrifice, and that involved death for Him. We need to recognize that He deliberately volunteered to die so that He might have the joy of glorifying God in saving the souls of men and women, boys and girls, and children. This was the highest goal for Him!

It's a fact; His going TO the cross brought Him MORE JOY than escaping FROM the cross EVER COULD have brought!

Jesus was willing to become a dead sacrifice because He had experienced the joy of being completely dedicated as a living sacrifice.

Our text does not challenge us to DIE for our faith. In fact, it is quite the opposite: It invites us to LIVE for our God in complete dedication to His Plan

for our lives.

II. THE LIVING SACRIFICE IS TO BE A HOLY SACRIFICE.

Many Christians are afraid of the word "holy"; but we need not be. In a positive sense, it means "to be dedicated to" that which is RIGHT with God; and in the negative sense, it means "to be separated from" that which is that which is WRONG with God.

In the modern terminology of today, it means to be completely available to the Good Purpose of God. For instance, The Good Samaritan Parable illustrates what it means to be a "Holy Sacrifice" unto God. He was available to render ministries of mercy to an unfortunate victim in a time of need. The Priest and the Levite, supposedly men who were

dedicated to the Will of God, were not available for service in the time of need. Sadly, most Christians are following in the footsteps of these two - the Priest and the Levite - when the Text would challenge us to follow the pattern of the "Good Samaritan".

III. THE LIVING SACRIFICE IS A COMPLETE SACRIFICE.

The challenge of the Text is for each of us to guide every aspect of our total selves to a complete dedication of every facet of our being into the Service of God. It does not call for a fractional type of consecration! It calls for something more than Sunday morning religion! It invites us to an acceptance of a full awareness of the challenge to cooperate with God's Good Purpose for us in every area of our lives.

IV. THE LIVING SACRIFICE IS A VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE.

There is no call in this Text for us to fear God as the main motive for surrender to Him. In fact, this is not a call for draftees; but is, on the other hand, an invitation to become volunteers who on the basis of gratitude respond "with eyes wide open to the mercies of God".

V. THE LIVING SACRIFICE IS A JOYFUL SACRIFICE.

Our Savior is a Shepherd who leads His sheep! He is not a driver who compels them to go where they do not wish to go.

Only those who have enough gratitude to motivate them to surrender will respond

to this gracious invitation. Christian joy makes a living sacrifice possible.

VI. THE LIVING SACRIFICE IS A SATISFYING SACRIFICE.

The Holy Father in heaven will be fully satisfied with you and your services if you fully dedicate yourself to His Will.

You will experience an inward satisfaction and joy that will prove to be invaluable if you will make a full response and give yourself unreservedly and unconditionally into the service of your loving Lord as He reveals His way to you from day to day.

The God who so loved you that He spared not His Son but delivered Him up for you will not withhold anything from you if you dedicate yourself to Him. You cannot

out-give a God who delights to give. The more you give of yourself, the more you will be able to receive from Him.

God has given His Son to save you from your sin. The only thing that you must give up to receive His salvation is that which is going to ruin you if you don't. God approaches you on the basis of His Grace and Mercy so that He might bestow upon you the richest gifts that one can experience. If you are willing to give to Him the place that belongs to Him, you can begin to know what it really means to live life on the highest plain and in its richest quality.

I am personally praying that everyone who reads this message will listen for one of three different Calls from God; for I have been assured they will most assuredly come:

"Come to Jesus" is a Call from God to everyone who is not already a Believer. Everyone has an opportunity to answer this Call.

"Come back to Jesus" is a Call from God to that person who has been saved; but has drifted back on The Lord for any reason whatsoever. Don't try to figure out why you cooled down in your Christian Zeal; just answer this second call from your loving, Heavenly Father.

"Come closer to Jesus" is for that Believer who is walking with God in fellowship, serving with Him, loving Him, and being loved by Him. There is always room to get closer to Him!

God bless you as you answer that Call!

Tom Mooty; Newport, Tenn (2025)



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