

## Living Sacrifices

### *Romans 12:1*

**Thought for the Day:** We will be able to effectively live the Christian life only to the extent that we are fully surrendered to the Lord.

In the Apostle Paul's writings, he typically uses the first portion of his letter to focus on doctrinal and theological issues (Truth). He then focuses in the second portion of his letter on the practical application of the doctrinal truths he has presented (Practice).

So we have seen in the first part of the book of Romans (chapters 1-11) that Paul develops the doctrinal truth of Righteousness. Then he sets forth the practical application—what righteousness looks like in daily life:

#### Doctrinal Focus:

Romans 1-3 – Righteousness Needed

Romans 3-8 – Righteousness Provided

Romans 9-11 – Righteousness Rejected

#### Practical Focus:

Romans 12-16 – Righteousness Practiced

A right relationship with God (Positional Righteousness – Romans 1-11) will manifest itself in right living for God (Practical Righteousness – Romans 12-16).

We must have a clear understanding of Romans 12:1-2 in order to be able to fulfill the 105± exhortations set forth in the following chapters.

#### **Therefore,**

- Points back to all that Paul has written in chapters 1-11.
- This is the fourth significant "Therefore" in the book of Romans.
  - Romans 3:20 – the "therefore" of Condemnation
  - Romans 5:1 – the "therefore" of Justification
  - Romans 8:1 – the "therefore" of Assurance
  - Romans 12:1 – the "therefore" of Dedication (*Warren Wiersbe, Be Right*)
- Because of all that the Lord has done for us in Romans 1-11, the only reasonable thing for us to do is surrender and commit ourselves fully to Him.
- It is this commitment to the Lord that will enable us to fulfill our responsibilities set forth in Romans 12-16.
  - Cultivating Christlike character and conduct
  - Loving our fellow Christians
  - Loving those who are not yet Christians
  - Loving our enemies
- We cannot rightly relate to others in a way that is pleasing to the Lord until we are rightly related to God.

### **I urge you, brothers,**

- Paul does not say, "I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ..." Nor does God!
- "I urge, appeal, beg, beseech, plead with you" as a fellow pilgrim on the journey.

### **in view of God's mercy / by the mercies of God**

- The preposition may be translated "because of" the mercies of God, pointing to the motivation for offering ourselves as living sacrifices, or it may be translated "by" the mercies of God, indicating the means whereby we offer ourselves to the Lord.
  - We need to appropriate God's grace and mercy on a daily basis for effective and fruitful Christian living.
  - Lamentations 3:22-23 – God's mercies are "new every morning."
  - For this reason, many Christians down through the centuries have found it helpful to begin their day in the Word and prayer.

### **to offer your bodies as living sacrifices**

- Paul has already told us what this means and how to do it.
  - Romans 6:11-14; Galatians 5:24-25.
- This is a once-for-all commitment to the Lord that we need to renew on a daily basis.
  - "The problem with living sacrifices is that they keep crawling off the altar!"
  - The greater problem is that many Christians have never made this commitment to the Lord! They've never put themselves on the altar in the first place. They have accepted Jesus as the Savior of their soul but have never committed to Him as the Lord of their life.
  - Have you ever made this commitment of your life to the Lord?
  - It is nothing less than the complete surrender of our entire self to the Lord: mind, heart (desires and affections), and will; our time, talents and treasure.
- God has given everything for us; He has the right to ask everything from us.
- We belong to Him by virtue of Creation and Redemption.
- Romans 12:1 is the fulfillment of the first and greatest commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength."
- Romans 12:3 and following is the fulfillment of the second greatest commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- Romans 12:2 tells us what we must do in order to fulfill these commandments.
- In the Old Testament, when a person presented an animal to the priest for sacrifice, he gave up all control and rights over that animal. As living sacrifices, we have died to our old life of sin and selfishness; we now belong to God and need to give up all control and rights over our life.
  - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:17-24
- Our new life in Christ is to be lived daily as a living thank-offering to God for all of the mercy that He has shown to us.

### **holy and pleasing to God —**

- "To be a holy sacrifice is to be completely set apart for God and dedicated to his service... If we are not set apart from our old life, we will not be useful to God." (*Life Application Commentary Series*)

### **this is your spiritual act of worship.**

- "We are not our own, we are the property of the Lord, by the right of creation and redemption; and it would be as unreasonable as it would be wicked not to live for His glory, in strict obedience to His will." (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*)