

Subject: *A Life That Honors God*

Scripture: *Romans 12:1-2*

If we were to think long and hard about the kind of life we should have in the New Year, what would that look like? How would we describe it? It could be many things, but if you are a Christian, one thing should be most important and that is honoring God each day. In this message we are looking at a text that tells us what we must do to honor God. This is a very practical message that will help us all year long. A life that honors God involves...

1. A GRATEFUL DEDICATION

A. A dedication based on salvation mercies

Paul urges (“beseech” Gk., *parakaleo*) believers on the basis of the mercies of God which are the blessings of salvation he has explained in chapters 1-11.

B. A definite dedication

The word “present” is a verb that indicates a point in time, definite act of dedication. One reason why we don’t honor God as we should is that we never make up our mind to do it. We think about New Year’s Resolutions and that word “resolution” comes from the word “resolve” which means to make up your mind to do something. Think of that song, “I am resolved no longer to linger, charmed by the world’s delight. Things that are higher, things that are nobler, these have allured my sight.” Have you resolved to dedicate yourself to God?

C. A daily dedication

We are to present our bodies as “a living sacrifice.” Living is a present tense participle, which means ongoing action. Every day of your Christian life you are to present yourself. It is a daily, ongoing dedication to God. The problem with resolutions is not making them, but keeping them. What we resolve on January 1, we must resolve every day of the year. Unless we do it daily, then our resolve will begin to dissolve. As we sing in one of our great hymns: “O to grace, how great a debtor daily I’m constrained to be.” Example of Jonathan Edwards’ list of resolutions...

D. An acceptable dedication

This kind of dedication is “acceptable to God.” It is pleasing because it is a holy dedication. Holy means set apart for God and His purpose. The Bible refers to many things as holy: God Himself is holy. He is the Holy One. His written word is the Holy Scriptures. His promised land is the Holy Land; His people are called “the saints” (holy ones).

E. A reasonable dedication

The word “reasonable” is where we get our word “logical.” It just makes sense to dedicate our life to the One who gave His life for us.

Romans 14:7-9⁷ *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*⁸ *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*⁹ *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ¹⁴ *For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: ¹⁵ And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

2. A NEEDFUL SEPARATION

Be not conformed to this world. One translation puts it this way: “Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold.”

- A. A personal separation – We are responsible for separating ourselves. Nobody else can do this for you and for me. This is a personal command for every one of us to obey.

- B. An intentional separation – The world will conform us if we allow things to run their course. *Ephesians 2:2* tells us that before salvation we all lived “according to the course of this world.” We all go with the flow. Paul’s command (“be not conformed to this world”) carries the idea that this is going on and believers need to stop it. Never underestimate the power of the world to pull us away from Christ and His plan for our life. Paul wrote of Demas in *2 Timothy 4:10*, “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.”

- C. A total separation – If we are to stop being conformed, molded by the world then we must separate from worldly thinking, from worldly activities, and worldly people.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ¹⁴ *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

John MacArthur: “It is not uncommon for unbelievers to mask themselves as Christians. Unfortunately, it is also no uncommon for Christians to wear the world’s masks. They want to enjoy the world’s entertainment, the world’s fashions, the world’s vocabulary, the world’s music, and many of the world’s attitudes—even when those things clearly do not conform to the standards of God’s Word.”

3. A THOUGHTFUL TRANSFORMATION

We must change our thinking to line up with God and His Word.

- A. Correct thinking about God – Outside of the Bible this is probably the most important statement you can ever hear: “The most important thing about us is what comes to our minds when we think about God” (A. W. Tozer).

- B. Correct thinking about yourself – Do you think of yourself as a good person or do you see yourself as a wretched sinner in need of God’s grace? When it comes to

your role at church, do you see yourself as a consumer and a spectator or do you think of yourself as a servant using your gifts and abilities for God's glory?

C. Correct thinking about salvation

- D. Correct thinking about the Christian life – From what I can tell some people have the idea that being a Christian is just worshiping God on Sunday and then doing whatever else they need to do the rest of the week. Maybe we have forgotten that the word used most often in the Bible to describe a Christian is the word “disciple.” “The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” A disciple is a follower of Christ, a learner, a servant of Christ.

All of this is based on our right thinking, biblical thinking. Our thinking changes when we are converted. “To be carnally minded is death, but to spiritually minded is life and peace.” Then after we are saved our thinking deepens and become clearer and more mature. We call it discernment. Paul wrote about this in the great love chapter...

1 Corinthians 13:11 *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

This means we need to know what God says. We need to read and study the Bible on our own and with others who can help us. All of us are like the Ethiopian man who was reading Scripture in Acts 8. Philip asked him, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He said, “How can I except someone guide me? We all need help to understand what the Bible means. And we all need to get as much biblical truth in our hearts as we can.

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom*

Having God's Word dwell in you richly is like making a pitcher of tea. If you take a tea bag and dip it in and out of the water, now and then, that won't work. But if you put the tea bag in water and let it sit and stay a while, something happens—the water turns into tea. God's Word does that in your life if you put it in your mind and heart and let it sit and stay a while. Your life changes. That's what it means to “be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”