

**Subject: *Living the Christian Life***

**Scripture: *Romans 12:1-8***

During our days of revival some have received a new Christian life and others have rekindled their old Christian life with new fire. What are we going to do with it? It is one thing to receive the gift of eternal life. It is another thing to live the Christian life. We are thankful for all that God did in the revival services, but that is only the beginning. We haven't crossed the finish line, we have just left the starting line and we are running the race. In the church we tend to overestimate the importance of events and underestimate the importance of the process. Being saved or being revived is an event, but living the Christian life is a process.

Chapter 12 is a turning point in the book of Romans. The first eleven chapters tell us what to believe. The last five chapters tell us how to behave. The first eleven chapters are about Christian doctrine. The last five chapters are about Christian duty. In the Bible we always find this order: God first tells us what He has done for us and then He tells us what we must do for Him. I want you to see three simple things about living the Christian life.

### **BE DEDICATED (vs. 1)**

We must present our bodies as a living sacrifice. This is the main thought. Everything else in verse 1 supports this main idea. We are to be dedicated because of "the mercies of God." What are the mercies of God? These are the blessings Paul described in Romans 1-11. We have been justified. We are being sanctified. We will be glorified. We have been set free from the penalty of sin. We are being set free from the power of sin. We will be set free from the presence and possibility of sin. We have a new peace with God the Father. We have a new position in Christ. We have a new power in the Holy Spirit. How great are the mercies of God. No wonder the Bible says in *Psalms 89:1 I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever*. For a multitude of sins there is a multitude of mercies. And the mercies of God call us to be dedicated.

What are we to dedicate to the Lord? First of all, we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. Isn't it interesting that Paul begins by telling us to present our bodies to God as living sacrifices. Before we got saved, we used our body as we pleased, but now we belong to Him. The Lord is not talking about a sacrifice for sin, but a sacrifice of worship and gratitude. Jesus gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins and said, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30).

- Dedicate your body as a daily sacrifice

The OT sacrifices were dead sacrifices, but we are to be "living sacrifices." The problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar. "Present" means to present once and for all. It involves a definite commitment, just like a bride and groom come to the marriage altar and pledge their full commitment to each other. They present themselves to each other once and for all, but their dedication must be lived out every day. We must be willing to die to ourselves and our way of doing things, so that we can live to the glory of God. We must say each day, "I'll dedicate my body to God as a living sacrifice." Jesus said in *Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*.

- Dedicate your body as a holy sacrifice

Your body is set apart for God. *1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the*

*temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*  
The word "temple" refers to the holy of holies or the inner sanctuary where the presence of God was revealed. Sometimes we hear a news report from a holy place such as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem built where Jesus was thought to be born and the reporter says this is "perhaps the most sacred site in the Christian faith." That's wrong. The most holy place on earth is the life of a believer. As a Christian, you are God's temple. In the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people. In the New Testament, He has a people for His temple.

- Dedicate your body as a pleasing sacrifice

"Acceptable" means pleasing to God. Your body is acceptable because God owns it.  
**1 Corinthians 6:19** *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

- Dedicate your body as a reasonable sacrifice

Dedicating your body to the Lord is not only the right thing to do; it is the reasonable thing to do. The word "reasonable" means logical. Offering your body to God makes sense. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all." We should offer our bodies to him not because we have to, but because we want to. The word "service" means "worship." We are to present our bodies as a daily act of worship to God. **Philippians 1:20** *Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

### **BE SEPARATED (vs. 2)**

There is a negative command (be not conformed to this world) and there is a positive command (be transformed by the renewing of your mind). Be not conformed to this world. The world wants to conform you (control you and shape you). Satan is the god of this world and he wants to control you. God wants to transform you. This is a constant battle.

- Be not conformed to this world

One translation says: "Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold." Don't follow the ways of this present evil world with its values, its attitudes, its actions, and its language. Don't let the world shape your way of thinking and living. Jesus said we are in the world, but not of the world. It's like a ship in the water. It's alright for a ship to be in the water, but there's a problem when the water gets into the ship. The Bible says that the believer is to overcome the world (1 John 5:4); to keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27); to have no friendship with the world (James 4:4); and to love not the world neither the things that are in the world (1 John 2:15). Be careful what you see, what you hear, what you do, where you go, and who you hang around.

- Be transformed by the renewing of your mind

"Transformed" is the same word used to describe what happens to a caterpillar when it spins a cocoon and then emerges as a lovely butterfly. It is the same word used of Jesus in Matthew 17 when he was transfigured. It literally means "to change into another form."

What is the key to a separated life? The key is what goes into your mind. Your mind is renewed or made new as you fill it with God's word. It's a lot like programming a computer.

A computer will only do what you tell it to do. There's an old saying: "Garbage in, garbage out." Some of you want a harvest of blessings but you are filling your mind with the world's garbage. Nature forms us. Sin deforms us. School informs us. But only Christ transforms us. And He does it through His Word and His Spirit. **John 17:17** *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

### **BE MOTIVATED (vs. 3-8)**

This section has two main thoughts: God's grace and His gifts. In verse 3, Paul refers to the grace given to him, but he is not the only one to receive God's grace. This is our testimony as well as Paul's, **1 Corinthians 15:10** *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* Grace is more than the forgiveness of God. Grace is the God-given desire and ability to do what God wants us to do.

Understanding God's grace will cause you to think "soberly" about yourself. Don't think lowly about yourself and don't think highly about yourself. Think soberly (clearly and correctly) about yourself. The grace of God will humble you without debasing you and it will exalt you without puffing you up.

When God saved you, He gave you the ability to serve Him in a special way. The Bible calls it a spiritual gift. Once we are saved we are part of the body of Christ. That's the church. Just like the human body, the body of Christ has different parts with different abilities. What would you think of an arm that was not connected to a body? It's gross. And it's useless. Just like our human body with its many parts, every part of the body has a purpose and a function. We are different, and yet we are one. We are connected to serve one another.

When we are dedicated and separated and motivated, God is elevated. He is glorified. Look at Rom. 11:36.