

The Basis for Christian Living # 10

Romans 12: 1-2

Tonight I want to continue our study concerning the basic biblical doctrines of our faith. I am convinced the church as a whole has failed tremendously in relation to her obligation to new believers. We are excited to see people saved and baptized into the family of God, but there is often little counsel or guidance after one is saved. When they are saved and join the church, most expect them to live, behave, and serve the Lord like everyone else.

With that in mind, we often wonder what is expected of Christians. How are they supposed to live? Is there any guidance in the Bible? We are all familiar with people who attend church on a regular basis. Some of those are very committed and live their lives much the same through the week as they do at church on Sunday. Others live their lives much differently among the world than they do at church. This can often be confusing and discouraging to a new believer.

Thankfully we are not left without guidance in regard to our Christian conduct and walk with the Lord. The passage we have read this evening deals beautifully with the life we are called upon to live. As we will discover, this life is not lived carelessly or without commitment, but it is very rewarding. As we consider the [directives](#) given in the text, I would like to preach on: [The Basis for Christian Living](#).

I. The Admonition (1a) – [I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.](#) Paul offers a stirring admonition to the believer. Consider:

A. The Urgency – In this context, Paul speaks with a sense of urgency. He challenges the hearer to respond to his instruction. He knew the Roman believers were surrounded by much temptation and distraction that could hinder their walk with the Lord. The word beseech has the idea of “*calling to one’s side; to aid, comfort, encourage, and exhort.*” Clearly we sense the urgency in Paul’s admonition. We too need to comprehend the urgency to live for Christ in this life. Few in our day realize the need for a consistent Christian witness. The world desperately needs to experience those who are committed to living for the Lord. Each of us bears that responsibility!

- It is also interesting to note the guidance offered by Paul. [I beseech you therefore...](#) He directs their thoughts back to what they have just read. He reminds them of their salvation in the Lord. They are challenged to consider all Christ has done for them and what they have received in Him. Regardless of the length of time we have been saved, we all have received much from Christ. We are redeemed in Him. If anyone ought to live for Christ, we should!

B. The Ability (1a) – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. Paul was well aware of the difficulties they faced. He knew they faced adversity and temptation. In themselves they would not be able to walk in a way that pleased the Lord, but they were not expected to go it alone. The Lord was there with them, enabling them to walk upright and live for Him. In their times of weakness and despair, the tender mercies of God would be revealed. That speaks of the “*pity and compassion shown concerning the suffering of another.*” God knew where they were in the journey, and He was more than able to equip them to endure.

- Isn't that amazing when you take the time to consider it? Our Lord knows the struggles we face; He knows the burdens we bear. He too endured the same temptations we are faced with. He desires to strengthen us in the faith and equip us for the journey. I praise Him that we do not walk alone. If we will but walk with Him, according to His will, we can enjoy the power of God in our lives, guiding our steps and equipping us to endure. Ephesians 2:4-5 – But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ^[5] Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

I. The Admonition (1a)

II. The Presentation (1b) – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice. Here Paul reveals how we are to respond to the Lord and present ourselves unto Him. Notice, we discover:

A. It is Personal – I know that is very simple and yet many have trouble submitting to it. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice unto the Lord. It is easy to consider the lives of others and point out failures in their lives. It is easy to criticize the commitment of others, but often we fail to look in the mirror. All are called upon to present themselves a living sacrifice. I am not responsible for others, but I am responsible for myself. If others fail to submit to the Lord, that doesn't release me from my obligations to Him!

- This is likely one of the most difficult aspects of Christian service. It is much easier to give our money than it is our time. We may be willing to commit a few hours a week in attending services at the house of God, but that alone isn't enough. The Lord wants us to give ourselves unto Him each and every day. Take a moment to consider this humbling thought: what kind of church would the body of Christ be if every Christian were just like you?

B. It is Sacrificial (1b) – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice**. Paul offers a word that is often hard to be received. He revealed that a half-hearted effort is never enough. Casual service unto the Lord will never be pleasing to Him. We are expected to offer ourselves as no less than a living sacrifice. That simply means that we should be willing to crucify our flesh for the Lord. He is to be the priority; He is to be the passion of our lives. All that we do, in word and deed, ought to be done in a way that glorifies Christ.

- Now I will admit that it isn't easy to die to self. It isn't easy to put something else ahead of what we want and desire. We are to literally lay our lives at the feet of Jesus, to be used of Him as He sees fit. We must be willing to crucify the flesh daily. We must continually and consistently bring our bodies into subjection unto the Lord. **1 Cor.6:20 – For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**
- Are you willing to die to self in order to please the Lord? Are you willing to seek Jesus and His desires above your own? That is what we must do, if we are to please Him. Keep in mind that He is there to guide and help us along the way.

I. The Admonition (1a)

II. The Presentation (1b)

III. The Obligation (1c) – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service**. Now Paul deals with the obligation of the believer. This includes:

A. Sanctification – We are to **present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God**. As we consider that, we must keep in mind the very essence of God. He is absolute holiness. There is no measure of sin or impurity in Him. He is surrounded by complete holiness. Sin and iniquity cannot enter His presence. If we are to live for God, in a way that pleases Him, our lives must be lived in holiness.

- I know that it is impossible for us to obtain perfection in these bodies. We all sin and come short of the righteous standard of God. However, if we are to be pleasing unto the Lord, we must strive for perfection. We must seek to rid our lives of sin and iniquity. We must determine that we will not willfully disobey the Lord or the guidance of His Spirit. We must keep this in its context. We have already been exhorted to offer ourselves a living sacrifice. That is the only way we can live to please God, and our sanctification will be much easier and richer when we are willing to crucify the flesh for the will of God.

B. Submission (1c) – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, **which is your reasonable service**. Paul knew some would find this an unreasonable request. He knew that some would argue that it was impossible. He reveals this is not a mere suggestion; this is our reasonable service. In fact, this is what God deserves and expects.

- We can never expect to live a life that pleases or honors God if we are unwilling to submit ourselves unto Christ. He is Lord and Master of our lives. We no longer have the right to live as we please. We are literally slaves to the Lord. Don't let that alarm you. When we die to self and fully surrender to the lordship of Christ, we experience abundant life. We experience the presence and power of God in wonderful and exciting ways. Being a Christian demands that we live completely submitted to Christ, only possible through Him, but it is living as God intended. If you ever get to the place that you fulfill your reasonable service, you won't regret it!

I. The Admonition (1a)

II. The Presentation (1b)

III. The Obligation (1c)

IV. The Transformation (2) – **And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.** Lastly Paul speaks of the transformation that takes place when one surrenders to Christ. Notice:

A. The Challenge – **And be not conformed to this world:** The believer is expected to resist conforming to the world and its desires. This means we are to refrain from “*showing the same outward pattern.*” We are not to look, behave, or appear as the world. The believer is to stand out from the world, not conform to it, blending in with it.

- Surely Paul knew Roman believers who struggled with this challenge, and we do as well. The world must see that there is something different in our lives. They must see that a change has taken place. The world has enough to offer; many are looking for something that is genuine. Every believer is obligated to resist compromising with the world and conforming to its image. Once you are saved, you can no longer conform to the world and please God.

B. The Change (2b) – **but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Once we are saved, we are changed. The old man of sin died, and we were resurrected a new creature in Christ. We face the same struggles as before. Temptation still abounds, but there has been a transformation.

- Our spiritual state was completely and eternally transformed at salvation, but the transformation Paul speaks of is a conscious and continual process. When we separate from the world, we must then transform our minds. The word transformed comes from the Greek word *metamorphoo* from which we get our word metamorphosis.
- After Christ, there is a renewing, or renovation, of the mind. We no longer view things as before. Our thoughts are lifted toward heaven with a desire to please the Lord. We seek and desire to possess the mind of Christ. This is a challenge that remains throughout our Christian journey. The flesh still desires the things of the world. It wants to think and reason consistent with the world.
- Many today have abandoned the truth of God's Word for the philosophies of men. Their minds are not set on things above. Keep in mind that most actions begin in the mind, make their way to the heart, and are then acted upon. Every believer must guard his mind, keeping it focused on Jesus, if we are to live victorious for Him. This too is much easier when our entire being is submitted to the lordship of Christ.

C. The Confidence (2c) – **And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.** Many seem to struggle with finding or knowing the will of God for their lives. What does God expect of me; what does He want me to do? Where is He leading me? These are all valid questions that can be answered. We can know what the Lord desires of us and follow His leading with absolute confidence.

- Many Christians today miss the will of God because their lives are not fully surrendered to Him. We can know with full assurance what God desires for our lives if we will follow the teachings of His Word. He doesn't want us wandering around aimlessly, frustrated because we can seem to discover His will. Submit to Him, love Him, and seek to live a life that pleases Him, having the mind of Christ, and you will know the will of God for your life!

Conclusion: Has the Lord spoken to you through His Word? Have you offered yourself a sacrifice unto Him, seeking His will for your life? Maybe you are here and you have never been saved. You are seeking a means of peace and fulfillment. That is only available in Christ. Come to Him!