

Christian Living Romans 12:1-15

by J.R. Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of presenting our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, being transformed by the renewing of our mind, and using our gifts according to the grace given us.

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Living Sacrifice", "Christian Community"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes Paul's teachings on Christian living from Romans 12:1-15, urging believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God, recognizing their identity as His creations and redeemed children. He highlights the importance of surrendering one's life to God, living in a way that reflects His holiness, and not conforming to worldly patterns. Miller encourages Christians to embrace their unique gifts and serve one another in love, while also maintaining a strong moral stance against evil. He stresses the need for genuine love and support within the Christian community, even towards those who persecute us, and the importance of rejoicing with others in their successes. Ultimately, he calls for a transformation of the mind to reflect Christ's character in our daily lives.

Transcript

Paul's philosophy of Christian living, is compactly stated in these fifteen verses.

"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God; which is your reasonable service." God wants us to be his. We are his by actual right. "All souls are mine." By the right of creation we belong to him; he made us.

"You are not your own; for you are bought with a price." By the right of redemption also we are his; he purchased us with his own blood. Yet God wants us to give ourselves to him. Indeed we are not his at all in the true sense--until we have done this. We hold our life in our own hands--until we voluntarily surrender it to him.

We must "offer our bodies as living sacrifices" to God. We must renounce all our own right and claim--and give them to God to be his utterly and forever. We must notice that it is our "bodies" we are to present to God. That means that he is to be Lord of our whole life. Our hands are to be given to him--to do all they do for him. Our feet we are to give to him--to walk only for him. If we have presented our bodies to God, they must be well cared for, and they must be kept clean and holy. It is a "living" sacrifice we are to make. We are not to slay or crush our bodily powers--but are to make them God's for obedience, for his use and

service.

"Which is your reasonable service." A Christian man had been speaking to a congregation and had quoted this verse, urging those whom he addressed, to present their bodies to God as a living sacrifice. When he closed his address, a good friend, who sat beside him, said, "John, the next time you quotes that verse, you would better quote all of it." "Didn't I quote it all?" "No--you left off the last words, 'which is your reasonable service.' That is very important." He was right. We would better quote the whole verse.

It is not an unreasonable thing that God asks us to do--when he beseeches us to present ourselves to him as a living sacrifice. We may think of our relation to God. He is our father--and we are his children. Is it unreasonable that a child shall be asked to do a father's will? We may think of all God's goodness and kindness to us, the countless mercies and favors he bestows upon us. We may think of our redemption and remember at what tremendous cost God bought us--and then of all the blessings and hopes that are ours through his sacrifice for us. Is it unreasonable that we should be asked to consecrate our lives to God when he has done such things for us?

We may think of what will be the result--if we do not yield ourselves to God--that our lives will be lost in sin's darkness and death. We may think of the good that will come to us through devoting ourselves to him--eternal life, eternal blessedness. Is it then unreasonable that we should be called to make this presentation of ourselves to God?

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." We are not of this world--if we are Christians. We belong to the kingdom of heaven. We ought never to forget this. It is very easy for us, being in the world--to become of it, to let our lives grow like the world. But this is not the way to make ourselves a living sacrifice to God.

Some Christian professors have the impression that they can do more good; have more influence over those who are not Christians, if they will not be too strict in their lives, if they will meet them half way. But this is a great mistake! We can never impress the world--by agreeing with it. "It is not conformity that we need," says Dr. Bushnell, "but it is to stand apart and above it, and to produce the impression of a holy and separate life. This only is safety and success."

Instead then of conforming to the world, taking the world's color, our duty is to seek to be transformed into the heavenly life. This word "transformed" means to be transfigured, that is, to become bright and shining in our life. The secret of it is given here in the words "by the renewing of your mind." The candle is to be lighted within our heart--that its beams may shine out through our life, making it glow. The meaning is, that our character shall become like the character of Christ in its beauty, its purity, its spirit.

"I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment." That is a needed lesson always. Many of us are in danger of making this mistake. We think we are better than we are. We want higher places than we are qualified to fill. We are taught not to overestimate our powers and gifts.

But neither are we to think too poorly of ourselves. Some people undervalue their ability. To think soberly, is to think the truth about ourselves. It is to look at our life reverently as a gift of God, as something God has made and given to us to care for and use and then to answer for. We are responsible for making the most of our talent, if we have but one; or whether few or many. It is sacrilege of the saddest kind--not to think soberly about our life. Whether lowly or great, it is a holy trust for which we must give account.

"In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Romans 12:5. The illustration of the body is very suggestive. We are all members of one body--but the members are not all alike. Each has its own function. Each is important in its place. Each is essential. The losing of one member, maims the body.

There is a difference in the apparent prominence of the members. Some are always seen; others are obscure and do their part out of sight. But the obscure member who does nothing that every attracts attention, is just as important and honors God and blesses his fellow men--just as much as the conspicuous member who is always in the gaze of men.

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." There are reasons why our gifts should differ. Suppose that all the people in the United States were poets, what would we do with so much poetry? Who would attend to the business, the commerce, the farming, the factories and mills? Differing gifts ensure a hand for every task, the smallest as well as the largest duties. There are a thousand different things to do--and there is somebody to do each thing.

"If a man's gift is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

Let everyone attend to his own gift; do the thing he is fitted to do, called to do, set to do. Then let each one give his whole energy to the thing he does. The words are very suggestive--we are to give ourselves to our own particular work--and do our best in it. It is like another of Paul's words, "This one thing I do."

Oliver Wendell Holmes says that the human race is divided into two classes: those who go ahead and do something; and those who sit still and inquire, "Why wasn't it done the other way?" Most people belong to the second class.

"If a man's gift is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously." Some people give grudgingly. They do not want to give away anything, and whatever benefactions they do bestow--are always dragged out of them. They give in a bad spirit, which destroys all the beauty of their charity. But that is not the way God wants his children to give. He would have them give liberally, that is as generously as they are able to give. He would have them give lovingly, cheerfully. "God loves a cheerful giver," Paul elsewhere says, and the literal meaning is, "God loves a hilarious giver!" We need to think of this.

"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." It is well to be intensely earnest in our moral sentiments and feelings. Some people are altogether too mild, both in their hatred of sin and their love for what is good and right. We are forbidden to hate wicked people--but we are to hate wickedness. God hates everything that is sinful, and if we would be like him--we must do the same. Too many of us are very tolerant of wrong things, especially in ourselves. We ought to keep our moral sense so keen that we shall always hate whatever is not strictly right.

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love." We are too cold in our love for each other. There is something wondrously beautiful in the way Jesus loved his disciples and friends. Not only did he love them--but he let them know that he loved them. He spoke to them of his tender interest in them--and showed it, too, in many sweet and gentle ways. His command to his friends was that they should love one another--as he had loved them. We have more love for each other than we express. We seem to be afraid to show our love. The words "kindly affectioned" do not suggest the cold reserve that is so common.

"Honor one another above yourselves." That is not easy. We like to claim first place for ourselves. We do not like to sink ourselves out of sight when we have been doing something good or beautiful, and quietly allow some other one to carry off the honor. It is in associated Christian work that this lesson has its special application.

"Bless those who persecute you." That is a hard lesson. We like to pay debts of this kind with the same sort of coin we have received. Or at best we would drop the matter and not pay at all. If anyone wrongs us--we do not want to have anything more to do with him. But neither of these treatments is what this lesson teaches. We are not to return injury for injury. Nor are we to return nothing for injury. We must pay the debt--but we must pay it with love. We must "get even" with our enemy. And the only payment that will settle the account--is love.

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Strange to say, the first of these counsels is harder to follow than the second. It is easier to weep with those who weep--than it is to rejoice with those who rejoice. When one is in sorrow, all one's friends are touched with sympathy, and many seek ways to express their feelings. But when one is in special joy there is not the same sympathy. One does not require help when specially glad and happy--as when suffering. Yet it is well for us to mark the lesson. It is a close test of character--this being able to be glad because our friend is prospered, even though we do not have prosperity of our own at the time.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/christian-living-romans-121-15/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net