

# A Holy Sacrifice

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.”

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

**W**hen Paul turns from doctrine (Romans 1-11) to behaviour (Romans 12-16) he begins by saying, “Therefore”. In other words Paul says, “In light of the truths I just wrote, live the following way.” Paul begins with a general statement to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. The rest of Romans works out the ways that sacrifice looks like.

When we think of a sacrifice we understand that the life is terminated in what is offered in sacrifice. The question arises as to how a sacrifice can live after being offered. The purpose of a sacrifice is to terminate its life in death.

For the believer we understand Paul’s expression in the words of our Lord when He said in Matthew 16:24 “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” A cross in Jesus’ time was

an instrument of execution not a burden to be borne.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German pastor and theologian, wrote the following, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” So from Scripture, and the commentaries of God’s people on Scripture, we are to understand that when we become Christians we are to die in some fundamental sense.

Personal ambition is to be subject to the Lord. Health and wealth is to be subject to the Lord’s will.

We must find out the Lord’s purpose for us in life and if that conflicts with personal choices we are to sacrifice what we want on the alter of God’s will. If, in the sovereignty of God, our health and/or wealth is taken from us, the same applies. We bow to the Lord’s will and seek to accept it.

All through his childhood

and well into his adult life the man born blind (John 9) lived in the darkness of his physical disease. His blindness was not because of personal sin according to Jesus but in order that God might receive glory.

When we ask how God gets glory from such a handicap, we respond that submission to the Lord in such difficulties honours Him. On the other hand, in those situations where the Lord heals someone, He is also glorified.

So when you are in some circumstance that deprives you of the things that most people enjoy, seek to remember that your life is in the Lord’s hands. You exalt Him by quiet submission. This, Paul writes, is pleasing to God.

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