Romans 12:1 Commentary

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Romans 12:1 I urge you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: Parakalo (1SPAI) oun humas adelphoi, dia ton oiktirmon tou theou, parastesai (AAN) ta somata umon thusian zosan (PAPFSA) agian euareston to theo, ten logiken latreian humon

Amplified: I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. (Amplified Bible - Lockman)

BBE: For this reason I make request to you, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you will give your bodies as a living offering, holy, pleasing to God, which is the worship it is right for you to give him.

NLT: And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? (NLT - Tyndale House)

Phillips: With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. (Phillips: Touchstone)

Wuest: I therefore beg of you, please, brethren, through the instrumentality of the aforementioned mercies of God, by a once-for-all presentation to place your bodies at the disposal of God, a sacrifice, a living one, a holy one, well-pleasing, your rational, sacred service, [rational, in that this service is performed by the exercise of the mind].

Young's Literal: I call upon you, therefore, brethren, through the compassions of God, to present your bodies a sacrifice -- living, sanctified, acceptable to God -- your intelligent service

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith

Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work "**Jensen's Survey of the NT**"

R **R**uin (Romans 1:17 – 3:20) – The utter sinfulness of humanity
O **O**ffer (Romans 3:21-31) – God's offer of justification by grace
M **M**odel (Romans 4:1-25) – Abraham as a model for saving faith
A **A**ccess (Romans 5:1-11) – The benefits of justification
N **N**ew Adam (Romans 5:12-21) – We are children of two "Adams"
S **S**truggle w/ Sin (Romans 6-8) Struggle, sanctification, and victory

I URGE YOU : Parakalo (1SPAI) oun humas:

- Ro 15:30; 1Co1:10; 2Co 5:20; 6:1; 10:1; Ep 4:1; 1Th 4:1,10; 5:12; Heb 13:22
- Romans 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Romans 12:1: Why Give Yourself Totally to God? - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:2: How to Change for Good - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:1-2 The Believer's Supreme Act of Spiritual Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Supreme Act of Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Critical Elements of True Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1 Responsibilities Under Grace 1 - Wayne Barber

This phrase reiterates again Who the gift is from. When we are vacillating and apprehensive, we can be sure it is because our focus is on ourselves and our own human resources rather than on the Lord and His available divine resources.

John Phillips writes that here in Romans 12:1 "The challenge has to do with the believer's body, which Paul now reveals to be the ultimate key to the practice of the victorious Christian life. It is of little avail to know theoretically the truths of Romans 6-8 if the body is not surrendered so that the life of Christ can be expressed in the everyday affairs of life...God does not compel and coerce the believer into presenting his body. He does not corral him and bridle him like a horse and force him to obey. He beseeches him. He wants an unbridled sacrifice. He makes it clear that to present the body to God is, for the believer, the proper thing to do. It is an axiom of Bible study that when we come across the word "**therefore**" we should pause and see what it's there for! In this case it links God's demand for the believer's body with those "**mercies**" Paul has been describing in both the doctrinal and dispensational sections of the epistle. God has saved us from sin, from its penalty and its power. He has saved us from self in all its features and all its forms. He has overruled the destinies of nations. He has triumphed in His grace and multiplied His mercies. He has, as it were,

besieged us with His mercies, brought them up against us in countless number, built the bulwarks of His grace against our souls, poured a ceaseless cannonade of kindness in upon the breaches in our hearts. He has overwhelmed us with unmerited favor and carried all before Him on the resistless arms of love. "I beseech you therefore," says Paul, "by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies." It is the proper thing to do. It is the only possible thing to do. It is the only fitting answer we can give to "**love so amazing, so divine**." (Phillips, John: Exploring Romans: An Expository Commentary)

J Vernon McGee - "I beg of you" is the language of grace, not law. There is no thunder here from Mount Sinai. Moses commanded; Paul exhorts. Could Paul have commanded? Well, he told Philemon that he could have given him a command, but he didn't. Paul doesn't command; he says, "I beg of you."

Newell - What an astonishing word to come from God! From a God against whom we had sinned, and under whose judgment we were! What a word to us, believers,—a race of sinners so lately at enmity with God,—"I beseech you!" Paul had authority from Christ to command us,—as he said to Philemon: "Though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech." Let us give heart-heed to this our apostle, who often covered with his tears the pages whereon he wrote. As he said of his ministry, "We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech—!" (**Romans 12**)

Charles Simeon introduces his sermon on Romans 12:1 noting that...

> The end of all true religion is, to bring men to God. From Him they have fallen, and to Him must they be restored. Whatever instructions have not this object in view, are of small value. The Gospel itself would be an empty speculation, if it did not teach us to hope for some practical effects. There are some who would separate principle from practice: but not so the Apostle Paul: he expected not **fruit** indeed without a **root**; nor hoped to raise an **edifice**, without laying a **foundation**: but, when his foundation was firmly laid, he deferred not to build upon it. In all the preceding part of this epistle he has shown how sinners are to find acceptance with God; and has proved the sovereignty of God in the disposal of His blessings. But, having finished his argument, he does not leave us there; he goes on to show the practical effects of his principles; and urges us, from the consideration of all God's mercies, to devote ourselves unreservedly to His service.
>
> The duty to which we are exhorted—There is in the words before us an evident allusion to the sacrifices that were offered under the law. The victims were brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and were there slain; and their bodies were disposed of according to the particular directions given in the law, as suited to the occasions on which the offerings were made; some being wholly burnt upon the altar, and others partly burnt, and partly eaten by those who ministered before the Lord. In reference to these, we are required to "present our bodies (which is here put for our whole selves) a living sacrifice unto the Lord;" that is, we should, with the full concurrence of our inmost souls, devote ourselves to God London.
>
> We must not strain a **metaphor** ("living sacrifice") too far. The sacrifices under the law were intended to make atonement for sin: but this is no part of our office; Christ, our great sacrifice, having, by his own body once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. It is only as far as the victim was surrendered entirely to God, that the metaphor is applicable to us: and in this view it is frequently used; the whole body of believers being themselves an offering to the Lord (Ro 15:16-note), and "a spiritual priesthood also, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."...
>
> No part of us should be under the dominion of any other lord: but "as we have formerly yielded both the members of our bodies and the faculties of our souls, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, we must henceforth yield them wholly unto God, as those that are alive unto God." (Ro 6:12, 13-note, Ro 6:19-note) Every sin, of whatever kind, must be mortified; and every grace, however difficult and self-denying, be brought into habitual exercise...
>
> If God call for our whole persons, as it were, to be consumed by fire upon his altar, we must not draw back; but must say with the Apostle, "I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die, for the Lord's sake." So far from regarding such an event with dread, we should rather consider it as our highest honour....
>
> In a word, "we should neither live unto ourselves, nor die unto ourselves; but live and die unto God only; so that, both living and dying, we may be the Lord's." (Ro 14:7, 8-note) (Romans 12:1 Devotedness to God Recommended)

(**Urge** (3870)(**parakaleo** from **para** = beside + **kaleo** = call aloud) (also used in Ro12:8, 15:30, 16:17) literally means "to call to one's side" thus picturing someone calling another to his side and lovingly presenting his message to him. Thus instead of simply asserting his apostolic authority, Paul preferred to appeal to the inner consciousness of his readers.

All believers need this urging on these great verses in Romans 12:1-2, lest our familiarity with them lead to passivity! These opening verses and the truth that follows is life transforming.

Parakaleo is often used to urge one to pursue a certain course of conduct. Paul may have had in mind the picture of the classic Greek use of **parakaleo [see more discussion of secular use]** where the commander exhorts the troops about to go into battle (a thought worth pondering)! One could translate **parakaleo** in this verse as Paul saying "I... appeal... beseech... exhort... plead... beg of you". Paul is imploring the Roman saints to make a decisive dedication of all that they are to God.

Parakaleo is a favorite Pauline verb (he uses it some 50 times - Ro 12:1, 8; 15:30; 16:17; 1Co. 1:10; 4:13, 16; 14:31; 16:12, 15; 2Co. 1:4, 6; 2:7, 8; 5:20; 6:1; 7:6, 7, 13; 8:6; 9:5; 10:1; 12:8, 18; 13:11; Ep 4:1; 6:22; Php. 4:2; Col. 2:2; 4:8; 1Th 2:12; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11, 14; 2Th 2:17; 3:12; 1Ti 1:3; 2:1; 5:1; 6:2; 2Ti 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:6, 15; Philemon 1:9, 10) characterized by McBeth as “one of the tenderest expressions in all the Bible.” Paul is not commanding the following attitude and action but appeals to our will. God calls us to make a choice about the way that we live for Him.

Similarly, in writing to **Philemon**, Paul told him,

> Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do that which is proper, yet for love’s sake I rather appeal to you (Philemon 1: 8,9).

Ray Stedman notes that "here, in a sense, in Romans 12:1, we have a formula for how to avoid a wasted life....you are not truly committed to God unless these things that Paul speaks of are true in your experience." (See his full sermon **Discovering the Will of God**)

As **Hiebert** writes "The first 11 chapters fairly revel in the great mysteries of the plan of redemption. But when we come to chapter twelve the tide turns. Now it is the practical, the everyday. It is a clear reminder that true Christianity involves both “believing” and “behaving” the gospel. The history of Christendom reveals the tragic results when the vital relationship between doctrine and conduct is lost....“A doctrine, a gospel, which has no significance for man’s life and conduct is not a real gospel; and life and conduct which are not based on that which comes to us in the gospel are not Christian life and Christian conduct.” In a living Christianity, faith & conduct are inseparable."

Expositor's Bible Commentary writes that the "theological exposition (or argument) centering around the problem as to how sinful man can be put into right relationship with God is over. But there is more to be said, because when man is made right with his Maker, he needs to know what difference this makes in his relations with his fellowmen. He needs to know what is expected of him and how to apply his new resources to all the situations confronting him. It is notable that the key word "righteousness," which has so dominated the book up to this point, occurs only once in the closing chapters (see Romans 14:17-note) and then not in the forensic sense denoting right relationship with God but rather in the practical meaning of right relations with one's fellows. (Gaebelein, F, Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing)

Albert Barnes - None of the doctrines of the gospel are designed to be cold and barren speculations. They bear on the hearts and lives of people; and the apostle therefore calls on those to whom he wrote to dedicate themselves without reserve unto God. (Notes on the New Testament)

Therefore (3767) (**oun**) reminds us that when we see a **therefore** we always need to ask "What's it *there for*?" (Click discussion of **terms of conclusion**) This question will usually prompt you to review the facts, truths or circumstances in the preceding verses and often expresses a "cause and effect". Paul typically begins a letter with a strong doctrinal section and follows with exhortations to Christian living...because of the truth just presented, **therefore** we should live this way (which Paul elaborates on in Romans 12-16).

Therefore in the immediate context refers back to the glorious doxology in (see **notes** Romans 11:33; 34; 35; 36) and then to the bedrock truths concerning "the gospel" expounded in the first 11 chapters.

Morris adds that when Paul "uses this pattern Paul is saying that the Christian life is dependent on the great Christian doctrines." (**Defender's Study Bible**) (**Ed note**: what you believe should affect how you behave -- otherwise one must ask "Do your ***really*** believe?".)

Henry Alford feels that **therefore** "may apply to the whole doctrinal portion of the Epistle which has preceded, which, see Ephesians 4:1; 1Thessalonians 4:1, seems the most natural connection (so Olsh., Meyer), or to the whole close of Ro 11 (so Tholuck.)" (**Greek Testament Critical Exegetical Commentary**)

The abundant ("great") life described in (Ro 12-16) is dependent upon great doctrine (Ro 1-11). Paul is appealing to our will and calling us to make a choice about our service to God.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.
Isaac Watts

(Click Here to Play this great hymn with a beautiful melody - — Video is hard to see but it's still hauntingly beautiful as sung by Kathryn Scott)
(**Or click here** for just the words of the hymn sung by Kathryn Scott)

Consecration (as in Ro 12:1, 2) should always precede **service** (Ro 12:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13ff). Webster says **consecration** = "The act or ceremony of separating from a common to a sacred use, or of devoting and dedicating a person or thing to the service and worship of God, by certain rites or solemnities. Consecration does not make a person or thing really holy, but declares it to be sacred, that is, devoted to God or to divine service; as the consecration of the priests among the Israelites; the consecration of the vessels used in the temple; the consecration of a bishop."

John Henry Jowett has a pithy devotional entitled **Imperfect Consecration** based on (Mt 19:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22) but related to the consecration Paul calls for in Romans 12:1...

> THE rich young ruler consecrated a part, but was unwilling to consecrate the whole. He hallowed the inch but not the mile. He would go part of the way, but not to the end. And the peril is upon us all. We give ourselves to the Lord, but we reserve some liberties. We offer Him our house, but we mark some rooms "Private." And that word "Private," denying the Lord admission, crucifies Him afresh. He has no joy in the house so long as any rooms are withheld.
>
> Dr. F. B. Meyer has told us how his early Christian life was marred and his ministry paralyzed just because he had kept back one key from the bunch of keys he had given to the Lord. Every key save one! The key of one room kept for personal use, and the Lord shut out. And the effects of the incomplete consecration were found in lack of power, lack of assurance, lack of joy and peace.
>
> The "joy of the Lord" begins when we hand over the last key. We sit with Christ on His throne as soon as we have surrendered all our crowns, and made Him sole and only ruler of our life and its possessions. (J H Jowett - Daily Meditation - February 14) **(Ed: Beloved, are there any "keys" you've been reluctant to wholeheartedly give to Jesus?)**

Vance Havner - God wants self before substance and service...Self, service, substance is the divine order, and nothing counts until we give ourselves.

I like the way **Walter Knight** explained it - Consecration isn't our giving anything to God. It is our taking our hands off what already belongs to God.

M H Miller - Consecration is handing God a blank sheet to fill in with your name signed at the bottom.

Easton's Bible Dictionary defines **consecration** as "the devoting or setting apart of anything to the worship or service of God. The race of Abraham and the tribe of Levi were thus consecrated (Ex 13:2, 12, 15; Nu. 3:12). The Hebrews devoted their fields and cattle, and sometimes the spoils of war, to the Lord (Lev 27:28, 29). According to the Mosaic law the first-born both of man and beast were consecrated to God. In the New Testament, Christians are regarded as consecrated to the Lord (1Pe 2:9-note).

Phillip Brooks - It does not take great men to do great things; it only takes consecrated men.

Paul is saying in essence **"Therefore**"...now that you are justified by grace through faith & at peace with God, now that you are redeemed from the power of Sin, now that you are being progressively set apart from the world & unto God (sanctified, made holy), and finally knowing that you will soon to be glorified...on the basis of these "precious & magnificent promises" (all of these being "mercies of God") Paul begs Christians to live a certain way in light of what God did for them Paul pleads for the brethren to give God their bodies.

There must be in the believer's life that final and complete surrender of the body to Jesus Christ. This does not mean there will be no further steps of surrender, because there will be. The longer we walk with Christ, the deeper the fellowship must become. But there can be no subsequent steps without that first step.

Wiersbe - The Christian life is not based on ignorance but knowledge, and the better we understand Bible **doctrine** (Romans 1-11), the easier it is to obey Bible **duties** (Romans 12-16). When people say, "Don't talk to me about **doctrine**—just let me live my

Christian life!" they are revealing their ignorance of the way the Holy Spirit works in the life of the believer. "It makes no difference what you believe, just as long as you live right" is a similar confession of ignorance. It does make a difference what you believe, because what you believe determines how you behave!" (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor)

Harrison - Whereas the heathen are prone to sacrifice IN ORDER TO OBTAIN mercy, biblical faith teaches that the divine mercy provides the BASIS of sacrifice as the fitting response.

THE
FOUR GREAT
THEREFORE'S

IN ROMANS

Note the 4 "strategic" uses of **therefore** by Paul in Romans (**therefore** is used 25x in NASB in Romans)...

(1) the **therefore** of condemnation (Romans 2:1-note)

(2) the **therefore** of justification (Romans 5:1-note)

(3) the **therefore** of assurance (Romans 8:1-note)

(4) the **therefore** of dedication (Romans 12:1-note)

Wuest - **Doctrine** must always precede **exhortation** since in doctrine the saint is shown his exalted position which makes the exhortation to a holy life, a reasonable one, and in doctrine, the saint is informed as to the resources of grace he possesses with which to obey the exhortations.

And so let us not forget that the vital part of **do**ctrine is "do"! You may think you know Romans 1-11, but you don't unless you are allowing it to "know you" and you are living it out in the practical issues of day to day life. James nailed this down by warning us not to be hearers but doers of the word, lest we live in a state of self delusion (see James 1:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26-see notes). In short, you have not really learned the Word of God unless you do the Word of God (of course not legalistically but empowered by the Spirit and strengthened by the grace of Christ Jesus - see 2 Timothy 2:1-note, cp 2Cor 12:9-note, James 4:6)

My Saviour, I am thine,

By everlasting bands;

My name, my heart, I would resign;

My soul is in thy hands.
Philip Doddridge

Paul's pattern in Romans is...

Doctrine
(Ro 1:1 - Ro 11:32)

v

Doxology
(Ro 11:33, 34, 35, 36)

v

Dedication
(Ro 12:1-2)

v

Duty
(Ro 12:3 - Ro 16:27)

Christian practice is inseparable from Christian truth
The goal of truth is holiness

These first two verses in Romans 12 give the basic exhortations which govern all the duties that follow. A life regulated toward God results in a life regulated toward man. The biblical pattern always dictates that we relate doctrine and duty, for what you believe must determine how you behave. A powerful motivation for living the "Christ life" (note: this phrase does not imply believers are "little Christs" - that is heresy) is gratitude to God for saving us by His grace (cf 2 Cor 5:14,15, Galatians 2:20-note;).

Theology (belief about God) precedes and should never be separated **doxology** (praise and worship of God) for there can be no genuine doxology without theology for who can worship an unknown god.

John Stott - "All true worship is a response to the self-revelation of God in Christ and Scripture, and arises from our reflection on Who He is and what He has done. The worship of God is evoked, informed and inspired by the vision of God. Worship without theology is bound to degenerate into idolatry. Hence the indispensable place of Scripture in both public and private devotion. It is the Word of God which calls forth the worship of God. On the other hand, there should be no theology without doxology. There is something fundamentally flawed about a purely academic interest in God. God is not an appropriate object for cool, critical, detached, scientific observation and evaluation. No, the true knowledge of God will always lead us to worship, as it did Paul. Our place is on our faces before him in adoration....Bishop Handley Moule said at the end of the last [19th] century, we must "beware equally of an undevotional theology and of an untheological devotion."

As **Kent Hughes** points out Paul frequently uses "**therefore**" to mark a point of turning from theology to practicality (cf Ephesians 4:1-note, Colossians 3:5-note). Hughes adds that...

> This shift can be expressed in many ways: from **doctrine** to **duty**; from **creed** to **conduct**; from the Christian's **wealth** to his **walk**; from **exposition** to **exhortation**; from the **indicative** to the **imperative**; from **high society** to a **high life**." (Ed note: and from "belief" to "behavior") (Romans: Righteousness from heaven. Preaching the Word)

Brethren (80) (**Adelphos** from "**a**" denoting unity + **delphus** = womb) literally means from "one womb". Thus Paul adds a note of warmth with this term because **adelphos** speaks of fellowship of life based on identity of origin as in members of the same family (cp John 1:12, 13). In Romans 12:1 Paul is not referring to unregenerate Jewish **brethren** but to his **brethren** in Christ by grace through faith. And so in what follows is "family truth" applicable only to believers who have trod the Romans Road of salvation and is not meant to be applied by unbelievers.

BY THE MERCIES OF GOD: dia ton oiktirmon tou Theou:

- Ro 2:4; 9:23; 11:30,31; Ps 116:12; Luke 7:47; 2Co 4:1; 5:14,15; Ep 2:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Php 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Titus 3:4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 1Pe 2:10, 11, 12
- Romans 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Romans 12:1: Why Give Yourself Totally to God? - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:2: How to Change for Good - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:1-2 The Believer's Supreme Act of Spiritual Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Supreme Act of Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Critical Elements of True Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1 Responsibilities Under Grace - Wayne Barber
- Spurgeon Discusses God's Attribute of Mercy
- Mercy of God by Barry Horner
- Mercy of God - Charles Buck Theological Dictionary

Note that Paul had just used ***mercy*** four times in the preceding verses (Ro 11:30; 31; 32 see notes Ro 11:30; 31; 32) so look at those verses in context to help understand what he is saying in this verse. In fact the key word of Romans 9-11 is not love but mercy.

Jamieson - those mercies, whose free and unmerited nature, glorious Channel, and saving fruits have been opened up at such length.

J Vernon McGee - **By the mercies of God** in the plural is a Hebraism (Ed: Reminiscent of the opening words of Psalm 1 which in Hebrew are literally "blessed, blessed" - as divine blessing is heaped upon blessing, so too divine mercy is heaped upon mercy.

PTL!) denoting an abundance of mercy. God is rich in mercy; God has plenty of it, my friend. He has had to use a lot of it for me, but He still has plenty of it for you. "Mercy" means compassion, pity, and the tenderness of God. His compassions never fail.

Charles Simeon - In all the preceding part of this epistle, St. Paul has been unfolding the great mystery of redemption as wrought out for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, and as applied to us by the Spirit, according to the eternal counsels of the Father. By the consideration of these "mercies" he urges us to give up ourselves to God. It was for this very end that these mercies were vouchsafed to us. Wherefore did our blessed Saviour "give himself for us?" Was it not "to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works?" And to what did the Father predestinate us, but to be conformed to the image of his Son?" Let these ends then be answered in us: and let us remember, that, "having been bought with a price, we are not our own; but are bound to glorify God with our bodies and our spirits, which are his. (Romans 12:1 Devotedness to God Recommended - Horae Homileticae Vol. 15: Romans)

Mercies (3628) (**oiktirmos** from **oikteiro** = to have compassion {used only in Romans 9:15- see note} in turn derived from **oiktos** = compassion or pity which in turn is said to be derived from the interjection **oi** = "Oh!") denotes the inward feeling of compassion which abides in the heart. It represents the display of concern over or compassion with another's misfortune. **Compassion** (from Latin **com** = with + **pati** = to bear, suffer - thus literally to "bear with" or "to suffer with") is a sympathetic consciousness of other's distress together with a desire to alleviate it and in the case of God, with the ability to in fact do so!

Oiktirmos - 5x in 5v - Ro 12:1; 2Cor 1:3; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12; Heb 10:28.**NAS** = compassion(2), mercies(2), mercy(1).

The meaning of **oiktirmos** is like **splagchnon** [word study], related primarily the viscera, which were thought to be the seat of compassion. The word came to signify manifestations of pity and refers to the pity that is aroused by the sight of another's suffering. Lightfoot says

> By **splagchnon** is signified the abode of tender feelings, by **oiktirmos** the manifestation of these in compassionate yearnings and actions

The related word **eleos** which is also often translated mercy is similar in meaning but Thayer discussing the corresponding verb forms (eleeo, oikteiro) makes the following distinction...

> **Eleeo**—to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy as manifests itself in act, less frequently in word; whereas **oikteiro** denotes the inward feeling of compassion which abides in the heart. A criminal begs**eleos** of his judge; but hopeless suffering is often the object of **oiktirmos** (p. 203).

The **Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible** has an interesting note on **compassion** explaining that...

> In the OT, compassion describes one aspect of God's covenantal relationship with his people (**Ed note**: In the examples of the use of oiktirmos in the Septuagint [see below] compassion is frequently found with "lovingkindness" or hesed [checed] a word integrally associated with the manifestation of God's covenantal love - see related resource Covenant - Why Study It?) One of the Hebrew words translated compassion is derived from a root word meaning "womb," thus comparing God's love with maternal love. God's compassion, however, went beyond simply feeling the emotion; it was always demonstrated by definite acts that testified to his covenant with Israel. In spite of Israel's rebellions God still had compassion on his people (2Ki 13:23; 2 Chr 36:15; Ps 78:38), as well as on all his creation (Ps 145:9). When Israel was chastised, the nation often feared that God had permanently withdrawn his favor (Ps 77:9; Is 27:11; 63:15; Jer 13:14; 21:7; Ho 13:14). Yet God's compassion would revive, and he would restore his people (Dt 30:3; Ps 135:14; Is 14:1; 49:13; 54:7, 8; Jer 12:15; 30:18; Micah 7:19; Zec 12:10), especially when they returned to him and cried out for deliverance (1 Ki 8:50; Ps 79:8). (Compassion - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)

Oiktirmos is the reaction of **pity** (a feeling of sorrow, sympathy and compassion caused by the sufferings of others) which one shows for the suffering or ills of others (as in the first use in the Septuagint (LXX) 2Sa 24:14 = *Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His* ***mercies*** [oiktirmos] *are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man.*")

Larry Richards explains that "**Oiktirmos** is a pitying exclamation torn from the heart at the sight of another's suffering...God compassionately and truly cares about what happens to us (Ro 12:1; 2Co 1:3). We are to imitate our heavenly Father (Lk 6:36) and let his kind of caring bind believers to each other in unity (Php 2:1-note;Colossians 3:12-note)... God calls us to have compassion on others. That call is more than an appeal for us to feel *with* and *for* the needy. It is a call to care enough to become involved and to help by taking some action that will set others' lives on a fresh, new course. (Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency)

Oiktirmos is that quality in God that moves Him to deliver man from his state of sin and misery and therefore underlies His saving activity in Christ. **Oiktirmos** as used here and in 2Corinthians 1:3 characterizes God's actions and feelings toward fallen humanity.

Our great hope (certainty) is in fact the provision of the unchanging mercy and boundless grace of our Father.

NIDNTT notes that in the original Greek usage "**oiktirmos**, and especially its root **oiktos**, to the exclamation of pity at the sight of another's ill-fortune, and **splanchna** to the seat of the emotions, the inward parts or what today would be called the heart. The corresponding verbs in the active express these feelings shown in the sense of to help, feel pity, show mercy; where they are used in the passive, they express the experience of these emotions...The root word ho oiktos (Aesch. and Soph. onwards) means the lamenting or regretting of a person's misfortune or death, then metaphorically sympathy, pity. The verb oiktiro, also oiktizo, (Homer onwards) means to have compassion, to pity, in the sense both of mere feeling and of active merciful action; it is often a synonym of eleeo". (Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology)

Here are the other 4 NT uses of **oiktirmos**...

> **2 Corinthians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of **mercies** and God of all comfort; (Note that **mercies** is in the plural when it refers to God)
>
> **Philippians 2:1** (see note) If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and **compassion**,
>
> **Colossians 3:12** (see note) And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; (**Note** that real sympathy or **compassion** demands that one become involved)
>
> **Hebrews 10:28** (see note) Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

The Septuagint (LXX) uses **oiktirmos** 31 times (2Sa 24:14; 1Ki. 8:50; 1Chr. 21:13; 2 Chr. 30:9; Neh. 1:11; 9:19, 27, 28, 31; Ps 25:6; 40:11; 51:1; 69:16; 77:9; 79:8; 103:4; 106:46; 119:77, 156; 145:9; Is 63:15; Da 1:9; 2:18; 4:27; 9:9, 18; Ho 2:19; Zech. 1:16; 7:9; 12:10). For example...

> Psalm 25:6 Remember, O LORD, Thy **compassion** (oiktirmos) (actually in the plural in Hebrew) and Thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been from of old.
>
> **Psalm 51:1** For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy **compassion** blot out my transgressions.
>
> **Psalm 103:4** Who redeems your life from the pit; Who crowns you with lovingkindness and **compassion**;
>
> **Daniel 9:9** "To the Lord our God belong **compassion** and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him;
>
> **Hosea 2:19** "And I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in **compassion**,
>
> **Zechariah 12:10** And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication (the LXX translates it with **oiktirmos** = compassion), so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

This flood of **mercies** has its source in the tender heart of God (cf Zacharias' description of God in Lu 1:78) and is not due to any merit on the part of the readers.

Unless God had granted us **mercies**, not one of us could or would desire or be enabled to obey Paul's exhortation to "**present ourselves**", for no unregenerate man seeks God or has any desire to please Him (see Romans 3:10 note).

Now we should be like the man who said,

> Christ has done so much for me, the rest of my life is a "*P.S.*" (postscript = a message added at the end of a letter, after the signature) to His great mercies!" Glory to God for His infinite mercies.

The greater our comprehension of what God has done for us, the greater our commitment should be. Practically applied, Christ's gift, meditated on, accepted, taken to heart, is a magnet drawing us to deepest commitment to him. Immense vision will bring immense commitment. That is what Isaac Watts meant when he wrote

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts **Play hymn**

Harrison writes that

> Whereas the heathen are prone to sacrifice in order to obtain **mercy**, biblical faith teaches that the divine **mercy** provides the basis of sacrifice as the fitting response.

William Seeker...In view of God's mercy (2Corinthians 9:15)

> What could Jesus do more—than to die for us! What can we do less—than to live for Him! You cannot fathom all the good which He has bestowed upon you—nor all the evil which He has forgiven you! (The Consistent Christian)

William Newell adds that

> We must believe that these Divine **mercies** have persuasive powers over our wills. (Newell, W: Romans: Verse by Verse)

When was the last time you truly "ceased striving" (Ps 46:10) to ponder some of our Father's infinite mercies in Christ? Look at some of these **mercies** below and

> Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. (see Hebrews 13:15-note)

JUST A FEW OF THE MERCIES OF GOD IN ROMANS 1-11

- · Justified
- · Dead to sin, alive in Christ
- · Adopted into God's family
- · Under the power of grace not law
- · Possessors of the indwelling Holy Spirit
- · Peace and reconciliation with God
- · No condemnation in Christ
- · Promise of future glory
- · No separation from God
- · Confidence in God's faithfulness based upon His faithfulness to Israel

The story of Nicolaus Zinzendorf: *One* day a young Austrian nobleman strolled into a small church in a European village. As he loitered along the aisle, his attention was arrested by a painting of the crucified Christ hanging on the wall. The soul of the artist who painted the picture had been flooded with love for his Savior because He had redeemed him from a life of sin and folly. Underneath the picture of the Sufferer the artist had written the lines, “All this I did for thee, What hast thou done for Me?” The young nobleman saw the love depicted in every feature of that divine face and was drawn to Jesus’ bleeding brow and pierced hands. Having slowly viewed the varied aspects of the picture, his gaze rested on the couplet under the picture. A new revelation of the claim of Jesus Christ gripped his heart. Hours passed as the young nobleman gazed on the face of his suffering Savior. The lingering rays of the afternoon sun fell on the bowed form of Nicolaus Zinzendorf, weeping and sobbing out his devotion to the Christ whose love had not only saved his soul but also conquered his heart. From that little church Zinzendorf went forth to become the leader of the mighty missionary activities of the Moravian church that have reached to the ends of the earth.Theirs was the response that Paul’s heart yearned for on the part of every believer, motivated by a gripping realization of the mercies of God. Don't misinterpret Zinzendorf's reaction to "What hast thou done for Me?" as his attempts to earn or merit salvation. To the contrary the *"love of Christ"* (**controlled)** (compelled, constrained) (2 Cor 5:14)

Zinzendorf now worked ***FROM*** his salvation in Christ and not ***FOR*** his salvation. There is an eternal difference between these two ways.

TO PRESENT: parastesai (AAN)

- Ro 6:13,16,19; Ps 50:13,14; 1Co 6:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Phil 1:20; Heb 10:22
- Romans 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Romans 12:1: Why Give Yourself Totally to God? - Steven Cole

- Romans 12:2: How to Change for Good - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:1-2 The Believer's Supreme Act of Spiritual Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Supreme Act of Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Critical Elements of True Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1 Responsibilities Under Grace 1 - Wayne Barber

Rom 6:13 and do not go on **presenting** the members of your body to sin [as] instruments of unrighteousness; but **present** yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness to God.

Rom 6:16 Do you not know that when you **present** yourselves to someone [as] slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

Rom 6:19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you **presented** your members [as] slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in [further] lawlessness, so now **present** your members [as] slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

If so poor a worm as I
May to thy great glory live;
All my actions sanctify,
All my words and thoughts receive.

Claim me for thy service, claim
All I have and all I am.
Charles Wesley

Illustration - In a church service one Sunday, the offering plate came to a little girl at the end of a row. She took the plate, put it down on the floor, and stood in it. When the usher asked her what she was doing, she responded, “In Sunday school I learned that I was supposed to give myself to God.” Point made!

J Vernon McGee writes that "We are called upon to "present" -- to yield. This is the same word we had, you recall, back in chapter 6. Although some expositors suggest that there it refers to the mind while here it refers to the will, I think it is a false distinction. The appeal in both instances is to the will. In the sixth chapter, the way of Christian character is to yield to Him. Here yielding is the way to Christian consecration and conduct. He says to yield "your bodies," your total personalities. The body is the instrument through which we express ourselves. The mind, the affections, the will, and the Holy Spirit can use the body. Vincent has assembled the following Scriptures which reveal this wide latitude. We are told to glorify God in our bodies. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Cor. 6:20). "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. 1:20). "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2Cor. 4:10).

By an act of the will we place our total personalities at the disposal of God.

Present (3936) (**paristemi [word study]** from **para** = beside or near + **histemi** = set) literally means to place or set beside or near hence to place at someone's disposal. The English dictionary notes that to **present** is to bring or introduce into the presence of someone especially of superior rank or status, to make a gift to (ponder that in context of Ro 12:1!); to convey to another as a possession (Woe! This is convicting!); to set, place or introduce into the presence or before the face of a superior; to offer gratuitously for reception; To put into the hands of another in ceremony.

Paristemi is used 6 times (of a total of 41 NT uses) in Romans - Romans 6:13, 6:16, 6:19, 14:10, 16:2 (see notesRo 6:13, 16, 19, 14:10, 16:2) (Here are the 41 uses of **paristemi** in the NT -

> Mt 26:53; Mk 4:29; 14:47, 69, 70; 15:35, 39; Lk 1:19; 2:22; 19:24; Jn 18:22; 19:26; Acts 1:3, 10; 4:10, 26; 9:39, 41; 23:2, 4, 24, 33; 24:13; 27:23, 24; Ro 6:13, 16, 19; 12:1; 14:10; 16:2; 1Co 8:8; 2Co 4:14; 11:2; Ep 5:27; Col 1:21, 28; 2Ti 2:15; 4:17)

Paristemi includes the ideas of to yield or surrender up, or to place at the disposal of another. The implication is that every aspect of a believer's life is to be yielded to God. In the Old Testament a worshiper would present an unblemished animal sacrifice to God as an expression of worship. Today, God doesn't want us to present dead sacrifices but to present ourselves to Him as living sacrifices.

The OT Law demanded sacrifice. The Gospel of Grace invites us to consider the "mercies of God" in (Ro1:1-11:36) and respond accordingly. On the basis of what God has shown us He has done, we are not to look to the Law & respond because we MUST. Instead we look at all God has done in showing us mercies & we respond freely from a grateful heart..."With eyes wide open to the mercies of God". (Phillips).

Lawrence Richards - If you ever find it hard to do what you know is the right thing, don't say, "I**ought** to do this or that" "**Ought**" won't help. Instead, think of God's MERCY to you & of Christ's great love. In view of God's MERCY you will want to do right.

PRESENTATION pictures giving something over to another, relinquishing your grip, and not letting go only to take it back! In context it is us placing ourselves at the disposal of God. In a similar manner, in Israel the whole burnt offering (which was also a voluntary offering) ascended to God and could never be reclaimed. It belonged to God. And so Paul is not referring to "**dedication**" as done in so many churches and evangelistic meetings, where individuals come forward in essence to confess sin. The sin problem has already been dealt with by His mercies. We are here presenting a "**holy**" sacrifice, not a **blemished** sacrifice. How many times in these so called "dedications" in churches do we see the same people coming down again & again, because they are dealing with some besetting sin. That is not what Paul is urging us to do -- consider two general types of OT sacrifices, for **reconciliation** & for **consecration**. (Ro 1-11) has taken care of **reconciliation** (of man to God, for God does not need to be reconciled to man - see Romans 5:10-note; Ro 5:11-note), and (Ro12:1ff) refers to **consecration** or **presentation** to God to do with us as He wills.

DOES GOD HAVE ALL OF YOU?

When they asked **General William Booth**, founder of the Salvation Army, why his ministry had been so successful he answered...

God has had all there was of me to have.

Comment: What a beautiful, practical picture of the first Levitical offering, the burnt offering, which was to be a whole offering. It was also a free will or voluntary offering, even as Paul here in Romans 12:1 does not **command** but encourages the presentation of our bodies to God as a living sacrifices. The more we meditate on the grand and glorious truths of what God has wrought for us undeserving, otherwise hell bound sinners, in Romans 1-11, the more we will (1) see the mercies (plural) of God who gives us heaven in Christ and the more (2) we will be motivated by love and gratitude for so great a salvation, to truly surrender all we are to the Lord God. Have you ever made this presentation to God? This is not a call for a legalistic presentation, but a loving presentation, yea even a "love offering" to the One Who has demonstrated His love to us when we were totally unlovely! Abounding mercies! Amazing grace. As Carl G Boberg so beautifully penned it...

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin,
Then sings my soul, my Savior, God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

F. B. Meyer once preached the following text "I remember so well when He came to my heart and challenged me as to the keys of the fortress. I had them upon my bunch, and before I gave them to Him I put one small key in my pocket. Have not you done that, and handed to Him the bunch minus that key? He gave it back, and said He could not be King at all if He could not be King of all. I put my hand in my pocket where I had hidden it, and said, 'I cannot give it, but You may take it,' and He took that tiny key. My King! I see Him now as He stood at the foot of the drawbridge of my heart. I see Him radiant as He stood then, for He is here now. He looked at me with those eyes which are as a flame of fire, and said, 'Are all the keys there?' I said, 'All but this, and I cannot give it; but I am willing for Thee to take it' and He took it at that. Then they were all His.

Have you given God all the keys? Have you given Him all of yourself? Do you love Him with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength? Christ gave His all when He became our "burnt offering" when He sacrificed Himself fully on the altar of the cross, to be consumed by the righteous wrath of the thrice holy God in order that He might pave the way to the Father by making atonement for our sins.

Claude Stauffer - **Presenting ourselves to God is an act of faith**. Remember what we said in Romans six, this is not so much a work as it is advancing in faith. Just as we received Jesus as our Savior by grace through faith, we continue on in our relationship with Him by the Spirit in faith ("from faith to faith" - Ro 1:17-note)...A living sacrifice is dead to self, dead to my desires, my agenda. I am to live sacrificially for God. I am alive, but I live for God; I am dead to myself, but alive to God (see Mt 16:24, 25, 26, Ro 6:3-10-note, 2Co 5:14,15-note, 2Co 7:1-note, Gal 2:20-note)....We are alive because of Jesus living in us by the Spirit. And the only

reasonable response to is now live for Him. (Ro 14:7, 8) (**Romans 12 Notes**)

Keep in mind the the culture and the times (the historical context) in which this letter was written -- Gentile (and Jewish) citizens of ancient Rome had a firsthand understanding of "**living sacrifices**" which helped them understand the gravity and import of Paul's great exhortation. Many today don't have this same understanding of a sacrifice as did first century believers and there is a tendency to take this serious call to **consecration** somewhat less seriously or with indifference, much to our loss. There will be NO God blessed ministry without a godly consecration! Or stated another way, there is no godly commitment that does not bring forth a God blessed ministry. In a similar fashion, before a priest in Israel could minister on behalf of others, he was obliged to present himself in a consecrated condition and the sacrifices he offered were to be without blemish (Mal 1:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13).

Present is **Aorist Tense**, which calls for a once and for all presentation denoting a deliberate action involving the thought of finality.

Pastor Chuck Smith reminds us that even in the OT David

> recognized that whatever we give to God belongs to Him. When the people gave the money to build the Temple because they gave so willingly and so abundantly (we read David's words) 1Chr 29:10, 11, 12, 13, 14...The problem with man is that so often he does not stop to reason things through. In Deuteronomy God said (Dt 32:29) and that is just the problem, people do not stop to consider the ultimate consequences of their actions. They do not look down the road to see where it is leading. If people would only stop to consider where the path is leading them, they would never go down that path. Through the prophet Isaiah God said (Is 1:18) and earlier in Isa 1:3 God said, "They do not consider." That is a great problem, people just do not stop to consider. Most people spend their entire lives in things that have no eternal value. Their bodies are used in activities that will bring no lasting reward. If the truth were expressed on their tomb stones would be inscribed, "This life was a waste." It was while I was taking my college prep courses, and planning on studying to become a medical doctor, that I felt God speak to me and say, you can go into medicine and help mankind, but the help you bring will only be temporary, for he will ultimately die. There is a deadly malady that all men are suffering, if you will devote your life to bringing them healing from the malady of sin, it is eternal. **Do you want to devote your life to things that are temporal or eternal?** (Chuck Smith - Sermon Notes)

A W Tozer said...

> "Present your bodies..."—that is, present your vessel. That must come first. A vessel that has not been presented will not be filled. God cannot fill what He cannot have. Present your vessel.
>
> I think God wants us to be intelligent. He wants us to come to Him. If you were in a bread line in some poor country, and you stood back and would not present your cup, you would not get any milk. And if you did not present the plate or basket, you would not get any bread.
>
> If you will not present your personality, you will not get the fullness of the Spirit of God.
>
> Are you ready to present your body with all of its functions and all that it contains—your mind, your personality, your spirit, your love, your ambitions, your all? This is the first thing. It can be a simple act—presenting the body. Are you willing to do it?

Present thus speaks of a definite point of commitment to God even as a bride and groom commit themselves to each other once and for all on their wedding day. The bride does not turn to the groom and say, “I give you my cooking ability.” Nor does he say to her, “I give you my bank account.” (They may not have either.) No, in a marriage ceremony they vow, “I give you myself.” And so the dedication of ourselves to serving God begins with a decisive commitment. But just as keeping the vows spoken in a wedding ceremony requires continual reminders and recommitment, so dedicating ourselves to the Lord involves a moment-by-moment awareness of the pledge we made. These reminders are necessary because the world-system relentlessly appeals to our inherent selfishness and pride. Through an attitude of continual submission to God, however, our hearts and lives will be transformed by God's power. And we will then know, with an assurance that comes from the Holy Spirit, that God's ways are "good and acceptable and perfect" (see Romans 12:2 - note). This enables us to live confidently, joyously, and sacrificially.

Miles Stanford adds this note...

> **Consecration** is based upon **reckoning** (an definite act of accepting as certain, of counting in this case Romans 1-11 as true) (see Romans 6:11-note). We turn from the old man by **counting ourselves** to have died unto sin and self. We turn to our position in the risen Lord by **counting ourselves** as new creations alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Abide above!... When we yield to sin and the old life, the result is unrighteousness; when we yield our “alive-from-the-dead” life unto God, there is righteousness... To **present** our bodies is to **yield** our faculties, our new life in Christ. “Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead [new creation], and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (see Romans 6:13-note). Life-out-of-death reckoning results in our becoming a “living sacrifice.” Such a one is always delivered unto death—but, out of that daily death, new life is constantly manifested. (Miles Stanford. Selected Works of Miles J. Stanford) (Bolding added)

Take My Life and Let It Be

Play hymn

(Hymn Story)

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.

From a devotional entitled **An Acceptable Sacrifice** we read that "The admonition of the apostle Paul in this verse is not at all unreasonable; in fact, it is a most logical request. In consideration of the mercies of God and all that He has done for us, and in contemplation of Christ's work of redemption at Calvary and the great sacrifice He made there, it is only reasonable that believers give their bodies back to Him as living sacrifices for service. Nothing less than a complete presentation of our bodies, however, will ever be acceptable to God. Our "sacrifice" must involve an entire and full surrender."

A T Pierson gave a most striking illustration of the need to give our all, holding nothing back writing "Supposing you had one thousand acres of land and someone approached you and made an offer to buy your farm. You agree to sell the land, except for one acre right in the very center, with provisions for a right of way. Do you know," he continued, "that the law would allow you to have access to that one, lone spot in the middle of that thousand acres? You could build a road all across the remainder of that farm to get to that small plot of ground. And so it is with the Christian who makes less than a one-hundred-percent surrender to God. You can be sure that the devil will make an inroad across that person's life to reach the unsurrendered portion and, as a result, his testimony and service will be marred and have little effect upon others.

Christian, does the Lord have your body? Have you ever by a very definite act of the will presented it to Him for His control, His use, and His glory? If not, why don't you do so right now?

Just say, "Lord, I've already given You my heart, but now here is my body! Help me to keep it clean, pure, and undefiled. Use me for Your glory in any way You see fit. I'm Yours to command!"

Poor is my best and small;
How could I dare divide?
Surely the Lord shall have my all,
He shall not be denied!—Anon.

There is no risk, only blessing, when we surrender ourselves to God!

The well known Bible expositor, **Warren Wiersbe** helps us understand how this great truth can be applied practically:

> For many years I have tried to begin each day by surrendering my body to the Lord. Then I spend time with His Word and let Him transform my mind and prepare my thinking for that new day. Then I pray, and I yield the plans of the day to Him and let Him work as He sees best. I especially pray about those tasks that upset or worry me—and He always sees me through. To have a right relationship with God, we must start the day by yielding to Him our bodies, minds, and wills....The Spirit of God transforms your life by renewing your mind (2Co 3:18), but He cannot do this unless you give Him your body." If you begin each day by surrendering your body, mind & will to your Lord, it will make a great deal of difference in what you do with your body during the day! (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor)

Presenting oneself to God is synonymous with **consecration**. But what is consecration? (See F B Meyer's excellent devotional entitled **Consecration** in "Our Daily Walk")

As the story goes a church member posed the following question to the pastor

"Will you please tell me in a word what your idea of **consecration** is?"

Holding out a blank sheet of paper the pastor replied,

"It is to sign your name at the bottom of this blank sheet, and to let God fill it in as He will."

Are you ready to "sign up" and "give yourself away" like in the line from Isaac Watt's famous hymn...

Alas and Did My Savior Bleed
Play hymn
But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe.
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do!

YOUR BODIES: ta somata humon:

- Romans 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Romans 12:1: Why Give Yourself Totally to God? - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:2: How to Change for Good - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:1-2 The Believer's Supreme Act of Spiritual Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Supreme Act of Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Critical Elements of True Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1 Responsibilities Under Grace 1 - Wayne Barber

Oswald Chambers says "There is actually only one thing you can dedicate to God, and that is your right to yourself (Getting There - My Utmost For His Highest).

Because our souls belong to God through salvation, He already has the inner man. But He also wants the outer man, in which the inner man dwells. God wants...

Our bodies not...
Our money or time

Our first not...
Our last

Our best not...
Our leftovers

Don't be like the Scottish woman in the following story taken from Our Daily Bread

> Several years ago I read an article about Queen Mary, who made it her practice to visit Scotland every year. She was so loved by the people there that she often mingled with them freely without a protective escort. One afternoon while walking with some children, she went out farther than she'd planned. Dark clouds came up unexpectedly, so she stopped at a nearby house to borrow an umbrella. "If you will lend me one," she said to the lady who answered the door, "I will send it back to you tomorrow." The woman didn't recognize the Queen and was reluctant to give this stranger her best umbrella. So she handed her one that she intended to throw away. The fabric was torn in several places and one of the ribs was broken. The next day another knock was heard at the door. When the lady opened it, she was greeted by a royal guard, who was holding in her hand her old, tattered umbrella. "The Queen sent me," he said. "She asked me to thank you for loaning her this." For a moment the woman was stunned, then, she burst into tears. "Oh, what an opportunity I missed," she cried. "I didn't give the Queen my very best! (Our Daily Bread)

Are you presenting God "tattered umbrellas" or your best?

Is Your All on the Altar?
Play hymn
Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?
Your heart does the Spirit control?

You can only be blest,
And have peace and sweet rest,
As you yield Him your body and soul.

Though Greek thought was prone to consider the body the receptacle containing the soul, this was not the Hebraic concept, which viewed man as a unit. Your body as used by Paul represents the complete man, the "part" representing the whole which is a figure of speech known as synecdoche (a part is put for the whole). So our **body** represents the totality of our being, not just our physical bodies but our **heart**, **soul**, **mind** and **strength**...**ALL of each of them! God wants ALL of our body on the altar, not just a part.** The body is the vehicle that implements the desires and choices of the redeemed spirit & is essential for making contact with the society in which the believer lives. Through the body we serve (Ro 12:3ff).

John MacArthur helps understand **our bodies** explaining that they "are more than physical shells that house our souls. They are also where our old, unredeemed humanness resides. In fact, our humanness is a part of **our bodies**, whereas our souls are not. **Our bodies** incorporate our humanness, our humanness incorporates our flesh, and our flesh incorporates our sin, as Romans 6 and 7 so clearly explain. **Our bodies** therefore encompass not only our physical being but also the evil longings of our mind, emotions, and will. (MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press)

A pastor friend of **Warren Wiersbe's** once said "There are too many 'cafeteria Christians' in our congregation. Instead of letting God plan the whole meal and accepting it, they pick and choose what they want, and they miss the best dishes He fixes for them!" God wants ALL OF OUR HEART, and He expects us to obey ALL of His will in ALL of our ways. If Jesus Christ gave His ALL for us (Ro 3:24, 25, 26-note, Ro 5:18-note, Ro 8:3-note, Ro 8:4-note), how can we do less than give our ALL to Him? (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor)

What a believer does with his body is as much a part of the spiritual life as what he does in his devotional time or how he uses his talents or his money. The artificial division we make between "physical" and "spiritual" is not at all biblical. Presenting our bodies to the Lord is a part of our "spiritual worship", and what we do with our bodies will have a direct bearing on how God will reward us one day. We should all be like the little girl who was looking at the presents under the Christmas tree, examining & shaking every package trying to guess what was inside. Then, in a burst of inspiration, she picked up a big red bow that had fallen off one present and held it on the top of her head. Looking at her daddy with twinkling eyes, she beamed a smile as she said, 'Look at me, daddy! I'm a present!'" Isn't this the child-like attitude every child of God should have toward their heavenly Father?

What shall I give to Christ today,
To Him Who gave Himself for me?
I'll give to Him my life, my love--
For time and for eternity.
--Anon.

In (Ex 29:20) there is a beautiful picture of what it means to present our entire body to God as a living sacrifice: In this chapter, the blood of the sacrifice was to be applied to the right ear, right thumb, & right big toe of the high priest, Aaron and also to his sons. This "ritual" was a reminder that they were to consecrate their whole body to the work of the Lord, listen to his Word, do his work, & walk in his ways.

Stedman has some practical, pithy thoughts on what our "body" signifies: "I frequently hear, as all pastors do, somebody say to me, "Well, I am sorry I can't make it to the meeting tonight, but I will be with you in spirit." And I understand what they mean, but I find it rather disconcerting to speak to a hall full of spirits; I would so much rather they bring their **bodies**. You see, if you move your **body** into action, you have really given yourself. You can come short of it in a thousand different ways, and sound very pious in doing it, but it is when you finally put your **body** on the line that you really have given yourself. Men frequently say, "Well, I'll give you my time." Or, "I will give you my money." But this is oftentimes a very pious dodge to evade a genuine commitment, because it is only part of the life. Or people say, "I am totally available," but the first request they get, they find an excuse to beg off. You see, our minds may be committed, our spirits may be available, but, yet, not our **bodies**. This is where we resist the pressure of God's Spirit, but this is what commitment is...The only life that is really life is: A life that is utterly given to God, a life in which He is in control, and a life in which God rules and reigns. (See Pastor Stedman's full sermon Discovering the Will of God)

Oswald Chambers comments regarding **presenting** ourselves to God...

> Christianity does not consist in telling the truth, or walking in a conscientious way, or adhering to principles; Christianity is something other than all that, it is adhering in **absolute surrender** to a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. (From Baffled to fight better)

> You will find the supreme crisis in you life is 'will-issues' all the time. Will I relinquish? Will I abandon? ...If you are up against a crisis, go through with it, relinquish all, and let Him make you fit for all He requires of you in this day. (From Christian Disciplines)

If the crisis has come to you on any line, surrender your will to Him absolutely and irrevocably. (From My Utmost for His Highest) (See also his devotional entitled Romans 12:1 Is my Sacrifice Living?)

A LIVING: thusian zosan (PAPFSA)

- Ps 69:30,31; Ho 14:2; 1Co 5:7,8; 2Cor 4:16; Php 2:17; Heb 10:20, 21, 22; 13:15,16; 1Pe 2:5
- Romans 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Romans 12:1: Why Give Yourself Totally to God? - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:2: How to Change for Good - Steven Cole
- Romans 12:1-2 The Believer's Supreme Act of Spiritual Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Supreme Act of Worship - John MacArthur
- Romans 12:1-2 The Critical Elements of True Worship - John MacArthur
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Jamieson - in glorious contrast to the legal sacrifices, which, save as they were slain, were no sacrifices at all. The death of the one "Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world," has swept all dead victims from off the altar of God, to make room for the redeemed themselves as "living sacrifices" to Him who made "Him to be sin for us"; while every outgoing of their grateful hearts in praise, and every act prompted by the love of Christ, is itself a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor (Heb 13:15, 16).

Vincent - Living, in contrast with the slain Levitical offerings. Compare Ro 6:8, 11. "**How can the body become a sacrifice?** Let the eye look on no evil, and it is a sacrifice. Let the tongue utter nothing base, and it is an offering. Let the hand work no sin, and it is a holocaust. But more, this suffices not, but besides we must actively exert ourselves for good; the hand giving alms, the mouth blessing them that curse us, the ear ever at leisure for listening to God" (Chrysostom).

Keith Krell rightly remarks that...The word "**living**" is a contradiction of terms. How can you offer a sacrifice and not kill it? We can explain this oxymoron by remembering Paul's words in chapter 6-we are dead (see Romans 6:11-note! Or, as Paul says in Gal 2:20 (see exposition) "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

It is true that animal victims were living when they were brought to the altar (a dead animal could not be brought for sacrifice) but as offered they were dead. Believers have "died to sin" (see Romans 6:2-note) but they live with Christ (see Romans 6:8- note) and are "alive from the dead" (see Romans 6:13-note). As offered they are alive. Thus the sacrifice Paul is calling for "demands not the destruction but the full energy of life. It is positive and dynamic." (Morris) This is a stark contrast with the dead sacrifices under the Old (Mosaic) Covenant (Law). There are two "living sacrifices" in the Bible and they help us understand the picture. The first is Isaac (Ge 22:1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 14); the second is our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaac willingly put himself on the altar and would have died in obedience to God's will, but the Lord sent a ram to take his place. Isaac "died" just the same—he died to self and willingly yielded himself to the will of God. When he got off the altar, Isaac was a "living sacrifice" to the glory of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect illustration of a "living sacrifice," dying, rising and forever bearing the covenant marks as the slain Lamb (see Rev 5:6-note).

Living reminds us of what God has made us, for as Paul had taught the Romans that they were "Alive [literally = "living"] to God in Christ Jesus" (see Romans 6:11-note). Paul encourages us to look at EVERY ASPECT of our LIVES as an ACT of worship. He would say to genuine believers in America,

"It is not just what you do on Sunday in the church building that 'ascribes worth' to God, but what God and the world see in you every day and every moment of the rest of the week." How am I doing in this area?

A. T. Robertson: In contrast with the Levitical sacrifices of slain animals. Not a **propitiatory** sacrifice, but one of **praise**.

F F Bruce comments that "the sacrifices of the new order do not consist in taking the lives of others, like the ancient animal sacrifices, but in giving one's own."

We need more men and women like American missionary **David Brainerd** who lived and died (at age 29) with a "living sacrifice" mindset, once remarking to **Jonathan Edwards** "I do not go to heaven to be advanced but to give honor to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high seat or a low seat there. My heaven is to please God and glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory."

ILLUSTRATION - As the story goes in a church service one Sunday, the offering plate came to a little girl at the end of a row. She

took the plate, put it down on the floor, and stood in it. When the usher asked her what she was doing, she responded, “In Sunday school I learned that I was supposed to give myself to God.” As has often been quipped about the presentation of ourselves as living sacrifices, “The problem with living sacrifices is that **they keep crawling off the altar**." The main point is that although the Lord may ask some of us to physically **die** for Him, He asks all of us to **live** for Him. In some respects, it may be harder to live for Christ than to die for Him; but if we are living for Him, we will be prepared to die for Him if that is what God calls us to do

All for Jesus, all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers:
All my thoughts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours. -
-James

To live for Christ, we must die to self.

HOLY SACRIFICE: hagian thusian:

- Romans 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Romans 12:1: Why Give Yourself Totally to God? - Steven Cole
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- Romans 12:1-2 The Believer's Supreme Act of Spiritual Worship - John MacArthur
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OFFER YOUR BODY AS HIS HOLY SACRIFICE

LET YOUR FIRE FALL
by Paul Wilbur

Come and show Your power as in days of old
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall
Burn up the idols of wood and stone
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall

We come before You Father
We offer You our lives
Our hearts are on Your altar
Consume the sacrifice
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall

Come and show Your power in our midst today
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall
Holy Spirit come and have Your way
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall
Purify Your people
Set our hearts aflame
Give us holy passion
Come and glorify Your name

O Lord, Lord let Your fire fall
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall
Lord, O Lord let Your fire fall
Lord, Lord let Your fire fall

Purify Your people set our hearts aflame
Give us holy passion
Come and glorify Your name

Have you ever presented yourself to Jehovah wholly, wholeheartedly, holding nothing back, sold out? Let today be that glorious day when you make the offering of a holy and pleasing to our Holy God. You will never regret it either in this life or the life to come. Consider what you are doing because in Leviticus the holy burnt offering on the altar was wholly consumed by Yahweh. Be willing to let Him consume you today and burn away every idol of wood and stone and then love the Lord Your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might all the days of your life. You will never regret it in all eternity! Play the song above and then pray to our Father Who art in Heaven that you might be consumed by His burning love, filled with His powerful Spirit and boldly proclaiming the good news of His Son Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. Amen.

Jamieson - As the Levitical victims, when offered without blemish to God, were regarded as holy, so believers, "yielding themselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God," are, in His estimation, not ritually but really "holy,"

Holy (40) (**hagios**) (Click in depth study of hagios) means set apart from the world unto God for a special purpose!

Claude Stauffer adds that **hagios**...

> is a derivative of the Greek term hagos which means literally "*an awful thing*." This is not something that is *awful* because it is bad, but *awful* in that it is awesome, sacred, consecrated to God, set apart for His use and purposes, holy (see Isaiah 6-note). **Hagios** is the word used to describe believers as "**saints**." Therefore, our bodies are presented holy to Him in the sense that they are set apart for His use...Peter noted this in his first epistle (1Pe 1:15, 16-note)...As God is unique, separate and distinct in that there is none like Him (Ex 9:14; Isa 46:9), believers are to be separated from that which would defile or defame God's good name and distinctively set apart for their unique and awesome God.

Hagios Includes the idea of taking something filthy, dirty and washing it and setting it apart as something brand new and useful for a different purpose. (cf Isa 1:18-note). The Greeks used hagios to describe something that was separated from common (profane) usage and devoted to the service of their "gods". In the New Testament hagios conveys a moral and spiritual sense describing that which is separated from the sphere of sin (cp the phrase "in the world but not of the world") and devoted to God and to His service. As human beings we are prone to forget, but in the area of holiness, the believer must determine to continually recognize that we are no longer at liberty to use our body in ways which are displeasing to God..

Keith Krell explains that a **holy sacrifice** "speaks of being fully **abandoned** to God. Dedication and service to God are an act of worship. This is the only worship that is "acceptable to God." This means that as individual Christians and as a corporate church, we must do all that we can to ensure that holiness is promoted. That is why we must exercise church discipline. That is why we must speak the truth in love. That is why we must disciple new believers. We are commanded to be holy as God is holy.

Stedman comments on what constitutes a **holy...acceptable** sacrifice: "The only life that is acceptable to Him is the life of Jesus Christ lived again in us. As we have seen, God has put all that I am to death -- my plans, my programs, my desires -- are all tainted with self, and are worthless. But, the minute I accept this and acknowledge that it is true and right, then it is possible for Christ, Who lives in me, to begin to work out His plans, His programs, His ideals, His desires. He does it through my conscious will, but then it is something holy and acceptable unto God. Anything else is burning false incense, false fire, before God.

I Surrender All

All to Jesus, I surrender;
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender;
Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus, I surrender;
Make me, Savior, wholly Thine;
Let me feel the Holy Spirit,

Truly know that Thou art mine.

All to Jesus, I surrender;
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power;
Let Thy blessing fall on me.

All to Jesus I surrender;
Now I feel the sacred flame.
O the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory, to His Name!

Refrain:
I surrender all, I surrender all,
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

Sacrifice (2378) (**thusia**) means that which is offered as a sacrifice or the act of sacrificing or offering.

Thusia - 28x in 28v -

> Matt 9:13; 12:7; Mark 12:33; Luke 2:24; 13:1; Acts 7:41f; Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 10:18; Eph 5:2; Phil 2:17; 4:18; Heb 5:1; 7:27; 8:3; 9:9, 23, 26; 10:1, 5, 8, 11f, 26; 11:4; 13:15f; 1 Pet 2:5

Vines states that **thusia**...

> primarily denotes the act of offering; then, objectively, that which is offered (a) of idolatrous sacrifice; (b) of animal or other sacrifices, as offered under the Law (c) of Christ, in His sacrifice on the Cross, (d) **metaphorically**
>
> (1) of the body of the believer, presented to God as a living sacrifice;
>
> (2) of faith, Philippians 2:17 (note);
>
> (3) of material assistance rendered to servants of God, Philippians 4:18(note);
>
> (4) of praise, Hebrews 13:15 (note);
>
> (5) of doing good to others and communicating with their needs, Hebrews 13:16(note);
>
> (6) of spiritual sacrifices in general, offered by believers as a holy priesthood, 1Peter 2:5(note).

Webster's has a very convicting secular definition for "**sacrifice**" = act of offering to a deity something precious! What a convicting thought.

Lawrence Richards - The Old Testament worshiper brought animals to the temple, to be killed and laid on the altar. Paul reversed the imagery. Bring yourself to the altar. But do not DIE for God: LIVE for Him!

Sacrifices are not substitutes for obedience, as King Saul found out when he tried to cover up his disobedience with pious promises (1Sa 15:12, 13, 14, 15, 16,17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23). Offerings in the hands without obedient faith in the heart become "the sacrifice of fools," because only a fool thinks he can deceive God. The fool thinks he is doing good, but he is only doing evil. And God knows it.

Chrysostom - How can the body become a sacrifice? Let the eye look on no evil, and it is a sacrifice. Let the tongue utter nothing base, and it is an offering. Let the hand work no sin, and it is a **holocaust**. (Ed note: Webster gives as a definition of 'holocaust," a sacrifice wholly consumed by fire.) But more, this suffices not, but besides we must actively exert ourselves for good; the hand giving alms, the mouth blessing them that curse us, the ear ever at leisure for listening to God.

The surrender of one's will to Jesus is essential to a life of joy and victory. Oswald Chambers called this "giving up my right to myself." We hold nothing back—no earthly life, no material gain, no pride-filled position—but simply say, "Jesus, do with my life whatever You want." Many Christians hold back from yielding all to Christ because they fear that it will bring terrible consequences, the death of a loved one or some other great loss.

F. B. Meyer reflected on a turning point to his spiritual life and how he overcame this fear.

> The devil said, 'Don't do it!. There is no knowing what you may come to.' At first I thought there was something to it, then I remembered my daughter, who was a little willful then, and loved her own way. I thought to myself as I knelt, Supposing that she were to come and say—'Father, from tonight I am going to put my life in your hand. Do with it what you will.' Would I call her mother to her side and say, 'Here is a chance to torment her'? .I knew I would not say that. I knew I would say to my wife, 'Our child is going to follow our will from now on. Do you know of anything that is hurting her?' 'Yes, so and so.' 'Does she love it much?' 'Yes,' 'Oh, she must give it up. But we will make it as easy for her as we can. We must take from her the things that are hurting her, but we will give her everything that will make her life one long summer day of bliss. (from Our Daily Walk)

Regarding the phrase "Present your bodies a living sacrifice ... which is your reasonable service"**C H Spurgeon** wrote...

> I scarcely like this word sacrifice, because it involves nothing more than a reasonable service. If we gave up all we had and became beggars for Christ, it would display no such chivalrous spirit or magnanimous conduct after all. We would be gainers by the surrender.

From The Baptist Challenge - Consecration

> "Will you please tell me in a word," said a Christian woman to a minister, "what your idea of consecration is?"
>
> Holding out a blank sheet of paper the pastor replied, "It is to sign your name at the bottom of this blank sheet, and to let God fill it in as He will."

ACCEPTABLE TO GOD: euareston to theo:

- Ro 12:2; 15:16; Ps 19:14; Is 56:7; Jer 6:20; Eph 5:10; Php 4:18; 1Ti 2:3; 1Ti 5:4; 1Pe 2:5,20
- Romans 12 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
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- Romans 12:2: How to Change for Good - Steven Cole
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Acceptable (2101) (**euarestos** from **eu** = well + **arestos** = pleasing, desirable, proper, fit, agreeable from **arésko** = to please or be pleasing/acceptable to) literally means "well pleasing" and so that which causes someone to be pleased. It is something which is well approved, eminently satisfactory, or extra-ordinarily pleasing.

In using **euarestos** Paul borrows from Old Testament sacrificial language to describe the kind of holy living that God**approves**, a "living sacrifice" that is morally and spiritually spotless and without blemish, and which He finds **well-pleasing**.

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul writes that

> we have as our ambition (Greek root means loving what is honorable), whether at home or absent, to be **pleasing** (euarestos) to Him. (2Cor 5:9).

Paul's service on earth was designed to **bring pleasure to the heart of his Lord**, whether Paul was still here on earth or whether he was standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ. To be **well pleasing** was Paul's highest goal, and should also be for every believer.

Writing to the saints at Ephesus Paul encouraged them to be

> trying to learn (idea of testing or proving to learn by clear, convincing evidence what is truly honoring to God) what is **pleasing** to the Lord." (Eph 5:10-note)
>
> **Comment**: In other words, these saints were to be putting every thought, word, and action to the test to discern "What does the Lord think about this?" "How does this appear in His presence?" Every area of our life should come under this searchlight, our...conversation, standard of living, clothes, books, business, pleasures, web surfing habits, friendships, sports, etc. The ultimate question should be... Will it be **well pleasing** (euarestos) to the Lord?

Make Paul's passion in (2Co 5:9) your passion! (...to be pleasing to Him.). As the burnt offering under the Law ascended as a sweet-

smelling savor to God's Throne, so does the believer's presentation of himself or herself!

God's assurance that the offering of the body would be highly pleasing to Him should be a further motive prompting believers to make the sacrifice.

William Newell - That any creature should be able to offer what could 'please' the infinite Creator, is wonderful; but that such wretched, fallen ones as the sons of men should do so, is a marvel of which only the gracious God Himself knows the depth! (Romans Verse by Verse)

WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL (logical, reasonable): ten logiken latreian humon:

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Spiritual (3050) (**logikos**) is used only one other time in (see 1 Peter 2:2-note) where it is translated "of the word".

Vines has this helpful comment on the use of **logikos** in this verse explaining that "**logikos** pertaining to "the reasoning faculty, reasonable, rational," is used in Ro 12:1, of the service (latreia) to be rendered by believers in presenting their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." The sacrifice is to be intelligent, in contrast to those offered by ritual and compulsion; the presentation is to be in accordance with the spiritual intelligence of those who are new creatures in Christ and are mindful of the mercies of God."

Phillips paraphrases it as **intelligent worship** and Jerusalem Bible has **that is worthy of thinking beings**.

Vincent explains it this way - "The special word for the service rendered by the Israelites as the peculiar people of God is very significant here. Reasonable, not in the popular sense of the term, as a thing befitting or proper, but rational, as distinguished from merely external or material. Hence nearly equivalent to spiritual. So Rev., in margin. It is in harmony with the highest reason.

It is only **reasonable** for man to be available to God. It is even your **logical** reason for existence. Paul is saying that in light of "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" and of His "unsearchable… judgments and unfathomable…ways"; and because "from Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (see Romans 11:33-note; Ro 11:36-note), including His immeasurable "mercies" that we already have received (Romans 12:1), our only **reasonable** (and by implication, **spiritual**) service of worship is to present God with all that we are and all that we have.

Keith Krell explains that "Many translations render this phrase "spiritual service" or "spiritual worship." Yet, the Greek word used here pertains to reason or the mind, and therefore does not really mean "spiritual." It is better translated "reasonable" or "rational." I think what Paul is saying is something like this: "If you weigh all that God has done in mercy in the light of who you were as a sinful, hopeless enemy of His righteousness, the only reasonable response is to lay your life on the altar for Him." Today's English Version translates the phrase "spiritual service" as "true worship." I like this rendering because it encompasses everything. Unbelievers sacrifice because they think it will earn them mercy. We sacrifice because we have already obtained mercy. Most of you have probably heard about the pig and the hen that were out walking one day when they passed a church. The sermon topic on the signboard was, "How can we help the poor?" After a moment's reflection the hen said, "I know what we can do. We can offer a ham and egg breakfast." It took several moments before the suggestion sunk in, but when it did, the pig protested: "That breakfast would be only a contribution for you, but for me it would mean total commitment." This is what God is asking from you. He wants all of you! This shouldn't scare you because if you let God have your life, He can do more with it than you can. (Romans 12:1-2 Transformed: More Than Meets the Eye)

Oswald Chambers writes that "Abraham had to offer up Ishmael before he offered up Isaac (see Genesis 21:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14). Some of us are trying to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God before we have sacrificed the natural. The only way we can offer a spiritual sacrifice to God is to "present [our] bodies a living sacrifice..." (Romans 12:1). Sanctification means more than being freed from sin. It means the deliberate commitment of myself to the God of my salvation, and being willing to pay whatever it may cost. If we do not sacrifice the natural to the spiritual, the natural life will resist and defy the life of the Son of God in us and will produce continual turmoil. This is always the result of an undisciplined spiritual nature. We go wrong because we stubbornly refuse to

discipline ourselves physically, morally, or mentally. We excuse ourselves by saying, "Well, I wasn't taught to be disciplined when I was a child." Then discipline yourself now! If you don't, you will ruin your entire personal life for God.

SERVICE OF WORSHIP: latreian:

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Service of worship (2999) (**latreia** from verb **latreuo** = to worship) means to perform religious rites as part of worship. It refers first to any service or ministration rendered for hire and then for the service of God.

Latreia - 5x in 5v - Jn 16:2; Ro 9:4; 12:1; Heb 9:1, 6

Thayer writes that **latreia** in the "Greek authors "service rendered for hire; then any service or ministration (Tragg., Plutarch, Lucian); the service of God":

Wuest adds that in the Septuagint **latreia** referred to "the service or worship of God according to the requirements of the Levitical law." It is used in Hebrews 9:6 of the priests who performed the sacred service. Thus, it speaks of priestly service. Doubtless, in the thinking of Paul, the word was used here to speak of the believer-priest's sacred service, not as the Levitical priests, offering a burnt sacrifice which was apart from themselves, but a living sacrifice which was not only part of themselves but also entailed the giving of themselves in connection with the giving of their bodies to the service of God, for a person cannot act independently of his body. (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans)

TDNT has this note on the word group **latreuo**/**latreia**...

> **latreuo**.
>
> a. Etymology. From latron, "reward," "wages," latreuo means "to work for reward," then "to serve."
>
> b. Use. The word is used literally for bodily service (e.g., workers on the land, or slaves), and figuratively for "to cherish." We also find it for the service of the gods, but not in a technical sense.
>
> **latreia**.
>
> The noun is more common than the verb and has such connotations as "service for reward," "labor," "bodily care," and "service of the gods." (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans)

Here are the 5 uses of **latreia** in the NT - Jn. 16:2; Ro 9:4-note; Ro 12:1; Heb. 9:1-note, Heb 9:6-note. The NAS translates latreia - divine worship(2), service(2), service of worship(1).

Here are the 5 uses of **latreia** in Septuagint (LXX)- Ex 12:25, 26 (service here refers to the service associated with the Passover; Ex 13:5; Joshua 22:27; 1Chr 28:13.

Paul chose a word familiar to readers of the Greek OT (Septuagint) where latreia described the Levitical rites & ceremonies by which God was worshiped (cf latreia in Joshua 22:27 "perform the service"). Paul's other use of latreia in (see Romans 9:4-note) describes an advantages of the Jews as possessing "the temple service". **Latreia** refers to any ministry performed for God, such as that of the priests and the Levites. Christians are believer-priests, identified with the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ (see 1Pe 2:5-note; 1Pe 2:9-note; Re 1:6-note). A believer's offering of his total life as a sacrifice to God is therefore sacred service.

John MacArthur - The Christian life consists of both **worship** [Ed note: Ro 12:1-2] & **duty** [Ed note: Ro 12:3-15:7]. The highest form of worship is to do God's will while duty not springing from a worshipful heart is nothing but legalism". Richards adds "We do worship God when we go to church, when we pray, when we raise our voices in song. But we also worship God every day whenever we do anything that pleases Him. Our hand on the arm of a hurting brother can be worship. Our effort to do our job honestly and well can be worship. Stopping to listen to an upset child, even though we're tired, can be worship. Everything we do, when done with a desire to please our Lord, is worship! (Ibid)

Ray Stedman gives a practical definition of '**worship**": "Worship is really nothing more or less than being what you were made to be, and doing what you were made to do. When a flower blooms, it is worshipping God. when a bird sings, it is worshipping God. when a plant grows, fulfilling its appointed task with its leafy arms outstretched, it is worshipping God. when a man, right in the midst of his daily life, right where he lives and where he works, right in the midst of those circumstances is being flooded with God Himself, he is worshipping God. The worship of a Christian isn't confined to those moments on Sunday morning when he gathers with others at church -- that is just our corporate worship -- we worship God all day long. When in some small, or even obscure, way we become the visible manifestation of God to someone -- then we have worshipped." (See Pastor Stedman's full sermon Discovering the Will of God)

Stedman says that **genuine commitment:** "isn't resting upon your ideas, and your plans, and your programs. It isn't trying to do your best for God. It is resting upon His announced intention to do His best through you. It is satisfying: It is the most wonderful experience that a man can have. It is fulfilling. It makes you sense, at last, and be, at last, what you were made to be. Anything less than that is a cheat, and a fraud, and a hypocritical act! (Discovering the Will of God)

Lorne Sanny of the Navigators has some the practical thoughts on this verse: "God's best has been given to you. Is your best His? Your best begins with committing yourself totally to Him. Then God will have your feet to take you where He wants you to go. He'll have your ears to listen to those who need listening to. He'll have your mouth to speak what he wants spoken. He'll also have your time, your career, your money. Have you ever said **a once-for-all 'yes'** to the Lord, like the 'yes' one says in a marriage ceremony? Not only that, but as a living sacrifice are you following the big '**yes**' with lots of small ones? I'm convinced this continual surrender is the key to being used by God. That's what it means to **take up your cross daily** (Mk 8:34)—a once-for-all commitment to follow Jesus Christ as his disciple, **followed by** a lot of little commitments and adjustments and surrenders along the way. In giving yourself, you're turning over to God the most valuable thing you can give.

J D Greear - This Is the Will of God for You = Grateful sacrifice and complete surrender. When Paul summed up in Romans 12:1 what God wants from us, he called for those exact two things: 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. (Rom. 12:1) We are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God as an act of worship. Notice that we do this in response to something — the mercies of God. The mercies of God in the gospel, Paul believes, should cause us to be so overwhelmed with gratefulness that we joyfully die to everything we have wanted from life so that we can live to fulfill his desires. This offering is both extreme and total. Don't let the beauty of Paul's prose keep you from the gruesome imagery he employed. Animal sacrifices are hard to watch. I saw one firsthand when I lived in a Muslim country. Seven men held down a large bull as the city's religious leader slit its throat. Blood sprayed everywhere — all over the imam, the men holding down the bull, and me. The poor animal, helpless and agonizing, squirmed and wheezed and moaned for the incredibly long minute it took him to die. As I watched this hideous scene, two thoughts entered my head, one of which filled me with horror, the other with grateful joy. The first was that, according to Romans 12:1, this was the picture of what God wanted from my life: daily, living sacrifice. The second was that this is what God had voluntarily done for me, to save my soul from hell. Wonder at his sacrifice for me compels my sacrifice for him, making it a joy and delight. So again, I ask you to consider: Where would you be without Jesus? Short answer: Lost. Forever. The only way others will hear about the gospel is through us. Others are at exactly the same place that we would be without Jesus. As Martin Luther said, "It wouldn't matter if Jesus died a thousand times if no one ever heard about it." It is impossible to understand that and not have your heart rise up to say, "Please, Lord, send me! Use me! I'm ready! Give your command." Later we will discuss how we can know, specifically, what God wants us to do; but before we can know that, our hearts must be in a posture to hear from him — a posture of thankfulness and surrender. Until this happens, we will likely get the Holy Spirit's direction wrong. We will turn the Holy Spirit into a divine butler instead of a mission commander. The Spirit is not a life coach helping you reach your potential, nor a concierge for a life of ease. The true Spirit of Jesus serves the mission of the cross. His goal is to make the cross larger in our hearts and to compel us to yield our lives in service to its purpose. The Holy Spirit, you could say, is always leading to the cross or from it, to carry its message of healing to others. Waiting on the Holy Spirit - We are continually to be in that same posture of waiting in which Jesus left his first disciples. Our waiting is not passive, however; it is extremely active. Because we already have the Holy Spirit, we don't sit around in inactivity, waiting on Jesus to send something from heaven. We've already got it. We aggressively offer our lives in living sacrifice to his mission, looking to him to steer us in the where and how. Consider this: The question is no longer whether God wants us involved in his mission, only where and how. The gratefulness and surrender of Romans 12:1 is the gateway to hearing from the Holy Spirit! As **Jim Elliot**, missionary martyr in Ecuador, clarified, "Before we can ever hear his voice, we must heed that verse [Romans 12:1, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices]." And this offering, by the way, will not be a onetime occurrence. "Living" sacrifices are hard to sustain because a "living" sacrifice always tries to crawl off the altar. As the heat and pain of sacrifice intensify, you want to quit. At least, that's how it is for me. I must daily, as Paul instructs, renew myself in the mercies of God for me, reminding myself of how far Jesus went to save me, and how much he gave up to do so. As I do, I gladly climb back on the altar, again and again, as an act of worship. I find myself pleading with Jesus to use my life for his purpose of saving others, just as he used his every breath for me. I want his glory to become my cause; the prosperity of his people, my passion; bringing home the lost sons and daughters he died to redeem, my agenda. Knowing

he engraved my name upon his heart engraves his mission upon mine (Isa. 49:15 – 16). (From Jesus, Continued…: Why the Spirit Inside You is Better than Jesus Beside You- I highly recommend this book if you are struggling to understand the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in your life!)

The venerable saint **J. Oswald Sanders** was once asked "If you had to boil it all down, what are the basic ingredients required for the individual who wants to become all God wants him to become? To which he answered: "I think the basic thing is an unreserved handing of oneself over to the Lord. Wherever there are reservations there is going to be immaturity. But once one has made that initial handing over—as in Ro. 12:1, it is to be a decisive act that isn't to be repeated, the initial act—from that initial act there will flow certain results. But until that act of passing over oneself to the lordship of Christ is done, there will be no spiritual growth worth speaking about. And then after that I believe the next thing is the maintenance of a consistent devotional life and walk of communion with God. That is the soil from which any anointed ministry springs. And where that is missing, there's not going to be fruitfulness.

John MacDuff - The Christian's heart should be a holy altar, and his life a living sacrifice.

F B Meyer (Our Daily Homily)

Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. - Romans 12:1

To present carries us back to Romans 6. We might almost say that the intervening chapters, after the manner of the apostle, are one prolonged digression or parenthesis, and that he classes all the great things with which he has been treating as among the mercies of God, and as reasons for our entire consecration. Every disclosure of God's grace toward us is an argument for our complete surrender to His will and power.

We are called on to present our bodies as instruments of righteousness, because all true regimen of the inner life immediately affects the body in all its members; and, conversely, the consecration of the body reacts upon and affects the temper of the soul. It would be well for you to take Miss Havergal's hymn, with its enumeration of the various parts of the body, and offer and present yourself, to be from this day and forward, wholly for God. Only believe that He is more anxious for this than words can tell, because He loves you so, and that He accepts immediately what you offer.

Such consecration must be living; that is, it must enter into all our life, being holy, well pleasing to God, and rational. It is not only reasonable when we consider the relation we sustain to Him, but it should engage all our intelligence and reasoning faculties. And when it is made, and the soul is becoming duly transfigured in its exercise, we begin to prove that God's will, which once we dreaded, is also good, well-pleasing, and perfect. When we look at God's will from a distance, and before consecration, it seems impossible. It is only when we begin to obey, that we can say:

"Thou sweet beloved will of God."

J R Miller on Romans 12:1

Doctrines are the roots from which duties grow. After eleven chapters of severe logic, the strongest kind of strong meat, we have now five chapters of the most practical sort of teaching. Roots are necessary to beautiful plants, and doctrines are necessary to duties. Moralities without doctrines at the back of them are rootless plants.

The two phrases, "a little sacrifice," and "be ye transformed," give us the key of all the beautiful lessons in this chapter. We are to give ourselves to Christ as a sacrifice laid upon the altar, and are to grow into all divine loveliness of disposition and character.

In becoming Christians we become members of the body of Christ. This implies that it is the life of Christ that is in us, and that it is the life of Christ that is in us, and that we must be like Him, since we are animated by His life.

We can realize this beauty of life only by surrendering ourselves wholly to Christ, thus becoming in fact members of Him. Then shall we be in reality transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Tattered Umbrella - Several years ago I read an article about Queen Mary, who made it her practice to visit Scotland every year. She was so loved by the people there that she often mingled with them freely without a protective escort. One afternoon while walking with some children, she went out farther than she'd planned. Dark clouds came up unexpectedly, so she stopped at a nearby house to borrow an umbrella. "If you will lend me one," she said to the lady who answered the door, "I will send it back to you tomorrow." The woman didn't recognize the Queen and was reluctant to give this stranger her best umbrella. So she handed her one that she intended to throw away. The fabric was torn in several places and one of the ribs was broken.

The next day another knock was heard at the door. When the lady opened it, she was greeted by a royal guard, who was holding in her hand her old, tattered umbrella. “The Queen sent me,” he said. “She asked me to thank you for loaning her this.” For a moment the woman was stunned, then, she burst into tears. “Oh, what an opportunity I missed,” she cried. “I didn’t give the Queen my very best!” (Our Daily Bread)

Turning Point - The surrender of one’s will to Jesus is essential to a life of joy and victory. Oswald Chambers called this “giving up my right to myself.” We hold nothing back—no earthly life, no material gain, no pride-filled position—but simply say, “Jesus, do with my life whatever You want.” Many Christians hold back from yielding all to Christ because they fear that it will bring terrible consequences, the death of a loved one or some other great loss.

F. B. Meyer reflected on a turning point to his spiritual life and how he overcame this fear. “The devil said, ‘Don’t do it!. There is no knowing what you may come to.’ At first I thought there was something to it, then I remembered my daughter, who was a little willful then, and loved her own way. I thought to myself as I knelt, Supposing that she were to come and say—‘Father, from tonight I am going to put my life in your hand. Do with it what you will.’ Would I call her mother to her side and say, ‘Here is a chance to torment her’? .I knew I would not say that. I knew I would say to my wife, ‘Our child is going to follow our will from now on. Do you know of anything that is hurting her?’ ‘Yes, so and so.’ ‘Does she love it much?’ ‘Yes,’ ‘Oh, she must give it up. But we will make it as easy for her as we can. We must take from her the things that are hurting her, but we will give her everything that will make her life one long summer day of bliss.’“ (Our Daily Bread)

Honor to God - David Brainerd was an American colonial missionary to the Indians who died at the age of twenty-nine. His diary reveals a young man intensely committed to God. Brainerd once said to Jonathan Edwards: “I do not go to heaven to be advanced but to give honor to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high seat or a low seat there. My heaven is to please God and glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory. (Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved)

SERVING THE LORD - F B Meyer writing on Romans 12:1 reminds us that...

THE FIRST thing for all of us to do is to present ourselves to God as alive from the dead, and our bodies as living sacrifices. The path of blessedness can be entered by no other gate. It is only as we refuse to be conformed to this world, and yield ourselves to be transformed by the free entrance of the Holy Spirit into our minds, that we can learn all that God will do for us. We are nothing; He is all. And He is prepared to be and do all things in us, if only we will He open to Him as the land lies open to the summer sun.

Those who really live the yielded life, do not need to ascertain God's Will by signs. They recognise it by the whisper of His voice and the touch of His hand. It is as we refuse to be moulded by the world, and give ourselves up to the transfiguring Spirit of God, that we prove what is His good, acceptable, and perfect will. But more than that, we begin to live for others, and draw by faith from the fulness of God, that we may minister to them aright.

First, we understand what the Will of God is; then we present our bodies that it may fulfil itself through us; then we discover that it means goodwill to men, and we become the happy channels of heavenly ministry to those around us in one of the spheres enumerated in Ro 12:6, 7, 8 of this chapter. It is impossible to cherish jealousy, because the Head may use this member or that; it is equally impossible to be proud, because we have nothing that we have not received. Let us always remember that each has a special ministry to fulfil, and that we shall find in our daily lot the opportunity of fulfilling it. How many resemble the landowner of the Eastern story, who sold his property in order to go in search of diamonds, and lo! the man who purchased his property found it full of diamonds. Indeed it was the famous Golconda region. In the dally drudgery of life you will find your heavenly opportunity. How many who are pining for a great mission, will never be permitted to enter it, because they despise the low and narrow door of humble service to those in their immediate neighbourhood.

But we can never realise these divine ideals of service merely by an external obedience. We must be constrained by a holy love to our Lord and to one another. What a despair these ideals would be apart from the Holy Spirit. That holy love comes from Him.

PRAYER - O God work in me, not only to will but to do of Thy good pleasure; and may I work out in daily life what Thou dost work in. AMEN.

AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE - The admonition of the apostle Paul in this verse is not at all unreasonable; in fact, it is a most logical request. In consideration of the mercies of God and all that He has done for us, and in contemplation of Christ's work of redemption at Calvary and the great sacrifice He made there, it is only reasonable that believers give their bodies back to Him as living sacrifices for service. Nothing less than a complete presentation of our bodies, however, will ever be acceptable to God. Our

"sacrifice" must involve an entire and full surrender.

It was **Dr. Arthur T. Pierson** who gave a most striking illustration of the need to give our "all," with nothing held back. He said,

"Supposing you had one thousand acres of land and someone approached you and made an offer to buy your farm. You agree to sell the land, except for one acre right in the very center, with provisions for a right of way. Do you know," he continued, "that the law would allow you to have access to that one, lone spot in the middle of that thousand acres? You could build a road all across the remainder of that farm to get to that small plot of ground. And so it is with the Christian who makes less than a one-hundred-percent surrender to God. You can be sure that the devil will make an inroad across that person's life to reach the unsurrendered portion and, as a result, his testimony and service will be marred and have little effect upon others."

Christian, does the Lord have your body? Have you ever by a very definite act of the will presented it to Him for His control, His use, and His glory? If not, why don't you do so right now? Just say, "Lord, I've already given You my heart, but now here is my body! Help me to keep it clean, pure, and undefiled. Use me for Your glory in any way You see fit. I'm Yours to command!" (Our Daily Bread)

Poor is my best and small;
How could I dare divide?
Surely the Lord shall have my all,
He shall not be denied!—Anon.

There is no risk, only blessing, when we surrender ourselves to God!

A young woman went to a Scottish preacher and asked how she could resolve her problem with desires that contradicted the will of God. The minister wrote two words on a slip of paper. Then he asked the woman to ponder the words for ten minutes, cross out one of them, and bring the slip back to him. The woman looked at the two words on the slip: "No" and "Lord." It did not take her long to realize that if she said no, she could not say Lord, and if she wanted to call Christ Lord, she could not say no.

Herein lies the secret of discerning God's will for our lives. We cannot know God's choice concerning the limitless options before us until we put ourselves unconditionally at His disposal. We must turn over all our rights. Presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice is another way of saying "Yes, Lord" to any command. Once we settle the question of our yieldedness, we can take the second step, which is to bring our behavior in line with the renewing of our minds. Renewing occurs only when we pattern our thinking after the principles of God's Word, not the prevailing ideas of the world around us.

If you are trying to discover God's plan for your life, you must first make a complete sacrifice of your body. —D. J. De Haan (Our Daily Bread)

God gives His very best to those who leave the choice with Him.

The King of Fruits - The durian, a tropical fruit, is often called The King of Fruits. Either you love it or you hate it. Those who love it will do almost anything to get it. Those who hate it won't get near it because of its pungent smell. My wife loves it. Recently, a friend, who was grateful for what my wife had done for her, sent her a box of the finest quality durians. She took great pains to ensure that they were the best.

I asked myself, "If we can give the best to a friend, how can we do less for our Lord who gave His very life for us?"

The nobleman in Jesus' parable in Luke 19 wanted the best from 10 servants to whom he gave money, saying, "Do business till I come" (v.13). When he returned and asked for an account, he gave the same commendation "Well done!" to all those who had done what they could with the money entrusted to them. But he called "wicked" (v.22) the one who did nothing with his money.

The primary meaning of this story is stewardship of what we've been given. To be faithful with what God has given to us is to give Him our best in return. As the master gave money to the servants in the parable, so God has given us gifts to serve Him. It is we who will lose out if we fail to give Him our best. — C. P. Hia (Our Daily Bread)

Give of your best to the Master,
Give Him first place in your heart;
Give Him first place in your service,
Consecrate every part. —Grose

We are at our best when we serve God by serving others.

If the Son of God has redeemed us by his blood, all that we are and have belongs to him; our body, soul, and spirit are his. Nothing is our own; we are bought with a price. In laying down his precious life for us, he has redeemed us unto himself, that we should be his peculiar people, and not only render to him the calves of our lips, but give him body, soul, spirit, substance, life itself; all that we are and have being his by sovereign right. He lays claim to them all, not only as our Creator, but as our Redeemer, having bought them by his precious blood. When we feel his mercy warm in our soul, can we keep body or soul back? Look at Abraham. When God called to him, and said, "Abraham!" what was his answer? "Here I am--Here is my body, here is my soul, here is my substance, here is my wife, here is my son; all are at your disposal. What shall I do, Lord? Take them; they are all yours. You have a right to them, and you must do with them, and you must do with me, what seems good in your sight."

Under these feelings, then, we should "present our bodies," not, indeed, leaving our souls behind. For what is the casket without the jewel? What is the body without the soul? Will God accept the body if the soul be left behind? That is popery; to give the body, and keep back the soul. Not so with the dear family of God; they present their bodies, but with their bodies they present the soul that lodges in their body--the house with its tenant, the jewel-case with the jewels in it. But what is it to present their bodies? They must be presented as "a living sacrifice." God accepts no dead sacrifices. You will recollect, under the Jewish law the sacrifice was to be a living animal, and that without spot or blemish. No dead lamb, but a living animal, perfect in its kind, was to be the victim sacrificed. So if we are to present our bodies, there must be "a living sacrifice." It may well be asked, What have we sacrificed for the Lord's sake? Have we been called upon to sacrifice our property, prospects, idols, affections, name, fame, and worldly interests; and have we obeyed the call? Abraham did not offer Isaac until the voice of the Lord called him to make the sacrifice; but when the Lord called him to do so, Abraham at once rendered obedience to the voice. So must it be with those that walk in the steps of faithful Abraham. If they are called upon, as all are, sooner or later, to make sacrifices, those sacrifices they must make.

Now, in thus presenting our bodies "a living sacrifice," it becomes also a "holy" offering, because what is done in faith is accepted by God as being sanctified by his blessed Spirit. If we make a sacrifice without the blessed Spirit's operation upon our heart, it is a dead sacrifice. Men go into monasteries, deluded women enter convents, become sisters of mercy, and what not, offer their bodies a sacrifice to God, but it is not a living sacrifice, because there is no spiritual life in either offerer or offering. But when we sacrifice our warmest affections, our prospects in life, everything that flesh loves, because the gospel claims it at our hands, and we do it through the constraining love of Christ, that is a living sacrifice, and is "holy," because springing out of the sanctifying influences and operations of the Holy Spirit.

We indeed, looking at ourselves, see nothing holy in it, for sin is mingled with all we do, but God's eye discerns the precious from the vile. He sees the purity of his own work; and he can separate what we cannot, the acting of the spirit and the working of the flesh. God looks at that which his own Spirit inspires, and his own grace produces, and he accepts that as holy.

1. **Learn self-denying Christianity.** Not the form or name, but the living thing. 'Christ did not please Himself.' Let us in this respect be His true followers; bearing burdens for Him; doing work for Him; submitting to the sorest toil for Him; not grudging effort, or cost, or sacrifice, or pain; spending and being spent for Him; relinquishing the lazy, luxurious, self-pleasing, fashionable religion of the present day. A self-indulgent religion has nothing in common with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; or with that cross of ours which He has commanded us to take up and carry after Him, renouncing ease and denying self. Our time, our gifts, our money, our strength, are all to be laid upon the altar. We are to be 'living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1) (Reference)

Love of Jesus is essential to Christianity. No privations can starve it, and no burdens can break it down. It is the core of all true piety. It is the only cure of the reigning worldliness and covetousness and fashion worship, which have made such havoc in too many churches. There is only one way to be a steadfast Christian—it is to get the heart so full of love to Jesus—that the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and the devil can get no foothold. A true Christian life is the continual consecration of our bodily powers, of our energies, our affections, our resources, and our influence—to Him who bought us with His precious blood. (Theodore Cuyler, "**Wayside Springs from the Fountain of Life**" 1883)