

## **A Living Sacrifice.**

### **Romans 12 1-21 Amplified,**

1 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.

2 Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

### **What is a living sacrifice?**

It is the offering of our total soul to Jesus, our will, mind and emotions, while still alive in our temporal body. It is taking up our cross that Jesus constantly spoke about. We cannot follow Him without this. A daily living sacrifice will certainly speed up our character change!

### **Quote from Christ Tiegreen**

*If we're honest, we'll admit that there are limits to our obedience. We may say that there is nothing we wouldn't do for God, and we may say it sincerely. But most of us, somewhere deep inside us, have a bottom line, a line we would hardly dare to cross. We like to choose our areas of sacrifice. We can't. Discipleship doesn't work that way. We can't be "a living sacrifice" according to Romans 12:1 and then choose how to live. If we have offered ourselves up to God, we are His. We have been bought with a price, as 1 Corinthians 6:20 says. We have no more say over our circumstances or our future than a piece of pottery has over its final shape. Our lives are in the hands of the Potter. Thank God."*

**Why would you present yourself a "living sacrifice"? You were bought with a price – His blood at the Cross!!**

### **1 Corinthians 6:20,**

**"20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."**

**I am convinced that as we present ourselves a living sacrifice today, in this life, that it will have eternal affects! I am not going to try to totally explain this, but just challenging you to seek the Lord about it!**

**Jesus even bought the evil people, but they did not accept it.**

**2 Peter 2:1,**

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the *Lord who bought them*, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

**Old Testament slaves had freedom of choice even after they were bought.**

**Exodus 21:2-6,**

“2 “If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.

3 “If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.

4 “If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself.

5 “But if the servant plainly says, ‘*I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,*’

6 “then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”

**1 Corinthians 7:22-24,**

22 For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.

**Romans 6:16-18,**

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

**You were created to be a slave [servant] to someone. It's your choice.** See definition of slave in endnote. <sup>i</sup> **What a wonderful privilege that through grace and because of the blood of Jesus we can be a “slave” to the most loving Being Who ever lived!!**

**However being a “slave” of God we are also His sons and daughters – Abba Father. Because we offered ourselves as slaves, He relates to us as friends and sons and daughters, and we can call on Him as Abba Father.**

**It is similar to marriage.**

**When I vowed to become Carol’s servant and she vowed to become my servant, in the Biblical way, then we could call each other husband and wife in a**

**Biblical way. Becoming a servant is the condition for the most intimate relationships like a marriage or like we have with Jesus.**

**It sounds like a paradox, but just look at how Jesus became a bondservant for us!**

**Philippians 2:5-10,**

“5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,”

**Motives.**

Often people misunderstand the motives of others when something is done or something is said. Sometimes the motive was bad, but the action appeared to be good. Or sometimes the motive is not only good, but also godly, and others misunderstand the action, and they assume that the motive was bad. Lots of people do not even go deep enough to think about the idea of motives.

The same type of misunderstanding about motives can be happen with God. One might consider Romans 12 and wonder why would God want me to be His slave. Many people crave freedom and just shy away from offering everything to God.

***God wants to give you freedom, but He asks you to not use your freedom to be a slave to sin and Satan!***

**We usually have no idea what God has ordained for us to experience in life.**

However, if we offer ourselves a living sacrifice we can trust His choices for us. This is also the way to stay intimate with Jesus, and to be changed into His likeness.

**Romans 12:2 b ----** “so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].”

***Job had no idea about what his life would be like.*** But after he “saw God” rather than just knowing about him, he offered himself a living sacrifice and many people were blessed by his experience. So it will be with you!

**As you follow the rest of Romans chapter 12 you will see how your living sacrifice is the path to loving others with God’s love, and living out His character now.**

**A great way to approach taking up our cross or pursuing a living sacrifice is to compare our lives to the issues Paul included in Romans 12. Let's go through it verse by verse and allow Holy Spirit to direct us and/or convict us so that we can move into closer intimacy with Jesus.**

**Notice how each one of these commands by Paul are the path to loving others with God's love. See love attribute in endnote <sup>ii</sup>**

3 For by the grace (unmerited favor of God) given to me I warn everyone among you not to estimate and think of himself more highly than he ought [not to have an exaggerated opinion of his own importance], but to rate his ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him.

**Verse 3 is self explanatory.**

4 For as in one physical body we have many parts (organs, members) and all of these parts do not have the same function or use,

5 So we, numerous as we are, are one body in Christ (the Messiah) and individually we are parts one of another [mutually dependent on one another].

**Strive for unity in the church or ministry settings.**

6 Having gifts (faculties, talents, qualities) that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them:[He whose gift is] prophecy, [let him prophesy] according to the proportion of his faith;

7 [He whose gift is] practical service, let him give himself to serving; he who teaches, to his teaching;

8 He who exhorts (encourages), to his exhortation; he who contributes, let him do it in simplicity and liberality; he who gives aid and superintends, with zeal and singleness of mind; he who does acts of mercy, with genuine cheerfulness and joyful eagerness.

**Not only recognizing your own gifts, but respecting those with different gifts. Not being critical or judgmental.**

9 [Let your] love be sincere (a real thing); hate what is evil [loathe all ungodliness, turn in horror from wickedness], but hold fast to that which is good.

***“Goodness is something so simple: always live for others, never to seek one's own advantage.—DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD”***

10 Love one another with brotherly affection [as members of one family], giving precedence and showing honor to one another.

**Love with God's love. See attributes of love in the endnotes.**

11 Never lag in zeal and in earnest endeavor; be aglow and burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord.

12 Rejoice and exult in hope; be steadfast and patient in suffering and tribulation; be constant in prayer.

**This one is a challenge. It is normal to go through sufferings and tribulation. The idea is to stay in constant communion with Jesus so that He may walk us through.**

13 Contribute to the needs of God's people [sharing in the necessities of the saints]; pursue the practice of hospitality.

**Be unselfish with your finances and hospitality.**

14 Bless those who persecute you [who are cruel in their attitude toward you]; bless and do not curse them.

**You've read it. Now do it!**

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice [sharing others' joy], and weep with those who weep [sharing others' grief].

**Go out of your way to call, or contact in some way, those who are grieving, and sharing joy even when you are not experiencing joy.**

16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty (snobbish, high-minded, exclusive), but readily adjust yourself to [people, things] and give yourselves to humble tasks. Never overestimate yourself or be wise in your own conceits.

**You've read it. Now do it!**

17 Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is honest and proper and noble [aiming to be above reproach] in the sight of everyone.

18 If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

**Our part of living at peace with others is to love with God's love.**

19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave the way open for [God's] wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay (requite), says the Lord.

**This can be dangerous if we don't release this to God!**

20 But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.

**Love your enemies. I believe this verse is speaking about a personal enemy. I also believe that institutional enemies like governments may be a different matter.**

**See endnote regarding <sup>iii</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer whom I truly respect and admire.**

21 Do not let yourself be overcome by evil, but overcome (master) evil with good  
**Verse 21 can only be accomplished with God's love.**

### **Fruit of the Spirit.**

A great way to approach taking up our cross or pursuing a living sacrifice is to always compare our lives to the model living inside of us, represented by the Fruit of The Spirit. As we see Holy Spirit convicting us, then we repent and move closer to Him. The repentance is part of the living sacrifice.

#### **(Galatians 5:22-24 AMP)**

22 But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness,

23 Gentleness (meekness, humility), self- control (self- restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [ that can bring a charge].

24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.

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**Endnotes:**

<sup>i</sup> **Slaves definition** – Strong’s concordance.

servant bond bondman a slave, bondman, man of servile condition metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will, those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests, 2) a servant, attendant

<sup>ii</sup> **Attributes of love.**

1 Corinthians 13:4-13

“4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

<sup>iii</sup> **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** (German: [ˈdiːtʁɪç ˈboːnhœfɐ]; 4 February 1906 – 9 April 1945) was a German **Lutheran** pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the **Confessing Church**. His writings on Christianity's role in the secular world have become widely influential, and his book *The Cost of Discipleship* became a modern classic.<sup>[1]</sup>

Apart from his theological writings, Bonhoeffer was known for his staunch resistance to the **Nazi dictatorship**, including vocal opposition to Hitler's **euthanasia** program and genocidal persecution of the **Jews**.<sup>[2]</sup> He was arrested in April 1943 by the **Gestapo** and imprisoned at Tegel prison for one and a half years. Later he was transferred to a **Nazi concentration camp**. After being associated with the **plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler**, he was quickly tried, along with other accused plotters, including former members of the *Abwehr* (the German Military Intelligence Office), and then executed by hanging on 9 April 1945 as the Nazi regime was collapsing.

*Quoted from Wikipedia.*

*Author’s note: Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945, just 21 days after Bonhoeffer’s assassination. I believe Bonhoeffer’s living sacrifice had a major spiritual affect on Hitler’s suicide.*