

Consecrated Christian Living

Text: Romans 12:1-2

Introduction:

1. Second major division of the Epistle – Practical Christian Living.
2. Chapters 12-16 – “The Apostle exhorts to a life in conformity with the exalted position in which chapters 1-8 place the believer.” (Wuest)
3. This lesson: Believers exhorted to consecrated, surrendered, holy living. “Here Paul succinctly and with vivid imagery summarizes what the Christian response to God’s grace in Christ should be.” (Moo)

I. The Motivation for Consecrated Living (Vs. 1a)

A. The Doctrinal Foundation – ‘therefore’

1. On the basis of the doctrines of chapter 1-11. “Reaches back to the contents of previous chapters.” (Wuest)
2. ‘therefore’ = appears 27 times in Romans
3. Illustration: Epistle developed like a pyramid. A layer of truth is laid down, followed by another layer connected to the previous by a ‘therefore’.
4. Doctrines taught in previous chapters provide the believer with the basis for and resources for the holy duties required of them.

B. The Divine Compassions – “mercies of God”

1. ‘mercies’ = unveiled in the wonders of salvation previously taught in Epistle (e.g. 11:30-32). “Refers to the different instances before enumerated of Divine compassion.” (Haldane) E.g. justification, sanctification & glorification.
2. In view of the fact we have been made recipients of God’s manifold mercies in salvation, it follows naturally that we give Him our all.
3. Note: A genuine experience of God’s Redemptive mercy, will lead to a life of holiness, rather than licentiousness.

II. The Mark of Consecrated Living (Vs. 1b)

A. A Personal Sacrifice – “your bodies”

1. ‘present’ = Means to put at one’s disposal. Same word translated ‘yield’ in chapter 6. Word used of presenting Christ in the temple (Luke 2:22)
2. ‘bodies’ = God wants our whole person – spirit, soul and body
3. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

B. A Pure Sacrifice – “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable”

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1. Paul uses language of O.T. offerings
2. “living sacrifice” = a daily consecrated life. In the O.T. a sacrifice was wholly set apart and dedicated to God.
3. ‘holy’ = set apart for special purpose
4. ‘acceptable’ = well pleasing. Same word used of the Father’s words of the Son “...in whom I am well pleased.” (?)

C. A Purposeful Sacrifice – “which is your reasonable service”

1. ‘reasonable’ = logical, rational. That which is aggregable to reason. Living a consecrated life for our Saviour who Redeemed us makes sense in light of all that He has done for us!
2. ‘service’ = word used to describe ministry of the Levites. This is the first step towards Christian service. Other acts of service follow this surrender of ourselves for God’s purposes.
3. David Livingston: “People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward of healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with such a word, such a view, and such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege...I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not talk when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father’s throne on high to give Himself for us.”

III. The Mindset of Consecrated Living (Vs. 2a-2b)

A. Separation from the world (2a)

1. “this world” = this world’s system, the spirit of the age
 - a. Trench: “All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world...being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.”
 - b. Its character unmasked in Scripture: The world is made up of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It will pass away (doesn’t last), is not of the Father (1 John 2:15-16) and “lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). The world is under the rulership and dominion of Satan who is called “the god of this world” (2. Cor. 4:4) and “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). It was this wicked world to which Paul referred in Gal. 6:14 “...but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, **by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**”
2. ‘conformed’ = formed, molded, fashioned.
 - a. Same word translated “fashioning” in 1 Peter 1:14.
 - b. Refers to an outward expression that does not reflect what is within. Wearing the world’s costumes and masks. (JM) “Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold.” (J.B. Phillips)

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- c. We are not to allow our lives to be shaped by the values, philosophies, fashions, attitudes, culture, ideals and priorities of this world's system.
- d. Philosophies: e.g. issues surrounding the sanctity of human life and marriage
- e. Fashions: e.g. dress and hair styles
- f. Entertainments: Music & Media
- g. Attitudes: e.g. disregard for authority, pleasure driven
- h. Ideals & Priorities: e.g. pursuit of money, physical above spiritual (e.g. preoccupation with sports)
- i. Note: If our Saviour was hated by the world, why do we expect to be accepted of it? 1 John 3:13 *"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."*
- j. Jim Elliot: "The world cannot hate us, we are too much like its own."

B. Sanctification of the mind (2b)

1. 'transformed' = the change of the appearance of one thing into that of another
 - a. Basis of our English word 'metamorphosis' (e.g. pupa to butterfly)
 - b. Translated 'transfigured' in Matthew 17:2. Christ's inner Divine nature was displayed on the Mount of Transfiguration. We are to manifest our inner redeemed nature outwardly in our daily lives.
2. 'renewing' = make new again, renovate, repair
 - a. Both words (conformed & transformed) are in passive voice.
 - b. We submit to or cooperate with one of these two processes in our lives. Either we allow our lives to be shaped and molded by the spirit of this world or we allow the Spirit of God through the Word of God to mold us into Christ's image.
 - c. 'mind' = the mind is the control center of the body. Our thoughts reveal who we are. *"...as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."* (Prov. 23:7). Phil. 4:8 *"...think on these things."* As our minds are renewed, it will fruit in renewed conduct.

IV. The Merit of Consecrated Living (Vs. 2c)

A. The Discovery of God's Will – 'prove'

1. 'that' = the purpose & result.
2. 'prove' = to prove something by testing
3. As our minds are transformed by the Word of God, we are able to discern what conforms to the will of God.

B. The Description of God's Will – "good, acceptable, perfect"

1. 'good'
2. 'acceptable' = same word in Vs. 1. "well pleasing"
3. 'perfect' = complete, whole, mature