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Romans 12 – 13

“Offering Your Body”

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Romans 12:1–2 has on occasion been used as a salvation message, however, it’s important to make the point that these verses refer consecration. One reason we know Paul is not referring to salvation is that he uses the term “*brothers*,” a term Paul uses 12 times, which obviously refers to fellow believers.

This study centers on the call for Christians to offer their bodies in consecration to the Lord; not their lives, but the members of their physical body.¹ Furthermore, the offering of one’s body is to be a living sacrifice. Another way to say this would be that this is to be a way of life for the believer. The Lord promises an immediate and direct benefit for obeying **Romans 12:2b**, which is probably the number one thing most Christian’s want in their lives: How do I know what God’s will is for my life?

In this study we’ll learn that our consecration must take place before God’s revelation, and that God’s mercy is the motivation for our act of consecrating the members of our bodies. The world, however, will be competing for our bodies and our lives, but the good news is that we can win the victory by the Holy Spirit’s work of transforming our minds!

Consecration Comes Before Revelation

1. **Romans 6:12–13** gives further instruction to offer our “body parts” as “*instruments of righteousness*.”
 - a. “*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*”
2. **1 Corinthians 6:13, 18–20** is another example of Paul’s counsel regarding sexual sin.

¹ The Greek word used here is *soma* (physical) rather than one of the two words for life (*bios* – life or *Zoë* – spiritual life).

- a. *“The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body... Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”*
3. Other “body parts” we’re to consecrate include:
 - a. Eyes – What we look at.
 - b. Hands – What we touch.
 - c. Feet – Where we go.
 - d. Mouth – What we say.
4. David, in **Psalm 101:3a** said, *“I will set before my eyes no vile thing.”*
5. **Proverbs 4:24–27** says, *“Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.”*
6. **Proverbs 6:16–19** gives additional warning and instruction: *“There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”*

Mercy Is The Motivation

7. Paul is practically begging these believers to offer themselves as living sacrifices because his audience knows the benefit and blessing of God’s great mercy! (**Romans 12:1**)
8. **Romans 11:30–32** instructs Christians to consider all that God has done; how he has loved, how he has forgiven, how he has redeemed and how he sacrificed his son so that we might see how great his mercy is toward us!
 - a. *“Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.”*
9. When we take our eyes off of God’s mercy we can become very selfish, very sinful, very proud and we can embrace a spirit of entitlement, however, when we consider the mercy of God, we can be very broken, very humble and very sorry over sin.
10. To offer one’s body as a living sacrifice is logical.²

² The Greek word is *logikos*.

11. It's just logical that if God has done so much, the least we can do is offer him a holy life.

The World Is The Competition

12. **Romans 12:2a** tells us that the world is intent on trying to fashion people into its mold, because the world wants people to look like it, talk like it and act like it.

13. Paul is not instructing Christians to “go Amish,” but to be modest and to live in moderation.

14. He is writing to make sure an emphasis is placed on the fact that while believers may live in the world; they are not to be of the world.

15. **James 1:27** gives a warning against being “*polluted by the world.*”

a. *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”*

16. **James 4:4–5** gives an even stronger admonition against “*friendship with the world.*”

a. *“You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?”*

17. Don't be conformed to the pattern of this world!

A Renewed Mind Is Part Of The Transformation

18. **Romans 12:2b** – *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*

19. In the insect world, whenever a caterpillar goes through the process of metamorphosis, it's always for the purpose of becoming something superior to its previous state.

20. You can't live a transformed life unless you renew your mind.

21. **2 Corinthians 10:5** – “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

22. **Romans 8:5–6** – “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.”

23. **Philippians 4:8** – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Romans 12:1–2** to emphasize today’s study.
3. Read and discuss the definition of consecration in the 1828 *American Dictionary Of The English Language*.³
 - a. 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.
4. Pastor Gary’s story about the turtlenecks he bought for his wife for Christmas is a classic account of the difficulty of finding just the right gift for someone.
 - a. Have you consciously and intentionally “given” the members of your body to the Lord as an act of consecration?
 - b. What would this “gift” look like?
5. Pastor Gary has often said, “God is not obligated to reveal his hidden will until we’re obeying his known will.”
 - a. Spend time talking about the lengths some people will go to try to figure out what the will of God is for their lives.
 - b. Have you ever thought about the part you have in discerning the will of God?
6. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences regarding being in the center of God’s will, as well as times when they’ve been out of the will of God.
7. Read and discuss **Romans 6:12–13** and **1 Corinthians 6:13, 18–20**.
 - a. Pastor Gary’s counsel for teens and single adults regarding the age-old question “How far is too far and what is okay?” was to come to the conclusion that anything that you would be embarrassed to have your mother see, that would be sin!
 - b. What do you think of this idea of appropriate versus inappropriate?
 - c. Would this be considered old-fashioned and out of touch in our culture?
 - i. Read The Silver Gravy Ladle joke and discuss the cultural shift that’s taken place in our culture over the past 20-30 years, and what is now considered acceptable and/or appropriate.⁴

³ <http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/search/word consecration>

- d. Read and discuss **Proverbs 4:24–27; 6:16–19**.
 - i. Spend time talking about ways we can consecrate specific members of the body, like the mouth, eyes, hands and feet.
8. Read and discuss **Romans 11:30–32**, focusing on the incredible mercy of God.
9. Read and discuss **James 1:27, 4:4–5**.
 - a. Do you think some people read Scriptures like these and come to the conclusion that a rule-following, legalistic life is the only way to please God?
 - b. When people look at you, do they see the imprint of the world, or do they see the mark of God?
 - i. What are some of the characteristics of a life marked by the world?
 - ii. What are some of the characteristics of a life marked by God?
10. Spend time reading and talking about Paul's instruction found in **Philippians 4:8**.
 - a. What would the difference be in your life if you intentionally spent time thinking about and meditating on each of these things?
 - b. Is it really possible to "*take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*"?
 - c. Read and discuss this quote from *Faith Alone*, a daily devotional written by Martin Luther.
 - i. "You can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but only let them fly. Don't let them nest in your hair."
11. Close your time by allowing everyone in your group to: offer the physical members of their bodies in consecration to the Lord as a pleasing gift; dedicate themselves to purity and holiness, which is a logical and reasonable act of worship.

⁴ <http://nashville.about.com/library/blank/jokes/blladle.htm>

The Silver Gravy Ladle

A young college student invites his mother over to eat dinner with himself, and his new roommate. When she arrives, she can't help but notice, how beautifully stunning his new roommate is. The son tells her that they are, just roommates, they have a strictly platonic relationship and assures her that nothing is going on between them. The mother enjoys a nice dinner, and later goes home.

Two weeks later the girl goes to her roommate, and says that ever since your mother came over for dinner, I can't find my silver gravy ladle. The son writes his mother [an e-mail] saying..."Mom, I'm not saying that you "did" take the silver gravy ladle, and I'm not saying that you "did not" take the silver gravy ladle, but the fact remains, it has been missing since you came over for dinner".

The mother wrote [an e-mail] back to her son saying..."Son, I'm not saying that you "do" sleep with your roommate, and I'm not saying that you "do not" sleep with your roommate, but the fact remains... if she was sleeping in her own bed, she would have found the ladle by now."