



A Living Sacrifice: Part 3 *Romans 12:14-21*

Main Idea: In the grace God gives, the Lord calls believers to live their lives to reflect and to share God's grace with one another.

In this section of the letter to the church in Rome, the Lord revealed some incredibly important heart attitudes that underlie and produce faith-driven action in the lives of his children – the church. Before we examine the faith-driven actions in verses 14-21, it's important to look at the heart attitudes that are addressed in this passage. As you study God's Word, allow the Holy Spirit through the living Word of God to shine his light of truth into your heart, asking him to reveal and to adjust your attitudes in alignment to his will for your life in Christ. Below are four important heart attitudes of a life that's given as a living sacrifice in service to the Lord.

A living sacrifice is humble before the Lord (16).

In verse 16, there are two statements that are key. First, the Lord called his people to not be haughty but to associate with the lowly. The idea of haughtiness is equivalent to an old saying that was popular when I was young, which was to say that someone was "stuck-up." To be stuck-up was to be haughty or arrogant. It was to have your nose stuck in the air – so to speak – thinking that you were better than everyone else. In other words, God's message in verse 16 was a call for humility in the way that believers view themselves in relationship to others. If Christ humbled himself to come to earth and to take on flesh so that lowly sinners like us could be saved, how much more should we model the humility of Christ in our attitude towards others? Second, the Lord called his people to not think too highly of themselves, trusting in their own wisdom. This continues the idea of an arrogant and conceited attitude, which the Lord rejects. Both of these exhortations in verse 16 focus on the call to be humble before the Lord, and humility before the Lord should naturally lead to humility before one another, reflecting the very humility of Christ in the gospel!

1. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies for the words "haughty" and "wise in your own sight" in verse 16. Discuss.
2. How are these words/concepts similar? How are they different?
3. Do you struggle with either of these things in your heart attitude before the Lord and with others? If so, how? Why?
4. How does humility in our hearts reflect Jesus and his gospel?

A living sacrifice is thoughtful for the Lord (17).

Continuing to look for heart attitudes in this passage, verse 17 is a call for believers to do what is right and honorable in all circumstances; however, an important part of this call is the reminder to "give thought" to what is done. In other words, God's desire is for his people to be thoughtful for the Lord in what they say and what they do, always seeking to do what's right before all people. God's people shouldn't act off of emotions, which can often be sinful and unreliable. God's people shouldn't just react in a human or natural way to the people and circumstances they encounter. As God's



people, we are to be people of faith. We should be thoughtful, driven by faith and by truth to do what honors and glorifies the Lord in all that we do and say. What an important reminder that connects to the earlier command in chapter 12 to be constant in prayer! Every moment of every day, faith and God's grace can strengthen us to be thoughtful for the Lord, allowing our faith and his truth to shape our attitudes and drive our actions in a way that honors him.

1. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do a word study on "give thought" in verse 17. Discuss.
2. What's the role or importance of God's Word in being able to give thought to do what's honorable? What about the role of prayer?
3. How can we encourage one another to be thoughtful for the Lord?

A living sacrifice is responsible to the Lord (18).

In verse 18, tied to the appeal to live at peace with everyone, God reminded his people that they are responsible for their actions, regardless of what others do: "If possible, as far as it depends on you . . ." In other words, while we can't control the actions of others, we must have the attitude and understanding that by God's grace in Christ, we can control our actions under the self-control of the Holy Spirit in us. Because of the goodness of God in the new life he's given us in Christ Jesus, we not only can live for the Lord, but also we are responsible to the Lord to do what we can in living to reflect and to share him with the world around us. These words remind us that while God is responsible for saving souls, we are responsible for doing the things that he's saved us and gifted us to do. An important heart attitude in being a living sacrifice is accepting that we are responsible to the Lord.

1. Do you have a relationship/situation where you need to act to pursue peace? Share.
2. What's your responsibility to the Lord in that relationship/situation? What do you need to do?
3. How would your efforts to pursue peace reflect Jesus and his gospel?

A living sacrifice is dependent on the Lord (19).

In verse 19, there's a call to in-action. Rather than taking revenge into their own hands, the Lord called his people to leave vengeance in the hands of the Lord. This is an attitude issue. It's a call to not do anything other than to depend on the Lord. It's an exhortation that requires faith! As believers, even our in-action should be by faith. What we do and what we do not do reflects our understanding of God – who he is and what he does. There are some things – salvation, vengeance/final judgment, the hearts of others, etc. – that belong to the Lord. We are completely dependent on him for these things, and both our actions and in-actions should be a testimony of our faith to those around us. As a living sacrifice, on the altar and wholly-given, depend on the Lord – wholly and completely – for the things that only belong to him.

1. Do you desire to take vengeance on someone because of something they did? Share.
2. What's the in-action that the Lord calls you to take? How's that possible? How can we help each other to not take action when the Lord calls us to only depend on him?
3. How would your obedience to in-action – depending on the Lord – reflect Jesus and his gospel?