

Be A Living Sacrifice To God

ROMANS 12:1-15:13

MEMORY VERSE

ROMANS 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Construction paper, magazines, crayons, scissors, and glue.

As many small stickers as the number of children in your class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Living Sacrifices

You will need construction paper, magazines, crayons, scissors, and glue. Have your class cut out pictures from magazines of things that “COULD” take God’s place in people’s lives. Have them paste them on the sheets of construction paper. Leave enough room for the children to draw an altar underneath their pictures. Explain that there are so many things in this world that are competing for the attention and focus that ONLY belongs to God. Today we are going to learn about presenting our lives as a living sacrifice and how we should not be conformed to the things of this world, but transformed in our thinking through the Spirit of God. Serving the Lord is the most important thing we can do in our lives.

Have your class write out the memory verse on the bottom of the paper. Remind them that the Lord must have first place in our lives.

LESSON TIME!

What in the world is a living sacrifice? We see sacrifices all of the time in the Old Testament. We know that people would bring their best animals to sacrifice to the Lord. We know that by doing the sacrifices their sins would be covered as the people believed in God. But what does Paul mean when he tells us to be a living sacrifice? We will find out in our lesson today. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

NOTE TO TEACHERS: This is a long passage of scripture. Mainly four areas will be highlighted.

1. What is a living sacrifice? (Chapter 12)
2. Loving and serving others. (Chapter 12)
3. Respecting authority. (Chapter 13)
4. Our relationships with other Christians. (Chapter 14 &15)

You will want to review the entire lesson and after prayer choose one or two of the areas to concentrate on as you may not have ample time to cover every verse.

ROMANS 12:1-8

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;

he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Paul opens this part of his letter to the church in Rome by talking to them about being a living sacrifice. Think about everything that Paul has been talking about in Romans. He shares with them their sinful condition apart from God and their need for a savior. He then shares with them the great things that God did for us through His Son Jesus. He also shares about how we have a relationship with God through faith or belief in Him. Then we learn that God has given us everything we need to live our lives for Him. Now we come to the place where Paul is saying, “since God has done all of these things for you, here is what you need to do.” He shares with us some real practical things that our lives should look like.

He begins by saying that we need to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice. What this means is that we need to respond to what God has done for us by giving our lives to Him. Just like the people in the Old Testament would bring the best they had to God, we need to bring our very best to Him. We need to give Him our bodies and hearts in service to Him.

Paul says this is our “reasonable service.” God is not asking too much of His children by asking for our lives. He has given us His Son Jesus so we can have eternal life. How much more we need to give our lives to Him. Not only that, when we give our lives to God it is the best life we can live. It will be a life of great blessing.

Paul then encourages us not to be like the world, but be transformed or changed. We need to be completely different people. Especially in the way we think. People who don’t know Jesus think the way that the world thinks. And the way the world thinks is opposite of how God looks at things. We need to know God’s word and allow it to change our lives completely. We need to think and act like Jesus would. Then, when we give our lives to God and be transformed by Him we will understand what His will is for our lives. He will show us exactly what He wants us to do and how He wants us to live.

Next Paul goes on to warn us to be careful that none of us think more highly of ourselves than we should, because as believers it takes every one of us to make the body complete; we each have different work to do, but we each need each other. Sometimes people can think that they are pretty important and cool. We need to be

careful of that kind of attitude. Jesus was a servant of others and that is the kind of attitude we should have (see Philippians chapter 2). We need to use the gifts that God has given us in our service to others. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

ROMANS 12:9-21

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Now Paul encourages us to love one another and to be kind. He also tells us that we are to pray for people that mistreat us. When others are happy, we are to be happy with them, and if they are sad we are to share their sorrow. In this way we are working together. We are not to repay anyone evil for evil. Don't quarrel with anyone, but be at peace with everyone. Don't be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

Let's make a list of the things that Paul writes here:

1. Love others.
2. Hate evil things.
3. Love good things.
4. Be kind.
5. Put others first.
6. Work hard.
7. Serve the Lord.
8. Have joy.
9. Be patient.
10. Pray.
11. Be giving.
12. Love those who aren't nice to you.

This list shows us what a life that is a living sacrifice should look like. Let's ask ourselves how our lives stack up to the list. If we are lacking in any areas we can ask the Lord to help us. He promises that He will.

ROMANS 13:1-10

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.

Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Paul now talks about obeying those in authority. He says that we should obey those in authority over us because God placed those who are in authority in those positions. Also, when we refuse to obey the authorities we are refusing to obey God. Next, Paul goes on to talk about the importance of those in governing positions, and why God has placed them there. Paul then begins to talk about how important it is to love our neighbor.

These verses are talking about respect. We need to respect those who are the government leaders. We need to be praying for our President, Senators, Congressmen, Governors, Mayor, Policemen, Firemen and others who God has raised up to be in authority. Sometimes laws may be passed that we don't agree with. Certainly in Paul's day Caesar passed laws that Paul didn't agree with, but Paul still says that as Christians we are a witness when we respect those whom God has placed in authority.

He also tells us that if we love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves we won't want to harm, cheat or steal from them and we won't sin against them. He says that love is the greatest fulfillment of the law. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

ROMANS 13:11-14

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Paul says that another reason for being a living sacrifice is that the coming of the Lord Jesus is nearer now than when we first believed. So we are to quit doing evil deeds of darkness and put on the Lord Jesus. We should ask the Lord to help us live as we should and not make any provision for the flesh.

What do you suppose it means to not make a provision of the flesh? That means that we need to make sure that we do not allow anything into our lives that will feed our flesh or tempt us to sin. We need to be careful of what we think, or watch or listen to. We should only allow those things into our lives that are pleasing to the Lord. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

ROMANS 14:1-13

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Paul says that we are to welcome and receive anyone, even though they may be weaker in the faith than us. He says we are not to criticize or judge them for having different ideas about what is right or wrong. For instance, someone might think it's all right to eat meat, while someone else might think that they should only eat vegetables. Some might think that Christians should observe certain holidays as special days to worship God, but others say it is wrong and foolish.

What's Right and What's Wrong?

Lead your class in a discussion of right and wrong. Ask your students to tell about things that are considered right by some and wrong by others. Be ready to differentiate these examples by scripture. Some things described will be wrong by the standard of the Bible, but some things will be gray areas.

Ask your class how we should handle the gray areas? Explain that there is liberty in Christ, but we must be very careful not to cause a brother to stumble. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

On questions like this everyone must decide for himself after seeking the Lord's will. We have no right to criticize someone else, because each one of us will stand before the judgment seat of God and give an account of ourselves to God. We are not to criticize each other anymore, but instead we are to live in such a way that will never make another stumble or fall. The main thing we need to remember in this is that if we are doing something that bothers someone else, or affects their walk with God then we shouldn't do it. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

ROMANS 14:14-16

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;

Paul says that the Lord Jesus convinces him that there is nothing wrong with eating meat, but that if someone believes it is wrong, then he shouldn't do it because for him it is wrong. (Paul is talking about meat, but this really applies to any other freedom we may have in Christ.)

We may think something is all right for us but if it causes someone to stumble and we continue to do it, then we are not walking in love. Don't let your freedom ruin someone for whom Christ died. We are not to do anything that would cause our good to be spoken evil of, even though we may know that what we are doing is all right. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

ROMANS 14:17-23

for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.

The kingdom of God is not about eating food or what holidays we observe or any of these other issues but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is what is important. So we should pursue those things that make for peace and that build each other up; this is the right thing to do. We may know that there is nothing wrong with what we do, even from God's point of view, but if it offends someone else and causes him or her to sin then we shouldn't do it. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

ROMANS 15:1-6

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.

For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those of us who are strong should bear the burdens of those who are weak; we should be considerate of them and not just try to please ourselves. We should each try to please his neighbor for his good and to build him up. Even Christ did not please himself, but came for the very purpose of suffering the insults of others.

My Brother's Keeper

Pass out to each student in your class a small sticker. Instruct them not to peel off the sticker yet or stick it anywhere. Have them sit in a circle around the room.

Tell your class that they may peel the sticker now and stick it onto the top part of their hands. HOWEVER, they may not use their hands to do it and they must remain sitting upright. They may be confused as to how to accomplish this, but give them hints if they are struggling that you are trying to get them to help each other put the stickers on.

When they have put stickers on each others hands, tell them that being a part of the body of Christ is to look out for one another's needs. We need to not only look after our own interests, but the interests of others. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

In Psalms it says "The insults of those who insult you fell on me." These things were written for us to learn patience and how to encourage others. Paul gives the church encouragement by saying, "May the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

ROMANS 15:7-13

Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,

and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name."

And again he says: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!"

And again: "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! laud Him, all you peoples!"

And again, Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope."

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the close of this part of the letter, Paul encourages believers to receive one another warmly just as Christ Jesus has received us. He reminds us that Jesus came to show that God is true to His promises and to help us who believe. He then shares with us several passages of scripture about rejoicing in the Lord. Then he ends with a prayer that the God of hope would fill us with all joy and peace in believing that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul encourages us to give our lives completely for God. **God wants our lives to be a living sacrifice.**

So there are a lot of things involved in being a living sacrifice. Let's review the main things we need to remember.

1. Being a living sacrifice means that we are giving our whole lives to God.
2. Being a living sacrifice means that our lives will look like Jesus.
3. Being a living sacrifice means that we will love and serve others.
4. Being a living sacrifice means that we will respect those whom God has place in authority.
5. Being a living sacrifice means that we will help our brothers and sisters in Christ and not make them stumble.

May God greatly bless you as you present yourself a living sacrifice to Him.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to love as the Lord directs us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.