

TOUGH TIMES, TOUGHER FAITH
II Thessalonians Series #12
November 23rd, 2025

TEXT: II Thessalonians 3:4-5

CONSIDER THIS: The ultimate contribution we make to our own sanctification is to offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices. The Thessalonian Christians were great examples of what it means to grow in sanctification by offering oneself in devotion to God.

And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing, and will do the things, that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ. II Thessalonians 3:4-5

Christian, as you offer yourself to God in order that you might be sanctified, your relationships are to be included in that offering to God. The Lord instructs you how to do this, and He will help you. The end result is **TOUGH TIMES BUT A TOUGHER FAITH.**

I. OFFER YOURSELF TO GOD

- A) Sanctification is the position whereby God sets the Christian apart unto Himself, declaring that Christian to be holy (a saint). The new position of being set apart unto God also initiates a lifelong process of being transformed into an imitation or reflection of Jesus Christ. The Thessalonian Christians were doing this:

*We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is **growing** abundantly, and the **love** of every one of you for one another is **increasing**.*
II Thessalonians 1:3

- B) Paul instructs Christians to view themselves as a living sacrifice to God. A sacrifice is something set apart (holy) unto God. The classic passage for this is Romans 12:1-2. This is the appropriate response to Romans 1-11 (The mercies of God!).

NOTE: Beginning with Romans 12:3, the remaining 4 chapters of Romans focus on how the sanctified Christian (the living sacrifice) humbly and lovingly interacts with others.

II. OFFER YOUR RELATIONSHIPS TO GOD

- A) See Matthew 5:23-24. This is amazing. Although bringing your sacrifice to the altar (remember, Jesus was talking to Jews still living under the Old Testament sacrificial system) was very important, repairing damaged relationships was even more important.

One could say that striving to honor and imitate Christ with your relationships **is the fulfillment of offering yourself to God as a living sacrifice.**

The more difficult the relationship, the more beautiful the sacrifice.

- B) In David's powerful confession of his sin, he noted there is something more important than sin sacrifices/sin offerings, it is the offering of one's heart to God (Psalm 51:9-10, 16-17). When we don't bring our relationships to God as an offering, we haven't really given Him our heart.

NOTE: In II Thessalonians 3:6-15 Paul ends his letter with instructions about problem relationships within the church, and the need for tough love. He was confident the sin of certain men would be dealt with biblically. This is the fruit of sanctification.

III. SANCTIFIED RELATIONSHIPS IN ACTION

KEY: This series is titled **TOUGH TIMES, TOUGHER FAITH**. The Thessalonian Christians endured persecution and faced tough times, but not only did they not quit, they continued to grow in their faith. God strengthened them by strengthening their relationships with each other (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). Christian, if you want to have faith that is tough when circumstances are difficult, you must bring yourself and your difficult relationship "to the altar" and offer both to God.

- A) Remember, sanctified relationships are characterized by **HUMILITY**, by **LOVE** and by **MERCY**. (Colossians 3:12-14)
- B) Option #1 (I Peter 4:8)
- C) Option #2 (Matthew 18:15-17)

In dealing with difficult relationships the goal is sanctification = to become more like Jesus no matter the cost.

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