

A Living Sacrifice

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (Rom 12:1).

Frances Havergal grew up in the church. In the eyes of any onlooker, Frances was a model Christian. Her father was a minister; she was baptized at 14; she was faithful in attendance; she knew doctrine and Scripture. But under the surface, Miss Havergal recognized the shallowness of her commitment. She wanted to serve God, but she saw a heart of selfish ambitions that hindered her love for God.

At the age of 37, Frances prayed this prayer of consecration. She surrendered herself fully as a living sacrifice to God. She prayed, “Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.”

She surrendered her daily schedule to a life of praise:

Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

She surrendered her hands to loving service:

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.

She surrendered her feet to God’s direction:

Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

She surrendered her voice to God-honoring song and conversation:

*Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee.*

She surrendered her wealth to God’s stewardship:

Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.

She surrendered her mind to God’s control:

Take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

She surrendered her will to God’s full authority:

*Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.*

The final step of surrender goes beyond possessions and ambitions. It is a willing surrender that comes from a heart of love, and it is a total surrender of oneself to God’s ownership. Just as Mary poured out her cruse of precious ointment, Frances Havergal poured out her love to God:

*Take my love – my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be always, only, all for Thee.*

“Take My Life and Let It Be” is the prayer of a person who says, “God, I want to be like you. I belong completely to you. I hold nothing back from your daily control.” This is the prayer of a living sacrifice.

This surrender is both a one-time commitment *and* a daily walk. It is not enough to pray the prayer and sing the song. We must live in willing, daily submission to God. Our once-for-all surrender must be followed by daily acts of surrender.

This surrender is motivated neither by guilt nor by an effort to “earn” God’s favor, but by love for God. As she lived a life of daily surrender, Havergal testified, “There are times when I feel such love for Him that I have not words to describe it... but I want to come nearer still. It is not knowing doctrine alone, but being with Him, which will give this.”

After a lifetime as a living sacrifice, Havergal’s last words were, “Beautiful! Splendid to be so near the gates of heaven! Blessed rest!” Her brother wrote that her face “was so glad, as if she were already talking to Him.” Such joy is the reward of a life of true discipleship.