

## HOW DOES GOD VIEW THE ORDINARY? A LIVING SACRIFICE

(Rom 12:1-5)

A. Paul usually ended a letter with a list of practical duties based on what he taught in the letter.

1. Our own lives ought to follow that order: *duty follows doctrine; action follows understanding.*
2. Because what we believe should determine how we behave.
3. It is not enough to learn WHAT God said, we must translate our *learning* into *living* & show by our lives that we trust Christ (cf. Rom 12:6ff).

B. Our text conveys three actions that demonstrate when we are making a “living sacrifice”:

1. Transformation: “*the renewing of your mind*”, so that you “*not be conformed to this world*”.
2. Evaluation: “*that you may prove [test for genuineness] what is the good & acceptable & perfect will of God*”.
3. Cooperation: “*so we, being many, are one body in Christ, & individually members of one another.*”

C. Today let’s consider the contribution WE ALL can make as “living sacrifices” to the Lord.

1. Because these verses apply to us all, & not just to those members we consider to be mature.
2. Let’s begin here, what is one’s “reasonable” or “spiritual service” (1); *an intelligent service, in contrast to a service of ritual or compulsion.*

- a. We don't have to be highly intelligent to give God this "*reasonable service*".
- b. We need only to be willing to recognize that our lives should always be on the altar of service to God.
- c. Song "Father (Jesus, Spirit), I adore You; lay my life before You. How I love you."

[So we need to keep in mind that our text applies to *ordinary* Christians of all ages & walks of life.]

## I. THE ORDINARY

A. **Someone once said**, "*God must love the ordinary because He made so much of it.*"

- 1. He often used ordinary people & common things to accomplish His will.

- a. He used ordinary bugs & frogs to bring about the deliverance of the Israelites.
- b. He chose an ordinary shepherd [Moses] to lead them through the wilderness.
- c. He used a common Hebrew maid to direct Naaman to Elisha.
- d. He used "a certain Jew" (Mordecai) to preserve & protect the nation from whom Christ would come.
- e. He used an ordinary boy with a sling & a stone to slay an extraordinary giant.
- f. He used another boy to warn those in charge of Paul of a plot to take his life.
- g. He used an ordinary young woman, to be the "maidservant of the Lord".

- h. He used a Samaritan woman to turn an entire city to Christ.
- i. Who did Jesus send out with the gospel? Uneducated & untrained Galileans.
- j. Who came from Heaven to do His Father's will? And ordinary child who had to grow into adulthood like everyone else.

1) Even his own contrymen found it hard to accept Jesus as being more than just a carpenter's son (Mark 6:3).

2) In fact He was so ordinary that no one even noticed Him standing in a crowd (Jn 1:26).

[God often wishes to work His tremendous power through ordinary people doing ordinary things, while the world thinks God's work ought to be done in a visual & captivating manner by those who are far above average.]

## II. THE "LIVING SACRIFICE"

A. Our idea of what it means to make a "living sacrifice" should differ from the world's view.

1. The world worships the grand & impressive, the outstanding & that which is far above average – *to adopt this way of thinking is to have an unrealistic idea of what it means to make a living sacrifice to God.*

2. To desire "great" service, as the world defines it, is to set ourselves up for bitter disappointment.

3. What is God's view of a "living sacrifice"?

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**Mark 12:41-44** – Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury & saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came & threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself & said to them, “Assuredly, ***I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury***; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”

**Mark 10:37, 42-45** – [James & John made this request of Jesus] They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand & the other on Your left, in Your glory.” 42 But Jesus called them [the 12, because they overheard this request] to Himself & said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, & their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And ***whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all***. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, & to give His life a ransom for many.”

**Luke 16:14-15** – Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, & they derided Him. 15 And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. ***For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.***”

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[These points are not made to encourage a second-rate service to the Lord, but to help us realize that a life lived as a “living sacrifice” will not impress most people.]

### III. HOW DOES GOD VIEW ORDINARY?

#### A. With great honor!

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**1 Cor 1:26-29** – For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But ***God has chosen the foolish things [he’s talking about people]*** of the world to put to shame the wise, & ***God has chosen the weak things [people]*** of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 ***and the base things of the world & the things which are despised [people]*** God has chosen, & ***the things [people] which are not [considered to be nothing in the eyes of the world],*** to bring to nothing the things that are [are what? Are “something” in the eyes of world.], 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

**1 Cor 12:23** – those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more ***abundant honor***, & [thus] our less presentable members become much more ***presentable***,

**Jas 2:5** – Listen, my beloved brethren: Has ***God not chosen the poor of this world*** to be rich in faith & heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

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B. **We need to** guard against the notion that if our service to the Lord has not attracted someone’s attention then it doesn’t really amount to much.

1. “But aren’t we supposed to let our lights shine before the world?” (Matt 5:16; 1 Pet 2:11-12).

2. Yes, but the “good works” to which Jesus & Peter refer pertain to the ordinary duties of life (see the context: [Matt 5-7](#); [1 Pet 2:13-19](#)).

[Did you know that nearly the entire body of Scripture was revealed to show us how to serve the Lord as we engage in the ordinary activities of life; & that is true, because God describes the Christian [His child] as one who quietly goes about his life of service whereby God receives the glory from the service given.

Never does Christ command a local church (congregation) to magnify or advertize itself.]

#### IV. WHEN IS ORDINARY WORK A SPIRITUAL SERVICE?

##### A. When the motive is right?

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**Col 3:22-24** – Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but **with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord**. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (cf. Jn 13)

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1. A work is not secular because you do it with your hands, nor is a work is spiritual because it involves the Bible ([Phil 1:15](#); [2 Pet 2:1-3](#); [2 Cor 2:17](#)) – It’s the *motive* that makes the difference.

- a. Whether teacher, student, manager, business owner, retired, father or mother at home with children.

#### CLOSING

- A. [Our purpose](#) has been to show that our entire life is to be presented to God as a “*living sacrifice*.” (BTW, this does not mean that all of life is worship: see “[Is All Life Worship](#)”)

1. Peter said we are part of a “*holy...royal priesthood*” offering ourselves continually in service to God ([1 Peter 2:5](#)).
2. So let us not be too concerned with whether or not we measure up to the world’s religious standard.
3. For ours is not a service that is meant to impress the world, but one that will show the world “*what is that good & acceptable a perfect will of God*.”