***Give your Body First  
RO151-01***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 12. And I hope you do have a Bible with you. This is an instructional situation at Berean Church. And without a Bible, you are at an enormous disadvantage. Our subject today is "The Basis for Christian Service."

**Romans 1 - 11 – Salvation**

We have completed the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans. Those chapters have dealt with the subject of justification. It has been presented by the apostle Paul in a formal, scholarly, and detailed manner. It has answered such important questions as: who is a lost sinner? What is the consequence of being lost in sin? How has God paid for the moral guilt of the lost sinner? How does the lost person secure justification before God in order to get into heaven. How does one retain justification which he has secured? What is the internal status of the Jew who rejects Jesus Christ? And not the least is: what happens if you add a bit of human work the payment of Christ in order to cover your sins and secure salvation? We have all the detail with all those tremendously important questions, and Paul has answered them for us.

**Romans 12 - 16 – Daily Living**

Now, in Romans chapters 12 through 16, there is a change of pace. These chapters deal with the application of regeneration to the daily conduct of the individual believer. This is the regular pattern of the New Testament epistles. Up front, you have doctrinal instruction. Then, at the latter part of the book, the writer says, "Now, here is how you apply this doctrine into daily living. Romans chapters 1 through 11 dealt with salvation. Romans 12 to 16 deals with sanctification – setting a life apart to a godly lifestyle.

I assume you understand that the word which is translated "doctrine" in the Greek Bible is the word for "teaching." And when we talk about Bible teaching or doctrine, we are referring not only to the knowledge of the great principles related to salvation, but we are also now concerned with proper Christian conduct. This, as you know, is our problem in the Christian life. Christians who know a doctrinal principle; they know a teaching; they know what God expects; and, they know what God has done. But then when it comes to doing that in daily living, it breaks down. Christians do not live up to what they know. For this reason, the apostle Paul now is going to go through some very practical instruction on how we ought to live, and act, and think. So, it refers to explicit personal conduct.

The Bible is, a matter of fact, is very exact in how a Christian should think, and how he should act while he moves through the devil's world. Proper Christian conduct, however, requires information from God in order to guide one. And this information will be very specific.

**The Inerrancy of the Bible**

Paul began the whole book of Romans, you may remember, by presenting God as the Creator of the universe and of man. We are told that God gave divine viewpoint information to mankind for its guidance. They did have Bible doctrine truth. Then God became very angry at men because they had his divine viewpoint truth, but instead, they suppressed it because they wanted to do evil. Romans 1:18 tells us that. Instead of welcoming the information from God, they held it under cover, and ignored it, because what God told them interfered with what they wanted to think and what they wanted to do. Therefore, they had to dismiss the Word of God. That, of course, is still being done by people today who do not like what the Bible says. Therefore, they seek to undermine its absolute authority. And the first thing say is, "Well, it's a book that is not perfect. If it's not perfect, we never know what part is actually true. Therefore, we must judge that by human reason." The attack upon the inerrancy of the Bible is the oldest trick in the world.

Furthermore, the natural creation, Paul pointed out, gave lost men information about the existence of God and His power. Romans 1:19-20 told us about that. Creation says, "There is a God out there." Creation says, "He's a very powerful being to be able to put such a creation together." With the rejection of God's revelation to mankind, men were left in total spiritual darkness. Romans 1:21 pointed that out. When they rejected God's light, they had nothing but darkness left in its place.

So, without the guidance of divine viewpoint truth, the natural reasoning of men resulted in what Romans 1:22 calls "foolish thinking." And they came to false conclusions. And Paul points out that God actually gives people over to their deliberate, foolish thinking. That, to me, is a very sobering principle, and one that we should not take lightly or forget. You want to remember that when you reject God's truth, you not only have turned your back upon light, but you want to remember that you may not be able to turn back. You may be in a lighted room, and decide that you don't want to be in the lighted room, and walk out to darkness, and then discover that it's terrible out there, and you want to go back to where the light is, and you turn around and find that somebody has turned the switch off, and you can't turn it back on. God explicitly says that He puts people in a position of enlightenment. And if you turn your back against it, then He will turn the switch off, and you'll never find your way back. He will commit you to that reprobate condition.

Now, this is what happened to these people in the human race in general. Uninformed humanity, lacking the enlightenment of doctrines, then created for themselves gods in the form of animals. We founded that in Romans 1:23. So, without any moral guidance from God, the human race degenerated into perverted, self-destructive conduct. Romans 1:24-31 describes homosexuality; the lesbianism; the bestiality; and, all the terrible things that human beings descended into because they had no moral, absolute guidance.

Sinners, furthermore, had no fear of God in the gross evil in which they were engaged. They had no fear of God in their anti-God thinking. They had no fear of the penalty of death that they were warned that would be imposed upon them. That in fact, Romans 1:32 says, "They delighted in the evil, and they promoted it, among others.

The Jews, who had great information from God in the Old Testament Scriptures, perverted that information into meaningless religious rituals, and then they turned to idolatry.

So, the whole human race ended up being condemned to the lake of fire with absolutely no way of escape, and no way to find their way back to God. God had to now come into the picture. The Christians who had escaped the lake of fire had done so by believing the gospel and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans chapters 1 through 11 have taken us through that whole story.

Now, the apostle Paul says, after the exposition of doctrine in the first part of the book, he now comes to exhortation in the last part, because Christians need information on how they should live.

So, we begin in Romans 12 verses 1-2. And I must confess that this is an awesome area of Scripture to me, and I enter it with some trepidation. I'm not sure that I can handle and convey to you what indeed the Spirit of God has recorded here, and to be able to alert you to the enormous important bit of guidance that these two verses give, that will make all the difference in the world in your life between a common, ordinary, no-account Christian, and rising to the princely aristocracy that is yours as part of the royal priesthood of the body of Christ. These are not easy verses to present. And I can assure you, these are not verses that you can read in the English language, and understand. Here is one place we have to fall back upon the Greek language to a very large degree to comprehend the enormity and significance of the information that is here.

Paul says, "I beseech you, therefore." The word "beseech" is the Greek word "parakeleo." This word literally means "to call to one's side." It is rather a tender expression. And what Paul is really saying here is that he is making a tender appeal (a tender admonition). It connotes an urging to action. The word "therefore" indicates the basis upon which he is making this appeal to the believers in Rome. The word "therefore" goes back to everything that he has said in chapters 1 through 11. Anybody who reads through those chapters and understands what he's reading is absolutely astounded by what God has been willing to do for a bunch of low, no-count, filthy sinners, and to make it possible for them to be as perfect as Jesus Christ, and to enter His heaven in that status.

So, Paul says, "Therefore, in view of what God has done to us, surely there is something that should be a logical consequence that we may expect on the part of a response from the individual believer: not rising up in snotty arrogance against God; and, not rising up against His Word, in intellectual superiority, but recognizing that, out of the pit of doom, He selected you, and put your feet on the solid rock. Therefore, everything you have has come from Him, and any further information you will get will be on the basis of what He brings to you. And there's only one place he's going to bring that information to you from, and that is the Bible itself.

Now, the apostle Paul addresses these people as "brethren," so that we know who is making a tender appeal on the basis of God's salvation provision to those who are in the family of God. He is speaking to born again people who have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. Therefore, they are capable of being taught doctrinal principles. And, furthermore, they have the capacity to put those into effect in their lives. It is foolish to try to impose a godly lifestyle on non-Christians. They don't want it, and they can't execute it. But the non-Christian, indeed, keeps his eye on the lifestyle of the Christian, which he knows is a good and profitable way to live. It works for everybody's well-being, and he counterfeits it, but he counterfeits it with the old sin nature. Unfortunately, that attempt to live good on the part of the unbeliever breaks down sooner or later.

**Mercy**

Paul says, "So, I ask you tenderly, brethren, in view of what God has done for you and by the mercies of God. The word "mercies" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It is the Greek word "oiktirmos." You remember already, from our previous study, that the word "mercy" has a very definite meaning in the Bible. The word "mercy" refers to the pity that one has for the suffering of another person, and then coming to his aid. That is mercy. Mercy is God's grace in action toward sinners who are hurting, and who are helpless. He comes to their assistance. That's His mercy. It is really connoting here a divine compassion for man in his lost, condemned condition, displayed by God in His various outward actions.

So, he says, "I'm appealing to you on these various compassions (or mercies) of God." And again, what is he referring to? He's referring to what has come before. All these verses that have been expressed by God, not only in getting us saved, but you remember the extensive study we also had in Romans about how to live the Christian life under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, on the basis of all of this help that God has given us, he comes to ask for certain action on the part of the believer. The word "God" here has the word "the" in front of it in the Greek Bible ("*the* God") indicating that it is God the Father. And it is characteristic of God the Father to be a source of mercy. 2 Corinthians 1:3 calls Him "The father of mercies."

So, all these mercies that have been detailed previously in this book: forgiveness of sins; imputation of absolute righteousness; salvation as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ; eternal security in that salvation; the baptism of the Holy Spirit, placing the believer into Christ sanctification for victory over evil; the very selection call to salvation; and, the future restoration of Israel as a nation. God's manifold verses to the believer merit maximum devotion to God.

**Present your Bodies**

So, what does he ask on the basis of those mercies? He asks that each of us make a certain sacrifice to God – that we present Him with something. The word "present" is the Greek word "paristemi." This Greek word means "to offer." It connotes, in fact, an act of dedication. At some point in time, a Christian is to make, and consider seriously making, this particular act of dedication to God. It is in the active voice, which means you have to do it yourself. And it's in infinite mood, which indicates that it is God's purpose that we should do this – that we present something: our bodies. The Greek word is "soma," so that we know we're talking about the physical body here. When Paul takes up the subject of godly looking, the first thing he deals with is the person's body. Now, that's of significance. That's the first point we should observe.

**The Human Body is Sacred to God**

Here we are, starting a whole new section of this book, which is going to tell us how we should act in day-by-day living toward God and other human beings, and the first thing he takes up in dealing with that subject is your physical body. The human body is obviously sacred and important to God – so much so that someday He's going to resurrect every human body that has ever been made.

All those poor 20 million little babies, whose blood this nation has shed in abortion – all of them are someday going to get their bodies together. Those little bodies that were torn out of the mother's womb past a first-trimester abortion, so that the little parts came out in pieces, and the doctor has to have a nurse that puts all the little pieces together on the table to be sure that they've got it all. And they put the head there, and they put the little arms there, and they put the torso there, and they put the little legs and feet there, and they count all the little toes, and they see to it that there are no pieces that have been left (un-removed). And then they scrape it off, and throw it in the garbage bin. All those little bodies are going to be brought together, because that body was not important to that mother. An evil American Supreme Court told the woman that she could have control over a baby's body, and do as she pleased with it. Someday, God is going to overrule that. And the one thing that we may say (as at least a silver lining) is that every one of those 20 million babies are going to be in heaven. And we can thank God for that act of mercy on His part.

**Glorify God in Your Body**

The human body is sacred, and God's going to resurrect every one of them, whether you are a believer or an unbeliever. Greek philosophy, in contrast to this, held the human body in very low esteem as the source of great evil. But the Bible tells us that the Christian's body is important to God, because it is the very dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit. God no longer resides in cathedrals and temples and magnificent churches, as He did in the Old Testament tabernacle, and the Old Testament temple. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 teach that. Paul says, "What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body." And the point that the apostle Paul is making is that the body is very important to God. It is a very sacred thing. And God has made it, in this age of grace, the very dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit.

I remind you again that the people of the Old Testament were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes He would indwell them for a certain purpose. But you and I, because we are the aristocracy; we are the royal priesthood of God; and, we are the aristocrats of believers of all ages, we have a unique relationship not only to Jesus Christ Who indwells us, but to God the Holy Spirit, who is our constant companion.

So, the Bible makes it very clear to us that, because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and it's a very sacred place, it must be treated with great respect. For that reason, God is going to resurrect a Christian's body, but minus a sin nature. We have found this in Romans 8:23, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57, and Philippians 3:21. Those passages all tell us that God is going to bring this back again, and it will then be like the body of Jesus Christ – no more sin nature residing in the genetic structure.

**An Offering**

This presentation that we are to make of our bodies is to be a presentation of a living body. The Greek word is "zao," and this refers to having life. It is a constant condition of the body that we present to God. We are to present something which is alive, and it is alive as what? Strangely, as a sacrifice. This is the "thusia." This is simply the word that is used in the Bible for animal offerings. It is an offering that we make to God. The body of the Christian, however, is to be a living sacrifice. It is not to be slain as the Old Testament animal sacrifices were. The Christian is in Christ, so he has already been put to death. He has already been sacrificed on the cross positionally. But the Christian's living body is what God wants, because it is the Christian's living body that is the instrument by which God does His work on earth.

I want to remind you, and reiterate, that when I say "body," I don't only need your arms, and your legs, and all the other pieces. I'm talking about what God includes, and that is your brain. That is the control center of your body. He wants your full capacity in terms of the human structure. He wants a living sacrifice. You perhaps have noticed that cadavers do not do much service to anybody. Therefore, this, in contrast to those Old Testament sacrifices which were killed and then offer to God, God says, "I want a sacrifice from you. I want your physical body. And I want it when it's alive. A healthy body is a grand opportunity for a Christian to be able to please God with his service and his living. The Bible makes it very clear to us that eternal rewards are to be earned through the use of our bodies. It is the living body that enables you to serve God with divine good production. The result of that is rewards.

1 Corinthians 9:24 puts it this way: "Don't you know that they who run in a race, run all; but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain." There are a lot of Christians on the race of life, who are all on the race track together, but some are running very poorly – very poorly indeed. They are hardly running at all. And they are not going to be the position of receiving a prize for their performance race.

Verse 25: "And everyone that strives for the mastery is tempered in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we and incorruptible. I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly, so I fight, not as one who beats the air, but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when I preach to others, I myself should be a castaway."

So, the apostle Paul says, "My body is important. God is going to hold me accountable for what I do with this body. And it is an opportunity for me to store eternal rewards and treasures for myself in heaven if I function in a proper way with this body. So, the apostle Paul says, "I have to be very careful that, while I'm telling you that you ought to treat your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, that I do not fail to do the same thing. And when I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, to find that I've been cast away, and that the rewards are not there for me.

In Galatians 2:20, Paul adds this: "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live; yet, not I, but Christ lives in me." Paul says, "I have positionally been crucified with Christ. I was there on the cross with Him in God's eyes. And yet I am physically now alive. And yet it isn't I who is living; but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh (in my physical body), I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Therefore, it is a great honor to use your body in a way that is compatible with the character and the program of Jesus Christ.

Now, of course, I could stop here, and this would be as far as we could go today, as we would take time to review all the things that Christians do, that they have no business doing to their bodies, which violate this basic principle of taking your body, and making a "thusia:" making a living sacrifice to God, which He expects of us. And that that opens to us the great doors of opportunity to enrich our eternity. All the horrible things that are done to the physical body, in a self-destructive way.

It takes a whole different picture, when you realize that the Old Testament forbad the people from bringing a sacrifice that had a blemish. Now, some of the Jews who wanted to save money said, "Here I have a blind sheep. I'll sacrifice him to God. I've got this sheep. He's lame. He's no good. I'll make him a sacrifice." And God said, "Don't you dare bring me a piece of junk like that. What you bring me is that which is perfect; that which is proper; and, that which is properly put together.

So, what you get of using your body in such a way as if God is not out there, and as if He has not spoken to you on this subject, and then playing around loose with the physical bodies, with things that you know are self-destructive to it. It is a mindless act that happens to people who lose their way, and lose their contact with the realities of the Word of God.

**An Aesthetic**

It is no honor in the Bible to be an aesthetic. I should point that out too. Living apart from sinful humanity, in some cave or cloister, is not God's way of dealing. He wants you to have a physical body that is functional, and that is operational, and that is capable, so that you can get out there and move through the world of humanity. Christian Service is living where people are in ministering. It is the Lord Jesus Himself, Who in His high priestly prayer, in John 17:15, prayed that we would not be removed from the realm of human beings, but that what we would be as Christians is protected from the evil that is inherent in those human beings.

**Give your Body First**

One interesting comment that the apostle Paul makes about the physical body, that I think is very striking, is found in 2 Corinthians 8:5. Paul is talking about financial support of God's work. And he's talking about the Christians and the churches in Macedonia, who were not very prosperous, but, who out of their poverty, always gave to God's work, and gave it up front, first of all. And in verse 5, he says, "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." Paul said, "We alerted them to the need of the poor saints in Jerusalem who were going through some starvation times. We told them we were collecting an offering to help our brethren in Jerusalem. And what we had hoped from them in Macedonia was that they would give their money to us." But Paul says, "They surprised me. Oh, they gave me their money, and they gave it to me sacrificially, because they weren't that flush." But Paul says, "The first thing they gave was their bodies." The first step in financial support of the Word of God, and the work of God, is to give your body. How can that be?

One of the primary ways of giving your body to God is through the financial offerings that you give, because the money that you give in that offering is money that you have used your body for, and spent the time of your life to earn. You got that money by using your body. One of the primary ways of giving your body over to God's service is every time you walk up to that offering box, because what you give in those funds represents your very life. Now, that puts Christian giving in another dimension that maybe hasn't struck us before. A great way to give your physical structure to God is by giving the funds that you have used that body to earn. So, offering the physical body is part of God's sanctification program – setting us aside to His great purpose, and His eternal plan. And giving the body is one of the first steps in that program of sanctification.

The offering of the Christian's body to God's service is one of the spiritual sacrifices that we as Christians give. We, as a real spiritual priesthood, do not offer animal sacrifices, but what we offer are spiritual sacrifices. In 1 Peter 2:5, we are just pointed out to us. He says of us Christians, "You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house; a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

So, Romans 12:1 says, "Here is one of the spiritual sacrifices you make to God. You let Him have your body. Of course, I hope that, by now, the thought has occurred to you, and the question has occurred to you: just how much of my body does God really get? Now, I used it to do this? I used it to go skiing. I used it to open my Christmas gifts. I used it to go partying. I used it to have a wonderful time. I used it to go to work. I used it for this. How much of your body did God get in His service, which includes, in large part, the financial support that you gave to God, which is a primary way of giving your body? The sacrifice of the body is one of those spiritual sacrifices.

**Praise**

Hebrews 13:15, says that another sacrifice that we Christians are called upon to make is the sacrifice of praise. We just praise God. We express our thanksgiving to Him, and we should not be careless about that. Romans 12:13 and Galatians 6:6 tell us that we have a sacrifice of substance to make; that is, the monetary offerings we bring to God.

**Our Service**

Then there is a fourth sacrifice of the Christian life. Hebrews 13:16 calls it the sacrifice of our service; that is, the ministry that we perform in one way or another. Your Ministry for God is a sacrifice. Every time you conduct a Berean Youth Club, you have offered up a sacrifice to God, which is a sweet-smelling odor in His nostrils. Every time you teach a Sunday school class under the guidance of the Spirit of God; you run a training group; your execution of the ministry of Berean Christian Academy; your faithfulness in pointing people to tapes; and, your faithfulness in pointing people to the gospel, and to all the things that they need to know in order to make it in life that only the Word of God can give them. All of that is an act of sacrifice of service on your part.

Now, this kind of sacrifice, of one's body, of course, makes no sense to the unbeliever at all. He thinks it's crazy, and he couldn't care less. But that is what the carnal Christian thinks too? I think this is very important for us to understand – this principle of sacrificing your body, because only the most undiscerning type of Christian would not sense that we are coming, in our society, to a great, crucial climax – a crisis. I know that you have all kinds of plans, and I know you are engaged in all kinds of activities, and you have a future in your mind. But you would do well to realize that tomorrow morning it could all be over. The arrival of the Lord is at hand. Now, you can enter into eternity as a pauper, or you can get with it, and capitalize on the time that you have, and go out there greatly enriched. It starts with the sacrifice of your arms, your legs, your head, your nose, your ears, your eyes, and all these channels through which the devil gets at you in order to dissuade you from the will and the role that God has for you.

Paul says, "So, I tenderly ask you, therefore, in view of what I have taught you in these first 11 chapters, my fellow Christians, and by the mercies of God that have been illustrated in the provision of our salvation, that you offer your physical body as a living sacrifice to God. But when you offer it, see that it is holy." The Greek word is "hagios." The Old Testament animal sacrifices had to be free from any physical blemishes. This word means "offer a life which is separated to God's moral standards." Christians do not present a body whose members are engaged in sinful practices. And the Bible is very strong on reiterating the necessity of avoiding those sinful practices.

I call your attention to a few, 1 Corinthians 6:9: "Don't you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" These are unbelievers: "Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind; nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but you are washed. But you are sanctified. But you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Now all things are lawful unto me, but all things that are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any of them. Foods for the body, and the body for foods; but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. And God has both raised up that the Lord, and will also raise us up by His own power. Don't you know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid. What? Don't you know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body? 'For two,' He says, 'shall be one flesh?' But he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit. So flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is outside the body. But he that commits fornication sins against his own body."

In Romans 6, the same principle was reiterated earlier by the apostle Paul – the holiness of the physical body. Romans 6:11: "Likewise, reckon you also yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto the sin nature, but alive and unto God through Jesus Christ. Let now the nature, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lust. Neither yield your members (your physical body members) as instruments of unrighteousness unto the sin nature. But yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead; and, your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Romans 6:17: "But God be thanked; that, whereas you were the servants of the sin nature, you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you. Being then made free from the sin nature, you became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, unto iniquity, even so, now yield yourselves servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when you were servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. What fruit did you have then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those thing is death. But now, being made free from the sin nature, and become servants to God, you have your freedom to holiness, and the end: everlasting life.

Let's add one more, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, to this important principle of the holiness of the body: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification (your setting apart; that you should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (his physical body) in sanctification and honor, not in the lusts of sensuality, even as the gentiles, who know not God, that no one go beyond to defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God has not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. He, therefore, that despises, despises not man, but God who has given unto us His Holy Spirit." And when verse 6 says, "Don't be a brother, it is talking about sexual advantage taken of another person.

So, the Bible is very explicit in the fact that the physical body is something that should be turned over to God in a holy status. That is, Christians are to be in temporal fellowship with the Father. The body is not to be of the domination of sin nature.

**Acceptable**

Then Paul says, concerning this kind of a sacrifice, that this living sacrifice is to be holy sacrifice. Then it would be acceptable to God. The Greek word for "acceptable" is "euarestos." What this word means really is well-pleasing. It's a sacrifice in which God delights. The Heavenly Father does wants you to offer your body to him for His use. How much time does he get to use your body? The Christian's body is to be holy, and then it will be a sweet aroma sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2 and Philippians 4:18 speak of this as a sweet aroma offering to God.

**Reasonable**

So, what should your reaction be to this? Paul says, concerning this principle, "It is a reasonable service. The word "reasonable" is this word "logikos." What this word means is "rational." It connotes an intelligent act of the volition. It is rational. It is intelligent to sit down and decide that God is going to get your body in every way that you can hand it over to Him. You are going to maintain it as a holy structure for a proper dwelling place of the Spirit of God. Thereby you will find that that sacrifice of your living body will be a sweet aroma offering to God – one that pleases Him, and one, therefore, to which He will respond with blessing and with the use of your body. Thus, you will think of all the ways that you can use your body. You can offer your body from the giving of your financial means, as well as your investment in Christian service activities. Paul says, "To do such a thing is a rational thing. Anyone who understands the work of the Holy Spirit in producing divine good works through the spiritual Christian, and who understands the doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the rewards that are going to be handed out there, know that this is a rational thing to do. Understand that this is a very sensible thing for a person to do.

Now, I must tell you that you are free to do your own thing. And we have plenty of people among us who do that. You are free to do your own thing. We are people who are no longer with us, who are out there doing their own thing. But God says, "When you do it, it's an irrational act of your will. And it is one that will come back to haunt you, and one that you will look back upon with regret from eternity – an eternity that you can count on being, such that you will be out there regretting the irrational act of not turning yourself over to his use. The act of self-dedication to God comes from the decision of your mind.

**Service**

The service that Paul speaks of here, furthermore, he describes as logical. The word "service" is the Greek word "latreia." And this refers her to Holy Spirit-led Christian Service. This kind of service is rational – divine, good works performed by Christians. The word also does connote the idea that when you do this, it's an act of worship to God. Romans 8:8 tells us that unsaved people can do absolutely nothing to please God. But we Christians have it within our capacity and power to do everything to please God. It starts with giving over your body.

Now, that's our basic first step into the question of the ground upon which Christian Service is performed. But having said that, and understanding that God has to have your body in Christian service, which includes your mind, then Paul says, "There's another problem. There's something in you that controls what you're doing with the body. Some of you are doing crazy things with your bodies. Some of you are doing things to yourself that are absolutely irrational. And some of you are very careless about presenting that body so that God has a crack at using it, such as it is. And I remind you, too, that the younger you are, the more you ought to be concerned about this, because you have a capacity. The older you get, you will discover that the body begins breaking down. It doesn't work as well anymore. Until you're 18 years old, you're getting better all the time. It's uphill. But once you hit 18, it's over the top and it's downhill ever since. Some of you have gained such tremendous speed that you have passed down (on the downhill side) some who are a lot older than you. You're terribly decrepit. Therefore, this whole picture comes in here. What kind of a control unit is handling what you're doing with your body?

That's where verse 2 comes in. Verse 2 is a mountain peak of this particular discussion. Here is some of the greatest bit of insight found anywhere in the Bible, and it is the transforming; it is the changing; and, it is the thing that makes the difference between one person who is a clod, and he's OK, and another Christian who lives like a prince and princess in the family of God. And Paul says, "Here is the way that the body is going to be handled in the right way. But you have a major problem, and here's where it is, and here's how to solve it." And we shall look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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