***The Christian Priesthood

RV102-02***

We are studying the executor of the scroll. This is segment number 14 on Revelation 5:6-10. Believers in the church age, which began on the day of Pentecost, form a royal family of God which is united to the King of Kings, Jesus Christ, as His body and bride. Only genuine born-again believers are God's nobility on earth. They are that as the result of having received salvation as a grace gift from God. Many people today who are associated with Christianity and with churches are not born again spiritually, so they are not members of the royal family. They have sought a salvation by human good works, and they are doomed to the lake of fire.

**The Royal Family of God**

However, multitudes who are in the royal family of God have never been trained in Bible doctrine principles so that they would be capable of fulfilling their royal calling and their royal duties. They move instead in the outer circle of carnality. The battle today with the onslaught of secular humanism, which is engulfing Americans, is being fought effectively, therefore, only by the fundamentalist Christians who have a mature royal character, and who have the abilities and the vision. Those who reflect this kind of royal character and this kind of royal capacity to understand the fundamentals and the basics of Scripture are looked upon with resentment and with contempt. So, the royal family faces the forces of Satan in the final intensified stage of the angelic warfare preceding the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

The current campaign against the royal family is very clear. Americans today face a society which functions on a monolithic consensus of human viewpoint. Satan's thinking is now the norm in the average American mentality. The unbelieving commoners are actively and aggressively determined now to wipe out all trace of divine influence in American society. They are exalting man as his own God.

**The Bible is Undermined**

So, scholarly human authorities are quoted as the final word in spiritual matters instead of quoting what God Himself has said in the Bible. So, scholarly authorities are telling us that the Bible is a book which was written by men. It was a compilation of the best of religious thinking. It therefore holds good only to a certain extent, particularly in its day. It is not rather a book from God which carries authority for all ages. So, the Bible is undermined in terms of its inerrancy. The claim is constantly made that there are mistakes in the Bible, though none have ever been demonstrated to exist. But people pick up mistaken ideas from one another, and they have attitudes toward the Scriptures that are completely contrary to what God Himself claims for His revelation. This substitution of what scholars and men of intellect have to say is again putting us at the mercy of ignorant intellectuals. We must be on guard against being influenced and being intimidated by them. Every attempt is being made to repress the biblical views of Christians in the political arena, and to rewrite, as a matter of fact, our national heritage which was Christian in its origin – to rewrite it in terms of an origin based on secular, humanistic principles.

**The Media**

In the forefront of this undermining of Scripture and of the undermining of American divine viewpoint heritage is, of course, the communication media. The pagan hordes of an incestuous public media hold captive the minds of Americans. There is very little counter outlet for balancing the liberal viewpoint which is possessed by the major news media. So, the media spokesmen are an incestuous lot because they breed on each other, reporting the same human viewpoint delusions that they have picked up from each other.

On the other hand, there is no widespread access to an exposé of these liberal delusions and lies. The liberal media is, as a matter of fact, now storming the last stronghold of Christian civilization in the world – the United States itself. The electronic and publication technology is being used to obliterate all biblical morality and divine viewpoint wisdom. To this end, sin (as it is defined in the Bible) is portrayed as not being the way it really is. It is something that is to be ignored, but ignored only at great personal hazard, because the Bible is very definitive on identifying certain things as sin. But these are offensive to our liberal, socialist oriented society, so these are countered as being outdated notions.

**AIDS**

So, we have the dignifying and legitimatizing of evil by television and by publication media. This has placed Americans at the mercy of divine judgments as the result of the sinful acts that people now feel free to do that once they were hesitant to do. I need not remind you that one of the primary examples of this is the homosexual evil and the divine judgment. And make no mistake – the disease of AIDS is a divine judgment which now threatens American society. AIDS is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, a disease which strips the body of all of its normal capacities to resist deadly diseases. AIDS, as a disease, is found primarily among those who are practicing the biblical sin of homosexuality, but which sin has now been dignified and legitimatized in our society so that it can be openly claimed and practiced. Homosexuals who carry AIDS, however, can inflict the disease upon non-homosexuals via body fluids: blood; semen; saliva; bowel matter; and, so on.

Now the legitimatizing by the communication media of homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle, which can be publicly practiced, has in fact now muted the warnings to the public that should be given concerning the deadly threat to association with homosexuals in the form of the disease of AIDS, and other associated diseases. Any action to contain the terror of AIDS is restricted on the political scene because the communication media have legitimatized this evil.

I listened recently to a newscast announcement about efforts to find a cure for AIDS, and the commentator described the disease as one in which one-third of the people who have it, die from it. However, in fact, everyone who has had it in a three-year period has today died. No one has survived beyond a three-year period. I wondered to myself, "Why does he present it in such a little bit of soft pedaling – the fact that this disease, when you get it, you better start getting your business in order because you're on your way out? Why did he soft pedal it and say one-third? This is an example of the undermining of reality by the powerful communication media who are determined to wipe out the last vestige of the controls of biblical Christianity upon this nation.

So, the news media wants to make it seem something less than it is, because, after all, they have promoted homosexuality. A few years ago, when Legionnaires Disease came along, and more recently when toxic shock syndrome came along and struck down people, the public health authorities immediately moved and decisively moved against manufacturers and other sources in order to protect the public. There was then no lecturing people about being alarmists; about being prejudiced against someone; or, using Nazi hate tactics, as is in the case of AIDS. If you've been reading articles, it's quite amazing how when people have been getting up and saying (and some commentators like James Buchanan have said) that something should be done on the public federal level toward homosexuals who are the source of this, considering all of the furor and the fantastic attacks that have been made that were never made when health authorities tried to protect the public against these other diseases. Why is that? It is because they have themselves dignified a biblical evil, and said, "It's alright to do." And God says, "No. When I say something is wrong, it is not alright to do, and if you do it, you do it with great personal consequences." This one is a vivid example of that.

The New York Post newspaper June 1st, 1983 edition reported that four Rikers Island penitentiary inmates in New York had died of AIDS, and that six more were infected. The chief of the New York City correction officers took fast and firm action. The jail medical staffs in the New York City jails and at Rikers Island Penitentiary were immediately ordered to conduct a continual program of examinations to diagnose AIDS among inmates. AIDS carriers, furthermore, were ordered isolated from non-contaminated inmates. All homosexual convicts, furthermore, were prohibited from serving food to other inmates at Rikers Island or the other New York City jails.

Now, why could the New York City police officials take such definitive conduct and act with such wisdom in protecting the prison population from homosexuals, but federal authorities merely stand by, wringing their hands, and pleading with homosexuals not to give blood? It is because our news media has dignified a biblical evil that has now become a powerful lobby in itself. The prison officials don't have to worry about the political implications of taking action against a malignant minority which the media, and its anti-biblical bias, has legitimatized in the first place.

Conservative journalist Pat Buchanan, in an article that he wrote on AIDS (which raised quite a furor) himself raised the question as to why the federal health authorities have not forbidden homosexuals from working in food-handling businesses and from donating blood. This is one primary way, and increasingly becoming an explosive way, of transmitting AIDS – to eat food which has been handled by a homosexual AIDS carrier, or to receive blood from an AIDS carrier. Sometimes the carrier doesn't know that he has the disease yet. It has an incubation period. This is also true of other diseases that homosexuals carry, which, while not so deadly, are still devastating, and which they transmit in food-handling, and which is transmitted in blood.

For example, other nations in the world have done precisely this. They have forbidden homosexuals from working in food-handling. They have forbidden homosexuals from giving blood. France, which is not one of your prime biblical nations on the face of the earth today, has taken very definitive actions in this way to protect the French population. In the United States, the homosexual lobby has become so strong because of our media support, and homosexuals themselves so permeate the communication media, that politicians and bureaucrats simply fear to take action against them. They simply stand around helplessly wringing their hands as the homosexuals flaunt their dehumanized, degrading evil in the face of all Americans.

Today, AIDS has become the number one cause of death among hemophiliacs. Hemophiliacs are bleeders – people who do not have normal blood clotting capacities. Hemophiliacs sometimes have to have 30 to 40 transfusions a year in order to survive. Many times, those transfusions come from something like 20,000 other transfusions in order to get a blood clotting material concentrated such as a hemophiliac needs. Hemophiliacs are dying today for the primary reason that they are being infected by AIDS through homosexual blood.

The homosexuals deny that they are under divine judgment for their evil. I've seen them turn red with rage on television when somebody suggests that what they're suffering, as a result of what they have done to each other, is a divine judgment upon breaking a primary moral rule of the universe.

What about the right to life of the three million Americans who need transfusions every year, as we seek to protect the so-called dignity and rights of a malignant, degraded minority? What homosexuals do to each other makes them sick with a variety of diseases, and some of them are deadly. These are transmitted to non-homosexuals through food-handling. It is necessary for every wise person who eats in a restaurant to be on guard if he spots homosexual type waiters. I realize that that's going to be tough to do. It might not be a bad idea for you to start asking the management of restaurants whether they hire homosexuals. And if they say they do not, ask them why they do not have a sign prominently indicating that that is so.

If people started walking in restaurants and asking that question, I can assure you what the free enterprise capitalist system would very quickly do by taking care of what government has not done in removing this threat to public health from being food handlers. ...

The electronic and publishing media have called acceptable what God has condemned, and they have placed in mortal jeopardy the lives of our families and friends. Mama Rosa's in Minneapolis was a prime example. It was a great restaurant, but it thought that it was being very broadminded by hiring homosexuals. And when something like 40 people became deadly sick with hepatitis (which is one of the things that homosexuals carried because of what they do to each other), the city finally said, "That's it," and they closed it down.

Heterosexuals today are suffering terrible consequences simply because they happen to need a blood transfusion; simply because they eat in a certain restaurant; or, simply because they happen to marry, unfortunately, a bisexual individual (who is heterosexual, but practices homosexual acts on occasion). All of this is because a tiny, perverted minority in the U.S. flaunts its lifestyle and demands that an entire nation tolerate its communicable diseases and grant it status as a privileged minority. Make no mistake about it. Homosexuals pass communicable diseases, and AIDS is communicable, along with all the others in the hepatitis class and so on that they're involved in.

Well, all of this is just one example of the fact that the fight is on between the divine viewpoint of Christian royalty and the human viewpoint of unbelieving commoners who control what people hear and think, and who influence American thinking today. There was a time in the American republic when this kind of a threat to public health would not have been tolerated, and action would have been taken immediately. We members of God's royalty have, as a whole, unfortunately not engaged the enemies of divine viewpoint. We permitted them to get entrenched because we were not in there resisting them: in part, because we were so disgusted with them; and, because we were so disgusted with what they were saying, and with what they were talking about.

I find it increasingly very difficult for me to carry on a discussion with a liberal. It is so disgusting; it is so inane; it is so out of touch with reality; and, it is so under the condemnation of God (and the consequences are going to be so terrible for that individual), that I just sit silent now. I find it difficult to speak, and yet we have to speak. We have to resist. I realize that the prophetic Scriptures do not seem to have a place in the antichrist world for a Christian oriented nation such as the United States. I believe that the Bob Jones University Supreme Court decision, which has appalled even liberal commentators because of the long-range implications of that invasion of government into the privacy of the thinking and conscience of the individual, is another step which God has put into the puzzle. It's another piece in place in order to bring this nation to its knees so that it can be brought into cooperation of a world empire under a world dictator.

**Priests**

In the meantime, however, let us join the battle to save souls; to teach believers doctrine; and, to enable thereby the Christian royalty to store treasures in heaven for divine good production on earth. In Revelation 5:10, there's one more important word that we want to look at before we leave the subject of Christian royalty: "And has made them (Christians – believers in the church age) unto our God a kingdom of priests, and they shall reign on the earth." We have been viewing the quality of royalty. These royal people have a triple role. They have the role, as we've observed, of being ambassadors of God; they have the role of being soldiers of God; but, they also have the important role of being priests. The royal family constitutes a kingdom of priests.

**Priesthood**

Very briefly, let's look at the history of priesthood. It was not necessary originally, in the Garden of Eden, to have any priests. The purpose of a priest is to represent a person before God. The goal is to join a Holy God in some way with a human sinner. The priest satisfies a holy God by what he does, and he gives assurance to the sinner of divine forgiveness and cleansing from evil. However, after Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, a system of human priesthood became necessary. Man was separated from the Holy God. There had to be some mediation between the two, and some agent to bring the two together.

The Bible tells us that priests do not appoint themselves. Hebrews 5:1-4 indicate that priests are selected by God – not by man. The doctrine of election (which means the doctrine that selects certain individuals out of the human race for eternal life by God's sovereign choice) makes royal priests of the church also a divine choice. The doctrine of election means that we, as royal priests, have been selected by God. We didn't appoint ourselves as priests.

The ministry of priests is simply this: He offers animal sacrifices to God to symbolically reconcile the sinner to God. Hebrews 8:3 tells us that. Without a sacrificial system in operation, no one had any ground on which to approach God. So, once you needed a priesthood, because of sin, to bring God and man together, you also needed a method by which to do that. And that was the sacrifice method, and the sacrificial method of animal sacrifices required an altar. The sacrifices represented realities pictorially which God was planning to perform to provide salvation for sinners through Jesus Christ, who was ultimately the Lamb of God. Therefore, priests intercede for people on the basis of appropriate sacrifices.

**The History of Priesthood**

The history of priesthood began with the family priest, in the patriarchal times, where the male head of the family was the priest of the family. This is represented in such men, of course, as Adam himself at first, and later in Job; Abraham; Isaac; and, Jacob. All of these men represented priesthood. They were the chief priests within the family group. They offered sacrifices in behalf of their families. Remember that in the book of Job we have a very explicit description of how Job used to offer sacrifices in behalf of his children and in behalf of his family.

**The Aaronic Priesthood**

Later on, we came to the Aaronic priesthood. This was established after the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt. This, however, was a priesthood which was limited to the tribe of Levi, and to the male descendants of the family of Aaron. It was part of the Mosaic Law system for the Jewish nation. The Aaronic priest, in his influence, and in his position of status, was second only to the king in the nation. He had a great dignity. He was the teacher of doctrine, and he was the adviser to the government. Ministries in behalf of sin had to be constantly repeated under this priesthood until Jesus Christ came. The Aaronic priesthood never had a final sacrifice that would settle the issue between God and man. Hebrews 10:1-2 refer to that continual repeating of the sacrifices.

**The Melchizedek Priesthood**

That's why, in the Aaronic priesthood system, there was no provision where a priest could sit down. He was always on his feet. His ministries never came to an end. However, the Aaronic priesthood therefore, obviously, had to be replaced in time by a better one which could secure permanent atonement – not just symbolic atonement. That priesthood was the Melchizedek priesthood. Melchizedek was a true, genuine, historical character who appeared in Abraham's day as a gentile king and the priest of the most high God. We have this recorded in Genesis 14:18-20. This was an order of priesthood which was prior to the Aaronic, and totally distinct from it. Melchizedek is pictured in Scripture as a type of Jesus Christ with an eternal priesthood. As such, the Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus Christ was superior to the Aaronic priesthood. Hebrews 7:4-10 explain why it was superior.

**Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the high priest of the Melchizedek Order. Hebrews 5:5-10 tell us that. The Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself, in behalf of the sins of mankind, as a sacrifice which eternally paid for human evil. So, finally, the Melchizedek priesthood provided a final sacrifice for the division between God and man. For that reason, it was a superior and better priesthood than the Aaronic. The Lord Jesus, as high priest of the Melchizedek Order, is now seated in heaven. He's got nothing more to do, so He can sit down. He is seated in heaven because His work of atonement is forever done. Hebrews 10:11-14 tell us that. The Melchizedek priesthood fulfilled all of the types which were portrayed by the Aaronic priesthood.

**The Christian Priesthood**

Then history moved on, and we come to the priesthood that exists today – the Christian priesthood. This one is referred to in such passages as 1 Peter 2:1-9. This priesthood of the Christian royal family is based on the royal Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, in 1 Peter 2:4 is described as a living stone. As a living stone, He makes a living foundation for this Christian priesthood. Verses 6 and 7 tell us that Jesus Christ is the living foundation of the Christian priesthood. Christians united to Jesus Christ are themselves living stones who are built on the foundation of the high priest Jesus Christ into a spiritual house, which, in this passage, is described as the holy priesthood of the Melchizedek Order.

Verse 5: "You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." So, today, every member of the royal family of God, male and female, is a priest of God. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen generation (you Christians – you members of the Body of Christ), a royal priesthood, a holy nation." So, we are a royal priesthood. Revelation 1:6 and Revelation 5:10 indicate that same principle.

So, the claim today that is made within certain groups such as the Roman Catholic Church, that a certain group of men constitute the priests of God, is a satanic lie. It is very important that you understand that. Number one: there is no select company of human beings that are now the mediators between God and man. It used to be the male head of the family. It used to be the select Aaronic line of descendants within the tribe of Levi. It is now the totality of every believer. There is no specialized priesthood. It is a devastating satanic evil, and you should have no respect for it.

**Privacy**

Secondly, the Christian priest today represents only himself before God, and he does that in privacy. If you are your own priest, and that's what we're saying, then you represent yourself before God. Privacy means not having to account to anyone other than God for what one does with divine viewpoint information that you receive. Whether your action is positive or negative, privacy means that you don't have to account to anybody for what you do with divine truth which you are taught. You are on your own. Furthermore, privacy of priesthood means you are responsible for what you do for it.

I would loathe being in the Christian ministry if, for one moment, I thought that the responsibility for what you do with divine viewpoint information rested upon my shoulders. It would be a burden that I would not want to bear, and could not. But that isn't the way it works. God says, "Once you're informed, you're on your own as to what you do with it, because priesthood is private." Privacy means living one's life as unto the Lord without having to report to another person. You don't have to report to someone else as to what you've been doing during the week with your life. You are to live your life as unto the Lord, and before the Lord. Privacy means that one Christian priest has no right to impose his preferences on another Christian priest in dealing with God. That is a very important point.

There are always some Christian priests who like certain procedural techniques, and they're forever trying to impose their procedural techniques on other Christians, instead of saying: "This is the way I like to do it. When I pray, I like to pray on my knees." Well, that's fine. Don't ask all the other Christians to do that, but if you don't want to pray with people who won't get on their knees, then find yourself a group of Christians who will pray on their knees. But don't impose your preference upon the priesthood of others. They are priests before God, and if they want to pray standing, they can pray standing. You might even pray with your eyes open. That sounds a little heretical, but I know you can do that because I saw the great president of Dallas Seminary, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, sitting up in chapel one day while we were having a prayer meeting, and he had his eyes open. I could see through my eyelids, but he had his eyes open. So, I know you can pray with your eyes open. But some people go into a devastating flap if you pray with your eyes open. That would be an advisable thing to do if you pray while you drive, which is a good time to pray.

In any case, this business of privacy means keep your nose out of other Christians' lives, and don't think that you have to be their thought police. And don't think that you have to be their righteousness police. I guarantee you that God is capable of handling every one of us, and He'll cut you off at the legs in a hurry if you are double-dealing with Him.

Privacy means not nosing around into the lives of other priests in order to judge their performance as Christians, or what their motives are. The Bible forbids you to judge other believers relative to their motives. You cannot judge other believers relative to their motives. So, we can see what people do outwardly, and that we can judge. We can see outward evils, and we can say, "That happened. We see that." But you cannot be judging why people are doing certain things. Christian priests may, of course, admonish and exhort one another as the Holy Spirit leads, but they leave the results of their admonishment and their exhortation with the Lord. There are no divine enforcers appointed.

**Altars and Animal Sacrifices Today**

Today, there is no legitimate place, therefore, in God's program for animal sacrifices. That picture has been fulfilled. There is no legitimate place for re-sacrificing Jesus Christ in some symbolic form, such as a Roman Catholic Mass. There is no legitimate place for an altar. It is wrong to have an altar in a church. It is an insult to God. It's blasphemy. It's degrading, because an altar indicates that a sacrifice is needed, and it's an insult to the grace of God to put up an altar in the front and say, "We still need to have sacrifices." I realize that there are certain traditions. People say, "Oh, I don't really mean that it's a sacrifice at an altar. We're going to have a sacrifice, but we've always had altars. That's just the way it is." You become accustomed to what churches should be.

Little Jonathan Wallace attended a wedding yesterday at a very lovely chapel. It was a chapel, and it had pews in it, and an organ, and everything. He walked up to his mother with a little puzzled look on his face, and he pointed to one of the pews and he says, "Are these nailed to the floor?" And she said, "Yes, they are." He said, "Well, how do they play basketball in here?" That led me to believe that we have to take our kids on tours of regular churches so that they know that they're not all gymnasiums. He had a definite idea of what a church should be, and he knew that that was not a church. He knew something was wrong with that right away. If you can't move the furniture, it can't be a church.

So, you may say, "Well, that's an accoutrement. We have an altar." However, but I'm squeamish about it. It's an insult. The great thing that the book of Hebrews puts out is that finally the high priest of the Order of Melchizedek (of which all of you royal priests are a part) has made a sacrifice once-and-for-all that never has to be repeated. That altar says to the contrary.

Let's look at the Christian priesthood. There are many things to say, and we're going to have to just touch upon them.

**The Functions of the Royal Priesthood**

First of all, let's look at the functions of the royal priesthood. There are several functions:

1. **Maintaining Temporal Fellowship**

You have the function of maintaining your personal temporal fellowship as per 1 John 1:9. This deals with your own carnality. You deal with that by your own private confession of sin to God the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest, intercedes for us as our advocate. He has secured our salvation forever by that intercession. The loss of the filling of the Holy Spirit (or temporal fellowship) will result in the royal priest becoming a spiritual casualty in the angelic warfare. So, a primary function of the priestly life of the believer is to maintain, by confession of known sin, his temporal fellowship. Temporal fellowship (or spirituality) is necessary for the priest to be able to utilize Bible doctrine so as to keep functioning in his ministry.

1. **Learning Bible Doctrine**

There is the function of learning Bible doctrine truths. The Levitical priests of the Old Testament actually ate part of the animal sacrifices – which sacrifices illustrated and portrayed certain Bible doctrine truths. The Christian royal priest himself, in the same way, feeds upon the Word of God by means of the HICEE technique of instructing in the Word of God. 1 Peter 2:2, Matthew 4:4, and 2 Timothy 2:15 all stress feeding upon the Word of God and learning Bible doctrine truths. The Christian priests, like the Levitical priest, is also a communicator of the Word which he has fed upon. You eat the Word in order to teach the Word. 2 Timothy 2:2 and 1 Peter 5:2 declare this. Failure on the part of the Christian royal priests to live daily in the Word through Bible Doctrine study will lead to defeat in the angelic warfare.

1. **Prayer**

There is the function of prayer. Prayer is the tactic for victory in the angelic warfare (Ephesians 6:18). The Christian royal priest has the powerful advantage of direct access to Almighty God to make his needs known. We don't have to go through any other priest because we are the priests. The failure to continually apply this tactic will cause a Christian royal priest to resort to his human capacities and to human techniques in living his life. Spiritual victories that enable God to prosper us come through the tactic of prayer. If you want to be prospered, turn to prayer. This function involves, of course, the biblical basis for prayer and the biblical proper use of the technique of prayer.

1. **Offering Sacrifices**

Another function of the Christian priesthood is the offering of sacrifices. The church-age sacrifices of the royal priesthood of God are spiritual in nature, but they are concrete. 1 Peter 2:5 says this: "You also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus." The spiritual sacrifices of the Christian royal priests are not optional functions. It is the heart of his ministry. This is why you take your next breath – to offer up another spiritual sacrifice, and another spiritual sacrifice, and another spiritual sacrifice. Here's what they are:

* 1. **The Sacrifice of Self**

First is the sacrifice of self. This one is declared to us in Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies (your physical human bodies) a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" – the offering of one's physical body and its capacities to God the Father. Such an offering, this verse says, is a smart move by the believer priest because it pleases God. God's work is done on this earth only by the physical bodies of believer priests. The believer priest, in his physical body, even if he is totally incapacitated upon a bed of illness, and all he can do is think and pray, still has to have that physical capacity to think in order to be able to do the praying. You have to have a physical body functioning in order to serve God.

So, offering that body is to present to God the very key of all Christian service. To that end, therefore, it is wise and proper that we maintain physical capacity for our allotted lifetime to maximize our time in divine good production. You should take steps to maintain the physical structure. You should maintain appropriate health procedures to maintain the physical structure. The older you get, the more important it is to maintain those physical structures.

If there is any place that one would think that the physical structures are put under demand, it's in summer camp. You're forever walking around; you're under heat; you're swimming; you're in water; and, you're out of water, but when I got home after two weeks and got to a regular, simple little routine of exercises, I hurt like I have never hurt in exercising in all my life before. So, I discovered that summer camp does not use all your muscles. And when you get them all operating, everything is a lot better. Everything looks better; everything works better; and, you think better. It's a legitimate thing. It's a proper thing. As you get older, you need more means of maintaining that physical structure in terms of the vitamins and the foods and the exercise. Give God the best physical capacities of your life all your life – not the worn out; depleted; slowed down; and, leftover energies of your later years.

* 1. **The Sacrifice of Praise**

Then there's the sacrifice of praise. This is a tremendous sacrifice. This is why we are left alive, in part – to make this sacrifice. Hebrews 13:15: "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." This relates to the royal priest's speech expressing his mental attitude of praise for divine grace – verbalizing one's gratitude for being graced out by the heavenly Father. This is to be offered continually as occasions arise. This is using our lips to give God credit for what He does while remembering our total dependence upon Him. Verbalizing our blessings helps keep us grateful for the things that we would otherwise ignore. Expressions of praise enable the Christian priest to actually glorify God through recalling His kindnesses and His gifts. Such sacrifice of praise is offered both privately and publicly. Praising God helps preserve one from worry and depression, because when you praise God, and when you thank God, you remember how well He is indeed taking care of you.

I've seen loathsome demonstrations within charismatic groups of sessions that they call, "We're all going to praise the Lord together." They turn into babbling, moaning idiots. They carry on by shouting out repeated key phrases: the Lord's name; "Jesus, Jesus;" and, "Hallelujah," and getting higher and higher in emotion, and they're learning to praise the Lord. Satan is such a good teacher, and he is such a conman. Praising God means for you to think what He has done; what you possess; how He has cared for you; His protection; and, everything else that He has graced you with – and to name it bit-by-bit, and thank Him. Then you will find that there will be a great deal of emotion indeed rising up within your heart of appreciation for the living God who is caring and providing for you.

* 1. **The Sacrifice of Divine Good Works**

There is also the sacrifice of divine good works. Hebrews 13:16 says, "But do good, and do not forget to share, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased. God is pleased with Christian service directed by the Holy Spirit which produces divine good results. The Christian priest exercises his spiritual gifts in service to the Lord. That's how he produces divine good. He exercises his gift of evangelism; his gift of pastor-teacher; his gift of exhortation; his gift of ministering; his gift of administration; his gift of giving; his gift of showing mercy; his gift of teaching; and/or, his gift of faith. These are all spiritual gifts that are clearly mentioned in the Bible, and every believer has at least one of them. The Bible lays great stress upon our using these spiritual gifts for divine good production, and great stress in bringing these spiritual sacrifices that produce divine good.

I wish we had time just to pause to read all the verses. I'll mention them to you. You should look through them yourself: Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:18; 2 Timothy 3:17; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 10:24; and, Hebrews 13:16 (the one that we just read). All of these again and again hammer away at the concept of being careful that you are producing divine good works; that you are exercising spiritual gifts; and, that you are in the practice of offering up this sacrifice with all that it produces. On the basis of this divine good production, the royal priest receives his reward in heaven. The sacrifice of divine good production is not the human good production of the old sin nature, which is devoid of Holy Spirit leadership. That's an evil before God.

* 1. **The Sacrifice of Substance**

Then there's the sacrifice of substance. Hebrews 13:16 includes this one: "Do good, and to share." "To share" means sharing your material possessions. This refers to the act of giving material help to some cause of the Holy Spirit. The individual believer in the local church Christian congregation gives humanitarian aid in general as the Spirit leads you. This sacrifice is easily bypassed by human selfishness and greed, but God is particularly pleased when it is offered to Him. That's what this verse says. Philippians 4:18 confirms that same fact – that God is particularly pleased when Christians offer the sacrifice of substance. This sacrifice refers to the kind of material stewardship that all believers are to perform. This does not refer to that specialized stewardship which is one of the spiritual gifts – the gift of giving. This is the kind of material stewardship all of us are responsible for.

**Logistical Grace**

A royal Christian priest's personal financial provision and security are always grace from God. Philippians 4:19 tells us that. Everything you have of your material care is a grace from God. So, don't be so stupid as to think, "Well, I applied myself. I worked hard. I was clever. I used my brains." Baloney! The only reason you could think two thoughts consecutively, and two things clicked for you, is because the grace of God permitted it to be that way. God provides logistical grace. That is the grace that you need to win the battle. That's your basic material needs to perform your duties as a soldier in the angelic conflict. He says, "I'll always give you the logistical provisions." You'll have what you need to execute your role as a Christian priest in the angelic conflict as a soldier. You'll have the provision to execute.

**Luxurious Grace**

But He also provides us with luxurious grace, and that is divine prospering to the believer who has the spiritual capacity to handle the material prosperity for the Lord's glory, and to handle it for the Lord's honor. He has more than just logistical grace. God's grace provision of material care enables us, in return, to take that material care, and to store it as treasures in heaven in Holy Spirit-led investment in God's service of proclaiming the Word of truth.

Christians fail in this extremely rewarding sacrifice because they always allow their expenditures to rise to the level of their income. No matter how much they earn, that's how much they spend. That's the key to being able to exercise this sacrifice of substance. Don't always let your expenditures rise to the level of your income. Money which is stored in the sacrifice of substance over the years of your life (you want to remember) is forever preserved for you as eternal rewards in heaven. Money which is stored in the sacrifice of substance over the years is ours forever in eternal rewards in heaven. Gifts to human good causes, even though they're religious, are not a genuine sacrifice of substance.

I wish I had time just to expand a little bit on some of the examples of huge sums of money given to human good causes by people who have died and gone into eternity thinking that God was going to be pleased with what they gave; what they did with their money; and, what has been left behind. And as people look upon it, they have these great monuments to what they have given, only to get over there and find that they gave it to human good causes, and what they're doing is promoting Satan's cause and not God's cause. But when you make a genuine sacrifice of substance, you take it out with you into eternity.

So, that briefly sums up the role of the royal Christian priest – the glory of the royal Christian priesthood. No royal priest ever becomes really poor for having made any of the spiritual sacrifices described in the Word of God. Remember that God is indebted to no one, and He will be indebted to no one. The royal Christian priest functions, furthermore, on a daily basis throughout his lifetime. There is never any time when you don't perform these functions and these sacrifices. The royal Christian priest also finds maximum motivation and effectiveness in his priesthood when his life has come to the super grace level of spiritual maturity. That's the prime of your spiritual life. That's the prime of your productiveness. A mature, functioning, royal Christian priest makes a powerful ambassador and a courageous soldier of Jesus Christ. Work on your priesthood. It is one of the most profitable areas of the Christian's lifestyle.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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