

A Suitable Sacrifice

4th - 6th Grade
Lesson 7

Our Reasonable Service

Before Jesus came, the Jews had to offer sacrifices often to gain forgiveness for their sins. We have already learned how Jesus was the last sacrifice. In the days when the Jews had to offer sacrifices, God gave them many laws about what kind of sacrifice they could offer. The sacrifice had to be almost perfect. God did not want the Israelites offering something that wasn't good. He wanted them to give their best.

In Romans, Paul wrote to the new Christians that they needed to give themselves as sacrifices. What did Paul mean? The people no longer had to bring a sacrifice to the Temple to pay for their sins. Jesus paid for all their sins. Instead, Paul was encouraging the people to give their lives to God. Giving our lives to God is the least we can do after all that God has done for us.

The Old Testament law taught the people what kind of sacrifice they needed to give to God. In this lesson, we are going to learn how we should offer our lives as a living sacrifice.

A Sacrifice That Keeps on Living

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

—Romans 12:1

The first thing Paul told the people to do was to “present” their bodies. To “present” something is like giving it. That means no one makes you do it. That also means that you want to do it. We should give our lives to Christ so that He can use our lives in whatever way He sees fit.

Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

—Romans 9:21

The story of the clay and the potter is a good illustration of what can happen when we give our lives to God. The prophet Jeremiah wrote about the potter who took a lump of clay and made it into something useful. If we give ourselves (the clay) to the hands of the potter (Jesus Christ), He can make us into something useful.

If we dedicate our lives to serving Christ, then it will be easy for us to do what we should do. We should decide that our every action will be what Jesus would do in the same situation. We should try very hard to do only what would please Him. Does yelling at someone honor Jesus? Would Jesus talk back to His mom or dad?

Paul said that each of us should decide to dedicate ourselves to God as a “living sacrifice.” What does that mean? That means that we sacrifice our own will to live for God. In order to live

for God, we must die to our own desires. Sometimes we may want to do something different than God wants us to do. But, if we have given our lives as a living sacrifice to Him, we will be willing to do whatever God has for us.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Romans 6:11

A Gift That Keeps on Giving

Have you ever known someone who is really good at something? Maybe you know a person who can play sports really well. Some people can sing or play musical instruments. Others are very smart. God made everyone with a special talent or ability. Everyone is different. God does not expect you to be like someone else. There may be someone who is a better reader than you are. That's okay! Each of us should do our very best in everything we do. If someone else does very well in a certain area, that might mean God has given that person a special gift in that area.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.

—Romans 12:6

It is very important for us to figure out what special talent or gift God has given to us and then use it however God desires. The Bible tells us that every gift that God gives to people should help the church. We should use our talents and abilities to be a blessing to people in the church.

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

—I Corinthians 14:12

Conclusion

The last thing that Paul said in Romans 12:1 was, "... which is your reasonable service." Paul was telling the church that asking them to give their lives to God was not a huge sacrifice—but only reasonable in light of what God had already given to them. The same is true of our lives. God has done so much for us! The fact that He loves us so much that He gave His son to die on the cross for the whole world should be enough to make all of us willing to give our lives back to Him!

Another reason that we should give our lives to Christ is because the Bible says that those who give their lives to Christ have a much better life than those who live for themselves. The Bible tells us in Hebrews that Moses chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy sin for only a little while.

Not only has God given us His Son, but He will give us a life of joy if we choose to serve Him with a sacrificed life.