

A Living Sacrifice

***Key Verse: "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***

***Selected Scripture:
Romans 12:1-8***

standing," is ours only if we make a full consecration, laying down our lives in sacrifice and service in the divine cause. (Phil. 4:7) Nowhere does God command anyone to make a consecration. Rather, he has invited, or called, us with a "holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus."—II Tim. 1:9

Similarly, sacrifice, self-denial and service in the Lord's cause are not forced upon followers of the Master. Certainly, however, if our Heavenly Father has granted us the privilege of fellowship with his Son by invitation, we should rejoice at the opportunity to be used in some way to bring honor and glory to his name. By calling us, God has given assurance that he is desirous of working with

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE

that Paul addresses the words of our Key Verse to "brethren," those who have faith in the blood of Christ as their means of redemption. The apostle urges such to take the further step of presenting themselves to God as a "living sacrifice," which he says is our "reasonable service." We have "peace with God" through our justification by faith in the ransom merit of Christ. (Rom. 5:1) However, the greater "peace of God, which passeth all under-

us, and in us, to develop a character which will be of use to him in his future plans and purposes for mankind. To this end, Paul admonished, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:2

This cooperative work with God is spoken of by Paul. He states, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12,13) These verses suggest a work that requires time, patience, diligence and great care. God’s work in us is through the power and influence of his Holy Spirit, and we are admonished to be “led by the Spirit of God.” (Rom. 8:14) We also must spend time in study and meditation on God’s Word, to show ourselves “approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Tim. 2:15

The fulfillment of our vow of consecration, and its related sacrifice and service, is a daily matter. Take up your cross “daily,” Jesus said. (Luke 9:23) It was thus with Jesus, and it must be also with us. The psalmist wrote, “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” (Ps. 50:5) Through Christ Jesus, we not only have a standing before God, but are also in covenant relationship with him. Our covenant is by sacrifice, as the psalmist indicates, but is also by God’s favor and grace. “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—Rom. 6:14

From this standpoint of God’s abounding grace, we note, if only in part, the grandeur of God’s wonderful plan of the ages, and our privilege of sharing in its ultimate accomplishment. Let us, then, “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph. 4:15) By so doing, faithfully even unto death, we will have a share in the outworking of God’s grand plan which will bless all of the willing and obedient of mankind forever.—Gen. 22:16-18■