

## Lesson 11     14 July 2013

### Consecration and the Transformed Life

**Lesson Scope:** [Romans 12](#)

#### Lesson Focus

The word therefore and the mention of "the mercies of God" (verse 1) link chapter 12 to the end of chapter 11 as well as to the preceding chapters. Our lesson introduces the final section of the epistle, in which the apostle Paul describes the practical outworking of justification by faith. Not only is the inner life transformed; but the appearance, speech, and conduct are also sanctified.

This chapter gives clear teaching on two cardinal doctrines that ultimately form the foundation for all aspects of Christian living—nonconformity and nonresistance. These expressions attest to a transformed heart.

Complete consecration affects the whole scope of our life: our outlook toward holiness of life and the spirit of the age (Romans 12:1-2), toward self (Romans 12:3), toward the brotherhood (Romans 12:4-16), and toward a hostile world (Romans 12:17-21). In all these areas, God's people exhibit "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

God has provided all that man needs for his justification, reconciliation, and sanctification. When the heart is transformed, the fruit of consecration will follow.

The lesson scope is among the most-quoted chapters because of its practical teaching on the outworking of the doctrines of nonresistance and separation from the world. Here is a direct link between the spiritual vitality of a group and its practice of these two important doctrines.

Many today consider the practical outworking of Romans 12 to be nothing more than legalism. This attitude reflects the spirit of the age, which promotes ecumenism (conforming to the age) contrary to the Scriptural teaching that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." A lack of diligence in maintaining a Scriptural position of separation from the world will erode our positions on the practice of other teachings of Scripture.

**Lesson Aim:** To portray involvements of being a living sacrifice to God.

**Theme Verse:** [2 Corinthians 5:17](#). Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

## Lesson Text

### A Renewed Mind

[Romans 12:1-3](#) <sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> And 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. <sup>3</sup> For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

### A Unified Body

[Romans 12:4-8](#) <sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: <sup>5</sup> So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. <sup>6</sup> Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; <sup>7</sup> Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; <sup>8</sup> Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

### A Consecrated Walk

[Romans 12:9-21](#) <sup>9</sup> *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. <sup>10</sup> *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; <sup>11</sup> Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup> Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; <sup>13</sup> Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. <sup>16</sup> *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. <sup>17</sup> Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide

things honest in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. <sup>20</sup> Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. <sup>21</sup> Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

## **Questions for Study**

### **A Renewed Mind**

1. What is involved in presenting our bodies "a living sacrifice"?
2. How do we prove to the world what the will of God is?
3. Suggest some issues that test our nonconformity to the world.

### **A Unified Body**

4. What is the basis for unity in the church?
5. What does the way our bodies function teach us about working together in the church?
6. Give some guidelines for the exercise of our gifts.

### **A Consecrated Walk**

7. What principles given in these verses must govern our Christian walk?
8. In what practical ways can we overcome evil with good? Lesson 11

## **Analyzing the Passage**

Beseech (Romans 12:1) carries an earnest, appealing tone. "That ye present" (12:1) indicates a voluntary choice.

Conformed (Romans 12:2) means "fashioned like or conformed to the same pat-tem." It has special reference to outward form rather than to inner essence of character. The Greek word from which conformed is translated is used only here and in 1 Peter 1:14, where it is translated fashioning, which also speaks of outward appearance.

Transformed (Romans 12:2) is translated from the Greek word metamorphoo, the source of our English word metamorphosis. This same Greek word is also translated transfigured (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2) and changed (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The simple language used in verses Romans 9-21 makes it very easy to understand the teaching being given. These teachings are "your reason-

able service" mentioned in verse 1.

Dissimulation (Romans 12:9) is pretense, hypocrisy, or deception. We are to love without dissimulation. The term used in 2 Corinthians 6:6 is "love unfeigned" and in I Peter 1:22, "unfeigned love." This passage mentions numerous ways to express this type of love: putting others' needs ahead of our own (Romans 12:10), praying (Romans 12:12), giving for the needs of others (Romans 12:13), blessing those who persecute us (Romans 12:14), showing compassion (Romans 12:15), avoiding favoritism (Romans 12:16), and going the second mile to effect peace (Romans 12:19-21). These expressions are the outworking of "agape love."

## **Principles and Applications**

### **A Renewed Mind**

1. Presenting our bodies wholly to the Lord is a reasonable response to God's mercy upon us (Romans 12:1). God is the Creator and Sustainer of life. Christ gave His life to pay the high price of our redemption. Guilty man can now be set free from sin and be delivered from eternal damnation. The love of Christ constrains us to crucify our selfish, fleshly desires and to purpose to do our Father's will.
2. The renewed mind issues into a transformed way of life (Romans 12:2). To have a renewed mind requires full surrender to God. We must shun the humanistic view that man can improve himself through education or self-betterment programs. The continual renewing of our minds is a work of the Holy Spirit. Instead of the works of the flesh, our lives will bear the fruit of the Spirit.
3. The choice to be a living sacrifice to God includes the deliberate rejection of worldly conformity (Romans 12:2). The world is attracted to what is "new" or "in." Many of these influences come from "the prince of the power of the air." Our attire, vehicles, properties, business pursuits, and use of technology are some of the areas where we are tested. We need not be intimidated that the world does not understand (1 Peter 4:4).
4. Humility is an essential element of being a living sacrifice (Romans 12:3, 16). A proud person is concerned about himself; he wants praise for his accomplishments, recognition for his influence, and compensation for his contribution. The humble person seeks rather to serve oth-

ers, to exercise his gifts to the glory of God, and to strive to maintain good working relationships with others.

### **A Unified Body**

5. As living sacrifices, we blend our efforts for the strength of the church (Romans 12:4-5). Working toward a common goal is a primary ingredient for success in any corporate effort. Individualism always leads to stressed relationships. Tasks may differ and worker abilities may vary, but brotherhood ties will be strengthened as each member labors "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

6. As living sacrifices, we devote our gifts to God's service and glory (Romans 12:6-8). Specific gifts are not more or less important than others. They do, however, serve differing purposes, just like the different members of our physical body. As members are available for service, the Lord will blend their individual gifts to give forth a witness that is balanced and effective.

### **A Consecrated Walk**

7. Sincere love characterizes the life of a living sacrifice (Romans 12:9-10, 13-15). What passes for love today is often self-centered lust. The motivation of one who is yielded to God is his desire to express the love of Christ shed abroad in his heart. True love will pass all the tests of 1 Corinthians 13.

8. Being a living sacrifice requires cultivating a diligent outlook (Romans 12:11-12). The Christian will serve faithfully, doing his best wherever God has placed him, even in his material pursuits. A life of complacency and slothfulness does not please God.

9. As living sacrifices, we strive to live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:17-21). We must cultivate proper attitudes toward others so that we will respond in a Christlike way to those who do us wrong. Doing good to those who treat us unfairly bears testimony to the love of God in our hearts. We should be known as those who "seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Peter 3:11).

### **Important Teachings**

1. Presenting our bodies wholly to the Lord is a reasonable response to God's mercy upon us (Romans 12:1).

2. The renewed mind issues into a transformed way of life (Romans 12:2).

3. The choice to be a living sacrifice to God includes the deliberate rejection of worldly conformity (Romans 12:2).
4. Humility is an essential element of being a living sacrifice (Romans 12:3, 16).
5. As living sacrifices, we blend our efforts for the strength of the church (Romans 12:4-5).
6. As living sacrifices, we devote our gifts to God's service and glory (Romans 12:6-8).
7. Sincere love characterizes the life of a living sacrifice (Romans 12:9-10, 13-15).
8. Being a living sacrifice requires cultivating a diligent outlook (Romans 12:11-12).
9. As living sacrifices, we strive to live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:17-21).
10. Practical nonresistance characterizes a living sacrifice (Romans 12:19-21).

### **Answers to Questions**

*1. What is involved in presenting our bodies "a living sacrifice"?*

We must recognize our accountability to God as Creator and Lord. We must crucify our selfish, fleshly desires; separate from anything that God hates; and give evidence of changed affections to the world. We can do this only by the power of God's Spirit living within our hearts.

*2. How do we prove to the world what the will of God is?*

The most-convincing proof is our practical living by the teachings of the New Testament. By not participating in politics and war, we exhibit the two-kingdom principle. We must be willing to speak out against sin and false doctrine.

*3. Suggest some issues that test our nonconformity to the world.*

The age-old test of separation in dress is probably more tested than ever as the world loses a respect for principles of modesty and morality. Our beliefs on the permanence of marriage and the sanctity of human life are becoming more and more unpopular. The demand for business partnerships, insurance protection, and technological involvement in order to be competitive continues to test us. The world's methods of recreation are many times unacceptable.

*4. What is the basis for unity in the church?*

Humility and love are foundational. Each member must recognize the contribution of others and must fill his God-given role to the best of his abilities.

*5. What does the way our bodies function teach us about working together in the church?*

The parts of the body that contribute most to its life and usefulness are unseen. Likewise, the loss of those functions affects the body to a much greater degree than does the loss of the visible functions. The "comeliness" of the member has no correlation to its effectiveness or its importance to the function of the body (1 Corinthians 12:22-24). If for any reason the body does not function properly, it begins to destroy itself.

*6. Give some guidelines for the exercise of our gifts.*

We must exercise our gifts for the purpose of advancing the body, not to draw attention to ourselves. Blending our gifts will actually enhance the effectiveness of particular gifts. "Burying our talent" is never acceptable.

*7. What principles given in these verses must govern our Christian walk?*

We must hate the evil and love the good (Romans 12:9). Serving the Lord requires diligence (Romans 12:11). We must be sensitive to the needs of others (Romans 12:13-15). We must give our brethren the benefit of the doubt and not despise others' opinions (Romans 12:16). The Christian does not seek revenge or harbor malice. We must leave vengeance in the hands of God (Romans 12:19).

*8. In what practical ways can we overcome evil with good?*

We do not defend wrongdoing, regardless of who is involved. We must be careful how we represent our brethren and our neighbors to others. When they are criticized, we can remind others of their commendable qualities. "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also" (Matthew 5:40). We are called to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods (Hebrews 10:34).

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Transformation is a work of God. As we surrender fully to God, we become a living demonstration of this transformation. It changes our attitude toward ourselves, makes us useful in the work of the kingdom, and

makes our witness effective in the world.

While our actions may at times be ridiculed or misunderstood, the Holy Spirit uses the faithfulness of God's children as an instrument to draw unsaved men to the power of the Gospel. To fail brings reproach to God and His people. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12).

### **Research Guide**

1. Read the chapters titled "Nonconformity to the World" and "Nonresistance" in *Doctrines of the Bible*.
2. Read the article "Perpetuating Biblical Nonconformity" in the December, 1991, issue of the *Eastern Mennonite Testimony*.
3. Read Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 3; and 1 Corinthians 12.