

Sacrifices That Please God (Go to Meeting)

Tom Fannin—January 22, 2022

Today I want to talk about a subject that has to do with our personal sacrifices that please God. There are a lot of people around the world in the Church—also in the world—suffering all kinds of afflictions, whether it be sickness or oppression. We know a lot of the brethren are affected by these things with this virus going on.

It's easy for all of us to get caught up in a lot of these things going on in the world and maybe might lose our focus on what's important to God and in our spiritual lives that we need to be doing.

A lot of our energy needs to be put, no matter what is going on in our lives and in this world, on the things that please God.

Rom. 12—here we will read about kind of a starting point for all of us, something that we all have in common, and that's this calling and covenant that we have all entered into,

Romans 12:1: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service."

Whether we thought about this when we went into covenant, or as we continued to be converted, once we entered into covenant, from that point forward we were to live our lives in a different way. We were to walk as Jesus Christ walked. Our lives became a personal sacrifice to God in how we live.

Verse 2: "Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

That's what we continually do is have a renewing of our mind. We know that building the mind of Christ, building God's mind! But a renewing, a changing of it.

"...in order that you may prove what *is* well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God" (v 2).

That's what happens within our mind as we are more converted and wash out the things that we need to be washing out having a new mind, a different mind.

We understand more about God's will and more about the things that please God; that God desires us to be doing. We learn more about His perfect will.

We know that we have Christ as our

personal Savior, as our example to look to continually. Let's see what written regarding Christ. Here's what Christ spoke regarding Himself: His mind, what He thought, what He did:

John 8:28: "Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know **that I AM**... [Who He was, the God of the Old Testament] ...and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, because I always do the things that please Him'" (vs 28-29).

That's the life that Christ had. He spoke the things that were received from the Father, and He always did the things that pleased God. That was His mind continually, to please His Father.

- Do we do this? *Everyday as we get up and live our day:*
- Is that our mind?
- Are we thinking about what we have received from the Father?
- Are we continually desiring to do the things that please God?
- Is that on our mind continually?

I think every one of us would say that we would like that to be our mind continually, but we all struggle with that. That's what we all desire to do, is continually do and have the mind to please God.

God and Jesus Christ are very familiar with us, what we are, what we do, what we think continually throughout the day. They're watching us and very much engaged and interested in us. David brings this out.

Psalm 139:1: "O LORD, You have searched me and have known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off" (vs 1-2).

There's nothing hidden from God; He's continually engaged in us and what we're doing.

Verse 3: "You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways... [hopefully that is a mind to please God] ...for there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have enclosed me behind and in front, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence?" (vs 3-7).

God and Christ are continually aware of what we're doing, where our mind is, what we're thinking and involved in. They want us to continually be of a mind where we're trying to please Them. That's what They desire from us.

The more we strive to have that type of mind, and knowing that God and Christ know us. But They want us to know more about Them. Have you ever thought about that? They know us very well, but They want to reveal more of Who They are to us.

It works together. The more we try to obey Them and live by Their Word and please Them, the more of Who They are is revealed to us. That's why we need to put a lot of effort into pleasing God, having a personal sacrifice to do that.

Where is there a good starting point with this, as we examine ourselves and try to have this attitude? Psa. 51 is a Psalm of David that goes right along with his repentance for what happened with Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite.

Psalm 51:16: "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it... [David was sincere about this; that's what he would do if God desired that] ...You do not take pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise" (vs 16-17).

That's what we think about, our personal sacrifices that please God. This is what we need to be working on within ourselves, having a broken spirit and contrite heart.

- we can't please God without this
- we can't come before God without this

If we have pride and haughtiness and self exaltation, ***then*** God is not pleased with that. We can't do the things that we need to be doing if we have this attitude.

So, humility is a great place for all of us to make sure that we have our mind and spirit in an attitude of humility. This is very important in anything we do to be able to please God.

Another thing I need to talk about as far as our personal sacrifice and things we need to be doing, and what we need to have our mind on for pleasing God is ***just plain obedience!***

1-Sam. 15—what is talked about there is what happened with Saul and what he did that caused him to be king over Israel, and Samuel's involvement in that. Samuel was a judge and priest for God for Israel. This is Samuel's message to King Saul:

1-Samuel 15:22: "And Samuel said, 'Does the LORD *have as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice! To hearken is better than the fat of rams.**'"

This is what God looks for as far as obedience to His Word, His commands, the things that He instructs in How God's Spirit leads us in our obedience to that. That's what God's looking for in all of us.

We think about what happened with Saul, he had partial obedience to the instructions of God. We have to be aware of that ourselves in our lives.

- Do we have a partial obedience?
- Are we obedient to the extent of maybe 90%, but there is something left there in our lives that we're not obedient to?
 - ✓ how we keep the Sabbath
 - ✓ how we keep the Holy Days
 - ✓ how we keep our relationship with God and each other
- Are we leaving something there where we are not in complete obedience?

This is what God desires, because once we enter into covenant we completely live by His Word and are obedient to Him!

I want to turn to what God said to Isaac in relation to his father Abraham. What we're going to read is pretty encouraging for us, an example for us where we see the obedience of Abraham. We know that God with Abraham and Abraham was obedient to God. God called Abraham *His friend!* We're also called *friends of God based on what we do!*

Genesis 26:3—*God's message to Isaac:* "Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (vs 3-4).

We know through Jesus Christ all nations, at some point, will be blessed because of what's coming: the Kingdom. That will involve everyone on the earth, as long as there is repentance and love and desire to love and follow God and Christ. ***A blessing for eternity!***

Now listen to what God mentions about Abraham, v 5: "**Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**"

That's pretty complete in the way that God desires us to obey Him!

- Do we mostly obey?
- Do we leave things out where there's not a complete obedience?

What was spoken of to about Abraham, that it was complete, very complete! We need to be complete, too, in our obedience to God and Christ and to remember this covenant we're all in.

We're talking about sacrifices, our personal sacrifices, the things we need to be doing to please God.

Hebrews 13:14: "For we do not have a continuing city here *on earth*; rather, we are seeking the one that is coming."

I hope that as time goes on, our mind is more on the Kingdom of God, our conversion and what we need to be doing personally. To be ready to enter into God's Kingdom as firstfruits. That's what we're all called to, to be firstfruits in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 15: "Accordingly, let us offer *the* sacrifice of praise continually to God through Him [Christ]; that is, *with the* fruit of *our* lips openly professing *our faith* in His name."

That's what we need to do is continually offer praise to God through Christ for what's been done for us. This is our part, our sacrifice, to do this. Openly professing our faith to each other as brethren, to the world as they see our example in what we do. This is what we need to be doing continually, having this mind. It's a sacrifice that pleases God.

Verse 16: "Now do not forget to do good and to fellowship, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

How often do we get a chance to do good? *I think that all of us would agree that that comes daily!* Everyday we live our lives we have a chance to do good. Paul says, "...do not forget to do good..." It's a sacrifice that pleases God. So, we need to continually want and desire to do good.

We know that to do good, primarily to our neighbors and also the brethren. It takes sacrifice, it takes our time and sometimes it takes our energy. It may take resources that we have to do good. It pleases God.

Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall reap corruption from the flesh. **But the one who sows to the Spirit shall reap eternal life from the Spirit.** Now, we should not lose heart *in* doing well because we who do not faint will reap in due time" (vs 7-9).

What we see is a blessing we're going to reap for doing well, doing good. We don't want to lose heart or faint about that; it's something we need to continually practice. There's a reward for us in this physical life in the Kingdom for doing this.

Titus 3:8—*Paul writes to Titus*: "This is a faithful saying, and I desire you to strongly affirm *all* these things, so that those who have believed God may apply themselves to doing good works. These things are good and profitable for men."

Doing good works, doing things that God wants us to be doing. That's profitable for us. It's good for us, and God wants us to continue in this.

Continually practicing good is something we want on our mind daily.

1-Peter 3:10: "For the one who desires to love life..."

I hope all of us desire to love life, what God has given us!

"...and to see good days, let him restrain his own tongue from evil, and not allow his lips to speak deceit. Let him avoid evil, and let him *continually* practice good. Let him seek peace, and let him *earnestly* pursue it" (vs 10-11).

There are benefits in this life that we live now for practicing good. It's sacrifice, but we need to have our mind on practicing good continually.

When it comes to remembering our brothers and sisters in the Church, and also our neighbors, I want to read Deut. 15 about what is around us, and who we will continually have around us, and what we need to be mindful of, as our sacrifice to God.

Deuteronomy 15:7: "If there is among you a poor man of one of your brothers inside any of your gates in your land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother. But you shall open your hand wide to him, and shall surely lend him enough for his need, that which he lacks. Beware that there is not a thought in your wicked heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye may be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing. And he may cry to the LORD against you, and it is sin to you" (vs 7-9).

The importance of what we're going to get here is remembering those around us, those in the Church and what our mind and attitude should be toward them. A sacrifice toward them!

Verse 10: "You shall surely give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him because for this thing the LORD your God shall

bless you in all your works, and in all that you put your hand to, for the poor shall never cease out of the land. Therefore, I command you saying, ‘You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor, and to your needy, in your land’” (vs 10-11).

Probably going back about 15 years ago or so, we had a neighbor who worked for the county in which we live and he was involved with a very bad accident where they were cutting some trees, probably on some of the county property. A log was cut and he was on hillside and this log broke loose and he couldn’t get out of the way and the log rolled over him.

It wound up crushing his pelvic area and break his hip, and he was in a pretty bad way. So, it caused him to be out of work for quite a while, and be at home recuperating from this horrific accident.

My wife and I went over to visit him and we saw that there was need there. We gave him some money. It wasn’t a lot, but some to help him with some of the expenses from him being out of work.’

I bring that up as an example because we all have neighbors, friends and those in the Church of God who are poor, or have problems and difficulties. It’s just so important for us to be mindful of them and to do something. It’s more than just making note of them, or maybe having works to really do something to try to help.

We did that for our neighbor and it was a good thing to do. That’s something we should do. I wasn’t going above and beyond our calling or for what God desires for us to do, but something we saw and took note of. Anytime you reach out to help, to give, to do good, **God gives it back to you!** It comes back!

It really helped the relationship, though it was good anyway, setting the example of love toward them. When it comes to the poor and the needed around us, in the world *or* in the Church, I’ll remind everybody of what Christ said, ‘The poor will always be among us’ (Mark 7). Keep that in mind, because we don’t want to turn our backs on the poor. We want to remember them, and whatever we can do to help, we try to help!

It may not be, in all cases, be just the poor that are physically in need. It may be spiritual within the Church, those who:

- need our help
- need our time
- need our encouragement
- need our love
- need our prayers

These are personal sacrifices for us! God’s

watching! He knows everything about us. He knows our mind, our thoughts, what we’re doing. This is what pleases God when we remember those around us.

In regard to my neighbor, he healed up from that injury that occurred and was able to go back to work and he’s been a really good neighbor. I think he’s retired now, so he seems to be doing really well.

James 1:27: “Pure and undefiled religion before God and *the* Father is this... [God is watching, it’s before Him] ...to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

Something we need to be mindful of, because in the world and in the Church we have that occur. We need to be mindful in their affliction, and in the time of their needs. Keep this in mind because this is important; it’s something God expects us to do.

Paul had a special relationship with the Philippian Church and if you read through Philippians and you have that in mind you’ll see that come out, because of what they did, and what they did for him. I’ll just say this—my opinion—because of their mind and where they were at, I think Paul was able to write some very meaty things to them to help them.

Philippians 4:15: “For you Philippians also know that in *the* beginning of the Gospel, when I came from Macedonia, not one church communicated with me in regard to giving and receiving, except you alone. And *when I was* in Thessalonica, you sent *to supply* my need both once and twice. *I do not say this* because I am seeking a gift, but *because* I am seeking fruit that may abound to your credit” (vs 15-17).

That’s what Paul was looking for in them; this attitude, this mind, this sacrifice that would be to their credit. It was pleasing to God what they were doing, and Paul was happy about this. He saw the fruits in them.

Verse 18: “But I have all things and abound. I am full after receiving from Epaphroditus the things you sent, a sweet-smelling savor, a sacrifice acceptable *and* well pleasing to God.”

What we’re talking about in this message. Paul saw that! They were doing things that pleased God. They had personal sacrifices. They were supplying Paul’s needs, and were mindful of others, too. It was a sweet smelling savor for Paul to be able to see and witness this. What was certainly acceptable and well pleasing to God. That’s the mind that we want to have and what we want to be doing, also.

We read in Hebrews about doing good, continuing to do good pleases God, but also fellowship pleases God.

Fellowship does not take personal sacrifice. It takes away from your time and what you would like to be doing to spend time with others. Particularly what I'm talking about is others in the Church of God. The results of fellowship, if done correctly, are powerful before God. That's why God wants us, as children with His spirit within us, to fellowship and spend time with one another.

We talk about fellowship in Go To Meetings and how important it is. I don't know if we all fully comprehend just the power that's behind our fellowship and the time we spend with one another as God's children.

Hebrews 10:22: "Let us approach *God* with a true heart, with full conviction of faith, our hearts having been purified from a wicked conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water."

That's where we are through conversion, repentance, baptism, and entering into this covenant.

Verse 23: "Let us hold fast without wavering *to* the hope *that* we profess, for He Who promised *is* faithful; and let us be concerned about one another, and *be* stirring up *one another* unto love and good works" (vs 23-24).

That is what comes from the fellowship, our opportunity to do this for one another; stir each other up in things that are important to God.

Verse 25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, even as some *are* accustomed to do; but rather, encouraging *one another*, and all *the* more as you see the day drawing near."

This is important to keep on our mind, that we need that fellowship with each other because that pleases God. Don't forsake it! Don't have a mind where we discard it and don't make an effort to fellowship.

I know that many brethren in the Churches of God are scattered, some by themselves and rarely have an opportunity to fellowship with others. It's not because they want to forsake it, but it's because the opportunity isn't there like it is for others. So, it's important that everyone who has the opportunity should take advantage of it.

I tell you, as I look around the Churches of God now, it's a concern that I have that it's become convenient for those in the churches to stay at home because of the Covid virus. I know that in some cases there is that need, but with others it has

become easy to stay at home, listen to messages and forsake the assembling. We don't want to do that.

We know that there are tools we have now, technical tools, that allow us to get together like we do on Go To Meeting, Zoom and other meetings. Those are good and effective, but those do not replace the opportunity that we have to be physically with one another.

Don't we all look forward to a time when we're all together, all of God's people and with God and Christ and we see Them face-to-face. That's the ultimate relationship that God and Jesus Christ look forward to, also. Our resurrection where we can be with Them and with each other.

My point is that since spending time with each other when we can is very important. There's power in it for all of us. There is a correct fellowship, and I want to talk just a little bit about that.

1-John 1:5: "And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is Light, and there is no darkness at all in Him."

God and Jesus Christ and the Holy angles around the Throne of God in heaven, there is no darkness there at all! It's complete light!

Verse 6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth. However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin" (vs 6-7).

So, the fellowship that we have with one another pleases God, but it has to be done in the light and in truth.

So, we have a good time with one another and we talk about things that we enjoy in this world, that we've been blessed by God to be able to have. But the most important thing that we talk about is things that are of the Truth:

- our calling
- the Kingdom
- what we have to look forward to as God's children

That is the main focus for all of us when we're together as God's people!

The power of the inner working of God's Spirit within us, as we dwell with each other, pleases God.

The other thing I want to talk about is our fellowship with God and Jesus Christ. The time we

dedicate to Them. Do you think that God enjoys our time?

All of us who have wives, children, grandchildren, really good friends, don't we enjoy their time? Take pleasure in that? God enjoys our time. He wants us to be engaged with Him and spend that time. He really enjoys is.

Do we rob God of our time and what we need to be doing with God? *It's important that we spend time with God!* When we spend good, quality time with God, and hopefully, all the time we spend with God is good, quality time. It is good for us and pleases God.

Psalm 43:3: "Oh, send out Your Light and Your Truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to Your Holy mountain and to Your tabernacles."

That's what's happened to us; we've been called by God and Jesus Christ is the Light that came into the world that has led us God the Father, to the Truth and we're brought before God. Because of the conversion and covenant that we're in, we're able to appear before God.

Verse 4: "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; yea, upon the lyre I will praise You, O God, my God."

I hope this all of our attitudes, that we have exceeding joy to go before God, that we have exceeding joy and praise when we come before God, and we have this time every day as long as we have life to appear before God and spend time with Him. We need to be fellowshiping as much as possible with God. He enjoys it; enjoys hearing from us in our praises and joy.

Psalm 55:16: "As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD will save me. Evening and morning, and at noon, I will cry aloud in my distress; and He shall hear my voice" (vs 16-17).

David is man after God's own heart. He spent a lot of time, I'm sure, talking with God, and meditating and also, as much as possible, learning of His Word. This is the sacrifice that we want to put ourselves toward fellowshiping and spending time with God.

Proverbs 15:8: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD..."

Their sacrifices and the things **they do and think** please God; the things **they think** are right before God. Mostly in their own eyes. It's an abomination to the Lord.

"...but the prayer of the upright is His delight" (v 8). *That's us! That's our prayers!*

They're prayers of the upright and righteous. The ones that God has imputed righteousness to; He has revealed His Truth to and given grace to. Those things are a delight to Him; those prayers are special to Him. We must remember to continually do that. All these things, whether it be:

- prayer
- study
- meditation
- giving Him glory and praise

That's our personal sacrifice to God, because we love Him and it's precious to Him; important to Him that we do that!

There are attitudes that God continually looks at in us. As we do all of these things before Him, to strive to please Him, to be a personal sacrifice, there's a way that God wants it done, an attitude that God wants us to have. Let's see what Paul writes:

2-Corinthians 9:6: "But this *I say*: the one who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and the one who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Each one as he purposes in his heart, *so let him give...*" (vs 6-7).

Think about this in regard to what we talked about here, and what we need to be doing before God and each other. Not just a monetary thing in the giving, but more than that. Talking about the things we give of ourselves and our lives in how we live them.

"...but not grudgingly... [we don't want to do what we do grudgingly] ...or by compulsion... [feeling pressure or compelled to do something] ...**for God loves a cheerful giver**" (v 7).

So, all these things we do in our lives as a sacrifice to God we do cheerfully, willingly. That's how we want to do it before God. That's how He desires for all of this to be done! *Cheerfully!*

1-Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in everything, for this *is the* will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." *An attitude of appreciation in:*

- all the things we do
- all the things we're given
- all the opportunities we have to do these things

If it wasn't for God and our calling, and the Spirit within us, we wouldn't know to have the desire to do these things before God and Christ. So, in everything we do and opportunity we have, **give God thanks in everything**, because this God's desire. It pleases Him when we have this attitude.

This messages have been about what really can please God of ourselves, out lives and what we're dedicated to in our spiritual lives before God.

Proverbs 16:7: **“When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”**

God is paying attention to what we're doing every day. We have Christ as the example. He lived by every Word of God. He spoke of the things that He received from God. He continually did the things that pleased God the Father.

I know when we read this it's easy to think about personal enemies, people we have problems with. But think bigger than that here. **“When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”**

Think about all of our enemies! Death is an enemy! When it comes to pleasing God and obeying God, all enemies we have in this physical life, we have peace with that; all these things. It's very important. No matter what state we find ourselves in, as time goes on, that we don't get distracted by things going on in this world and what may be coming. *Every day we stay dedicated:*

- *to our covenant*
- *to God the Father and Jesus Christ*
- *to our desire to do the things that we need to be doing*
- *to pleasing Them in our lives to be a personal sacrifice for Them*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 12:1-2
- 2) John 8:28-29
- 3) Psalm 139:1-7
- 4) Psalm 51:16-17
- 5) 1 Samuel 15:22
- 6) Genesis 26:3-5
- 7) Hebrews 13:14-16
- 8) Galatians 6:7-9
- 9) Titus 3:8
- 10) 1 Peter 3:10-11
- 11) Deuteronomy 15:7-11
- 12) James 1:11
- 13) Philippians 4:15-18
- 14) Hebrews 10:22-25
- 15) 1 John 1:5-7
- 16) Psalm 43:3-4
- 17) Psalm 55:16-17
- 18) Proverbs 15:8
- 19) 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
- 20) 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- 21) Proverbs 16:7

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Mark 7

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Transcribed: 5/9/22

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