

Consecration

By [Herald Magazine](#)

A Living Sacrifice

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). — Extracted from a 2023 Baptismal Service

Consecration – A Living Sacrifice

To the baptismal candidates, I want to ask this question: “Have you lost your mind?” In a way, someone in the world could be justified in asking you that question. After all, you are signing a lifetime contract to serve the Lord, but do not get to read the fine print. You do not know what experiences the Lord may put you through, and you are no longer to strive for worldly ambitions. On one occasion Jesus was so pressed by his service, “His friends ... went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself” (Mark 3:21). Revered religious leaders charged him as directed by Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24). Jesus was not disturbed, nor should we be bothered if we are criticized for this decision. Walking in the narrow way is very different from walking in the worldly way.

This is the greatest decision you will ever make, and the hardest thing you will ever do. You will go through the same experiences as others in the world: the pleasurable, the painful, the joyful, and the sad. But a major difference is your attitude in your experiences. Nothing that happens to you is random, or accidental. Every experience in your life matters. All things will work together for good.

Worthy?

One of the things that worried me about consecration was whether I was worthy of running for the prize of the High Calling. Many others were more deserving. But actually, none of us deserves to be called! It is grace. It is a gift from God. He has “called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace” (2 Timothy 1:9). He does not call us because we are special. We are special, because He calls us.

Trials

Our experiences will be some pleasant and delightful, some painful and difficult. Paul advised in either case, “in every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God ... concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). “Chastening for the present seemeth ... grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews 12:11). Those fruits are sweet and delightful, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22, 23 NASB).

What do you do to make a tree produce even more fruit? You prune it. What does the Lord do to make us produce more fruit? “He prunes it” (John 15:2 NASB). Thankfully we are not our own workmanship; we are His workmanship. When **He** is done with us, we **will** have produced the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

When we go through difficult trials — not inconveniences, but difficult, painful, lengthy experiences — and another trial gets added on top, and maybe another after that — what should we do? Have faith. Trust our Heavenly Father.

Who wants us to be “discouraged”? Who wants us to mistakenly think the Lord has left us, and that we were never worthy of running for the prize of the high calling anyway, and why are we wasting everyone’s time with a losing battle? The adversary. He prowls like a roaring lion. “Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren” (1 Peter 5:8, 9).

We do not stand alone in our trials. Who is with us? What is the end result? “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10).

Losing our Mind, our Will

We lose our mind, and our will, by intentionally giving it up. We replace it with the mind of Christ. “We have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). One thing was constantly on Jesus’ mind — doing his Father’s will, period. “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38).

My prayer for you brethren is that you get to a point in your Christian walk, where you are so focused and immovable, that you can honestly say, “I do not care what happens to me, or around me, I will **only** do the will of the Lord, period.” That attitude absolutely requires faith. And, walking the narrow way requires courage.

Were you feeling a bit anxious and vulnerable when you arrived in this auditorium? Probably, but you came up here anyway. Did the Lord help you have the courage? You may or may not realize it, but yes, He did.

Baptism

Baptism is an outward sign of something that has previously taken place within your heart. You have offered yourself to the Lord and desire to serve Him by following in the footsteps of Jesus. If you are faithful unto death, you will receive the crown of life, and will be raised as a member of the “little flock.”

Where does that desire to follow Jesus come from? Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him [giving him the desire to come to me]” (John 6:44, Amplified Version).

Who does God draw? We know from 1 Corinthians 1:26-28, that it is the weak, lowly, and despised, so “that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Corinthians 1:29).

Christian baptism is recommended, as it is exemplified in the scriptures. In Matthew 3:16, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. After Jesus was raised, he said to his disciples, “Teach all nations, baptizing them” (Matthew 28:19).

In Romans 6:3, Paul says “So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.” In verse 11 Paul adds, “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). In baptism “There is one body, and one Spirit ... one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4, 5).

Practical Advice

The top two things our Heavenly Father wants us to do, are in Matthew 22:37-39. “Love thy Lord thy God with all thy heart ... soul ... mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” To make sure we understand how important those two commandments are, Jesus added in verse 40, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:40).

Thereafter Jesus added, “A new commandment I give unto you ... as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). He then added, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). That is the ultimate sacrifice — our very lives.

When we love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind, our life revolves around God. We memorize names of Bible characters, their stories, parables, prophecies, even verses of special meaning to us. We appreciate our Bibles, reference books, and devotionals. Some have framed scriptures on the wall, and some have a sofa pillow or two with scriptures embroidered.

We meet with others who love God with all their heart, soul, and mind. What gets in our way of worshipping the Lord full time? Nothing! We are always in His service. “Whatever your task may be, put in your very best effort as if it is something done for the Lord and not for men” (Colossians 3:23, Amplified). We can be running a corporation or washing dishes, and if we do our best, that is pleasing to God. That brings glory to Him. Jesus glorified God with his fidelity and service (John 17:4), as we may also.

Obedience

“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it” (Luke 11:28 NIV). Our obedience is frustrated by having a mind of our own. When we truly replace our mind with the mind of Christ, we will resist temptation. To obtain the mind of Christ, do not just read the Bible — study it, consume it, and make it part of you. Jesus countered temptations by quoting scripture. So may we. “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and

correcting error ... training ... in good living. The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God and fit him fully for all branches of his work” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, Phillips).

Humility, Reverence, Prayer

When Jesus took on the form of a servant, he demonstrated humility. People who are used to being smarter, stronger, and more successful than others, may have difficulty being humble. When we are humble, we are teachable — and there is **a lot** to learn.

“The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” and wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). Not everyone wants knowledge from our Creator, for “fools despise wisdom and instruction” (same verse). At what point in our consecrated walk do we no longer have to be teachable? Never. Stay close to God all day, every day, through prayer.

A measure of spiritual maturity is the percentage of waking hours spent in communion with God. At the beginning of consecration, the percentage will be lower. Here is a recommendation on how to increase that. Focus on three different times of the day. (1) The beginning of the day when your head is still on the pillow and you first wake up. (2) The end of the day when your head is on the pillow, about to sleep. (3) Everything in between. One and two are easy, but number three requires practice.

(1) As you wake in the morning, make it a point to say, “Good morning Lord.” Thank Him for the rest, pray that He blesses the day, and guides your words and your actions. If there is a specific issue present, talk to him about it. Pray that He overrules your decisions, and your will, because He knows best.

When out of bed, read something in the Bible that gives you at least one scripture to think about during the day. Some brethren like to read a Psalm each morning. Personally, I also like to include the Manna for the day.

When you make a decision, large or small, pray for the Lord’s guidance. You might say, I do not need to ask the Lord which brand of toothpaste to buy. That may be true. But perhaps the Lord wants you to interact with someone at the store, and if so, pray that his holy Spirit guides your words, even if it is only “hi there,” or “good morning.”

Also — always watch for the hand of God in your life. He is with you during every breath you take. The more you mature spiritually, the more often you will see His hand working in your life. That daily reflection will increase your faith exponentially.

At the end of the day, when your head is on the pillow, thank the Lord for the day, for watching and keeping you close to Him. Ask forgiveness where you fell short. Pray, if it is His will, that you have another safe night of rest.

Things to Avoid

We are all familiar with seven things the Lord hates, in Proverbs 6:16-19, Amplified. “A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that creates wicked plans, Feet that run swiftly to evil, A false witness who breathes out lies, And one who spreads discord among brothers.”

Here are three more important things, especially at the beginning of our Christian walk. (1) Do not judge others. God is the judge. Besides, we do not know everything going on in another person’s life. (2) Do not take part in class divisions. If you happen to be in a class that splits, do not let anyone force you to pick a side. (3) Do not worship any of the brethren. It is good to respect, and appreciate, but never to idolize.

Moderation

Let us remember, everything temporal that is acceptable should still be in moderation. We do not live in a monastery. Instead, strive to live peaceful lives with everyone, in harmony with God’s law of love. As we walk in the narrow way, remember that we are being watched — not only by God and Jesus, but we are a spectacle to angels and to men. So, let us live a lifestyle that is always pleasing to the Lord.

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