



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Romans 12:1-8
- II Peter 1:5; Romans 5:1-2

BEYOND SALVATION

- Reasonable & Perfect
- Grace in Action

SEED:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is **your reasonable service**. And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect will of God**.” Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

FRUIT:

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, **add to your faith** virtue, to virtue knowledge,” II Peter 1:5 NKJV

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1-2 NKJV

NARRATIVE FOR TODAY'S SCRIPTURES: ROMANS

Paul shifts his attention and his message begins to hone in on the personal responsibility assigned to each one of us to navigate a life in the faith. And it is not a casual request he is making; his admonition is urgent, his tone fervent. You've been given an unprecedented opportunity. You deserved death and were made alive in Christ; now, what are you going to do about it? Paul says, "I have some direction for you. This is how you should live the rest of your life for the Lord."

Before you can wrap your mind around the imagery Paul insinuates, you must first acknowledge Paul's pedigree. He is a Jewish Torah scholar, the top student trained at the feet of Gamaliel, the most renowned Torah teacher of the day. So, when Paul uses the imagery of a sacrifice to suggest how you might live your life as a disciple of Christ, you must know what that means to him. If it's an animal sacrifice you must imagine that the neck of the living sacrificial animal is slit; its blood is drained and its body disemboweled and chopped into pieces. Then the parts are burned in the flames until there is nothing left but ashes, a complete consumption of the animal—what Paul recognizes as a burnt offering. The other type of sacrifice that imposes thoughts that a life in Christ means that none of the old you remains is the drink offering. Picture a cup of wine being tossed into an inferno and

how it becomes nothing but vapor in an instant—and how that vapor dissipates into the atmosphere in mere moments.

These are the images you must hold in your heart when Paul admonishes you to become a living sacrifice. While you yet live, live a life that is dedicated to the Lord to such a degree that none of the old you remains. Like a sacrificial animal; there can be only one option—all in! And of that magnitude of sacrifice, this is what Paul considers. It is what truly separates you for God; it is what God will happily receive from you. And most telling—it is nothing extraordinary in God's eyes. It is nothing more than your expected and adequate ministry to which you donate your entire life, hence a "living sacrifice!"

Nobody does it better. Paul packs mounds of theology into once sentence. It's not justice to simply gloss over it in the eight seconds it takes to read. The world, the transformation of the mind, and the perfect will of God, all wrapped in one. In the spirit of sacrifice, let's disembowel this verse—separate it into its component parts.

The world: There are two worlds to counterbalance, one Christ came to save, the other to condemn. One world is everlasting; He loves it and died for it. The other is passing away; don't love it. Don't comport according to its values and standards, as it is only filled with lust and pride.

The transformation of the mind: You are here on earth for one ultimate purpose, to grow into the fullness, stature, and image of Christ. The metamorphosis begins in your mind as old thoughts dissolve, giving room to a way of thinking that mimics the mind of Christ. It's an ongoing process that requires taking every thought captive and bringing it into submission to the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. That is what it means to renew your mind daily.

The perfect will of God: What is God's will? That might be the quintessential question for the ages. To know His will you must know His heart on every matter. Begin with being a student of His written Word; even experts need ongoing instruction in His mysterious ways. Continue by developing a keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit; learn what God's voice sounds like and how He speaks to you. Know that His choice is always the way of purity and holiness. And above all, be willing to submit to His guidance and direction no matter where it leads you. It sounds something like this; "Not my will, but Your will be done."

So, here is the equation. Sacrifice your entire life for God and accept that it is merely reasonable to do so. And while you are at it, don't conclude you are the greatest thing since sliced bread because you gave it all up for God. You could only do any of it because of His grace, so remain level-headed about your accomplishments for the Lord. Besides, haughtiness is often the last

step before you fall off a cliff. Even the initial faith you were given to believe Y'shua is Lord and Savior was a gift and the call on your life will be equally met by God's provision, as He equips you every step of the way.

As you soberly consider yourself no better than anyone else, no smarter, no more important, not better equipped, not special or more talented, nor carrying a greater anointing—the easier it will be to see yourself as one small, but indispensably critical part of a larger whole. Just as in one human body there are many body parts, and yet all those body parts do not have the same function, in the same way, as many individual body parts, we are unified into one body in Christ—the Body of Christ. Each of us is a specific body part with a different function, gifts imparted according to God's grace—and we must work together

And maybe the most consequential piece here, if we are to walk in unity, is to learn that each body part has equal significance. We all need each other to be a fully functioning healthy Body of Christ. In fact, because some parts seem naturally less significant than others, the parts that have less obvious importance, God showers with honor because those with obvious significance need no such acknowledgment.

The secret here is to emphasize unity above individuality. We are different parts of one body of Christ. And it is essential that we

view that reality through this lens. We cannot be one with Christ if we are not first one with each other. In fact, that type of unity will be the greatest witness of all to a dying world. Unity is so critical that it was Y'shua's final prayer at the dinner table the night He was betrayed. "I pray they all may be made perfect in one with each other as You and I Father are one. That is how the world will believe who I am!" Elsewhere Paul called it the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The admonition was to be perfectly joined together in the same mind. It should be as if we live together in one household, under one budget, as one new person who was created according to God. This can only happen when we understand God's love and freely express that love to one another. Loving one another is the literal demonstration of God's perfection. As the Psalmist sings, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

We previously learned that "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." This is all part of God's unalterable prophetic plan for mankind. He has installed within you a unique nature, a set of gifts and talents designed specially for you as an individual and for you to discover, activate, and utilize in your calling as one, but significant, cell in the whole body of Christ. You are both an infinitesimally small piece and an indispensably important part of the whole. Nothing you can do can deny that reality; that is the

irrevocable part. Although, you can certainly ignore your job description and neglect your duties; that would be tragic. Two things are most significant here: the first is that each of us has different gifts. The second is to recognize that all our gifts are empowered by God's grace. It makes sense to begin with how grace functions and then finish up by describing the seven different gifts Paul mentions.

Grace is God's supernatural power, and when you access that grace we might call it empowerment. Your experience with God's grace began, as it did for every Christian, with God's use of His power to soften or transform your heart to such a degree that you would have the faith to invite a born-again encounter with Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, "by grace you have been saved through faith." But of course, you can't just sit on that faith; you have to put it into practice. And that is precisely how you gain ongoing access to God's grace. It just may be the most powerful force in the universe—Yahweh's divine power that raised Christ from the grave also empowers your godly living and allows you to share it with others.

The different gifts Paul emphasizes here are: prophecy, to enforce God's revealed truth in proportion to your faith. Ministry, to devote yourself to serving. Teaching, to commit yourself to direct, admonish, and instruct. Exhortation, to be an encouragement, to

invite people deeper and invoke, even provoke, them to walk worthy of their calling. Giving, to be generous, to make sincere contributions with no strings attached. Leadership, to lead with passion and diligence, to practice what you teach with utter enthusiasm. And finally there is Mercy, to care for others with kindness, compassion and with a cheerful heart. And remember, whatever your gifts or callings, they are indisputable and undeniable. So get to it; discover and practice them! And put God's grace into full effect in your life!

"Think in Bible." DJH

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S MESSAGE:

Picture the scene. You have just encountered Y'shua. He has become your Lord and Savior and you feel truly free for the first time in your life. The moment you became a Christian is one you should savor, one to look back upon in utter appreciation and amazement every day for the rest of your life. Your old life is dead and buried and your new life is stretched out before you. There is quite literally nothing more exciting. But what now?

To be clear, the cost for you to have apprehended such a gift was absolutely zero. It cost you nothing, but what it cost Y'shua was much more than your human mind can fathom. Not only did He willingly surrender His life as a man, but it is critical you

acknowledge what He had to first surrender to become a man. He left His position with the Father and His form which was Spirit. Then, He made a permanent decision that would prevent Him from ever returning to that position and form. That portion of His sacrifice dwarfs the mere surrender of His human life.

Now that you have some idea of the magnitude of what it cost Him, maybe you can better appreciate that surrendering your whole life for Him in return is just a speck compared to what He surrendered for you. You're born-again, so what now? God's expectation is that you give over your life to Him to such a degree that you could be compared to a sacrificial animal whose neck was slit, blood drained, inner parts disemboweled, and body disassembled into pieces, before being burned in the flames until nothing but ash remained. Give your life to God like that and your reward is a little pat on the back, indicating what you've done is simply reasonable. It's nothing extraordinary; it is, nevertheless, the only way to walk in the perfect will of God!

There is only one possible way to live this way. And that makes it certain that your eyes are open, your heart is receptive, and your ears are very attentive right now. God's grace! Your first encounter with God's grace, whether you recognize it or not, was when it softened your heart to receive salvation. By grace through faith you were saved, it was a gift from God. Then you arrived at this point;

you're born-again, what now? This is when you take that free faith and put it into practice. Your practice of faith then gains you ongoing access to the very grace that softened your heart in the first place. You must use that grace to animate, motivate, and empower every choice you make from this point forward!

Up to now this all seems so personal, so individualistic. But it's all for one larger cause. Each one of us who has arrived in this place must unify in such a way that we are performing like one being; this unified body is what the scripture calls the Body of Christ. Each one of you must embark on a journey beginning at salvation and learn to continually access God's grace. This is how to discover your individual gifts and calling—in other words, what part you play. Finally, you must add your small, but indispensable part, to the whole Body of Christ. That is a life of living sacrifice. Live as such and it is merely your reasonable service to God, a small price to pay for what He paid for you!

REASONABLE & PERFECT

1. The Expectation

A. Nothing Extraordinary

(1) A Living Sacrifice

(a) I “beseech you!” I fervently and ardently beg you! It's urgent you get this!

1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**" Romans 12:1 NKJV
2. Paul shifts his attention and his message begins to hone in on the personal responsibility assigned to each one of us to navigate a life in the faith.
 - a) It is not a casual request he is making; his admonition is urgent, his tone fervent.
 - b) You've been given an unprecedented opportunity. You deserved death and were made alive in Christ; now, what are you going to do about it?
3. Paul says, "I have some direction for you. This is how you should live the rest of your life for the Lord."
 - a) Before you can wrap your mind around the imagery Paul insinuates, you must first acknowledge his pedigree.
 - b) He is a Jewish Torah scholar, the top student trained at the feet of Gamaliel, the most renowned Torah teacher of the day.
 - 1) *"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but **brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to **the strictness of our fathers'*****

law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.” Acts 22:3 NKJV

- 2) Paul is an expert in the Law (Torah) and Yahweh chose this Hebrew, tribe of Benjamin, legal scholar to be the disseminator of Christian Doctrine, might we even say, “the formulator” of Christian Doctrine.
4. So, when Paul uses the imagery of a sacrifice to suggest how you might live your life as a disciple of Christ, you must know what that means to him.
- a) If it’s an animal sacrifice you must imagine that the neck of the living sacrificial animal is slit; its blood is drained and spilled on the altar (the life is in the blood, Leviticus 17:11), and its body disemboweled (eviscerated) and chopped into pieces.
 - b) Then the parts are burned in the flames until there is nothing left but ashes, a complete consumption of the animal—what Paul recognizes as a burnt offering (The Law of Burnt Offerings is in Leviticus 1:1-17).
- 1) Unlike other offerings, where the priest and sometimes the worshiper himself would share a

portion of the sacrifice, the burnt offering was to be completely consumed by fire on the altar. It was an offering given in its entirety to the Lord, and represented complete devotion to God.

- 2) The Hebrew word for “burnt offering” actually means to “ascend,” literally to “go up in smoke.” The smoke from the sacrifice ascended to God.
- c) The other type of sacrifice that imposes thoughts that a life in Christ means that none of the old you remains is the drink offering.
- d) Picture a cup of wine being tossed into an inferno and how it becomes nothing but vapor in an instant—and how that vapor dissipates into the atmosphere in mere moments.
 - 1) In Genesis 35:14, when Jacob set up the pillar for worship at Bethel, he consecrated it by “pouring out a drink offering on it.”
 - 2) There was a similar ritual commanded in the Law: in Exodus 29, it says the priests were to offer a “drink offering” of a hin of wine along with the lamb of the burnt offering.

e) Paul saw his life as drink offering in His final letter before His execution (martyrdom).

1) *“For **I am already being poured out as a drink offering**, and the time of my departure is at hand. **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”* II Timothy 4:6-8 NKJV

5. These are the images you must hold in your heart when Paul admonishes you to become a living sacrifice.

a) While you yet live, live a life that is dedicated to the Lord to such a degree that none of the old you remains.

1) *“**I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live**, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* Galatians 2:20 NKJV

2) *“Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**”* II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

b) Like a sacrificial animal; there can be only one option—all in!

6. Of that magnitude of sacrifice, this is what Paul considers.

a) It is what truly separates you for God. Paul calls it holy. Holy means that it is set-apart, different from what everyone else is doing. As a Christian, you better look different from the world.

b) It is what God will happily receive from you. It is what he says it is acceptable.

c) And most telling—it is nothing extraordinary in God’s eyes. It is your reasonable service to Yahweh.

d) It means that 100% all in, to totally sacrifice everything for God, like a bled, chopped up, burned on the altar dead animal, is nothing extraordinary in God’s eyes. It’s just...reasonable.

- e) It is nothing more than your expected and adequate ministry to which you donate your entire life, hence a “living sacrifice!”
 - 1) ***“I been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...”*** Galatians 2:20 NKJV
- f) The sacrificed animal is 100% dead, all-in dead; it’s not a lukewarm halfway-in-type dead. Live your life in Christ like you are all-in, 100% dead, committed like your life is not your own anymore. You are dead to yourself and alive for Him alone. Jesus said it like this;
 - 1) ***“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”*** Matthew 16:24-25 NKJV
- g) This is how you live a set-apart life in the faith.
 - 1) And let’s agree that it is impossible without God’s grace.
 - 2) Acknowledging God minimizes the risk of this becoming an exercise in self-righteousness.

B. Prophetic Outtake

- (1) When you realize the true price He paid for your salvation, you will understand why offering your life to Him as a living sacrifice is merely reasonable.
 - (a) What it cost Y'shua was much more than your human mind can fathom.
 1. When you have some idea of the magnitude of what it cost Him, maybe you can better appreciate that surrendering your whole life for Him in return is just a speck compared to what He surrendered for you.
 - (b) Understanding the Law of the The Hebrew Servant. It's about a final permanent choice!
 1. ""Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: If you buy a **Hebrew servant**, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. **If his master has given him a wife**, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. **But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'** then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or

to the doorpost, and his master shall **pierce** his ear with an awl; and **he shall serve him forever.**" Exodus 21:1-6 NKJV

2. A Hebrew servant is in bondage for six years and is then permitted to go out for free without cost in the seventh year.

a) **But there are some important stipulations:**

- 1) If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself.
- 2) If he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.
- 3) If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, **and he shall go out alone.**
- 4) But, if the servant loves his master, wife, and children, he can chose to stay a servant [**and keep his wife and children**].
- 5) If the slave makes a decision to stay, **it is a permanent decision** and it is witnessed by the judges and consummated with a piercing.

b) What and who does this sound like?

- 1) A hebrew servant has the option to go free, but He chooses instead to stay, so He can keep the bride He was given while in slavery!
 - 2) Because He has chosen to stay, his master shall bring Him to the judges. Then he shall bring Him for a piercing and He shall serve his master forever.
 - 3) The servant can volunteer to be a slave forever because He loves his Master and his BRIDE! A slave who chooses to stay even when He could go Free gets pierced and is called a BONDservant!
- (c) Not only did He willingly surrender His life as a man, but it is critical you acknowledge what He had to first surrender to become a man and become a bondservant.
1. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, **who, being in the form of God [God is Spirit], did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men [a Human Body]. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:5-11 NKJV

2. He left His position with the Father and His form which was Spirit.
 - a) Then, He made a permanent decision that would prevent Him from ever returning to that position and form.
 - b) That portion of His sacrifice dwarfs the mere surrender of His human life.
- (d) Messiah as a Bondservant: Let this mind of Christ be in you... a bondservant who volunteered to give His life FOREVER, never again able to go "FREE"! When?
 1. "And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, **"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."**" Luke 22:41-42 NKJV

2. Gethsemane was the moment of truth—bondservant and a piercing or freedom?
 - a) He could go free and lose His bride [*take this cup from me*], or remain captive, be pierced, and KEEP HIS BRIDE FOREVER! The bride given to Him during His Slavery! [*not my will but yours be done*]
 - (e) He chose to stay and that is the price He paid; the true price of your salvation!
 1. “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For **you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.**” I Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV

C. God’s Perfect Will

- (1) Nobody does it better.
 - (a) Paul packs mounds of theology into once sentence.
 1. “And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect will of God.**” Romans 12:2 NKJV
 2. It’s not justice to simply gloss over this in the eight seconds it takes to read.

- a) The world, the transformation of the mind, and the perfect will of God, all wrapped in one. Let's separate it into its component parts.
3. The world:
- a) There are two worlds to counterbalance, one Christ came to save, the other to condemn. One world is everlasting; He loves it and died for it. The other is passing away; don't love it. Don't comport according to its values and standards, as it is only filled with lust and pride.
 - 1) ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*** John 3:16-17 NKJV
 - 2) ***“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away,***

and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” I John 2:15-17 NKJV

3) **““If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”** John 15:18-19 NKJV

4) **““I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me **out of the world**. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. {11} **Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You.**”**

Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. {14} **I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.** {15} **I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." John 17:6-19 NKJV

4. The transformation of the mind:
 - a) You are here on earth for one ultimate purpose, to grow into the fullness, stature, and image of Christ.

- 1) *“for the equipping of the saints...for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to ... a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”* Ephesians 4:12-13 NKJV
- b) The metamorphosis begins in your mind as old thoughts dissolve, giving room to a way of thinking that mimics the mind of Christ.
 - 1) *“But we have the mind of Christ.”* I Corinthians 2:16 NKJV
- c) It’s an ongoing process that requires taking every thought captive and bringing it into submission to the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. That is what it means to renew your mind daily.
 - 1) *“...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”* II Corinthians 10:5
- d) The type of transformation Paul is referring to comes from Greek word from which we derive “metamorphosis.”
 - 1) The word picture for this is caterpillar-to-butterfly type transformation.
 - 2) The resultant creature has ZERO resemblance to its predecessor.

- 3) That is the type of transformation Paul is describing.
 - 4) That is what is available to you if you are willing to “renew your mind” daily.
- e) When I think of the transformation Paul is talking about think of the Mount of Transfiguration.
- 1) *“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and **He was TRANSFIGURED before them. His face shone like the sun,** and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three TABERNACLES: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.””* Matthew 17:1-4 NKJV
 - 2) The Greek word used here in Matthew 17:2, transfigured, is the same word used by Paul in Romans 12:2, transformed.
- f) That is the type of transformation Paul is declaring for you, a face shining like the sun (Son).

1) *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**”* II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

g) Then we have the renewed mind.

1) *For “**who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?**” **But we have the mind of Christ.**”* I Corinthians 2:16 NKJV

2) *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,** and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”* II Corinthians 10:4-6 NKJV

5. The perfect will of God:

a) What is God’s will? That might be the quintessential question for the ages. To know His will you must know His heart on every matter. Begin with being a student of His written Word; even experts need ongoing instruction in His mysterious ways. Continue by developing a keen

sensitivity to the Holy Spirit; learn what God's voice sounds like and how He speaks to you. Know that His choice is always the way of purity and holiness. And above all, be willing to submit to His guidance and direction no matter where it leads you. It sounds something like this; "Not my will, but Your will be done."

- b) Know his will by being instructed by the law...
 - 1) *"Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and KNOW HIS WILL, and approve the things that are excellent [superior], **being instructed out of the law,**"* Romans 2:17-18 NKJV
 - 2) *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."* Psalms 1:1-2 NKJV
 - 3) *"Then He said to them, "Therefore **every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom** of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.""* Matthew 13:52 NKJV

- 4) You and Yahweh and His Word, day and night, all the days of your life! And what kind of mind transformation can you look forward to? *“But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16)* Drown yourself day and night in His presence and in His word, and **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**; it’s the only way.
- c) Your Sanctification
 - 1) *“For **this is the will of God, your sanctification**: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,”* 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 NKJV
- d) His will not your will...
 - 1) *“And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; **nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.**””* Luke 22:41-42 NKJV

GRACE IN ACTION

2. Two Faiths

A. The Gift and the Practice

(1) Don't get haughty!

(a) A Measure of Faith

1. "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think**, but to think soberly, as **God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**"

Romans 12:3 NKJV

2. Here is the equation.

- a) Sacrifice your entire life for God and accept that it is merely reasonable to do so.
- b) And while you are at it, don't conclude you are the greatest thing since sliced bread because you gave it all up for God.
- c) You could only do any of it because of His grace, so remain level-headed about your accomplishments for the Lord.
- d) Besides, haughtiness is often the last step before you fall off a cliff.
 - 1) "*Pride goes before destruction, And **a haughty spirit before a fall.***" Proverbs 16:18 NKJV
- e) Even the initial faith you were given to believe Y'shua is Lord and Savior was a gift and the call on

your life will be equally met by God's provision, as He equips you every step of the way.

- 1) *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God,**”* Ephesians 2:8 NKJV

B. One Body

(1) Unity of the Faith

(a) One Body Many Parts

1. “For as we have **many members in one body**, but **all the members do not have the same function**, so we, being **many**, are **one body in Christ**, and **individually members of one another.**” Romans 12:4-5 NKJV
2. You are a small part of something much greater...
 - a) As you soberly consider yourself no better than anyone else, no smarter, no more important, not better equipped, not special or more talented, nor carrying a greater anointing—the easier it will be to see yourself as one small, but indispensably critical part of a larger whole.
 - b) Just as in one human body there are many body parts, and yet all those body parts do not have the same function, in the same way, as many

individual body parts, we are unified into one body in Christ—the Body of Christ.

- c) Each of us is a specific body part with a different function, gifts imparted according to God’s grace—and we must work together
- d) The secret here is to emphasize unity above individuality. We are different parts of one body of Christ. And it is essential that we view that reality through this lens.
- e) We cannot be one with Christ if we are not first one with each other. In fact, that type of unity will be the greatest witness of all to a dying world.
- f) Unity is so critical that it was Y’shua’s final prayer at the dinner table the night He was betrayed.
 - 1) *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that **they all may be one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, **that the world may believe that You sent Me**. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one: {23} I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the***

world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”” John 17:20-23 NKJV

- g) Elsewhere Paul called it the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 - 1) *“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called in **one hope** of your calling; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God** and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*
Ephesians 4:1-6 NKJV
- h) The admonition was to be perfectly joined together in the same mind.
 - 1) *“Finally, all of you **be of one mind**, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called*

to this, that you may inherit a blessing.” I Peter 3:8-9 NKJV

- 2) *“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be **perfectly joined together in the same mind** and in the same judgment.” I Corinthians 1:10 NKJV*
- 3) *“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, **be of one mind**, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” II Corinthians 13:11 NKJV*
- 4) *“**Be of the same mind toward one another.** Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.” Romans 12:16 NKJV*
- 5) *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, **being of one accord, of one mind.**” Philippians 2:1-2 NKJV*

- i) It should be as if we live together in one household, under one budget, as one new person who was created according to God.
- 1) *“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, **but they had all things in common.**” Acts 4:32 NKJV*
 - 2) *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and {23} **be renewed in the spirit of your mind,** and that*

*you put on the **new man which was created according to God**, in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:17-24 NKJV*

- j) This can only happen when we understand God’s love and freely express that love to one another. Loving one another is the literal demonstration of God’s perfection.
 - 1) *“**bearing with one another, and forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, **which is the bond of perfection.**” Colossians 3:13-14 NKJV*
 - 2) *“By this all will **know that you are My disciples**, if you have **love for one another.**” John 13:35 NKJV*
- k) As the Psalmist sings...
 - 1) *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren **to dwell together in unity!**” Psalms 133:1 NKJV*

C. Differing Gifts

- (1) Practical Living Instructions

(a) We have entered into some of Paul's best practical living instructions, and he does so whilst he practices, on us, his own gift of exhortation. Christianity cannot only be lived between the ears, or in the clouds; we are also destined to bring heaven to earth (Matthew 6:10), and that takes reflecting heaven in everything we do, every day.

1. "Having then **gifts differing according to the grace** that is given to us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or **ministry**, let us use it in our ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching; he who **exhorts**, in exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:6-8
NKJV

2. We previously learned that "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:29)

a) Paul calls them gifts here, and I believe he does so because they are empowered by grace, which is the ultimate gift from Yahweh.

b) This is all part of God's unalterable prophetic plan for mankind. He has installed within you a unique nature, a set of gifts and talents designed specially

for you as an individual and for you to discover, activate, and utilize in your calling as one, but significant, cell in the whole body of Christ.

- c) You are both an infinitesimally small piece and an indispensably important part of the whole.
- d) Nothing you can do can deny that reality; that is the irrevocable part. Although, you can certainly ignore your job description and neglect your duties.

3. Two things are most significant here:

- a) First is that each of us has different gifts.
- b) The second is to recognize that all our gifts are empowered by God's grace.
- c) It makes sense to begin with how grace functions and then to describe the seven different gifts Paul mentions.

4. **Grace:** the supernatural power of God that is available in your life, the same power He use to raise Christ from the grave.

- a) Grace is God's supernatural power, and when you access that grace we might call it empowerment.
- b) Your experience with God's grace began, as it did for every Christian, with God's use of His power to

soften or transform your heart to such a degree that you would have the faith to invite a born-again encounter with Christ.

- 1) That is why the Scriptures say, *“For by **grace you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”* Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV
- c) But of course, you can’t just sit on that faith; you have to put it into practice. And that is precisely how you gain ongoing access to God’s grace. It just may be the most powerful force in the universe.
 - 1) *“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, **add to your faith** virtue, to virtue knowledge,”* II Peter 1:5 NKJV
 - 2) *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand**, and*

*rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans
5:1-2 NKJV*

d) Yahweh’s divine power that raised Christ from the grave also empowers your godly living and allows you to share it with others.

1) *“and what is the **exceeding greatness of His power toward us** who believe, according to **the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead** and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,” Ephesians 1:19-20 NKJV*

2) *“**Grace** and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as **His divine power has given to us** all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,” II Peter 1:2-3 NKJV*

3) *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, **that it may impart grace to the hearers.**” Ephesians 4:29 NKJV*

5. **Gifts:** Paul says, “Access that power (personally) and put it to good use (God use) for the betterment of the

body of Christ (corporately).” The different gifts Paul emphasizes here are:

- a) **Prophecy:** to enforce God’s revealed truth in proportion to your faith.
 - b) **Ministry:** to devote yourself to serving.
 - c) **Teaching:** to commit yourself to direct, admonish, and instruct.
 - d) **Exhortation:** to be an encouragement, to invite people deeper and invoke, even provoke, them to walk worthy of their calling.
 - e) **Giving:** to be generous, to make sincere contributions with no strings attached.
 - f) **Leadership:** to lead with passion and diligence, to practice what you teach with utter enthusiasm.
 - g) **Mercy:** to care for others with kindness, compassion and with a cheerful heart.
 - 1) Whatever your gifts or callings, they are indisputable and undeniable.
 - 2) So get to it; discover and practice them! And put God’s grace into full effect in your life!
- (2) Paul’s sentiments from his first letter to the Corinthians magnify the idea of what some of these irrevocable gifts and callings look like.

- (a) Think of them as things that accompany salvation...
1. “But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, **yes, things that accompany salvation**, though we speak in this manner.” Hebrews 6:9 NKJV
 2. What accompanies being born again that is MORE than being born again?
 - a) See the promises in II Peter 1:1-11
 - 1) Abundant Grace
 - 2) Abundant Peace
 - 3) Divine Power
 - 4) Everything you need for a Godly life.
 - 5) Divine nature
 - 6) Escape Corruption caused by evil desires
 - 7) Not Nearsighted or Blind
 - 8) Fruitful and Productive
 - 9) Never Stumble
 - 10) Rich welcome into the Kingdom
- (b) Here in I Corinthians we see the gifts Paul introduces as spiritual gifts—these too *“accompany salvation.”*
1. “**Now concerning spiritual gifts**, brethren, **I do not want you to be ignorant**: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however

you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. **There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God** who works all in all. But the **manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:** for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. **For as the body is one and has many members,** but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to

drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? **But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.** And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, much rather, those members of **the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor;** and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same

care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. **And God has appointed these in the church:** first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? **But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.**" I Corinthians 12:1-31 NKJV

2. He insists that we must be educated on such things.
 - a) He writes that there are varieties of gifts that come from the one Spirit, and it is God who decides who gets what.
 - b) We are to manifest the gifts of the Spirit for specific ministry purposes and to govern every activity of our lives, and to do so for the benefit of others.
3. Paul then lists some of these Spiritual gifts:
 - a) wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy,

distinguishing of spirits, kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

- b) He emphasizes that it is God alone who assigns these gifts as He pleases. Then Paul specifies the critical importance for each of us to understand that we are an essential part of the Body of Christ.
 - c) He compares those gifts to human body parts. And maybe most consequential is that we are to walk in unity and learn that each body part has equal significance.
 - d) And that is true no matter if Paul's analogies utilize bloodlines, social status, or human body parts to make his point.
4. We all need each other to be the fully functioning healthy Body of Christ.
- a) In other words, a pinky toe is equally as important as the brain.
 - b) As a matter of fact, because some parts seem naturally less significant, the parts that have less obvious roles God showers with honor because those with obvious significance need no such acknowledgment.

c) This equals the playing field. And hear this, because we are one body, if one part suffers, we all suffer!

5. Paul concludes his teaching on gifts by naming how some of these gifts operate in various church functions.

a) Of course this is not a conclusive list: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helps, administrations, and tongues.

b) Your job remains to discover your unique gifts and calling and then to walk in them to the best of your ability, empowered by the Holy Spirit, of course.

(3) Gifts NOT Offices

(a) It would also be good to note here that the gift does not confer an office or title. For instance, you are not a prophet because you have the gift of prophecy.

1. **“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.** Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.” (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above

all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) **And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,** for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:7-12 NKJV

2. The gifts of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).
 - a) You can't give them back, and you are required to manage them well.
 - 1) *“It is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”* I Corinthians 4:2 NKJV
 - b) So, if you are called to a certain of gift “according to your faith,” then you must exercise it faithfully. And do so with the same commitment as a sacrificed animal, all-in!
 - 1) *“...present your bodies **a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is **your reasonable service**.”* Romans 12:1 NKJV

Summary: REASONABLE & PERFECT

1. The Expectation

A. Nothing Extraordinary

- (1) A Living Sacrifice

- (a) I “beseech you!” I fervently and ardently beg you! It’s urgent you get this!
 - 1. Paul shifts his attention and his message begins to hone in on the personal responsibility assigned to each one of us to navigate a life in the faith.
 - a) It is not a casual request he is making; his admonition is urgent, his tone fervent.
 - b) You’ve been given an unprecedented opportunity. You deserved death and were made alive in Christ; now, what are you going to do about it?
 - 2. Paul says, “I have some direction for you. This is how you should live the rest of your life for the Lord.”
 - a) Before you can wrap your mind around the imagery Paul insinuates, you must first acknowledge his pedigree.
 - b) He is a Jewish Torah scholar, the top student trained at the feet of Gamaliel, the most renowned Torah teacher of the day.
 - 1) Paul is an expert in the Law (Torah) and Yahweh chose this Hebrew, tribe of Benjamin, legal scholar to be the disseminator of Christian Doctrine, might we even say, “the formulator” of Christian Doctrine.

3. So, when Paul uses the imagery of a sacrifice to suggest how you might live your life as a disciple of Christ, you must know what that means to him.
 - a) If it's an animal sacrifice you must imagine that the neck of the living sacrificial animal is slit; its blood is drained and spilled on the altar (the life is in the blood, Leviticus 17:11), and its body disemboweled (eviscerated) and chopped into pieces.
 - b) Then the parts are burned in the flames until there is nothing left but ashes, a complete consumption of the animal—what Paul recognizes as a burnt offering (The Law of Burnt Offerings is in Leviticus 1:1-17).
 - 1) Unlike other offerings, where the priest and sometimes the worshiper himself would share a portion of the sacrifice, the burnt offering was to be completely consumed by fire on the altar. It was an offering given in its entirety to the Lord, and represented complete devotion to God.
 - 2) The Hebrew word for “burnt offering” actually means to “ascend,” literally to “go up in

smoke.” The smoke from the sacrifice ascended to God.

- c) The other type of sacrifice that imposes thoughts that a life in Christ means that none of the old you remains is the drink offering.
 - d) Picture a cup of wine being tossed into an inferno and how it becomes nothing but vapor in an instant—and how that vapor dissipates into the atmosphere in mere moments.
 - 1) In Genesis 35:14, when Jacob set up the pillar for worship at Bethel, he consecrated it by “pouring out a drink offering on it.”
 - 2) There was a similar ritual commanded in the Law: in Exodus 29, it says the priests were to offer a “drink offering” of a hin of wine along with the lamb of the burnt offering.
 - e) Paul saw his life as drink offering in His final letter before His execution (martyrdom).
4. These are the images you must hold in your heart when Paul admonishes you to become a living sacrifice.

- a) While you yet live, live a life that is dedicated to the Lord to such a degree that none of the old you remains.
 - b) Like a sacrificial animal; there can be only one option—all in!
5. Of that magnitude of sacrifice, this is what Paul considers.
- a) It is what truly separates you for God. Paul calls it holy. Holy means that it is set-apart, different from what everyone else is doing. As a Christian, you better look different from the world.
 - b) It is what God will happily receive from you. It is what he says it is acceptable.
 - c) And most telling—it is nothing extraordinary in God’s eyes. It is your reasonable service to Yahweh.
 - d) It means that 100% all in, to totally sacrifice everything for God, like a bled, chopped up, burned on the altar dead animal, is nothing extraordinary in God’s eyes. It’s just...reasonable.
 - e) It is nothing more than your expected and adequate ministry to which you donate your entire life, hence a “living sacrifice!”

- f) The sacrificed animal is 100% dead, all-in dead; it's not a lukewarm halfway-in-type dead. Live your life in Christ like you are all-in, 100% dead, committed like your life is not your own anymore. You are dead to yourself and alive for Him alone. Jesus said it like this;
- g) This is how you live a set-apart life in the faith.
 - 1) And let's agree that it is impossible without God's grace.
 - 2) Acknowledging God minimizes the risk of this becoming an exercise in self-righteousness.

B. Prophetic Outtake

- (1) When you realize the true price He paid for your salvation, you will understand why offering your life to Him as a living sacrifice is merely reasonable.
 - (a) What it cost Y'shua was much more than your human mind can fathom.
 - 1. When you have some idea of the magnitude of what it cost Him, maybe you can better appreciate that surrendering your whole life for Him in return is just a speck compared to what He surrendered for you.
 - (b) Understanding the Law of the The Hebrew Servant. It's about a final permanent choice!

1. A Hebrew servant is in bondage for six years and is then permitted to go out for free without cost in the seventh year. **But there are some important stipulations:**
 - a) If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself.
 - b) If he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.
 - c) If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, **and he shall go out alone.**
 - d) But, if the servant loves his master, wife, and children, he can chose to stay a servant [**and keep his wife and children**].
 - e) If the slave makes a decision to stay, **it is a permanent decision** and it is witnessed by the judges and consummated with a piercing.
2. What and who does this sound like?
 - a) A hebrew servant has the option to go free, but He chooses instead to stay, so He can keep the bride He was given while in slavery!

- b) Because He has chosen to stay, his master shall bring Him to the judges. Then he shall bring Him for a piercing and He shall serve his master forever.
 - c) The servant can volunteer to be a slave forever because He loves his Master and his BRIDE! A slave who chooses to stay even when He could go Free gets pierced and is called a BONDSERVANT!
- (c) Not only did He willingly surrender His life as a man, but it is critical you acknowledge what He had to first surrender to become a man and become a bondservant.
- 1. He left His position with the Father and His form which was Spirit. Then, He made a permanent decision that would prevent Him from ever returning to that position and form.
 - a) That portion of His sacrifice dwarfs the mere surrender of His human life.
- (d) Messiah as a Bondservant: Let this mind of Christ be in you... a bondservant who volunteered to give His life FOREVER, never again able to go "FREE"! When?
- 1. Gethsemane was the moment of truth—bondservant and a piercing or freedom?

- a) He could go free and lose His bride [*take this cup from me*], or remain captive, be pierced, and KEEP HIS BRIDE FOREVER! The bride given to Him during His Slavery! [*not my will but yours be done*]
- (e) He chose to stay and that is the price He paid; the true price of your salvation!

C. God's Perfect Will

(1) Nobody does it better.

(a) Paul packs mounds of theology into once sentence.

1. It's not justice to simply gloss over this in the eight seconds it takes to read.

a) The world, the transformation of the mind, and the perfect will of God, all wrapped in one. Let's separate it into its component parts.

2. The world:

a) There are two worlds to counterbalance, one Christ came to save, the other to condemn. One world is everlasting; He loves it and died for it. The other is passing away; don't love it. Don't comport according to its values and standards, as it is only filled with lust and pride.

3. The transformation of the mind:

- a) You are here on earth for one ultimate purpose, to grow into the fullness, stature, and image of Christ.
- b) The metamorphosis begins in your mind as old thoughts dissolve, giving room to a way of thinking that mimics the mind of Christ.
- c) It's an ongoing process that requires taking every thought captive and bringing it into submission to the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. That is what it means to renew your mind daily.
- d) The type of transformation Paul is referring to comes from Greek word from which we derive "metamorphosis."
 - 1) The word picture for this is caterpillar-to-butterfly type transformation.
 - 2) The resultant creature has ZERO resemblance to its predecessor.
 - 3) That is the type of transformation Paul is describing.
 - 4) That is what is available to you if you are willing to "renew your mind" daily.
- e) When I think of the transformation Paul is talking about think of the Mount of Transfiguration.

- 1) The Greek word used here in Matthew 17:2, transfigured, is the same word used by Paul in Romans 12:2, transformed.
 - f) That is the type of transformation Paul is declaring for you, a face shining like the sun (Son).
 - g) Then we have the renewed mind.
4. The perfect will of God:
- a) What is God's will? That might be the quintessential question for the ages. To know His will you must know His heart on every matter. Begin with being a student of His written Word; even experts need ongoing instruction in His mysterious ways. Continue by developing a keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit; learn what God's voice sounds like and how He speaks to you. Know that His choice is always the way of purity and holiness. And above all, be willing to submit to His guidance and direction no matter where it leads you. It sounds something like this; "Not my will, but Your will be done."
 - b) Know his will by being instructed by the law...
 - 1) You and Yahweh and His Word, day and night, all the days of your life! And what kind of mind

transformation can you look forward to? *“But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16)* Drown yourself day and night in His presence and in His word, and **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**; it’s the only way.

- c) Your Sanctification
- d) His will not your will...

Summary: GRACE IN ACTION

2. Two Faiths

A. The Gift and the Practice

(1) Don’t get haughty!

(a) A Measure of Faith

1. Here is the equation.

- a) Sacrifice your entire life for God and accept that it is merely reasonable to do so.
- b) And while you are at it, don’t conclude you are the greatest thing since sliced bread because you gave it all up for God.
- c) You could only do any of it because of His grace, so remain level-headed about your accomplishments for the Lord.

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- h) The admonition was to be perfectly joined together in the same mind.
- i) It should be as if we live together in one household, under one budget, as one new person who was created according to God.
- j) This can only happen when we understand God's love and freely express that love to one another. Loving one another is the literal demonstration of God's perfection.

k) As the Psalmist sings...

C. Differing Gifts

(1) Practical Living Instructions

(a) We have entered into some of Paul's best practical living instructions, and he does so whilst he practices, on us, his own gift of exhortation. Christianity cannot only be lived between the ears, or in the clouds; we are also destined to bring heaven to earth (Matthew 6:10), and that takes reflecting heaven in everything we do, every day.

1. We previously learned that "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:29)

a) Paul calls them gifts here, and I believe he does so because they are empowered by grace, which is the ultimate gift from Yahweh.

b) This is all part of God's unalterable prophetic plan for mankind. He has installed within you a unique nature, a set of gifts and talents designed specially for you as an individual and for you to discover, activate, and utilize in your calling as one, but significant, cell in the whole body of Christ.

c) You are both an infinitesimally small piece and an indispensably important part of the whole.

- d) Nothing you can do can deny that reality; that is the irrevocable part. Although, you can certainly ignore your job description and neglect your duties.
2. Two things are most significant here:
- a) First is that each of us has different gifts.
 - b) The second is to recognize that all our gifts are empowered by God's grace.
 - c) It makes sense to begin with how grace functions and then to describe the seven different gifts Paul mentions.
3. **Grace:** the supernatural power of God that is available in your life, the same power He use to raise Christ from the grave.
- a) Grace is God's supernatural power, and when you access that grace we might call it empowerment.
 - b) Your experience with God's grace began, as it did for every Christian, with God's use of His power to soften or transform your heart to such a degree that you would have the faith to invite a born-again encounter with Christ.
 - c) But of course, you can't just sit on that faith; you have to put it into practice. And that is precisely

how you gain ongoing access to God's grace. It just may be the most powerful force in the universe.

- d) Yahweh's divine power that raised Christ from the grave also empowers your godly living and allows you to share it with others.
4. **Gifts:** Paul says, "Access that power (personally) and put it to good use (God use) for the betterment of the body of Christ (corporately)." The different gifts Paul emphasizes here are:
- a) **Prophecy:** to enforce God's revealed truth in proportion to your faith.
 - b) **Ministry:** to devote yourself to serving.
 - c) **Teaching:** to commit yourself to direct, admonish, and instruct.
 - d) **Exhortation:** to be an encouragement, to invite people deeper and invoke, even provoke, them to walk worthy of their calling.
 - e) **Giving:** to be generous, to make sincere contributions with no strings attached.
 - f) **Leadership:** to lead with passion and diligence, to practice what you teach with utter enthusiasm.

- g) **Mercy:** to care for others with kindness, compassion and with a cheerful heart.
 - 1) Whatever your gifts or callings, they are indisputable and undeniable.
 - 2) So get to it; discover and practice them! And put God's grace into full effect in your life!
- (2) Paul's sentiments from his first letter to the Corinthians magnify the idea of what some of these irrevocable gifts and callings look like.
 - (a) Think of them as things that accompany salvation...
 - 1. What accompanies being born again that is MORE than being born again? (See the promises in II Peter 1:1-11)
 - a) Abundant Grace
 - b) Abundant Peace
 - c) Divine Power
 - d) Everything you need for a Godly life.
 - e) Divine nature
 - f) Escape Corruption caused by evil desires
 - g) Not Nearsighted or Blind
 - h) Fruitful and Productive
 - i) Never Stumble
 - j) Rich welcome into the Kingdom

- (b) Here in I Corinthians we see the gifts Paul introduces as spiritual gifts—these too “*accompany salvation.*”
1. He insists that we must be educated on such things.
 - a) He writes that there are varieties of gifts that come from the one Spirit, and it is God who decides who gets what.
 - b) We are to manifest the gifts of the Spirit for specific ministry purposes and to govern every activity of our lives, and to do so for the benefit of others.
 2. Paul then lists some of these Spiritual gifts:
 - a) wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing of spirits, kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.
 - b) He emphasizes that it is God alone who assigns these gifts as He pleases. Then Paul specifies the critical importance for each of us to understand that we are an essential part of the Body of Christ.
 - c) He compares those gifts to human body parts. And maybe most consequential is that we are to walk in unity and learn that each body part has equal significance.

- d) And that is true no matter if Paul's analogies utilize bloodlines, social status, or human body parts to make his point.
3. We all need each other to be the fully functioning healthy Body of Christ.
- a) In other words, a pinky toe is equally as important as the brain.
 - b) As a matter of fact, because some parts seem naturally less significant, the parts that have less obvious roles God showers with honor because those with obvious significance need no such acknowledgment.
 - c) This equals the playing field. And hear this, because we are one body, if one part suffers, we all suffer!
4. Paul concludes his teaching on gifts by naming how some of these gifts operate in various church functions.
- a) Of course this is not a conclusive list: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helps, administrations, and tongues.

b) Your job remains to discover your unique gifts and calling and then to walk in them to the best of your ability, empowered by the Holy Spirit, of course.

(3) Gifts NOT Offices

(a) It would also be good to note here that the gift does not confer an office or title. For instance, you are not a prophet because you have the gift of prophecy.

1. The gifts of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). You can't give them back, and you are required to manage them well.
2. So, if you are called to a certain of gift "according to your faith," then you must exercise it faithfully. And do so with the same commitment as a sacrificed animal, all-in!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1 NKJV

- A. What does it mean to present your body as a living sacrifice?
- B. What does it mean that doing so is nothing extraordinary?
- C. Use the burnt offering and the drink offering as imagery for going all-in God. (See: Leviticus 1:1-17: II Timothy 4:6-8)

2. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

- A. Describe the two different worlds. (See: John 3:16-17; 15:18-19; 17:6-19; I John 2:15-17)
- B. What does it mean to be transformed and to renew your mind? (See: Matthew 17:1-4; Ephesians 4:12-13; II Corinthians 5:17; I Corinthians 2:16; II Corinthians 10:4-6)
- C. What is the perfect will of God? (See: Romans 2:17-18; Psalms 1:1-2; Matthew 13:52; I Thessalonians 4:3-4 and Luke 22:41-42)

3. “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Romans 12:3 NKJV

- A. Support this verse using Proverbs 16:18 and Ephesians 2:8.

4. “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” Romans 12:4-5 NKJV

- A. What does it mean to be one unified Body of Christ? (See: John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:1-6; I Peter 3:8-9; I Corinthians 1:10; II Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 2:1-2; Romans 12:16;

Acts 4:32; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13-14; John 13:35;
Psalms 133:1)

5. “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” Romans 12:6-8 NKJV

- A. What is the role of grace in God’s gifts? (See Ephesians 2:8-10; 1:19-20; 4:29; II Peter 1:2-5; Romans 5:1-2)
- B. Write an essay to demonstrate how God assigns and uses various gifts. (Use I Corinthians 12:1-31)
- C. Distinguish gifts from offices using Ephesians 4:7-12.