

Romans, Part 32

God wants us to present our bodies to Him for service. This is not a new or unusual idea that was introduced for the church. Throughout the Bible, God called and equipped people to do acts of service. Some of the service they rendered to God preserved life on earth. God told Noah to build an ark and gave him the blueprint and the ability to accomplish the task, (Genesis 6:18). Noah and his family entered the ark with all kinds of living things to keep them alive. **Genesis 6:22 CEV** “Noah did everything the Lord told him to do.” When God told Moses to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness, he was given plans for the construction and then God called and equipped Bezalel to accomplish God’s plan.

Exodus 35:30-33 NIV Then Moses said to the Israelites, “See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts— to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship.

The Spirit of God gave Bezalel the skill, ability, and knowledge to do this work. In addition to that, God gave special abilities and gifts for service to the Levites, Priests, and worshipers. God has always done that. When He calls us into the body of Christ, He always equips us for the assignment He places upon us. He makes certain plans and requirements and then He gives the gifts, talent, wisdom, knowledge and ability to do what He has required.

God called twelve Judges in Israel, several kings, and many prophets.

The twelve judges were men and women that God equipped and sent to deliver Israel from their enemies. Many of them considered their personal standing and stature inadequate to accomplish God’s plan. Several of Israel’s judges were given special boldness and strength to do a single act of defense or deliverance from their enemies. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, Caleb’s younger brother and he judged Israel for 40 years, (Judges 3:9-11). Ehud was strengthened to defeat Eglon of Moab, (Judges 3:14-30). Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad, (Judges 3:31). Deborah prophesied and led the armies of Israel into victory in battle, (Judges 4:5-5:31). Gideon was strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord to defeat the Midianites and destroy the altar of Baal, (Judges 6:11-8:35). Not much is said of six of the judges of Israel — Tola (Judges 10:1-2), Jair (Judges 10:3-5), Jephthah (Judges 10:6-12:7), Ibzan (Judges 12:8-10), Elon (Judges 12:11-12), and Abdon (Judges 12:13-15). Samson was the last of the twelve judges that God raised up to deliver Israel and he was given special strength to deliver from the hand of the Philistines. Not much is said about several of these people. Many of them did not appear to be qualified to accomplish the task God set before them, but God used them and equipped them to defeat their enemies.

After the judges, God raised up kings in Israel.

When God called Saul to be the first king of Israel, he did not feel qualified for the

task, but the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and turned him into a different man. David felt that he was not qualified when Samuel anointed him to be king in the place of Saul, but the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

Along with the kings of Israel, God called and equipped many prophets who spoke to God's people by the Spirit of the Lord.

Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah and Elisha and Huldah are but a few of the prophets mentioned from Genesis through Psalms. The Bible consists of several books that were written by sixteen prophets of old. Four of these were major contributors and twelve were considered minor prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos and many others were pulled out of obscurity into service for God.

Regardless of their calling, God equipped individuals for the work He set before them.

When we step over into the New Testament, God continued calling, equipping and using individuals who surrender and submit to Him.

It is easy to focus on the disciples and apostles of the church. Jesus called them from among the crowds and made them an extension of His ministry to the world. Beyond the twelve and the seventy, God has chosen believers to present their bodies for service.

Romans 12:1 AMP I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.

Romans 12:2 AMP Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

God wants to use each of us.

In His sovereign design, God purposed to redeem us, call us into intimate fellowship with Himself, and use us for His service.

God wants to use our bodies in His service.

He wants to be the Shepherd, Caretaker, Protector, Healer, Provider, and Lord of our lives. God wants to do something profitable with our lives.

In Romans 12, after we make a decisive dedication of our bodies to God, He gives us gifts for service.

God's plan in verse one is realized and demonstrated in the remainder of Romans. God does not intend to accept the free will sacrifice of our bodies and leave us with an unrealized change and equipment. When we surrender our bodies to God by a

decisive dedication, our mind and spirit will realize the change. There is a transformation and equipping that coincides with that dedication. Remember what He did with Moses who said he was slow of speech and inadequate for the task. God is prepared to radically change us and use us for His glory. He will take everything we are and prepare us for Himself.

Look at the practical application of that transformation.

God wants to affect a change in our entire physical, mental, and spiritual being. Christ's salvation provides the possibilities of this change. This transformation will affect every aspect of who we are and what we do. This change makes us God's children and heirs, and provides the equipping, enabling and mind of God's Spirit to do the work of His calling.

Consider this throughout the Bible.

When the Lord chose Bezalel son of Uri to do the vessels of bronze, silver and gold, the Spirit of the Lord equipped him with the ability to do it. That same thing happened with everyone God chose. David said he was the least in his family and his family was the smallest one in Israel.

When God calls, He equips by the power of His Spirit.

Before God will transform our spirit, soul, and body, we must surrender to Him. This is an authority issue. God waits for us to become submissive to Him and His will. He is ready to transform us into the person He can use. God is ready to give us new life. He is ready to bring us out of the weakness of our past and conform and transform us to the image of Christ. He will equip us with the gifts and power of His Spirit.

There is a progression in this transformation.

First, God saves us, and then He transforms us.

Romans 12:2 AMP Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but **BE TRANSFORMED (CHANGED) BY THE [ENTIRE] RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND [BY ITS NEW IDEALS AND ITS NEW ATTITUDE]**, so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

How can God change the way we think?

This is part of our dedication to God. This requires more than reading the Bible. We can read the Bible without it having any impact on our lives. We can pray and not surrender to His authority. We can go to church and not be changed. The Holy Spirit can personally speak to us and tell us what we should do, and we refuse to be changed.

To be changed we must surrender to God's authority over our body, mind, and spirit.

Acts 16:31 AMP Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ [give yourself up to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping] and you will be

saved, [and this applies both to] you and your household as well.

We have to make this surrender.

This “decisive dedication” is the presentation of body, mind, and will to God once for all and the continued daily surrender to Him and His will. Every day we must yield our body, mind and will to Him and recognize and realize God’s authority over us. This process involves renewing our mind by the Word and it requires daily surrendering our will through prayer and obedience to God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Throughout Biblical history, God successfully used and equipped individuals who submitted to His Lordship over their lives.

We can achieve God’s plan for our lives by doing God’s will God’s way. God knows our limitations and strengths but He also has the might, strength, wisdom and knowledge to accomplish His plan. God’s plan for our future is greater than our plan.

Jeremiah 29:11 AMP For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

God wants to be the Lord of our lives.

God is thinking about the plan He has for you and your future and He has all of the details worked out. We must come to trust Him with the details of our lives. We should not be careless or foolish in our business or work. It is wise to plan our work and work our plan, but we must not become so rooted in our plan that we resist God’s plan and authority. We must learn obedience and dependence on Christ.

Listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ said about this.

John 5:30 NLT But I do nothing without consulting the Father. I judge as I am told. And my judgment is absolutely just, because it is according to the will of God who sent me; it is not merely my own.

Jesus did nothing without consulting the Father. He followed the will of the Father in every decision. Jesus told the people: “What you see Me doing is what I see the Father doing.” “What you hear Me saying is what I hear the Father saying.” “I do not speak on My Own authority; I speak on the authority of the Father.”

Proverbs 3:5-7 NIV Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

We must be convinced that God’s will and plan for our life is good and acceptable and perfect.

If we want to grow up in the Lord, we must learn to seek God’s will and plan, and then we must learn to function in His strength. It is difficult getting over our deficits

and the way we were. We must be convinced that what is good, acceptable, and perfect in God's sight is good, acceptable, and perfect for us.

When we become transformed into Christ's image and likeness, our entire life will be impacted.

This is why the next 19 verses depicts the impact of the Spirit-controlled life and what happens when He takes us up and gives supernatural gifts. When our thinking is set straight, God is free to begin using us with the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit.

He gives gifts according to His will.

God knows what is needed in the church and in our lives. He has tempered the church body to work together and gives gifts and talents so that the whole body is blessed and functions.

Romans 12:3 NIV84 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Romans 12:4-5 NIV84 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:6-7 NIV84 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

Romans 12:8 NIV84 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

This is God working within us.

Take note throughout the Bible, God does not call us out because we are so great. He just looks for people that are willing to surrender to His authority. Then, God fills them with His power and Holy Spirit and uses them to achieve His purpose.

Zechariah 4:6 NIV84 The Lord told Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord Almighty."