

## 4. Imperatives of Sanctification in Romans pt2

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In a word, your duty to the Spirit is to consider yourself to be united to Christ, forbid sin's reign over you, and present yourself to God as a servant of righteousness. These three things are found in the Romans 6.11-14. They are core duties of sanctification.

### I. Consider your union with Christ

Count yourself dead to sin, alive to God, freed from sin's bondage, and free for righteousness.

### II. Forbid sin's reign in your life

Rom 6.12: **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.** Sin can only "make you obey" the passions of your mortal body if you let it reign. You let it reign when you let the weeds of sin grow in your spiritual garden. When it crops up, cut it down. Although sin strikes blows like a boxer, do not give in, but fight on. Be the runner that throws off all the hindering weights. Why do this? You lay them aside to run all, to run swiftly and efficiently; to run with vigor, to serve with delight in the law of God (Rom. 7:22). So, if you have time to drink from a brook, do so as warriors, with heads up ready to do battle.

Never consider your work of contending with sin at an end by simply letting things be. Don't be careless after times of great victory and blessing; valleys often follow mountain tops. Fight with the sin that easily besets you. Avoid things that take you down the wrong path: **Do not make provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts** (Rom. 13:14). Don't be slothful. Do not grow weary in doing good; to give up is to give sin a place of rule. Pray and faint not. Look unto Jesus the author and finisher of your faith; wait for Him to renew your strength (Isa. 40:31, **they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint**). With your *eyes fixed on Him* you will find persevering strength: **lay aside...sin which clings...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,<sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.<sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted** (Heb 12.1-3).

### III. Present yourself to God

#### A. Rom 6:13

**Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.** Present means "to give over to" "to place at the service of." "Your members" refers to the various parts of the physical body that is not one member but many including eye, ear, foot, hand, and nose (1 Cor 12.12-18). "Yourself" widens to the whole person, body and soul. So, the duty is nuanced and thereby emphasized by saying the same thing in different ways: a) give your self, what you are in the wholeness of your person, to God, and b) give the members of your body to God. In other words, give yourself and all that you are in the body away to the Lord to be His servant forever. Make this presentation in prayer as in the song we sang earlier: take my life, moments, hands, feet, voice, lips, gold, intellect, will, heart, love, my very self. This is a commitment to repeat often in various contexts of your life.

Basis of the presentation: **as those who have been brought from death to life.** This is an indicative, you are alive from spiritual death, set free by the power of resurrection life. Here is encouragement and motivation; you need to know it, ponder it, absorb it in detail into your blood stream.

Goal of the presentation: **as instruments for righteousness**. Present yourself and your very bodies to God for His use in righteous actions, not to sin as a master, but to God as master of all that you do. Pray this prayer, pray it often and in earnest: "Lord I belong to you. I am yours, I am not my own. I give myself away to you for obedience." Acknowledging that you are alive from death and have been freed from an awful bondage, submit yourself to God as your King; do this gladly and adoringly. In contrast with our contemporary sexual culture, present your hunger for sex, your appetite for material things, and all your desires to God *for holiness* (Rom 6.19: **as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification**). Thus, marital intimacy has sanctity; the use of your mind is a matter of holy serving. Give your intellect, will, your drives and hungers, your mind, hands, legs and feet to the Lord Jesus Christ to serve Him in all things. Without question then, for this work of holiness, we need the guide lines of God's word. Some idea of what that means can be found in the imperative clusters of Romans 12-16.

## **B. Romans 12-16**

### **1. The prism of 12.1-2**

#### **a. Dedication (presentation)**

One way to connect the duty of presentation (Rom 6.13) to the imperatives of chapters 12-16 is through the prism of 12.1: **I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship**. Note the indicative that grounds the presentation of your bodies to God: **by the mercies of God** (as those brought from death, 6.13). It is not "give yourself to physical death or give your body to be burned." You are to present you bodies as sacrifices, yes, but the sacrifice of your body is a living sacrifice for living a holy life acceptable to God: **as instruments for righteousness** (Rom 6.13), **as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification** (6.19). This is your spiritual, that is, reasonable worship and it means "the use of your body is to be characterized by conscious intelligent, consecrated devotion" (Murray, *Romans II*, 112). Thus, worship that is acceptable to God flows "from the fact that it enlists our mind, our reason, our intellect. It is rational in contrast with what is mechanical and automatic" (Murray). The body is to be disciplined thoughtfully for holiness of life and worship. Obviously, laziness, sleepiness, and sloth in worship flow against the current of sanctification.

#### **b. Transformation**

**12.2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold. Instead, be transformed; give yourself over to (present yourself to) a transformation of your thinking, to change from the inside out. How do you do this? By testing. Clear and critical thinking lead to a transformed outlook. This involves testing by which you sharpen your ability to discern distinctions and definitions (Phil 1.9-11). In turn, you will learn, in a practical and seasoned way, the holy will of God by which to guide your life of devotion to God and to righteousness. Consider how the principles of open-minded humility apply to the testing process in huge way and to sanctification big time!

12.1-2 are like hinges on the door to many sanctifying duties that Paul will put before us in the final chapters of the book of Romans, duties that unpack the three core imperatives.