

# Living a Dedicated Christian Life (Part 2)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] beloved the joy and highlight of my week and my life is coming before you to preach the gospel i love preaching to you i love being with you and thank you oh i'll tell you you are such an encouragement to me as i prepare through the week and think of your faces eagerly looking up here taking notes taking in the truth as i stand before you and look into your eyes to bring the gospel to you as weak a servant as i am in this this is something you realize that is way too much for me and it's by grace through faith that i've called to do it but i recognize the reality that i'm doing something that if it were not for the blood of the lord jesus christ it would be absolutely meaningless and so we rejoice in that together and i want you to know how proud i am of you as your pastor and your friend that you come each sunday and share in the trust and truth of the lord jesus together as a family so thank you for letting me preach the word to you and thank you for supporting this church thank you for making what we do here together possible you give financially make this possible you show up you pray you support you fellowship you minister and in all of those ways god is exalted jesus is exalted and we know him as our treasure don't we so thank you beloved well let me get right to it in romans chapter 12 we'll read the text in just a moment living a dedicated christian life part two is what we're talking about we're continuing from our time last sunday last lord's day living a dedicated christian life now folks last sunday we defined dedicated this way it means wholly committed to something set apart or reserved for a specific use or purpose boy that is a great definition of you as a child of god someone saved born again redeemed by the blood of the lord you have been set apart by god himself for a special unique purpose on this earth and you are called to be wholly committed to almighty god paul in the passage we'll read in just a moment is talking about our worship if there's anything that defines you and i as human beings whether we're born again in christ or not it's you have been made a worshiper so you were worshiping long before you ever came to jesus you were born worshiping as soon as you could show the loyalty of your heart you showed it wah i'm hungry wah i need my diaper changed right this these are ways that we display the worship of our heart and what we treasure that's what paul's talking about he's speaking about the commitment the loyalty the devotion which our hearts show to what we treasure most in this life in any given moment because at one moment we can profess and know and even confess in our heart jesus is lord and we want to live for the lord and then through the circumstances and situations of life as we face the world the flesh and the devil we find ourselves in a moment of sin and in that moment we are not treasuring jesus above all things are we this is what we strive against together beloved this is why we come together gather together as god's people to be reminded of these truths and that we should seek him not just solutions to our

problems not just uh answers to the issues that we face in our life not just to receive guidance those are all great things we are called as worshipers to seek a person jesus christ that is what we're all about as christians now paul is talking about how god sets you and i apart for the specific purpose of serving him loving him for making the most of your life for the kingdom of god on this earth not the kingdom of jeff not the kingdom of you but the kingdom of almighty god on this earth and that kingdom resides in the hearts of believers not in the hearts of unbelievers we want to see them brought to that kingdom don't we but the kingdom of god is at work in the hearts of god's people growing us in christ likeness let's read the passage together and see more of what paul's talking about i'm still in verse one it'll be a part two of verse one and then we'll transition lord willing to verse two next week therefore i urge you romans 12 1 i urge you brethren by the mercies of god present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to god which is your spiritual service of worship and do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of god is that which is good and acceptable and perfect so paul's central appeal as i spoke about last week paul's central appeal in these two verses is that we would avoid

being conformed to the world how by living our christian lives entirely devoted to god now that is not pie in the sky i told you last sunday that is not something that is reserved for elite christians no such thing being wholly devoted to god in our hearts is something that god commands of us and in commanding us to worship like that he then tells us to present ourselves to him as a living sacrifice true spiritual worship is presenting ourselves yourself on the altar of god's mercy as a living and holy sacrifice to the lord now there is an alternative that i mentioned last sunday as well here it is the alternative is foolishly allowing yourself to be conformed to the thinking the priorities the values pursuits of this world those are your two choices friends we either serve the lord in our heart devoted to him or we don't and if we don't we pursue a foolish life that's it that's how the bible and the lord divides living as human beings so we don't want to live foolishly paul told the corinthians i am afraid that as the serpent deceived eve by his craftiness your minds your hearts will be led astray away from what a simple and pure devotion devotion to jesus what is satan after as he wants to conform you to the thinking priorities plans and pursuits of the world what is he after he is after robbing you of devotion to christ he would have you be devoted to anything now hear this warning hear this admonition married people he would even have you be devoted to your spouse more than being devoted to jesus he'd be perfectly happy with that parents he would be perfectly happy with you being more devoted to your

children than to the lord jesus christ have you ever seen that put backwards even in a moment where the kids are elevated to a point where jesus should be i have i saw a lot of it in europe but i saw it in my own life as i raised my kids too and it meant i needed to repent the little dears listen listen to what listen to what we are talking about here the devotion the worship the treasure of our hearts determines the course of our daily life our lifestyle our lifestyle comes out of emanates from the devotion of our heart in any given moment whatever is most important to you in that moment whatever you want most in that moment that's the treasure of your heart and your life's going to show it in that moment so we are being admonished we are being commanded even to present ourselves to god as living and holy sacrifices that means that we are worshipers devoted holy to jesus we follow the treasures of our hearts in any given moment or situation jesus said this do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy where thieves break in and steal this could be material goods it can be other things too but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys where thieves do not break in and steal where your treasure is there your heart your devotion your loyalty your priority will be also the worship of your heart determines how you live what is the treasure of your hearts show me what you are most invested in and i will show you your treasure that's not hard to think about that's not a tough concept is it show me what you are most invested in in any given season or era of your life and i'll show you what you're treasuring most in that season and era or moment now how does paul tell us to invest our hearts in heavenly pursuits in priorities that's what we're trying to get at he answers by presenting ourselves to god there it is if you stopped right there you'd have enough to be begin walking in that command how does paul tell you and i to invest our treasures our hearts what we most want desire and are loyal to how does he tell us to invest our hearts in heavenly pursuits and priorities by presenting ourselves to god by laying ourselves before the lord and saying god i am your servant do with me as you will whatever here i am but he doesn't stop there he goes on to define it present yourself to god as living holy sacrifices acceptable to the lord and offered as our spiritual service of worship to him acceptable to the lord is a mind-boggling phrase is it not to be made acceptable to the god of the universe as a sinner who am i who are you to be acceptable to god but that's the service that you and i are called to and the service that we can make to god can be acceptable to him it all hinges on the first part of that phrase doesn't it the first part of what i just read to you present yourself to god there's a foundation to talk about as we talk about that because god has shown you saving mercies

in jesus christ he tells paul tells you that god has made you into a living breathing walking around sacrifice to god you're not some cold dead thing on an altar somewhere laying there because you got sacrificed and now it's over for you no you were sacrificed and now you're being called on to continue to sacrifice yourself on the altar of god's mercies just as we did last week in part one i want you to look with me again at how paul develops and here's what i'm going to call it the profile of a person who is presenting themselves to god this is the whole concept we want to really zero in on today what does it look like for you as a worshiper to present yourself to god to make a sacrifice of yourself to god moment by moment in your life what does that look like can you do that while you're working your job while you're driving your car while you're changing a diaper while you're cooking a

meal whatever it is that are the mundane issues of your everyday life can you be a worshiper offering the treasure of your heart to jesus in those moments see this is the crux isn't it i'm so glad that paul gets really practical with us i mean he spent 11 chapters just hitting us with this beautiful display of doctrine about the mercies of god and now he comes to chapter 12 and he says now let's just put all that doctrine right down to the way you live right down into the way you think about relationships with each other so look with me at this profile of a person who is presenting themselves to god as a living and holy sacrifice we're just going to pick it up in verse 9 of chapter 12 and rather than make a lot of comment like i did last sunday about this i'll just roll through it let love be without hypocrisy abhor what is evil cling to what is good there's the beginning of this profile of a person presenting themselves to god present yourself as someone who is loving without hypocrisy abhorring what is evil clinging to what is good present yourself as one devoted to one another in brotherly love giving preference to one another in honor not lagging behind in diligence but fervent in spirit serving the lord rejoicing in hope persevering in tribulation devoted to prayer contributing to the needs of the saints practicing hospitality bless those who persecute you oh boy bless and do not curse slash complain rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep that's another way of saying be a person of compassion be of the same mind toward one another do not be haughty in mind but associate with the lowly do not be wise in your own estimation don't be proud don't be haughty don't be stuck up don't be all about you never pay back evil for evil to anyone respect what is right in the sight of all men if possible so far as it depends on you be at peace with all men never take your own revenge beloved but leave room for the wrath of god for it is written vengeance is mine i will repay says the lord but if your enemy is hungry feed him if he's thirsty give him a drink for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good there's your profile of a person who is presenting themselves to god as a

living and holy sacrifice you and i might read that and think boy i'm falling desperately short there are one of two reasons for that one you don't know jesus christ as your lord and savior or number two you're not making jesus christ the treasure of your heart moment by moment by moment there's your safeguards come to faith in jesus christ or at this point in your life surrender yourself to the lord in the way of i want jesus to be my treasure i want jesus to be my treasure at the outset you and i need to understand paul's foundation for living as spiritual sacrifices to god let me say it a different way this lifestyle that we just read about has a spiritual foundation there is a spiritual foundation that needs to be in place before someone can live like this it's a relationship by faith with jesus christ god's salvation mercies are that foundation you understand everything he's been saying in chapter 1 through chapter 11 about the mercies of god that bring us to faith in jesus christ that we can be forgiven and cleansed from sin all of that that's wrapped up all those great words like reconciliation and propitiation and sanctification all those great words of our the doctrines of our faith those define the mercies of god that are the foundation for this spiritual life this spiritual profile that i just read to us now that's very important you see why i'm concerned about that because i don't want you to try to gut it out it's not gutting christian life's not about gutting it out it's about trust and it is about striving and it is about discipline but i'm not talking about a life that you profess jesus and that you live without him trying to gut it out and convince yourself that you have him folks that'll get you a devil's help so we want to be super super careful that the foundation that we're talking about is clearly understood it's the mercies of god in jesus christ the way that god has shown you mercy to forgive you to offer you his son so that you can have life in his name don't blow by that don't let the christian ease of the preacher cause you to blow by that evaluate very carefully where you are in your relationship spiritually to god through your faith or lack of faith in jesus christ we need to understand paul's foundation so that was the main point from last week i want to sum it up for you in the way that i put it up on the screen last week we talked about where your devotion to god begins this was the first part of chapter one dealing with these mercies your devotion to god begins with the foundation of god's mercies toward you you're living out of those mercies you're grateful you're blessed you're full of joy hope and peace why because everything in your life's peachy keen fine no because you are centered in your heart and mind on the mercies of god shown to you realizing that nothing no power in the universe could ever rob you of those mercies you're safe and secure in the arms of jesus in that way so paul sums up what he's told them for 11 chapters about their salvation in christ by calling all of that the mercies of god friends you we need to build our lives on the mercies of almighty god we so that we never get over the mercy that's been shown to us in jesus christ we need to cultivate that carefully

[ 20 : 30 ] nurture it and protect it don't don't let the world beat that out of you and make you bitter because it will the world will teach you not to trust the world will teach you not to be thankful the world will sour you and depress you and the world will make you afraid and in all of those ways you will learn not to treasure jesus even as a christian isn't that dangerous so paul says don't get over the mercies of jesus shown to you our worshipful devotion to god begins with his mercies to us by the mercies of god our text says i told you last week that mercies is an intensive plural it conveys the idea then of great mercy intensive great great mercies great compassion all the riches of god's wisdom grace goodness are our new treasures and they're all found exclusively in the lord jesus aren't they all of it as jesus offered himself to god on our behalf we are now to offer ourselves to god for christ's sake or for his glory i am being taught not to live anymore for jeff but to live for christ not to live anymore for jeff's sake but to live for jesus sake that's the transformation that brings me joy you know god didn't save me from you god saved me from me and i should never get over that every time i look in the mirror i should say thank you lord for saving me from that fella right well this is another way that i can say it paul tells us to present ourselves to god on this altar of his love and grace to us in jesus specifically specifically he tells you and i to present our bodies to god present here present your bodies is a command therefore i urge you this is a compassionate urging i urge you brothers by these mercies of god these salvation blessings of god present your bodies present your bodies it's a command present is the idea of putting yourself at the disposal of the lord now do you do that present has the idea of you placing yourself in service to god this is our challenge each and every day isn't it all throughout the day am i placing myself in service to christ is the way that i just talked to that person my employee my wife my child my manager or whatever the person at the store is the way that i just interacted with them was that pleasing to the lord was that was that indicative of someone presenting themselves as a living sacrifice to god do you see this becomes very practical it's not a way of psyching ourselves out it's a way of showing the devotion of our heart and cultivating that devotion for the lord place yourself in service to jesus this is strong now hear this this is your right and your privilege purchased for you by the blood of jesus christ i don't talk much up here about our rights but here is a right that you have because it's been purchased and given to you as a gift

by jesus himself you have a right to serve jesus and a privilege right that's a beautiful thing to think about god has purchased that right for me now satan will tell me all kinds of ways that i do it wrong and he'll attack me and all this kind of thing fine but i can stand on the fact that no this is an established right for me as a child of god i get to serve jesus i'm called to serve christ i've been made a different person so that i can serve jesus and serve him faithfully all right so we present ourselves to him because he gave himself for us we got to get that in the right order by the mercies of god now you live this way live in those mercies foundation yourself in those mercies and now live out of that foundation your devotion to god then is a grateful response of your heart to god's mercy toward you that is wonderful you are constantly living in response to jesus you know not too long ago i got in a conversation with someone about the nuanced difference between responding and reacting now i like to make a distinction when i talk to people about going through life like this because reaction has the idea that i just kind of knee jerked it's something just kind of came at me and i i reacted response has more of the idea of something thoughtful something prepared for so i like to talk to people about that i'd rather see you going through life responding rather than reacting and when you respond you're responding out of faithfulness devotion treasuring jesus you've given thought to what that should look like in your life what that should be like in your life and so you're not moving through being bumped all over like a pinball machine kind of thing but you're responding to life in a calculated thoughtful prepared way you're learning to respond to your spouse that way if you're married to your children that way if you're a parent to people at your job and that you relate to in different ways especially people that you're challenged with in terms of them being difficult in your life i don't want a show of hands but i wonder how many hands would go up if i asked you how many of you are currently or have recently dealt with difficult people don't raise your hands all right now i can speak as an expert in this because being a difficult people myself we want to be careful right your devotion to god is a grateful response of your heart to god's mercy towards you we're constantly living in response to the mercies of god in our life man folks if we would grab i want to write about this more if we would grab onto this and really run with this what a revolution it could make in the way that we live day to day to day that i am living my life first and foremost not as a response to my circumstances but as a response to the mercies of my god in my life you follow me

if i could just grab that because god's peace and hope and joy doesn't change in circumstances the things of this earth do not change god's joy peace hope being ministered to us it doesn't it changes at the level of us letting our hearts wander from devotion to god we change not god

i tell people what if the circumstances don't get better what if they get worse can you still love the lord and know joy in the lord if the circumstance grows worse not better and the answer is yes it doesn't mean that it won't be hard or difficult or taxing on you that's why you have a room full of brothers and sisters in a room that we come to worship and treasure the word of god together with all right let me hasten on to this second point for us what it means to dedicate or devote your body to god we need to talk about that and unpack it a little bit because it's very very rich what it means to dedicate or devote our bodies to god remember paul is urgently encouraging this is an urgent compassionate encouragement to us he's encouraging us to dedicate our bodies as sacrifices to god not a concept you hear every day nevertheless that's what he says this is an inclusive way of referring to your entire being i mentioned this just briefly last time this has to do with your total self why because your body houses your soul your body is the temple for your soul it's the house so for for paul to tell us to devote our bodies to god or sacrifice our bodies to god as a way of inclusively saying sacrifice who you are lay yourself self on the altar so paul's idea of presenting yourself to god as a living sacrifice is obviously bound up in the sacrificial system of the old testament this is when people would offer animal sacrifices to god and there are three terms that he uses here to describe what kind of sacrifice you and i are to be and to make to god with our bodies that is with our very selves what kind of sacrifice am i laying before the lord as i come to do this all three of these terms are priestly terms they are connected with old testament sacrificial worship notice the text once again beloved therefore i urge you brethren by the mercies of god present command your bodies a living living sacrifice that's the first one a living sacrifice in old testament times people needed a levite priest to offer their sacrifice to god people didn't make these sacrifices on their own they took the sacrifice to a priest and the priest became the mediator between god and man the rules governing all of this were laid out in sections of the old testament now only god's priests could perform perform the necessary functions of animal sacrifice and ritual covering of sins and only listen to this only after each of them undertook much personal ritual cleansing and personal purification to ready them for the task not being ready for the task would cost them their lives so they better be ready very serious in the mind of the lord with jesus christ death and resurrection animal sacrifice became unnecessary along with all of the associated functions of the priest which is very interesting by acting as our great high priest jesus christ once for all made himself a sacrifice for sins animal sacrifice is no longer needed most of us understand that transition from the old covenant to the new covenant

with jesus being the key to it all right under the new covenant laid down for us in the new testament the new covenant written out for us you are your own priest you have been made a priest in christ and what is the sacrifice you make to the lord the sacrifice that you bring to the altar and offer to the lord is you you you're the priest you're the sacrifice wow as a christian with the spirit of jesus living in you you share in his priestly office and you are made to be a living sacrifice that need not physically die in order to be offered up to god look at a couple of passages with me we'll just hover here for just a moment first peter 2 9 will you go there with me we did deal with this when i preached through this months and months ago first peter 2 9 a glorious statement here but you are a chosen he's talking to christians now believers you are a chosen race notice a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for god's own possession now notice the purpose clause that comes next in all of that so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light why have you been made a royal priest in honor of the blood of the lord jesus christ so that you can proclaim the excellencies of jesus who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light you and i have been saved and sanctified and made in this way so that we can proclaim the excellencies of jesus not pursue our own thing let's look at one other passage it's back in revelation chapter 1 verse 6 revelation 1 6 i know this is a big doctrine this may be a little bit new to you we're just gonna kind of go over the surface of it here revelation chapter 1 verse 6 and he has made us to be a kingdom priests to his god and father that's christ to him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever amen and he has made us to be a kingdom priests to his god and father in jesus christ you and i have been made priests before the lord this spiritual reality was foreshadowed in the old testament with abraham and isaac it's very interesting if you'll go to genesis 22 we mentioned this last time we we just marvel at the way the bible connects all these theological dots for us how things foreshadow the greater realities that would come in the cross of

the lord jesus here's one of them genesis 22 and we'll begin in verse 1 what a fascinating story now it came about after these things that god tested abraham and said to him abraham and he said here i am now they're right there stop right there this statement here i am this is this is another way of a man i am presenting myself to you i stand before you presenting myself to you as a sacrifice a living sacrifice here i am i'm ready

do with me as you will oh lord boy he he didn't know what was coming next though did he well this is a tough one this is a really tough one and he said take now your son notice this folks your only son whom you love isaac and go to the land of moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which i will tell you boom period right out of the gate go sacrifice your son to me the next verse reads abraham then argued with the lord oh lord would you have me do this thing no so abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him and isaac his son and he split wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which god had told him on the third day abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance you think that third day is just a coincidence yeah right yeah abraham in verse 5 said to his young men now you stay here with the donkey and i and the lad will go over there and we will worship and return to you that isn't that interesting we will go and worship we will return to you abraham took the wood of the burnt offering laid it on isaac his son took his and took in his hand the fire and the knife so the two of them walked on together isaac spoke to abraham his father and said my father and he said here i am my son and he said behold the fire and the wood but where is the lamb for the burnt offering abraham said god will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering my son so the two of them walked on together this is faith isn't it this is this is now this is the guy who lied twice about his own wife and was going to give her up to another man and he's married to her same guy aren't you glad that god is forgiving and works his work of grace of grace in our lives and brings us along and tests our faith along the way he grows us and helps us persevere in faith this is what we're seeing in the life of this man verse 9 then they came to the place of which god had told him and abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood and bound his son isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood now don't you wonder what isaac's thinking abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son the man is at full tilt up here ready to put that knife in his own son but the angel of the lord called to him from heaven and said abraham abraham and he said here i am and he said do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him for now i know that you fear god since you have not withheld your son your only son from me then abraham raised his eyes and looked and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns and abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son abraham called the name of that place the lord will provide as it is said to this day in the mount of the lord it will be provided provided in the mount of the lord it will be provided that's the faithfulness of our god friends isaac became a living sacrifice not a dead one so this is because god provided god provided a way for isaac

[ 40 : 41 ] to be a sacrifice set apart for god's special use and yet go on living god provided a substitute for isaac and that substitute died in the place of isaac and isaac was spared to serve god as a living sacrifice yes that's the picture and that foreshadows jesus dying is our substitute that we might present ourselves to god a living and holy sacrifice jesus purchased that for you that's why i say it's your right jesus established that for you and for me so by his mercies god has provided us with life through jesus christ he has spared you and i he has saved you and i to serve him as living sacrifices folks living breathing offerings made acceptable to god in jesus christ so your new life is actually proof of god's love and forgiveness offered to you in christ through your relationship with jesus you are now a person made a living offering to him and here's the best part of it all that living offering that you're making of yourself to god is acceptable to him for what reason there's only one reason that you can make that sacrifice and god receives it as acceptable yes yes you are making that sacrifice as one who is trusting in the lord jesus christ for the forgiveness of your sins that merciful foundation is the only reason that you and i can stand acceptable before god we are made acceptable in christ i have no righteousness or acceptance of my own to offer i have only my sin but by faith in jesus christ god imputes or credits to me the righteousness of his son and i am made acceptable to him that's the beauty of the gospel of the lord jesus christ sinners being justified by the justifier because of the sacrifice of christ well let's move on to this second one real quickly you're a holy sacrifice a holy sacrifice this is also what it means to be a holy sacrifice the greek word for holy in 12 1 it was a common word used to refer to anything set apart for some special purpose so in christian usage this word came to mean anything or anyone set apart for godly purposes that

was the definition we gave for dedicated at the beginning of the message isn't it being set apart for special purposes you have been set apart by faith in christ for the special perfect purpose of offering yourself to god as a living sacrifice that you might glorify god in christ in the way that you live your life you glorify and bring out and display the excellencies of him in the life that you live as a living sacrifice a living offering made to the lord that is what isaac was isaac was holy he had been set apart for special use to god the holy spirit living in you makes you holy it makes it possible for you to live a holy or set apart for god's

use kind of life set apart for god's use that is what paul is so intensely encouraging you to live as a person whose entire life is a living holy sacrifice to god a set apart for god life it's sobering i want that to settle in on you you've been saved and god has set you apart to live a holy life before him and it's a treasure all right how about an acceptable sacrifice that's what our text says present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to god you are an acceptable sacrifice another way of saying this is a well pleasing sacrifice it's possible for us to live in ways that are not pleasing to god yes all right so we all we're confronted with a little bit of a dilemma here we're called on to present ourselves and to live as holy sacrifices before the lord acceptable sacrifices but the reality is you and i each day of our lives find ourselves doing things that are not holy not acceptable to god yes so we have a problem we have there's something going on here think of it again in terms of how we use our bodies as instruments as instruments for god's service or use our bodies as instruments for our own selfishness we can use our tongues for good purposes or for selfish purposes right for the glory of god or for us we can use all parts of our bodies in ways that don't honor and please the lord we can use our eyes to view things that promote faithfulness to god or we can use our eyes to destroy faithfulness to god to demean faithfulness to god to distract us from faithfulness to god our eyes can carry us to places like that we can use our hands to help we can use our hands to harm we can use our hands to invest or to injure you and I can use our feet to take us to places that promote a holy set apart for god life or our feet can take us to places where holy set apart to god people should not go i don't know about you have you ever found yourself standing somewhere where you realize i shouldn't be here and i shouldn't be doing this and then you ask yourself later how did i even how did i even get there how did i even do that scary we can allow our hearts to be deceptively convinced of worldly pursuits and worldly priorities and those things can compromise our devotion and faithfulness to the lord and have a deep impact on the people around us folks this is the reality the fact is you and i can behave in ways that are sinful we don't want to gloss over that we don't want to make this call to living in the mercies of god some pie in the sky thing this is very gritty and real when you and i are using our bodies in ways that are sinful we are not offering our bodies to god as living holy acceptable sacrifices i think

at that point then we could not correctly say that we are acceptable to god in that moment of sin now here's what i mean when god redeems your soul it remains forever acceptable to him that's good doctrine right in other words you can't unsave your soul once it's saved so your soul remains acceptable to god on the level of the righteousness of christ being applied to you and so now forever more god sees you as he sees his son praise the lord all right that can't be taken away when we're talking about being an acceptable sacrifice in the way that paul's using it here we're talking about the way that you and i form our lifestyle what we say and what we do not everything we say and do is acceptable to god is it sometimes it offends the lord sometimes it grieves the holy spirit quenches the holy spirit that's that's not a good proposition is it but it's it's where we find ourselves living at times we just need to put that right out on the table god redeems our souls and our souls remain forever acceptable to him in christ that's not the case with our earthly bodies that house our fleshly worldly earthly appetites paul tells us those things remain and we continue to fight against those things even as a new person in christ we fight against these new these old patterns habits and appetites the world continues to entice us we continue to struggle this is why paul tells us to put to death or put off daily discard or cast off the self centered desires and resultant deeds of our bodies how by walking in the desires and deeds of the holy spirit now i'm not going to turn there but let me give you a couple of quick references you if you're taking notes you can put them down romans 8 13 and following write that one down in colossians 3 5 where we're told to do what with our sin colossians 3 5 mortify it kill it kill the desires that are in contrast to or antithetical to at war with the desires for treasuring jesus we're to kill those desires put them away and repent of them and replace them with desires to honor the lord that's colossians 3 5 he also commands us not to let sin reign or to have or take control of our mortal bodies we're not to go on presenting the

members of our bodies to sin as instruments of unrighteousness we'll read that passage in just a moment we are to present ourselves to god as those alive from the dead and our bodies to god as instruments of righteousness have you ever thought about that now have you ever thought about the limbs of your body the different aspects of your body being literally instruments for god this is a walking talking breathing instrument for the lord not not for me for the lord now i'll do a number of different things that have to be done i have to earn a living i have to do certain things and but i can go about those things as god's instrument i can go about those things in a heart of worship before the lord i i offer this to you lord i'm gonna go out here and dig a hole and put a plant in it and i'm gonna i'm gonna do that for you because while i'm doing it i'm gonna be like lord this is hard and i'm sweating and i got blisters all over my hands but you know what i'm not complaining because i know adam did this to us i know that christ is where's my hope then i stick that thing in the hole and i pack it around and i step back and look at it and say what a marvel lord you made that one and then look at that one over there how different it is and it took millions of years for that to get there and no we can do these things out of the treasure of jesus being in our heart and the mercies of god giving us life and breath for life every day it really can be like that and we can repent and turn back to god we need to present ourselves to god as instruments of righteousness let me show you this real quickly paul speaks of our inner man he speaks of our redeemed spiritual selves this is your made alive to god self not your formerly dead in trespasses and sin self under the wrath of the lord this is different self he says this i joyfully concur with the law of god in my inner man my spiritual self he prays that the ephesians will be strengthened with power through god's spirit in the inner man now if you think through this with me our bodies our bodies put us in visible physical contact with our material world with those around us don't they people don't walk around and if they do you run people don't walk around interacting with you and looking at you and going oh i see that spirit inside you you know or whatever i have had a couple people do that to me before in another way and i didn't know what to say to them at the time that was that was a while back in my christian life no we we see and interact with each other based on what we see with these fleshly bodies that's just the way it is that's what we do so so we have contact with our world through our bodies but but here here's the interesting part it is our inner man our spiritual selves our hearts that we want people to relate to and interact with our bodies just house the most important part i'm not saying our bodies are not important they're not as important your body is going to waste away your soul is going to go to heaven you get a new body so need to keep that in perspective so our inner man our spiritual selves our hearts that's what we want people to relate to and interact with but the question is well jeff you just told us that they can't really look in and see that we want to want them to relate to us in that way so how how does that work well this is what paul tells us through our redeemed through our redeemed inner man which expresses our heavenly thoughts desires and choices by means of our physical bodies so who's serving whom our bodies are serving our heart i am i am bringing my physical instruments into submission with the loyalty and devotion and treasure of my heart my heart says i love the lord jesus i want to exalt jesus i want the excellencies of jesus to be seen in my life so hands eyes legs feet get it together we're serving christ in this thing you know you're not going to be taking me anywhere i shouldn't go eyes you're not going to be making me look at stuff that's not that's worthless no we're not doing that so we bring our bodies into submission with what our hearts most desire folks it's only a matter of time before your body will show what is the treasure of your heart now let's put this one up here by the look and manner of our bodies that is our lifestyles and our actions all display the heart attitudes of our inner man if our inner man's heart attitudes are devoted to the lord then our body should simply showcase that reality about us now i know it doesn't always work that way sometimes what we're showcasing isn't that our heart is loyalty to the lord in that moment it's loyal to self or some agenda that we've set up and that's when we repent we confess and repent and move in the grace of the lord jesus and encourage each other maybe i have to rebuke you maybe you have to rebuke me but we do that so that we can move forward in grace not judge each other but get to the point where our bodies and our lifestyles are reflecting the love of jesus if we ever come to you and we have to talk to you about some issue in your life we're going to make it very clear that the greatest concern of our heart i'm speaking about my brother greg and i as your pastors what we want to talk to you about more than anything is how is this affecting the lord jesus christ in your walk with him how is it affecting the people all around you what are they seeing in your life what are they seeing about your priorities your what is your lifestyle reflecting to them about the priorities of your life do they reflect a submitted sacrifice sacrificial living offering before the lord lord you have me hook line and sinker

here it's all about you and am i reflecting that in all that i say and do in the way that i do my job relate to my family so let me let me hasten to say this before i move toward a close our bodies are not evil in and of themselves so please don't hear me up here preaching this dualism body is bad spirit is good i did not say that i'm saying i'm not saying that our bodies are to be offered to god as living sacrifices come on it says acceptable so don't get down on your body whatever body style you have that's not about that it's about what your body houses and is your body being used to showcase the loyalty of your heart for jesus so is for you married are you married in a way that showcases in your lifestyle in your marriage that jesus is your treasure you see it's that practical does your parenting reflect that jesus is your treasure because you're going to speak to your kids you're going to deal with your kids in ways that are going to reflect where your heart is now i've sinned before against my kids as i raised them there were times i disciplined my children because they were inconveniencing me and irritating me and so i disciplined out of irritation and inconvenience rather than out of a treasure of the lord for me to shepherd their heart and so i missed an opportunity to shepherd their heart in that moment because i was too consumed with me now i know none of you parents have made that mistake before we do that with other people we do that with people that we in our families we do that with people at our work our bodies are not evil in themselves we're not wrong to be good stewards of our physical bodies it's okay for you to take care of your body i remember talking to brian my brother here not too long ago i think it was right before you went in for your heart surgery and brian when i were talking about how we steward our bodies and the challenge that it is and in his profession he needs to take care of his body because his job's physically demanding and lives are at stake and he shared that with me there are people who have jobs like that and it and it matters well that's that's

[ 60 : 44 ] a healthy good biblical attitude about the sobriety of taking care of myself so that i can do what i'm called to do i want to do that too i've only asked the lord for old age for one reason and it's not to go out and play the world i've asked the lord to grant me old age so i can keep preaching the gospel i don't know that i'll be here on this earth at 80 years old i'll be 62 next month i don't know if i'll be here at 80 years old but i i recently saw an 80 year old doing something on tv and another thing and then i saw a guy who told a cashier at lowe's he was 81 years old and he was carrying a big old tray of stuff to plant he was 81 years old he walked out a little bit of a swagger and i leaned over and told suzanne i i want to be that guy in the pulpit at 80 years old i've asked the lord grant me old age if it's in your will so i can keep preaching the gospel i don't even know how to retire now you know if i'm still here and still around my brother he'll let me know if i'm up here going uh wait just a minute i'll find it in a minute uh yeah but he'll let me know right he'll pull me aside and he'll say jeffrey it's time for you to do something else i don't know whatever you know whatever but we're not there yet so take care of yourself so you can serve the lord don't take care of yourself to be buff take care of yourself because you want to serve the lord you want to provide for your family you want to be able to go on mission trips and endure the rigors of what it takes for you to go somewhere else in a different culture and love people in jesus and tell them about the goodness of god and what god can mean and be for them in their lives you got to be physically able to do that well most important of all is it concerns our bodies we're faced with the daily choice of using our bodies to express love and devotion to god or we can choose selfish sinful expressions of speech behavior those things can grieve the lord and reflect very negatively on him if you'll turn to we're already in romans 12 turn to romans 6 just give you a few more thoughts here and i want to read something to you as i end great perspective romans chapter 6 when you think about this whole issue of our bodies and our souls and we're instruments of righteousness before the lord verse 12 helps a lot therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts and do not go on presenting you see the word there there's our word do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness but present yourselves to god there it is again present yourselves to god as those alive from the dead that is spiritually reborn and your members your body as instruments of righteousness to god that's a sacrifice that you're making to the lord when i say sacrifice i mean offering and then if you'll look at verse 19 i am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh that is your natural weaknesses for just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness resulting in further lawlessness so now so now as a new creature in christ present your members your bodies as slaves to righteousness resulting in holiness sanctification that's the

apostle paul folks are our bodies here's what i want to put it up here to our bodies are instruments for the flow of god's mercy to others it's a great way to think about this in terms of how the bible describes it paul goes on to tell us this as i close out listen to this i urge you brethren by the mercies of god to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to god now notice which is your spiritual service of worship spiritual the word for spiritual is where we get our english words for logical and reasonable logical and reasonable in the words of everett harrison paul is referring to this an intelligent commitment of life in the light of god's gift of salvation that is great great way to sum this up are you making an intelligent commitment of your body and life to god in gratitude for god's mercy to you that's every day to offer our bodies to god for his honor and for his use then is our logical it is our reasonable worship of the god who gave us new life in jesus that's your spiritual service your reasonable logical result of being grateful to god for the salvation he's given you he made it possible for our bodies to be set apart in this unique holy special use and so you and i need to carefully evaluate the way that we use our bodies in everyday life and so ask ask yourself ask yourself if from love and gratitude to god are you using your body in a way that is acceptable and well pleasing to the lord we're going to see down in verse two that all of this builds into the idea that we're able to live a life that proves the will of god a will that is good a will that is in every way acceptable and perfect the people in the world get to see the will of god being worked out all of the blessedness of god's goodness being worked out in our lives as we move through these things offering ourselves to the lord let me end with this story john mcarthur included this in his commentary and i was i was so moved by it in terms of its challenge i wanted to share it with you it's about the missionary that most of you know the name of he was a missionary in africa and he wrote in his journal david livingston wrote in his journal people talk of the sacrifice i've made in spending so much of my life in africa can that be called sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our god which you and i can never repay is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward of healthful activity the consciousness of doing good peace of mind bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter away with such a word away with such a view and such a thought it is emphatically no sacrifice say rather it is a privilege anxiety sickness suffering or danger now and then with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life may make us pause and cause the spirit to waver and sink but let this only be for a moment all these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us i never made a sacrifice of this we ought not talk when we remember the great sacrifice which he made who left his father's throne on high to give himself for us let's pray together dear lord we are full to the brim with the goodness of your heart as you have displayed it to us in the mercies that you showered on us as your people in the forgiveness of sins through jesus christ our lord and savior we thank you for making us your people i do pray lord that if there is anyone in our congregation this morning who has truly not been born again they have truly not submitted their hearts to you and trusted in you as their treasure looking only to you for the sacrifice that you made in substituting yourself for them on the cross dying for their sins that they might live a new life with you father i pray for them i pray that you will make these truths real and that jesus will come alive in their hearts that you will enlighten their understanding that they would be able to grasp the wonder of jesus offering himself in perfection for the filthy sins of our lives that we might be made whole complete blameless and spotless in him help these folks who don't know you to run to the throne of grace and receive forgiveness for sins to cry out to you as sinners and beg you lord for life life in jesus name thank you for the gospel thank you for the truth that by the mercies of god we can offer ourselves to you every day i pray that my brothers and sisters would go forward into this week with this ringing in their hearts and minds i have the privilege and the right by jesus to make myself an offering to god every moment of every day and to use my body to glorify him and all that i say and do may you truly be glorified in us bless our time together lord even as we transform this room now as greg said into a place of fellowship as we offer to sit down with one another and listen and talk and discuss life over a meal that you've provided may you be blessed may we be encouraged in jesus precious name we pray amen and and