

A BIBLICAL STUDY ON PRAISE
LESSON NINETEEN: PRAISE AND SERVICE

by Sandy Harber

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

Praise is a celebration. It's a party. We happily and loudly celebrate the One Who created and sustains us. We gratefully extol the virtues of the One Who redeemed us. We express our praise with singing, shouting, praying, dancing, and waving uplifted arms and hands. The purpose is the glorification of our great God. Peter encourages us to glorify God by using our spiritual gifts in His service (I Peter 4:10-11). Paul explains that God recreated us when we were saved (II Cor. 5:17) to do good works (Eph. 2:10). Good works follow salvation (Eph. 2:8-10). We are saved to serve, not saved to sit.

In Romans 12:1 Paul spells out what is our "reasonable service." The Greek word "logikos," which is translated "reasonable" in this verse can also mean "spiritual." Our worshipful service, or divine service, is the presentation of our bodies as living sacrifices. In other words, we give ourselves, we devote our lives to God's service daily.

The book of Romans has been called "The Christian Manifesto." The theme is, in a word, salvation. Paul spends eleven chapters explaining the basics of sin and salvation. He begins chapter 12 with "I beseech you therefore, brethren...." Whenever you see the word "therefore" in Scripture ask, "what it is there for?" The "therefore" in Romans 12:1 shows a transition from the teaching portion of the epistle to the application portion of the epistle. In view of Paul's exposition of the mercies of God in effecting our salvation (Rom. 1-11), it is only reasonable (logical) that we devote our lives to His service (Rom. 12:1-15:3). Paul begs (urges) his spiritual brethren (believers) to offer our lives as a sacrifice. No longer will we live for ourselves, striving to obtain what we desire. Instead, we live for God, obeying His will and serving His purposes. This is pleasing (acceptable) to God.

Paul presents us with a negative and a positive command: do not conform to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Rom. 12:2). If we want to please God we must be set apart (holy) from the world system, of which Satan is the god (II Cor. 4:4). We must not live according to the lifestyle of the ungodly in "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). Instead, we should be transformed (Greek "metamorphousthe"), which means totally changed from the inside out (English "metamorphosis"). Scripture tells us that when we are saved we become a new creature (II Cor. 5:17). The Greek tense indicates this is an ongoing process, that is, we need to keep on being transformed. It's not a once and done deal. It's a process. How is it accomplished? "By the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). "Renewing" involves an adjustment to the moral awareness, ethical judgment, and logical reasoning (mind) to the mind of God. It is a daily process that will transform your life, molding you into the image of His Son (Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:29).

Keep in mind that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, Who indwells us (I Cor. 6:19-20). We belong to God Who purchased us out of the slave market of sin with the precious blood of Jesus (I Peter 1:18-19). By not conforming to the world but, instead, transforming our minds we are proving (testing by experience) God's will. His will is good, that is, beneficial for the believer. His will is acceptable (pleasing) to God and, hopefully, to us, as well. And, His will is perfect, or complete, in every way. God's will achieves His desired results. Have you dedicated your life to His service?

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever Amen." I Peter 4:11