

Consecration

*Your people will offer themselves willingly In the day of Your warfare,
In the splendor of their consecration. Your young men will be to You
Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.—Psalms 110:3*

1. The basis—God’s purchase

1 Corinthians 6:19-20a

Or do you not know that...you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price...

2. The motive—God’s love

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

3. The meaning—to be a sacrifice

Romans 12:1m

...present your bodies a living sacrifice...

4. The purpose—to work for God

Ephesians 2:10a

For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works...

5. The practicality—to give ourselves to God

2 Corinthians 8:5m

...they gave themselves first to the Lord...

Romans 6:13m

...present yourselves to God...

Consecration

The basis— God’s purchase

How can God demand that we consecrate ourselves to Him? The reason is that He has bought us. In Exodus 13:2 we see that after the Passover, God commanded the Israelites, saying, “Sanctify unto me all the first-born.” The reason for this command is that all these first-born were redeemed by God through the death of the lamb. They were bought by God with the blood of the lamb. To purchase is to acquire the right of ownership. When God has bought us, He then has the right of ownership, that is, He has a basis to demand that we turn ourselves over to Him to belong to Him. The basis of consecration, therefore, is God’s purchase.

From what then has God bought us? Galatians 4:5 says, “That he might redeem them that were under the law.” God has bought us from under the law. What is it that God has redeemed us from the law?

The reason is that when we sinned and fell, we not only came under Satan, sin, and the world and became their captives, but we also offended God’s righteousness, transgressed God’s law, and became sinners. Because we

became sinners, we fell under God’s law and were kept and retained by this law. The fact that we were thus retained by the law of God is altogether righteous and legal. If God, therefore, wanted to release us from under His righteous law, He must pay the full price to satisfy the demand of His law. This price is the precious blood shed by His Son. Since this blood satisfied the requirements of the law, we are redeemed from under His righteous law, that is, we are bought from under the law. Since the day we obtained redemption, we have been released from the rule of the law; we are no longer under its authority. The right of ownership over us has been transferred from the law to the hand of God. It is on the basis of this transfer of right that God demands that we consecrate ourselves to Him. God’s right of ownership over us through purchase, therefore, is the basis upon which we should consecrate ourselves to God.¹

The motive— God’s love

Although God has the legal right and basis to possess us, we may not have the heart to let Him do so. Therefore, when God desires us to consecrate ourselves to Him, He must move our heart. He must give us the motive of love

that we might be willing to consecrate ourselves to Him.

The motive of consecration is the love of God. Whenever the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, we will naturally be willing to become the prisoners of love and consecrate ourselves to God. This kind of consecration, motivated by the love of God, is mentioned very clearly in two places in the Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and Romans 12:1.

Second Corinthians 5:14-15 says: “For the love of Christ constrains us (constrains in the original has the meaning of the rushing of waters)...and He died for all, that those who live should no longer live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and has been raised.” In other words, these verses tell us that the dying love of Christ is like the rushing of great waters toward us, impelling us to consecrate ourselves to God and to live for

Him beyond our own control.

Romans 12:1 says, “I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice.” The com-

passions referred to here are the love of God. Therefore, in this place also, Paul is seeking to move our hearts with the love of God. He would cause us to have the motive of love, so that we might consecrate ourselves willingly to God as a living sacrifice. We see from these two passages that the love of God is the motive of consecration.

In a normal consecration this motive of love is very necessary. If our consecration rests solely on the basis of consecration, the realization of God’s right to us, this consecration will only be based on reason; it will lack sweetness and intensity. But if our consecration has love as its motive, if our feelings have been touched by the love of God, the constraint of this love will cause us to consecrate ourselves willingly to God. This consecration will then be sweet and intense.²

The meaning— to be a sacrifice

A sacrifice is a thing which is set apart for God and laid on the altar, with a change in position and a change in usage. Whether it is a bullock or a ram, whether it is fine flour or oil, once it is offered as a sacrifice, it leaves the hands of the offerer and can no longer be used for his own advantage and enjoyment.

Key Verses

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

Romans 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them.

Romans 6:13b ...present yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness to God.

Consecration is a gate, and we must be determined to enter through this gate

All the sacrifices on the altar belong to God and are for His use and enjoyment. To put it simply, to be a sacrifice means to be offered to God for His use.

Since the meaning of consecration is to offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice for God's satisfaction, we should ask ourselves this question: Since our consecration, how much of our actual living and actual experiences have proved that we have indeed laid ourselves on the altar to be a sacrifice for God? Are we indeed willing to be God's food that He might be satisfied? True consecration is never compelled by God; it is of our voluntary will. God takes nothing by force; everything is offered up by men willingly. Likewise, our consecration today must be made out of our voluntary will; it is we who willingly lie on the altar and dare not move off.

We should be able to say continually to God, "O God, I have no choice; I have already consecrated myself to Thee; I am in Thy hand." Whenever anything happens to us, we must express ourselves in this way to God. We must remain thus in God's hand and actually be a sacrifice unto God. Only this is the true meaning of consecration.³

The purpose— to work for God

The purpose of consecration, therefore, is to be used by God, to work for God. But in order that we may work for God, we must first let God work. We can only work for God to the extent that we allow God to work. If we do not let God work first, our labor can neither please Him nor be accepted by Him, no matter how diligent and enduring we are.

"Let" is the basis, and "for" is the result. When we have the basis of "let," then we can have the result of "for." This is an unchanging principle. Therefore, when we consecrate ourselves to God, although it is to work for God, yet from our standpoint the emphasis is to let God work. The purpose of consecration then is to let God work in order that we might reach the stage of working for God.

It is extremely dangerous whenever a man comes into direct touch with spiritual things without experiencing the working of God. If we want to touch spiritual things, whether it be to work for God, to study the Bible, or to preach the gospel, we must first allow God to work on us that we might be broken, subdued, and disciplined by Him. Then we may touch spiritual things and work for God.

We must ask whether our consecration to God is for working for God directly or for allowing God to work in us first. If we are not willing to allow God to work in us first, we cannot attain the object of working for God. Consequently, after our consecration we must not first be anxious to accomplish something for the Lord. We need to remain on the altar and allow God to work on us and consume us. The result of this consuming work will enable us to work for the Lord.⁴

The practicality— to give ourselves to God

Consecration is a gate, and we must be determined to enter through this gate. We need to have thorough prayer in which we confess our sins and hand ourselves over to God. The sins, mistakes, contamination, and corruption that we sense before God need to be confessed one by one. All that we are, all that we have, and our everything then need to be handed over to God. We cannot casually and generally say, "God, I consecrate everything to You." This is insufficient. We need to thoroughly hand everything over, item by item. We need to hand ourselves over to the Lord. We also need to hand over our education, career, future, and everything to the Lord.

Consecration is not only a gate but also a path. In all spiritual matters, we must first step inside the gate and then walk on the path. This is the God-ordained order. Therefore, after we enter through the gate of consecration, we must continue to walk on the path of consecration. Although entering through the gate is once and for all, walking on the path requires a continual renewing, a daily consecration

The first thing we should say after we get up every morning is, "Lord, I place myself in Your hands again this morning." At night when the day is over, we should go before Him again and say, "I give myself to You again." When we need to do specific things, we need to say, "Lord, I present myself to You once again." Whether we are going to study, teach, take up a post in the government, give a message, or visit the brothers, we should first present a burnt offering, consecrating ourselves to God. Even if we want to see a movie, we should first kneel down before the Lord and say, "Lord, I am a consecrated person. I want to see a movie, but I acknowledge my consecration to You!" Once we acknowledge our consecration in this way, we will be clear whether we should go to see the movie or not. We need to live a life of consecration practically. Consecration is not only a gate but also a path. After entering through the gate, we need to walk on the path.⁵

Assignment

Set aside a good amount of time to consider your consecration before the Lord, and bring out any items in your heart that He is touching.

Prayer Assignment

Pray that the Lord would bless the study and digestion of this lesson in all the students, and that He would raise up a consecrated group of young people at the University of Texas.

Additional Daily Verses

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 | 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 | Romans 12:1 | Ephesians 2:10 | Psalm 110:3 | Romans 6:12-13 | Romans 14:7-8 |

Weekly Memorization Verses

Romans 12:1

I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.