



Links Players

Why Links? - The Sacrificial Life

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. (Romans 12:1, ESV)

Very few, if any, achieve excellence without sacrifice. Survey the leaders across all sports, and you will soon discover what others have always known—consistent performance at high levels demands sacrifice. The recipe for greatness in any endeavor requires sacrifice, be it family, sport, or business.

For those who love this great game of golf, we know this reality of sacrifice is essential if we are to make progress in our performance on the course. It might be the case that one remains on the range for months until the “hitch in our git-a-long” is gone.

No matter the sphere—our families, our marriages, our vocations, our hobbies, and our philanthropic organizations—if they reach levels of excellence, the practice of sacrifice will be “par for the course.”

For what many consider the Apostle Paul’s magnum opus, the book of Romans, Paul has, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, spent eleven chapters describing this great salvation that Christ Jesus has purchased for wayward sinners at the cost of his own life.

When he arrives in his letter at today’s text, the “therefore” is summing up what our response should be to the one who sacrificed his life on our behalf. For Paul, the only response worthy of such sacrificial love is to “present your bodies as a living sacrifice...”

Throughout Scripture, we see all sorts of animal sacrifices pointing forward to Jesus’ sacrifice. In every case, the victim dies. In the Old Testament, animals die, foreshadowing the death of the “lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

A sacrifice, by definition, implies death. Yet, here, Paul argues that we are to present our bodies as a “living sacrifice” to God. He, then, calls it our “spiritual worship.”

A “living sacrifice” is a life lived in death to self yet alive to God, death to sin yet

alive to righteousness, death to worldliness yet alive to God’s good world, dying to our past yet alive to our new life in Christ. Dead to those things that grieve God yet alive to those that please him—we are “living sacrifices.” This is true, not just for the preacher, but for the “butcher, baker and candlestick maker.”

We are “by the mercies of God” to present our bodies to him as instruments of righteousness. We are to appear before him daily, ready to receive our assignments for the advancement of his kingdom. To hear him correctly and to be empowered by his Spirit, one must be “transformed by the renewing of the mind.”

For that to happen, one must know how he thinks. Thankfully, he has preserved his thoughts in the revelation of the Old and New Testaments.

Prayer – Spirit of the living God, open our eyes to the great adventure of knowing, worshipping, and serving you.

READING - Romans 12: 1-2; Romans 1-11 for the brave at heart.

OPENING QUESTIONS: What particular sacrifice have you made to improve your game? Did your competence and confidence rise?

1. We find the word “therefore” in verse one. If Paul’s argument is grounded in logic, what does that tell us about connecting **Romans 12** and following with the first eleven chapters? Discuss.

2. Paul says we should present our bodies, by which he means the whole person, to God by something. What is that, and why does that matter? Do we present our bodies to get ____? Or do we, by _____, present ourselves to God? Why is that order essential?

3. To “prove or discern the will of God,” what two things are required (vs. 2)? Based on our devotional, how does one think God’s thoughts after him?
