

# The Talmid



**Talmid תלמיד** a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

*Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)*

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY  
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



**Dr. Eddie Ildefonso**

*West Los Angeles Living Word Christian Center  
Los Angeles, California*

*Professor, Covington Theological Seminary  
Honduras, Pakistan, Zimbabwe Extensions  
International Dean, Covington Theological*

## NOW IS THE HOUR!

### **Romans 13:11-14 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> **Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.**

<sup>12</sup> **The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.**

<sup>13</sup> **Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.**

<sup>14</sup> **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**

I'm sure you've noticed that each year almost all the major news magazines put out an issue with special pictorial sections recalling people and events that made news during the previous year. Many magazines also include articles by experts predicting what they expect to see happening in the years ahead. Some even go so far as to make predictions covering 10, 20, or more years in the future. In the past, a few of these predictions have proven amazingly accurate, while others couldn't have been more wrong.

For example, back in 1967, experts predicted that by the turn of the century technology would have taken over so much of the work we do that the average American work week would be only 22 hours long, and that we would work only 27 weeks a year. As a result, one of our biggest problems would be in deciding what to do with all our leisure time.

Well, I don't know about you, but that prediction certainly missed the mark as far as my life was concerned! In fact, most of us seem to be very busy. We're always in a hurry. We walk fast, and talk fast, and eat fast. And after we eat, all too often, we stand up and say, "Excuse me. I've gotta run."

So here we are, at the first day of 2015. I wonder how we'll do this year? Will we be as busy? Will we make any better use of our time? In 364 days, when this year is over, will we be looking back with joy, or with regret? Will we be looking at the future with anticipation, or

with dread?

There is a passage of Scripture that I believe can be of help to us as we look forward to the rest of 2015 if we'll listen to it. The passage is [Ephesians 5:15, 17](#), and here is what it says,

[Ephesians 5:15 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>15</sup>“**Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.**”

[Ephesians 5:17 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>17</sup>“**So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**”

I think that in this passage the Apostle Paul presents some important lessons that we need to consider.

### **I. OUR TIME ON THIS EARTH IS LIMITED**

First of all, we must be very careful how we live because our time on this earth is limited.

The Psalmist wrote:

[Psalm 39:4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>4</sup>“**LORD, make me to know my end And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am.**”

And again:

[Psalm 90:10 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>10</sup>“**As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away.**”

Now, I realize that for some of you younger folk, 70 or 80 years sounds like a long, long time. In fact, I can remember when I thought anyone over 40 was ancient. But no longer! It is all rather relative, isn't it?

For example, for teenagers in love talking together in the car, an hour or two seems like a blink of an eye. But for mom and dad worrying about what's going on out in that car, an hour or two seems like an eternity.

The Psalmist also tells us to number our days so that we will develop a heart of wisdom.

A few years ago People Magazine published an article entitled “Dead Ahead” telling about a new clock that keeps track of how much time you have left to live. It calculates an average life span of 75 years for men and 80 years for women. So you program your sex and age into the clock, and from then on it will tell you how much time you have left. It sold for \$99.95. I didn't buy one. But it is an intriguing idea. Isn't that what the Psalmist told us to do to number our days?

When I first heard about the clock I figured out that if I lived to be 75 years old that I had just about 4,745 days left to live. That's all, just 4,745 days left to live. But wait a minute. Neither you nor I have a guarantee of even one day more to live. In fact the Bible tells us not to count on tomorrow because tomorrow may not come for you or for me. All we have is right now. So our time on this earth is valuable because it is very limited.

### **II. MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY**

Secondly, Paul tells us that we must make “**the most of every opportunity.**” And he gives a reason, “**because the days are evil.**”

Jesus said that Satan is a robber and a thief, and one of the things he tries to rob from us is our time because time is a very precious possession. Just think of the time wasted in sinning. Think of the time wasted in bars or in gambling casinos or in shallow affairs. Think of the time wasted in gossiping or spreading rumors. Or think about all the time wasted worrying about the consequences of the sins we have committed. Satan is a thief and a robber!

But it is not just sin that makes demands on our time. Sometimes even good things can make demands.

Jesus went to the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. He sat down to teach, and Mary was sitting at His feet just soaking in every word. Meanwhile, Martha was out in the kitchen preparing dinner.

Now, you know the story. It is found in [Luke 10:](#)

[Luke 10:1-3 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup>“**Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.**”

<sup>2</sup> **And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”**

<sup>3</sup> **“Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.”**

**Go ahead and finish reading the rest of the story.**

Martha gets upset because Mary is not in the kitchen, too.

**Luke 10:38-39 (NASB)**

<sup>38</sup> **“Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.**

<sup>39</sup> **She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.”**

So she complains to Jesus:

**Luke 10:40-41 (NASB)**

<sup>40</sup> **“But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.”**

<sup>41</sup> **But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things.”**

Now was Martha committing a sin by fixing a meal in the kitchen? No, of course not! But here's the problem. She was so preoccupied with what she was doing that she didn't realize that God was in her living room.

That's the same mistake you and I make almost every day. We get so caught up in the here and now that we fail to deal with the eternal, the things that will last forever and ever.

**Richard Swenson**, a medical doctor, wrote a book in which he discusses one of the major maladies of our time anxiety and stress. He calls it “overload,” and says that people are just plain overloaded.

**1.** We're overloaded with commitments. We've committed ourselves to go here and there, to take part in this activity and that social function. As a result we soon begin meeting ourselves coming and

going because we have overloaded ourselves in the area of commitments.

**2.** We're also overloaded with possessions, he says. Our closets are full, and our garages are overflowing. We've gone into debt to pay for all of these things that we “simply must have.” And now we're so afraid that someone will steal them. We are overloaded in the area of possessions.

**3.** Thirdly, we have an overload in the area of work. We get up early, fight traffic, and experience intolerable working conditions because we have to if we're going to pay for all those possessions that we've accumulated.

**4.** There is also an information overload. He said that as a doctor he has to read 220 articles a month just to keep up with all the changes in his profession. And now with the internet there's an information superhighway. But the problem is that we can't possibly absorb it all. So we feel an overload in this area, too.

Well, I could go on and on, but you get the picture. There are so many demands on our time, so many good things that need to be done. But there are just 8,760 hours in this year, and we've already used 58 of them. We do want to make the most of every opportunity, so what are we to do?

**III. UNDERSTAND WHAT THE LORD'S WILL IS**

Well, to answer that, Paul tells us,

**Ephesians 5:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> **“So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”**

Now what do you think God's will is for you in this New Year? Do you think He wants your mind so saturated with worries and anxieties that you can't think spiritual thoughts? Do you think He wants your calendar so crowded that you don't have time for the important things? What do you think God's will is for you this year?

Let me make a couple of suggestions for you to consider. First of all, establish your priorities.

**1.** I'm assuming that since you're in church that you believe God should be a part of your life. But when you begin to establish priorities, you have to decide just

where He stands in your life. So ask yourself, “Who or what is most important in my life?”

And I’m hoping that your answer will be, “My relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, is most important to me.” If so, then put that at the top of your list of priorities, and say, “This will affect my decisions, my scheduling, my relationship with others, and my whole outlook on life.” Therefore, when Sunday rolls around neither rain nor shine nor football kickoffs will interfere with my being in church, because He comes first in my life. I’ll worship the Lord and nothing will interfere with that.

2. You also need to schedule some definite time each day to pray and to read His Word. Pray for yourself and for your family and for people around you. Pray for the church, and for the missionaries. Sometimes they feel so alone and so far away. You’ll never know how much your prayers will mean to them. But you’ll be blessed as you grow in your faith and trust in the Lord!

3. You must also spend time with your family. Every husband here ought to have a date night with his wife. I’m serious. You ought to have a date night with your wife, a time when just the two of you get away and don’t have anything else to interfere. No beepers, no telephones, no interruptions, and you can just talk. Maybe at a nice restaurant or maybe at home. Wherever it is, spend some time together.

Spend time with your children, too. They’re growing up ever so fast. These are precious moments. Don’t let them get away. Make sure that you spend quality time with your children. Make sure that your family is very high on the list.

4. Now most of us have to work. And I think Christians ought to be good workers. When someone hires a Christian they ought to know they’re getting someone who will give them an honest day’s work, and not cheat them. Because we’re Christians we have a responsibility to the Lord to honor Him even in the marketplace. **So first of all, establish your priorities.**

And then, learn how to live today. The two greatest enemies of time are regrets for things we did in the past, and anxiety about what will happen to us in

the future. Many of us are living either in the past or in the future. In fact, many of us are engaged in the little game of, “I wish it were.” “I wish it were next week,” or “I wish it were next month,” or some such thing. Kids go to school and say, “Boy, I wish this day was over.”

Gary Freeman tells about a girl who went to college and just hated it. But she told herself, “If I can ever get out of college and get married and have children, I know I’ll finally be able to enjoy life.”

So she stuck with it. She went to classes every day and finally graduated from college. Then she got married and had children, and discovered that children are a lot of work. So she told herself, “If I can just get these kids raised, then I’ll be able to relax and really enjoy life.”

But about the time the kids were entering high school her husband said, “Guess what? We don’t have enough money to send our kids to college. I guess you’ll have to get a job.” Well, she didn’t want to, but she knew he was right and they needed the money, so she went to work. And she hated it. But she told herself, “If I can just get these kids out of college, and get all of the bills paid, then I can quit work and really enjoy life.”

Finally, the last child graduated from college, and all the bills were paid. So she walked into her employer’s office and said, “I quit.” He said, “Oh, you don’t want to quit now. If you stay with us just another 8 years you’ll have a pension for the rest of your life.”

She thought, “Well, I don’t want to work another 8 years, but there’s all that money there, and I really can’t turn down the opportunity.” So she worked for another 8 years. Finally, she and her husband retired at the same time. They sold their home and bought a little retirement cottage. Then they sat down on the swing on their front porch and looked at the family picture album and dreamed about the good old days.

Someone said, “Life is what happens to you while you’re making plans to do something else.” True, isn’t it? Another year has come and gone. A new year stretches before us. Help us Lord, to redeem the time. So have a happy new year!

And during the New Year may you have:  
enough happiness to keep you sweet - enough trials

to keep you strong,  
enough sorrow to keep you human - enough hope to keep you happy,  
enough failure to keep you humble - enough success to keep you eager,  
enough friends to give you comfort - enough wealth to meet your needs,  
enough enthusiasm to make you look forward to tomorrow, and  
enough determination to make each day better than the day before.

Lord, please help us to use the 8,760 hours of this year the wisest way we can for you, and for your glory. Remember what Romans tells us:

**Romans 13:11-14 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup>“**Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.**

<sup>12</sup> **The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”**

## **CORAM DEO** **(Before the face of God)**

The missionary and martyr **Jim Elliott (1927–1956)** wrote, “The devil has made it his business to monopolize on three elements: noise, hurry, crowds... Satan is quite aware of the power of silence.” It is difficult to escape the busyness, noise, and crowds of life. We are bombarded by a host of amusements and contraptions, most of which we have enthusiastically welcomed into our lives, homes, communities, and churches. We have conditioned ourselves to distraction, and we are leading the next generation down the same path in a hurry. **C.S. Lewis** wrote, “We live, in fact, in a world starved for solitude, silence, and privacy.” We stand at a crossroads, and we will either rediscover the lost virtues of listening, meditating, and thinking, or we will amuse ourselves to death.

However, our problem lies not in our twenty-first-century tools and toys, but in our inability to use them without them using us. Every gadget we own was invented to make life more easy and sim-

ple, and, in God’s providence, every device, network, and program is given to us by God to use for His kingdom, His gospel, and His glory. God has called us to subdue the earth, and we do this by listening intently to His Word, meditating on it, carefully thinking through how to apply it, and being doers of it as we commune with God and live in community with one another in the family, the church, and the world. We are made for family, we are made for worship, we are made for community, and we are made to engage the world as we follow Jesus Christ, bringing the light of His gospel to a dark world. But in order to do this well, with biblical discernment, ancient wisdom, and enduring passion, we must recover the disciplines of listening, meditating, and thinking as we live *coram Deo*, **before the face of God.**







**Pastor Gary C. Fleetwood**  
*Chime Bell Baptist Church  
Windsor, South Carolina*

*Professor, Covington Theological Seminary  
Aiken, South Carolina Extension  
Dean, Covington Theological Seminary  
Country of Romania*

## Hebrews 9 Overview Part 6

We want to complete the overview study of [Hebrews 9](#) by looking at two areas of application. The first application has to do with how a believer actually **reflects** the greatness of Christ and His atoning and saving work in their life. The second application asks the question as to how a believer actually **offers** themselves to God. In reality, the two cannot be separated. They are part and parcel of the same spiritual fabric. It would be utterly impossible to reflect the greatness of Christ's saving work in our life if for whatever reason we were not willing to offer ourselves to Him for His glory. In essence, what we are asking is at the very heart of the Christian life – what is it worth to us to truly yield ourselves to Christ.

### **Practical Application 1: Reflecting the character of Christ in our life.**

Whenever the idea of reflecting the greatness of Christ in a believer's life is to be seriously contemplated, it is important to appreciate that for that to happen there has to be a meaningful and supernatu-

ral spiritual transformation in that individual's life. In reality, it is not the believer that people need to see, but rather they need to see Christ in the believer. It is impossible to actually reflect someone that you do not care that much about. So, at a practical level, how does that spiritual transformation actually develop in a believer's life once they have been saved? Well, just salvation itself is a transformation of no small consequence. To be transferred from death to life, from darkness to light, and from Adam to Christ is really more than can be expressed in a few sentences. It is an eternal exchange that has eternal ramifications that cannot be fully understood by the one coming to Christ. For instance, [Colossians 1:13](#) says,

**<sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,**

The word “**delivered**” means to be rescued (NASB, NIV), and the word “**conveyed**” means to be transferred (NASB, ESV). We are rescued from a place of eternal judgment and transferred to a place of eternal forgiveness. When that happens, the rescued sinner personally undergoes a life changing spiritual transformation. [Ephesians 2:1](#) says that we were “**dead in trespasses and sins.**” [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says,

**<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

[1 Corinthians 15:22](#) says this,

**<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.**

These are not just some minor statements that have little to no impact. To the contrary, they are words revealing that real salvation has a life-transforming impact on the sinner's life. Someone who is lost cannot just be brought into the “**kingdom of God**” and it has no bearing on their life. To the contrary, everything in their life experiences an initial and undeniable transformation. There is no Scriptural way to quantify how much of a personal change someone experiences or how that individual actually experiences the change, but there is a very meaningful change that **MUST** take place – or sal-

vation simply has not occurred. The last thing that needs to happen is to clone the experience so that everyone has to experience what someone else experienced. That would be very detrimental. An eight year old that truly is saved will most likely experience something far different from a rebellious and miserable drunkard who has their life completely overturned by the Holy Spirit. Simply suffice it to say that real salvation makes a real difference, and if it does not, then the individual in all likelihood has only experienced something spiritually superficial at best.

So, how does the believer reflect the greatness of Christ in their life? Well, I am sure that there are many ways, but one of the obvious ways is through continued spiritual growth and transformation. [Romans 12:2](#) gives some insight into how this actually happens when it states,

**<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

[2 Corinthians 3:18](#) says,

**<sup>18</sup>But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

These are the only two places that the word “**transformed**” is used in the New Testament where it has a positive spiritual meaning relative to how salvation impacts the believer right now. It is the Greek word “*metamorphoo*” from where the English word “metamorphosis” is derived. It literally means to change or to transfigure. The Greek word is composed of two words “*meta*” and “*morphoo*”. The word “*morphoo*” is where the English word “*morphe*” is derived and it means to change gradually and completely from one thing to another. It is the idea of the caterpillar morphing into a butterfly. As a verb it implies changing the form and character of something so that it is different from what it used to be.

It represents the very nature and essence, the inseparable part, the unchanging part of a man. The man in evening clothes looks differently than he does in work clothes, but inwardly he is still the same. I am 67 years old, but I am still the same person that I was when I was 23 years old. However, I have grown and matured, but I am still the same person. So, what the word is indicating is that the transformation is primarily an inward change in the believer’s inner being, and that is exactly where Christ is the most reflected – not in the outer man, but in the “**inner man**”. [Ephesians 3:16](#) says this,

**<sup>16</sup>that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,**

If a believer truly wants to be “**transformed**” in the “**inner man**”, then they have to be renewed in their mind. Spiritual transformation involves two distinct areas: (1) an initial spiritual event called “**salvation**”, and (2) an ongoing spiritual process called “**sanctification**”. The first happens only once, and the second happens all the time. The first involves the work of the Spirit (being born of the Spirit – [John 3](#)), and the second involves the work of the Scriptures. Both are necessary and essential for spiritual transformation to take place. The word “**transformed**” provides some insight into what actually must happen. It is in the imperative mood, present tense, and passive voice. The imperative mood indicates that the believer being “**transformed**” is an actual command and should never be viewed as something that is “optional” for their life. Unfortunately, for many Christians the renewing of their mind is not a meaningful and consistent priority, and as their life progresses their spiritual life often regresses. They passionately feed their body, but dispassionately feed their mind and heart.

The fact that the verb is in the present tense means that it is an activity that needs to be continuing. It is what would be considered a habit or a practice of someone’s life – something that they are fully committed to doing. An important part of the verb, however, is that it is in the passive voice which means that the action is being done to them. When a believer makes it a consistent pattern and habit of their life to spend time renewing their mind through the meditation on and study of Scripture, it is the sole work of the Holy Spirit within them to increase their spiritual desires, their spiritual

knowledge, and their spiritual fruit. The Holy Spirit performs that work solely through the instrument of His Word. The truest measure of a believer's spiritual life is directly related to the time that they spend meditating on and studying the Word of God. There are no shortcuts to spiritual success. Being able to reflect the greatness of Christ in the believer's life comes from personally knowing Christ. Those that know Christ the most reflect Christ the most, and those that know Christ the least reflect Christ the least.

It is critical to an understanding of [Romans 12:2](#) to be clear on the meaning of the word “renewing”. The word is a noun and involves an active adjustment of the believer's moral and spiritual vision and thinking to the very mind of God. It is that adjustment that is designed to create the transforming effect on the believer. Many Christians have the idea that they can have some kind of spiritual experience that brings about this spiritual transformation, but [Romans 12:2](#) is clear that it occurs as a continual process and not as a one-time experience. Anyone who sincerely desires to be spiritually transformed must come to a place in their life where they are fully resolved that they are going to be committed to those activities that God has designed to create the actual transformation in their life. This is a process of being changed, of being renewed, and of being transformed and it takes a degree of personal resolve in the believer's life to make it happen. What the [Romans 12:2](#) passage is doing is stressing the willingness and the responsiveness on the part of the believer to be personally committed to this renewing process of spending time in God's Word.

The following are some very practical steps to help the believer actually reflect Christ in their life.

[First, they should make a personal assessment of where they are spiritually.](#) [2 Corinthians 13:5](#) says,

**<sup>5</sup>Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you are disqualified**

“**Examine yourself**” to see if your faith is truly biblical. The Greek word for “**examine**” means to put to the test in the sense of ascertaining the validity or integrity of one's faith in God. It refers to making a personal assessment to determine personal spiritual achievement. Ask the difficult questions that you may not want to actually answer. What are some of those questions? Well, they may vary from individual to individual, but for the most part there are general questions that every Christian should ask themselves. Am I too busy to become Christlike? Does my life have the right priorities? How often does the Holy Spirit actually direct my life into the deeper things of Christ? Am I committed to a time of meaningful and purposeful study in the Word of God?

Based on how a believer honestly and transparently answers those kind of questions will most often reflect their personal resolve relative to their actually reflecting the character of Christ in their life. Until a believer is ready to “**examine**” himself, they can never arrive at a true assessment of where they are spiritually. At some point every believer has to put their life to the test to see if they are genuinely and truly in the faith or if they are just a casual part of the religious culture and landscape.

[Secondly, a believer should determine what personal sacrifices they are willing to make in order to reflect the character of Christ in their life.](#) Sacrifices are never easy to make, but a meaningful Christian life cannot be lived without them. [Romans 12:1](#) defines this part of the process accordingly,

**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.***

The particular Greek word for “**sacrifice**” can refer to either the act of sacrifice or the victim of the sacrifice. Based on a believer's personal assessment of what needs to take place in their life in order to reflect the character of Christ, it will lead to other questions that will require personal resolve to implement in their life. For instance, a believer may ask the following questions: Am I willing to set aside a consistent daily time to be alone with God and make it a priority of my life? Am I willing to change my current priorities to achieve



God's best for my life? Most people do not like to make sacrifices simply because of the personal cost involved. They do not like to change their current priorities because their current priorities are what generally makes their life comfortable. If the believer does not have a spiritual mindset that encourages personal assessment and corresponding changes, then changes will never occur. It is the old adage that "if we always do what we have always done, then we will always get what we always got". Our mind has to be transformed, changed, and altered for meaningful changes to take place. This will not be easy. These kinds of meaningful spiritual changes do not come easy, and especially for the believer who does not have a spiritual mindset that encourages spiritual change. Meaningful spiritual changes require personal sacrifice and personal change, often major changes, and those kind of changes do not happen often in people's lives. We are all creatures of habit, and very often those habits do not reflect the personal work of Christ in our life.

**Thirdly, develop a personal plan to achieve your most important spiritual goals.**

Whatever the plan may be, it must have a reasonable timeframe to be effective. The timeframe cannot be too short and it cannot be too long. Either of those two options will only lead to frustration. Most likely it would be best not to work on multiple or major areas at the same time. The believer simply needs to prioritize their goals, and it would be beneficial for them to do the hard ones first. If they can accomplish the hard ones first, what they will find is that those which follow will seem very easy to achieve. However, success has to be achieved. Believers have to develop a spiritual mindset that will not accept compromise or failure. To fail will diminish the very character of Christ being displayed in their life. Believers must prioritize their goals, but be patient when they may fail in achieving those goals. We can only eat an elephant one bite at a time. Achieving success in a very important area of our life will make achieving success in lesser areas much easier.

**Practical Application 2: Offering our life to God**

The second application deals with what it means for our life to become a meaningful offering before God. In beginning this last exhortation and

application, it needs to be clear that we are not talking about a financial offering or money. Certainly at times that may be involved, but please appreciate that that is not the thrust or the motivation behind anything that will be taught in this application. This is about the believer's life becoming an offering, or as **Romans 12:1** states it – "a living sacrifice".

The words "offer" (17) and "offering" (13) are used 30 times in the New Testament. Of those 30 times, 14 (or nearly half) are in the book of Hebrews. Seven (7) of those times are in **Hebrews 10**. So, one of the primary emphases in concluding the doctrinal section of Hebrews has to do with the idea of an "offering". The word "offered" is used 25 times in the New Testament and 11 of those times are in Hebrews. The word "offered" is used 4 times in **Hebrews 9** alone. So of the 55 times that a form of the word is used, 25 – almost half – come from the book of Hebrews. It is a special word with a special significance for the believer's life. So, what are some of the practical aspects of a believer "offering" their life to God.

**First, before you can offer something, you must first have an actual and meaningful offering.**

Any meaningful offering must have some intrinsic and essential value to the one making the offering. One obvious example of this was Abraham and his willingness to actually offer his son Isaac. Isaac had great personal and inherent value to Abraham, so the depth of his offering was as deep as one could possibly make. In the book of Malachi, God rebuked His people and the priests for their insincere and meaningless offerings. **Malachi 1:7 and 13** says,

**"You offer defiled food on My altar...."**

**<sup>13</sup>"...And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick..."**

i.e., the priests and the people were just going through the motions of making an offering, but it was actually unacceptable and rejected by God.

**Secondly, the more valuable and meaningful the actual offering, the greater the spiritual impact on the one making the offering.** **2 Samuel 24:24** speaking of David says,

<sup>24</sup>Then the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

Every meaningful offering has a level of **personal sacrifice** associated with it.

**Thirdly, we must consider the One to whom the sacrifice is being made.** The greatest offering ever made involved an unspeakable twofold sacrifice. First, the Father was willing to sacrifice His very Son to become sin for us and to pay the penalty of the spiritual debt that we could never pay. Secondly, the Son was willing to sacrifice His very life to become the greatest offering ever made.

**Fourthly, at a personal level, consider the personal cost of what you offer to God and whether or not it is a sacrificial offering or a non-sacrificial offering.**

**Fifthly, when you make an offering to God, make sure that your heart is right before both God and others.** Matthew 5:23-24 says,

<sup>23</sup>Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

The attitude that something is given is often more important than the actual sacrifice itself. Do not offer things to the Lord begrudgingly.

**Sixthly, bathe every offering to God in personal and private prayer that through the offering God would be glorified.**

**Seventhly, keep no records, make no demands, and keep it private.** Do not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing. Matthew 6:3-4 says,

<sup>3</sup>But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.


Practice sacrifice **personally**, practice sacrifice as **husband and wife**, practice sacrifice as a **family**, and lastly, practice sacrifice with a **church** willing to make the necessary sacrifices to honor Christ as well.

*Continued in next edition...*

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*West Los Angeles  
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6520 Arizona Avenue  
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Email: [admin@wlalwcc.org](mailto:admin@wlalwcc.org)  
 Web Site: [www.wlalwcc.org](http://www.wlalwcc.org)