

July, 2008

# Pause Ponder Profit

## A Living Sacrifice

by James A. Brown

The apostle Paul tells us to, "... present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). The verb "present" in this verse commands a definite commitment. As I seek God's favor, there are some things I must do in order to fulfill this commitment.

I must present myself completely to God. I cannot give myself as an offering with the attitude of keeping part of myself back "for myself". Some Christians have adopted this attitude and will find themselves unacceptable before God in the day of judgment. They try to serve their desires and what they want and forget about God and what He wants. They set their hearts on things of the world, serving their own ambitions.

But when I give myself completely to God, I deny myself (Matt 16:24). I disown myself and have no longer any claim on myself. It is God who now has possession of me. I have given myself to God to be used in His service and should follow His word toward that end.

God must see my love and devotion for Him through the energy I spend in His service. When I put my mind, my hands and my talents to work for the Lord, I am a living, acceptable offering. I cannot appear as a dead sacrifice, one that has no vitality. I must be alive to God and dead to sin. Genuine dedication to God demands that I present "a living sacrifice."

God wants us to surrender ourselves completely into His service. We sometimes sing the song, "All To Jesus I Surrender". Have you completely surrendered all? If not: believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God (Jn. 8:24); repent of your sins (Acts 17:30); confess Christ before man (Rom. 10:10, Acts 8:37); and be baptized for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38). If you have rendered this obedience before but have taken yourself from God's service, repent (Acts 8:22), confess your sins (1 Jn. 1:9), and present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

## Remember Our Gospel Meeting

Speaker: Tony Ripley

Sunday, July 20th

9:45 A.M. 10:45 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

Mon. — Fri., July 21st — 25th

7:00 P.M.

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## The Intended Purpose Of The Church

by Tony Ripley

The Lord's church, in its universal capacity, is without doubt the largest body of consecrated people ever known to mankind. As opposed to having membership in the Rotary or Kiwanis, etc., the body of Christ consist of the redeemed of all ages. This body of people transcends any known body that has ever existed or will ever exist. We are passionately devoted to the church that Jesus purchased with his blood, and we are equally zealous in leading others to it. The church of Christ is not just a name. It identifies who we are in particular and the gospel fortifies what we are about.

The local church of Christ is God's provision for the good of people. In the local fellowship, the benefits out-weigh the alternatives. However, we must keep in mind the nature of this local fellowship in that we do not corrupt the reason for its existence.

1. The local church was not intended to serve as a venue of entertainment. The idea of attending the local assembly to be spiritually satisfied is a mistake in the mind of the worshipper. Our coming together is not for the purpose of self gratification, but for the pleasure of our God. The activities of the assembly are probably different than what man would have chosen for himself. These activities such as singing, praying, Bible study, pooling our resources, and the Lord's supper are all divinely instituted practices of the children of God according to first century pattern.

2. The local church was intended to be an instrument of encouragement. The writer of Hebrews clearly states that we are to assemble together and encourage one another (Heb. 10:25). Edification can be illustrated in various ways through personal contact with others or simply singing together in order to glorify God.

3. The local church was not intended to be a safe haven for the immoral. Although immoral behavior seems to be the protocol of the day, the saints are expected to be holy, pure, separate from the world, and consecrated to the service of the Lord. Immoral living is to be repented of quickly and righteous living must be the order of business for each and every saint.

4. The Christians in the first century were a committed group of people. They were not involved in so many activities of life that they were unable to make time to assemble with their brethren. They gave up all in order to fulfill the intended purpose of the local church.

5. The local church sought out the needs of their own and attended to them. In Acts 4, the brethren had all things in common. This was so because all the members saw to it.

6. The local church was intended to be an instrument spreading the gospel. It was not intended to be a social club. The preaching should be Bible based and accurate. The message should be as strong as the text it comes from and the attitude should be one of love and genuine concern for

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## Maliciousness Condemned and God Likeness Commanded

by James A. Brown

*Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.*

If God dealt with us like some brethren deal with their fellow man, it would be a very miserable state of affairs. It is heartbreaking for a preacher or any Christian to have to listen to someone tell how he/she has been mistreated by a Christian. But the sad reality of the matter is that this is an experience that happens far too often.

In verse 31 of our text Paul listed six negative attitudes and actions which must not be the character of any Christian. He tells us that every hint of such dispositions must be put away. Take a careful look at each one of these.

**Bitterness** — William Barclay tells us that “the Greeks defined this word as long standing resentment, as the spirit which refuses to be reconciled.” This nature is cultivated by many a Christian who broods over the affronts and injuries which he/she has received in the past. Some seem to even cherish this attitude and are proud of the fact that they have not forgotten some insult they received long ago. It is the person we sometimes say has been weaned on lemons or sour pickles. This person does not love enough to forget. And will do nothing to initiate a return to a friendly relationship.

**Wrath** — This is the heated and unsettled conditions of resentfulness and bitterness confined within the heart. It is bitterness that has reached the boiling point. So in a sense this emotion flows from bitterness.

**Anger** — This is the foaming up and overflowing of wrath within a man that breaks out in some word or action against whom it expresses resentment. It is long lasting and looks forward to the taking of revenge.

**Clamor** — This is one manifestation of anger. The Greek word simply means to “cry out” (cf. Matt. 25:6; Acts 23:9). In our text it suggests crying out or yelling at those against whom anger is directed. This word describes a person who when angry grows louder and louder in their aggressiveness. Harsh language and loud rowdy remarks are all found in clamor.

**Evil speaking** — This word, when used of speech directed toward God, is translated “blasphemy”. In our text it is blasphemy against the good name of another. It is the railing, cursing, slandering and/or even backbiting which is done for the purpose of ruining another’s reputation, or gaining the revenge desired by “anger”.

**Malice** — The Greek word translated malice here is not just some general term for moral evil, like baseness or wickedness. But rather it is a special kind of vice. Thayer defines the word as, “malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure”. Malice is the condition of mind from which all of the above mentioned qualities flow. The one who has malice in his heart is the one who harbors ill will toward another and wishes for (maybe even plots) harm against him/her. This cold-blooded disposition should never enter the mind of the child of God.

These words are not complicated. They are easy to understand. So let us be warned that there is no place for these in the Christian’s character.

In verse 32 and in place of the carnal characteristics of verse 31, Paul gives the proper attitude which each Christian is to have.

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To **"be kind to one another"** means to be good, pleasant, and gracious to another. It means to be willing to serve others and to show a polite and generous attitude. William Barclay informs us that, "the Greeks defined this quality as the disposition of mind which thinks as much of its neighbor's affairs as it does of its own." Therefore, kindness requires that I consider the other person's feelings. It demands that I seek his happiness rather than his misery. It calls on me to be helpful and not hurtful.

**Tenderhearted** — This is having a heart full of compassion and expressing it in action. It is showing sympathy and empathy toward others as they are faced with difficult circumstances of life and being responsive to their needs. It means that, as I learn of my fellow man's problems and sorrows, I will seek to lighten his burden by help and comfort.

**Forgiving** — To be a forgiving person is to, "show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent" (Thayer). The Greek word translated "forgiving" here comes from the root word "charis", which is translated "grace" one hundred and thirty times in the King James Version. The idea then is to forgive freely, graciously, and without grudging. And a Christian cannot do this without being kind and tenderhearted just as God was as He forgave you. If we fail in this, God will refrain from forgiving us (Matt. 18:21-35).

The phrase "for Christ's sake" (KJV) is literally "in Christ" (NKJV, ASV, NASV, RSV, NRSV, NIV). Forgiveness of sins is only "in Christ" (Eph. 1:7). **Therefore, be followers of God as dear children** (Eph. 5:1)



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**Sunday**  
Radio 1490 AM . . . . . 9:00 A.M.  
Bible Study . . . . . 9:45 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 10:45 A.M.  
Worship . . . . . 6:00 P.M.  
**Wednesday**  
Bible Study . . . . . 7:00 P.M.

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