

**JUDGES 14:8-11**  
**NO SEPARATION!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 14 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Judges.

We are currently looking at the 13<sup>th</sup> and last Judge in the book of Judges, Samson. And Samson ministered in the western portion of Israel.

Keep in mind that Samson had started out life with great potential. The Lord had called Samson from the womb.

Remember the story. Manoah and his wife had no children and one day the “**Angel of the LORD appeared to**” Manoah’s wife and told her that she would have a son and he would be a Nazarite from birth. In fact, she was not to drink wine or eat grapes or eat any unclean thing while she was pregnant!

And in Judges 13:24-25 we are told, “**So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.**”

And, as we have seen and will continue to see, even though Samson had all that potential, even though Samson was empowered by the Spirit of God, he still needed to walk by faith, he still needed to obey the Lord, and he did not!

As we have seen, these other Judges delivered the children of Israel out of the hands of their enemies, but not Samson. We are told that “**. . . he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.**” Judges 13:5.

I find that very interesting. I truly believe Samson could have done more, he could have delivered the children of Israel from the bondage they were in by the hands of the Philistines, but because he walked in the flesh, he was not able to do all that God wanted to do through him!

And as you look at the things that Samson did in his life, how he mounted up attacks against the enemy, he did not go with his fellow Jews, he was a one-man show.

Not only that, but he did not destroy the enemy for the nation's sake, but because they did something against him.

In fact, it is not till the time of Samuel that we see a large-scale victory against the Philistines, even though Samson could have had a great victory against them. You can read of this in I Samuel chapter 7, but let's just look at a few verses. Here in I Samuel 7:11-14 we are told, **“And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us.’ So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.”**

I have called our study this morning – ***NO SEPARATION!*** And the idea is that Samson was to separate himself from the world and be separated unto God. But he didn't do that and because of that, he came up short of all that God had for him!

Now let me go over what this Nazarite vow is all about because it will play a huge factor in what we will be looking at this morning.

We read of this vow of a Nazirite in Numbers chapter 6:1-21. In these verses we are given the rules of this vow of the Nazirite.

You see, when a person took the vow of a Nazirite, he was dedicating himself to the Lord.

In fact, the Hebrew word for “**Nazirite**” is NAZIR and it means to “*set apart.*”

In other words, he was setting himself apart from this world and focused on the Lord.

You were consecrating yourself or dedicating yourself totally to the Lord and both men and women can take this vow that could last for 30 days or your entire life.

For the most part, the vow was a short one, maybe lasting 30 days or so, but again, like in the case of Samson it was to last his entire life! It was a time where you would draw close to the Lord and fellowship with Him. And the only woman we see taking this vow in the Scriptures was Manoah’s wife when she was pregnant with Samson, (Judges 13:4), but that does not mean that other women didn’t take this vow.

With this vow there were three main things that the person needed to do or abstain from.

First of all, you were to abstain from anything that came off the vine, not just wine but the grapes that make the wine!

Also, you were not to cut your hair but let it grow during the time that this vow was taken. The long hair was just an outward symbol of your dedication to the Lord.

And lastly, you were not to touch anything that had died for then you would be unclean! This was just showing the purity we are to have before the Lord.

That was what Samson was to do, be separated to this world and be dedicated to the Lord!

And at this point, Samson has ***STRIKE ONE*** against him.

What do I mean by that?

I mean that he was to be a Nazarite and he broke that vow. We read of that in Judges 14:5, **“So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.”**

I don't think at this point Samson had any wine, but he went *DOWN*, down to the **“vineyards of Timnah”** and I am sure he had a few grapes from these vineyards. Remember, Samson is not looking up to God, he is going *DOWN!*

And thus, *STRIKE ONE* for Samson as he ate grapes from the vineyards!

Like I have said, I have called this study – *NO SEPARATION!* And I have broken down these verses into the following points. They are,

***SAMSON'S JUSTIFICATION OF SIN – JUDGES 14:8-9***

***WINE, WOMEN AND SONG – JUDGES 14:10-11***

Now keep in mind that Samson already has one strike against him and as we will see this morning, he will strike out before our study is over.

What we will see this morning is born out of what we read in Judges 14:1-2, **“Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, ‘I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.’”**

Now his parents tried to persuade Samson to marry a daughter of Israel and not a Philistine. But he refused. In fact, he told his parents, **“... ‘Get her for me, for she pleases me.’”** Judges 14:3.

And that is what took place, and on their way to see this Philistine girl, to talk with her parents and set up this marriage, Samson separated from his parents. And all of a sudden a lion came out and we are told, “**And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him [Samson], and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.**”

Now keep that in mind, that he did not tell his parents what he had done, because it will play a role in Samson continuing to move downward, away from the Lord as you will see.

I think this is an important lesson for us to learn as we see the pull of the world upon us today.

And my prayer as we go through this is that we would see the importance of being dedicated to the Lord and allow Him to mold and shape our lives, to transform our lives because if we don't, we too will start moving ***DOWN, DOWN, DOWN***, away from the Lord and we will begin to look more and more like the world as the world tries to conform us into its image!

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 14 beginning in verse 8 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic – ***NO SEPARATION!***

### **JUDGES 14**

#### **VERSES 8-9**

We are not told how much time passed from the arrangement of this marriage with this Philistine woman to the actual marriage, but, as we are told, “**After some time.**”

So as all the arrangements have been made for this marriage, we are told then, “**. . . he returned to get her . . .**”

In other words, Samson is by himself once again and we may not see that as a big deal, but it truly is.

The reason it is such a big deal is because there is no accountability for Samson. No one to tell him, "***Samson, you should not be doing that!***"

There was no one to correct him or to help keep him on track!

Let me share with you what I have seen over the years in ministry. When someone is not walking with the Lord, when they are doing things that they know are wrong, they will avoid fellowship, they will avoid believers who might correct them or tell them what they are doing is wrong.

That was Samson and it was not a good thing for him, and it is not good for us!

I truly believe that Biblical accountability is a vital aspect of a Christian's walk with the Lord. Let's face it, we all struggle with things and as we go through life, the temptation is there to travel down that path. But a brother or sister in the Lord who can correct you not to do what you are doing or to encourage you to continue that good fight of faith is priceless!

In Proverbs 27:17 we are told, "**As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.**"

Make no mistake about it, it is so important to have people in your life that will keep you in line, that will sharpen your mind through conversation, and yes, there may be even sparks at times, but the end result, if received, is you will keep yourself sharp instead of being dull. In fact, you will keep each other sharp!

I love Proverbs 17:17, which says, "**A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.**"

D. L. Moody put it this way regarding this verse. He said, *“A true friend is like ivy - the greater the ruin, the closer he clings.”*

You see, a true friend will always be there for you, in the good times and in the hard times. A true friend will love you in spite of what they know of you. And you will be able to tell your friends because when times get tough, they will be by your side through the thick and thin times. A true friend is priceless!

And here’s the thing. If you really love someone, if you really care about them, then you will tell them what they need to hear and not what they want to hear! And that can be difficult, but it is what is needed if we are a true friend and if we want to keep each other sharp in the faith!

Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 5:11, **“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”**

I like the way Hiebert put it. He wrote, *“It is clear that in the primitive churches the care of souls was not delegated to an individual officer, or even the more gifted brethren among them; it was a work in which every believer might have a share.”*

That is the way it should be. We should be looking out for each other. We should bring comfort to people. We should even bring correction to people, like I have said.

You see, there are times that you need to rebuke someone, but it is done with the idea of restoration and not destruction!

Also, in Galatians 6:1-2 Paul reminds us, **“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

I hope you see the picture that Paul is painting for us here. It is a person who has fallen into sin, overtaken by this sin, kind of like a person who is in the lake and drowning, they just can't get back.

And what are we to do when we see a person in a situation like that?

Many would throw him an anchor, and probably say, ***“Let's face it, he is only getting what he deserved. He should not have been doing that in the first place!”***

That is what the legalist would say as they look down from their ivory towers forgetting that it is by the grace of God that they stand. Legalism comes down hard on people, grace restores!

You see, as a Christian who understands grace, one who lives by the grace of God, they will act graciously towards others. When you truly see and understand what God has given to us, His amazing Grace and we in no way deserve it, you can't help but be compassionate and gracious to people.

Thus, as we see others struggling with sin, we can extend the grace of God to them and help them in the situations that they are in.

And here's the thing. And this is very obvious. When you put a legalist and a person who lives by grace, side by side, and a weaker Christian confesses their failings to them, their response is like night and day!

For the legalist, they don't get support, they don't get help, they get a lecture on how to be better, they get condemnation for what they have done.

They may say something like this, ***“I don't know how they could do that and call themselves a Christian! I would never think of doing anything like that!”***

Why do they respond like that?



Because it makes them look good since they have not done what this other Christian has done. That is not love, it is not the fruit of the Spirit!

But, when a person who is walking in the grace of God hears someone who is struggling with sin, they get love and encouragement to come out of that! It is the Fruit of the Spirit that is flowing through our lives!

What a difference that is and what a wonderful gift God has given to us – **GRACE!**

You see, we are not to destroy or condemn the person nor are we to condone their sin. There is a balance.

Then what are we to do?

We are to restore them to the faith. You see, they transgressed, they sinned either willfully or unintentionally and thus they don't need excuses, they are not to be ignored, but they are to be restored.

In fact, Paul uses the Greek word KATARTIZO, (kat-ar-tid'-zo) for "**restore**" and it carries with it the idea of "*to put in order*" or "*to restore to its former condition.*"

It was used as a medical term to set a broken or displaced bone or in Mark 1:19 it is used of the apostles mending their nets.

Look at how this is played out and you will see how we are to minister to people, help them, love them, extend the grace of God to them.

You see, to set a broken bone means you have to get close to that person in need, you have to touch them. It may cause them some pain as you reset the bone, but the idea is always a healing not destruction. It is done in love not hatred.

To mend a net, you have to physically touch that net and repair it, so too with someone who has fallen into a trespass.

We see this played out for us in a bad way and in a good way back in Genesis 9:20-23. These events took place after the flood and we are told, **“And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness.”**

Ham gossiped, told others of what happened to his father. That truly is how the Law looks, it condemns, puts down, makes fun of others while making us look good.

But we also see what Noah’s two other sons did, Shem and Japheth. They walked in backwards and covered their father’s sin – that is love! They extended *GRACE* to their father!

It is as Peter tells us in I Peter 4:8, **“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’”**

Now please understand that Peter is not saying that we just ignore the sins of others, as some like to think.

The idea here is as follows,

He must pay attention to his fellowship with other believers . . . and *have fervent love* for all members of the household of faith. Such a love will not publicize the faults and failings of other believers, but will protect them from public view. Someone has said, “Hatred makes the worst of everything. Love is entitled to bury things out of sight.”

The statement *“love will cover a multitude of sins”* (Prov. 10:12) should not be taken as a doctrinal explanation of how sins are put away. The guilt and penalty of sins can only be removed by the blood of Christ. Neither should the statement be used to condone sin or to relieve an assembly from its responsibility to discipline an offender. It means that true love is able to overlook minor faults and failures of other believers.

- William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, p. 227

In other words, can you forgive what others have done to you and love them with that Agape, that unconditional love that God has towards you? Are you willing to let those things go?

And the idea with this **“fervent”** love is that of a muscle that is stretched to its limit! Can we love like that? Not on our own but by the power of God’s Spirit working in us and through us we can. You see, it is the Fruit of the Spirit manifested in our lives.

Think of it like this. When you fall, when you sin, and you will, do you want God to disown you, belittle you, put you down?

Of course you don’t. You want God to extend His grace and mercy to you and restore you!

That is the idea here. That is what we are to do!

Let me give you this example to think about.

When you are teaching your child to walk and they fall, what do you do?

Do you go up to them and yell at them, ***“I told you so! You are not ready to walk! You fool! I am ashamed of you and I am going to tell everyone what you did! I am raising a moron!”***

No, at least I hope you don’t do that!

You pick them up, place them back on their feet and encourage them to go forward and you tell everyone that they are standing, that they are trying to walk, you encourage them, support them, love them.

Folks, by the grace of God we stand or as Paul put it, “**. . . restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**” Galatians 6:1.

John Stott put it this way, “*This suggests that gentleness is born of a sense of our own weakness and proneness to sin.*”

Here’s the thing. The legalist does not need to “*consider himself*” because he pretends that he could never commit such a sin.

But the believer, living by grace, realizes that no man is immune from falling. He has an attitude of humility because he realizes his own weaknesses. It is all by the grace of God we live!

I hope that makes sense to you. The legalist will condemn, and it is a works of the flesh.

The person living under Grace will restore and it is truly the fruit of the Spirit that is seen in their lives!

And when Paul brings up the idea of the one “**overtaken in any trespass,**” it paints the picture of a person sagging under a heavy load.

Now let’s think about this for a minute.

Have you ever met someone who was sagging under the heavy load that has come upon them?

We have all been there and I’m sure when we have been weighed down that some dear saint came alongside to help us.

I know I have been blessed often by people who have come alongside me and encouraged me, lifted me up, my wife being my biggest encourager, just being there to help lift the load!

Now keep in mind that Paul, in this letter to the Galatians, has been dealing with the mixing of Law and Grace and how they don't mix. If you add anything to Grace then it is no longer Grace, but it is works, it is the Law you are living by and believing you are saved by!

In saying that, we see here that Paul may be speaking of the Law and its heavy burden upon people's lives, crushing them under its weight.

And Paul's point is to help them out of that yoke of bondage the Law has them in, restore them in Christ and in doing so you are fulfilling the Law of Christ – loving others as the Lord has commanded us.

And it probably goes even farther than those who are weighed down by the Law, it is any sin that they find themselves in, weighing them down, that we are to restore them, as we saw in Galatians 6:1.

Remember what Jesus said in John 13:34-35, “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**”

We are to love as Christ loves us, unconditionally, sacrificially, *AGAPE* love!

And the last one I will look at in regard to this idea of accountability, is Hebrews 10:24-25, where Paul tells us, “**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**”

I know that after service there are times that you have to rush out to get to another engagement. That does happen.

But what I want to drive home here is that it is so important to stick around and fellowship, talk with people, get to know people that you don't know, introduce yourself to people.

As we do, I truly believe we encourage each other and stir each other up in love and good works. And by our actions, by our words, we can even correct someone who may be in sin. It is just taking that time to do that.

And this is something that has been made so clear to me today. Paul says, “**. . . and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**”

The Day that Paul is speaking of is the Day of the Lord, and prior to the start of that period of time things are going to go crazy!

Have we seen that today? Maybe just a little! No, not just a little! We have seen the craziness that is out there and we see how easy it is to be caught up in all of that and lose sight of what we are called to do, be a witness of Jesus Christ!

Accountability is so important and with Samson, he was not accountable to anyone and thus, his life reflected that.

Now some may feel, “*Hey, wasn't Samson empowered by God, by the Holy Spirit? So why does he need anyone else?*”

Yes, he was!

Then how in the world could he do those things that he did?

For Samson, he just did not listen to what God was telling him, he had a choice to either follow what the Lord has instructed him to do, or to do his own thing!

You see, just because you are empowered by God doesn't mean you are a robot; you have a free will. God gives to you the resources to live a life that will please Him, a holy life but He doesn't overtake you and make you do these things. A good lesson for us to learn!

And maybe if his parents were stronger in the faith and did not let Samson get away with what he wanted to do, maybe if he had friends who could have corrected him, he may not have gone down this path!

So we see here that Samson goes back to these vineyards and he sees this lion that he killed but now some bees have made a nest in its carcass.

So Samson reaches into this carcass and takes out some honey and eats it and brings some to his parents. But he does not tell them where he got this honey from, why?

Samson did not tell his parents where he got the honey because he knew it was a compromise of his Nazirite vow. You see, he was to be consecrated to the Lord and he was not to touch a dead body, and thus, ***STRIKE 2*** for Samson!

You can hide your sin from others, but you can't hide your sin from God!

Paul reminds us in Hebrews 4:13, "**And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**"

Be careful because for Samson, we see ***SAMSON'S JUSTIFICATION OF SIN!***

And what I mean by that is this.

Yes, that was the lion he killed, a dead carcass. But there was honey in that dead carcass and thus, God made the bees who made the honey and thus, this must be of God!

Now we are not sure exactly what he was thinking, but we do know that this sin did not affect him at all.

And don't we do the same? Of course we do.

If we are living in sin, we make all kinds of excuses why it is okay or why we have this special dispensation from God to sin.

The one that I hear a lot is Christians who are not married, and they are living together!

***“In God’s eyes we are married!”***

***“We love each other and really that is the most important thing!”***

***“It is just a piece of paper from the government, not from God, so we really don’t need it!”***

And the list can go on and that is just one area. But what does God say?

We don’t have to guess, it is very straightforward and the only way to ignore it is to ***JUSTIFY YOUR SIN***, as Samson did.

Listen carefully to what Paul says in Hebrews 13:3, **“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”**

Do you see how simple that is, and yet, we are very good and ***JUSTIFYING OUR SIN!***

Samson will get away with it for a time, but there will come a day when God will remove His hand of protection from upon him and Samson will be taken captive!

So we have seen two strikes against Samson, but we are not done. There is coming strike three for him, and he is going to be out!

### VERSES 10-11

I have called these verses – ***WINE, WOMEN AND SONG!*** And you will see why as we go through them!

Here we see this party for this seven-day marriage feast.



The marriage itself was not consummated yet, that would take place at the end of the seven days.

But this feast, literally a drinking party for seven days, was once again something Samson should not have been involved in.

He was not to drink wine and thus, ***STRIKE 3!*** In other words, Samson is out!

And since Samson had no friends in Timnah, they provide for him 30 Philistine young men for what we might call a bachelor party, but they are not really his friends!

Listen to what Paul has to say in I Corinthians 10:12. He wrote, “**Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**”

And if that does not do it for you, listen carefully to how The Living Bible puts this verse. It says, “**So be careful. If you are thinking, ‘Oh, I would never behave like that’ - let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin.**”

Complacency, thinking too highly of ourselves, thinking we know better than everyone else, is a slippery slope away from God.

Where are you walking? What direction are you heading, upward keeping your mind focused on the Lord or downward and keeping your mind focused on the things of this world.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord.

We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline [rowdiness] of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.

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And please don't think Samson lacked any power to do the things that God wanted him to do. Remember, the Spirit of the **LORD** came upon Samson, empowered Samson to do those things. But now it was up to Samson to walk in holiness, to do those things that God had called him to do, and yet, he did the exact opposite!

He went to a vineyard and partook of grapes – ***STRIKE ONE!***

He touched a dead body – ***STRIKE TWO!***

And now, he is drinking wine – ***STRIKE THREE!***

The amazing thing to me is that he didn't even see any wrong in what he was doing. He had justified his sin and now he is partying with the enemy – ***WINE, WOMEN AND SONG!***

And, like I have said, we can do that in our own lives. We can justify our sin so much that we don't even see it as being wrong any longer, we have grown accustomed to it! That is a dangerous place to be and we will see that with Samson.

You see, all this is going to lead to ***PRIDE*** on the part of Samson, and we will look at that next time.

But when you move away from the Lord, when you do your own thing, you are being prideful, that is not a might be or could be, it is just the facts. You are saying you know better than God in this situation, you can do what you want, and that is – ***PRIDE!***

And I want to focus on what God desires of us because who wants to strike out before God? None of us do and thus, I think Paul gives to us what we need to do so that we can have a walk that is worthy of the high calling by which we have been called!

In Romans 12:1-2 Paul wrote, **“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. 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.”**

And listen to how the Amplified Bible puts these verses. We are told, **“I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].”**

Notice the appeal that Paul is making to us, to Christians. He lays it all out and he says that he beseeches us or that he wants us to do what is right. He is begging us to do what is right. He wants us to choose that which is best. You see, we have choices to make in this life.

And keep in mind that the word, “**therefore**” introduces the key point of **DEDICATION** or **DEVOTION** to God here in Romans 12:1. You see, if you look at all that God has done for us, therefore we should dedicate or devote our lives to Him!

That should just make sense. It is no longer about us, about what we want, about what we want to do. It is all about the Lord and what He wants us to do!

And thus, we see Paul urging us to live a life that is pleasing to God.

Morris put it this way, “*When he uses this pattern Paul is saying that the Christian life is dependent on the great Christian doctrines.*”

I think that is important for us to understand. You see, we don’t live a life that is separate from the Word of God but a life that is according to the Word of God!

How do we do this? By presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice. That we are holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service or spiritual worship!

You see, our lives should be different now that we have come to Christ. We should not be living like we were before we were saved.

Leon Morris says, “*It is fundamental to [Paul] that the justified man does not live in the same way as the unrepentant sinner.*”

That should just make sense and that is what we should be doing, that is how we should be living, in a way that honors God!

And I like the way that Paul tells us how we are to be living. Paul tells us that we are to be a living sacrifice unto God.

That is our lives are to be placed on the altar to be offered up as a burnt offering, totally given to God, and it will be a sweet-smelling sacrifice unto God as we do. It is a total dedication to God and not about us!

You see, as we give ourselves to the Lord, as we lay our lives down upon the altar of sacrifice, Paul tells us that it is our “**reasonable service**” or literally our “**spiritual worship.**”

Let me explain this, because I do believe this is important.

First of all, the word “**reasonable**” comes from the Greek word, LOGIKOS, (log-ik-os’) and it can also be translated “*of the word*” just as it is in I Peter 2:2.

Also, the word “**service**” in the Greek is LATREIA, (lat-ri’-ah) and it speaks of the worship of God.

Thus, what is our reasonable, our logical service unto God?

Listen carefully; *it is a life of worship that is according to God’s Word!*

But, if you don’t have the right doctrine you are not going to be able to live a life that is pleasing to God, I don’t care what people will tell you today! I think that Paul makes this point very clear! And if your doctrine is off, then your worship of God will be off as well, you can’t worship Him any way you want!

Jesus said that we are to worship God in *SPIRIT* and *TRUTH*! In other words, we must be saved, and we must worship Him according to His Word!

So our lives are given to God as a sacrifice and as we give our lives to God it is pleasing in His sight!

And as we move on to Romans 12:2 Paul is giving us two paths we can travel on, two roads that are out there, and there are only two.

The first path is the way of the world and Paul is warning us not to be conformed to this world or the age we are living in!

Make no mistake about it, the worlds ways, the worlds system wants to squeeze you into its image and it truly is the path of least resistance.

Think about it. To be conformed to this world, you don't have to do anything but continue floating with the current of society. They will mold you; you just have to let them!

And as you look at those that follow down this path do you see how their life is one that is unstable, always changing, unsure, it is transitory?

Why is that?

Because that is what this world's system is all about, it evolves to feed the flesh and whatever that may be, wherever that leads, that is what it will have for you!

Remember what John told us in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

Notice how the world, the god of this age attacks people; through the flesh, through the eyes and through pride and John tells us that this kind of living will not last, it is passing away.

And yet, look at the people that are grabbing for it with all their might! And please understand that this is not just *“the keeping up with the Jones”* mentality. It is not just speaking about the latest hairstyles, clothes styles and-so-on. It is speaking of making us think the way the world wants us to think and live the way that the world wants us to live!

It is not a biblical worldview here, it is a worldview that, I am sorry, comes from the pit of Hell because it is not here to draw you closer to God but to drive you father from Him.

And again, here are three enemies of man: **SATAN** who is the prince of this world that is in rebellion against God and he uses us as pawns to be drawn into the lusts of this **WORLD** that is opposed to God through **FLESHLY** lusts.

Sin is dangled in front of us as if it is some prize to obtain but, in the end, it only brings about death. May we be aware of Satan, the world and the flesh so we won't be drawn into its deception!

That was Samson's problem. He could have followed God but he allowed the lusts of his flesh – he wanted this woman; the lust of the eyes – she was beautiful; and the pride of life – I can do as I please; to guide him and it is a path of death and destruction for Samson!

And make no mistake about it, being **“conformed to this world”** speaks of becoming like this world, influenced by this world, this system of man apart from God whose ruler is the Devil himself as Paul told us in II Corinthians 4:4, **“whose minds the god of this age has blinded . . .”**

It is easy to just stand there and let the world press you into their mold.

But Paul is telling us that we need to resist being put into their mold because, as Paul said in Romans 8:6-8, **“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”**

Folk's, it is truly your choice, but you need to understand the choice you are making if you wanted to be conformed, molded into this worlds influence. And make no mistake about it, the world is an instrument of Satan and we must understand that his ungodly influence is pandemic, or it is like a plague that has spread throughout this world!

And as you look at how this world has influenced people you can see how John, almost two thousand years ago, warned us of this very thing as he wrote, **“and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one”** (1 John 5:19). It clearly still does.

But if that is the path you choose to go down, the end result will be eternal separation from God, but it is your choice!

And for us as Christians, if we allow the world to conform us into its image, the light of Christ will not shine in our lives and there are consequences, the chastening of God we will see!

But there is another option, another thing we can do, and this is the one that Paul wants you to choose. And this one is not a conforming but a transforming by the renewing of your mind!

And this is opposite of being conformed to this world!

And where is this battleground between this conforming to the world and being transformed by God?

It is the mind and the enemy works in the unbeliever and the believer. He keeps the unbeliever blinded to God and he keeps the believer in a course away from the will of God by messing with their minds!

You see, it is not, *“How do I feel”* or *“What should I do”* but *“What does God’s Word say regarding this situation?”*

You see, the world wants to brainwash people into their way of thinking, but the Holy Spirit wants to wash our brains by the **“cleansing water of the Word.”** (Ephesians 5). And that is a huge difference between the two!

You see, as you surrender your life unto God as a living sacrifice, you will not be conformed to this world, but you are being **“transformed by the renewing of your mind.”**

The word **“transformed”** in the Greek is METAMORPHOO, (met-am-or-fo’-o) and it speaks of a metamorphosis that is taking place in our lives.



The only other two places this word is used in the New Testament is in Mark 9:2-3 where we see the transfiguration of Jesus and we are told, **“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.”**

The other place is in II Corinthians 3:18 where we are told, **“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.”**

Folks, as we behold the face of God, as we spend time with him, as we surrender our lives to Him, our lives will be transformed into the image of God, a metamorphosis will take place.

This begins the moment we get saved and it continues on through our entire lives until we go to be with the Lord!

In other words, the new nature that God has placed in our hearts will manifest itself in our lives! The thing is, what are you filling your mind with?

Kenneth S. Wuest, a great Greek scholar, has an excellent translation - actually an interpretation - of this verse. This is how he lays Romans 12:2 out: ***“And stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being, but is patterned after this age; but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being, by the renewing of your mind, resulting in your putting to the test what is the will of God, the good and well-pleasing, and complete will, and having found that it meets specification, placing your approval upon it”*** (Romans in the Greek New Testament, p. 290).

You see, what many try to do today is make outward changes but there is nothing that has changed inwardly and thus, you may play the part for a time, but eventually your true colors will be seen.

If you don't fill your mind with the things of God, what comes flowing from your life will be the things you have filled your mind with! In other words, the outward transformation is affected by an inner change in the mind, and the Spirit's means of transforming our minds is the Word of God.

You can't fill your life up with all kinds of garbage and then expect good to flow from it, it just won't happen. And it is God's Word that is truth, it is the solid meat that we need to ingest into our lives and let it permeate our being.

Let me give you a few examples from the Scriptures that show us that it is the mind that is filled with the Word of God that will transform us and not feelings or doings, but filling and obeying or having the right doctrine and then applying that to your life as you live out your faith.

In Psalm 119:9-11 David tells us, **“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”**

How do we stay on track?

By knowing and obeying God's Word but if you are not taking in the Word of God, then you will fill your life with something, and it will be the philosophies of this world!

In Colossians 3:16 Paul tells us, **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”**

If you want to grow, if you want to be transformed, you must renew your mind and I am not just talking about information but it is the right information that is then applied to your life!

Samson had all he needed to live a Godly life, but he gave into the flesh, he justified his sin and he went after wine, women and song you might say.

I want to leave you with this to think about. Are we a conformer or transformer? Let me explain it like this. We are told,

Are you a thermometer – adjusting to the temperature of the culture, or are you a thermostat – changing the climate of the culture?

If you are a conformer, a thermometer, you're in for perpetual frustration because by the time you take the temperature and figure out what's hot, by the time you change your look, or buy the car, or redo your house – the world will have moved on, leaving you out of style.

Truly, this is a great mystery to a lot of Christians. They try to make their ministries relatable by analyzing what the world is doing in order to emulate it.

But by the time they figure it out and implement it, the world has moved on. That's why Christians are known for being out of style.

What's the key?

Don't be a thermometer. Be a thermostat.

Don't be a conformer. Be a transformer.

Say, "I'm in a whole different place than you are, world. I'm living for eternity. I'm preparing for heaven."

Make no mistake about it, there should be a separation for us from this world and its influences upon our lives. We are empowered by the Spirit of God, we have the Word of God, and now we must take what the Spirit is showing us, according to what the Word of God is telling us and walk accordingly.