

In Romans 12:1 it says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." In this passage, Paul urges us by the mercies of God to offer our lives, as an ongoing surrender to God. He describes this as our reasonable service. A call to total surrender. In this passage, Paul is saying that our plans, emotions, comfort, and pride should be continuously laid down for God's glory. Because of God's overwhelming mercy, we are to offer our entire bodies to Him. Not just in words or feelings but daily. He says this is basic obedience after everything Jesus has given us. An offering that is to be living and ongoing, not just a one-time act. Holy, set apart from sin, reserved, purified, and devoted to God. He says it is our reasonable service. It is not too much to ask for. This passage snaps us into the realization that God gave us everything, now the only logical response is to give Him our full submission. Our complete surrender and total sacrifice. God, I long to offer my body as a living sacrifice.

What is a sacrifice? The definition of a sacrifice is to suffer loss of, to destroy, or to give up. A sacrifice is a deliberate act of surrender. It is giving up something important in an act of authenticity and obedience.

In the Old Testament there were several sacrifices which were described as a central part of worship and covenant between God and His people. These sacrifices symbolized atonement, devotion, and fellowship. To just touch on a few of the offerings brought before

God in the Old Testament, during a burnt offering sacrifice, an entire animal was consumed by the fire, nothing was kept or salvaged for later. But it was complete surrender and consecration to God. It mirrored dedication, reminding us how Jesus gave all of Himself, holding nothing back. A grain offering was of fine flour, oil, and incense and it represented thanksgiving and honor. In John 6:35, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life". He offered His life as bread for the world. Like the grain that had to be crushed and offered, Jesus was broken and given for the life of the world. A peace offering was a shared meal, and symbolized fellowship and eating at God's table in joy and communion. Ephesians 2:14 says "For He Himself is our peace". It reinstates that Jesus, through the cross tore the veil and restored our broken relationship with God. He is the perfect peace offering and now we are invited to sit at His table. A sin offering cleansed unintentional sin through the restoration of purity. Jesus, who never sinned, was made sin on our behalf. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." His blood doesn't just cover sin but cleanses it completely. His blood has made us spiritually clean before God. And a guilt offering was restoration in intention to pay back what was lost. In Isaiah 53:10, it says "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, the Lord makes His life an offering for guilt." Jesus was the perfect guilt offering, not only removing all of our offenses but elevating and restoring us to better than before.

Some of these offerings required animals, some required grain and some required altars. But each offering regardless of form, required death. When Jesus laid His life down, He no longer required dead sacrifices. But he fulfilled the requirement of death permanently. Hebrew 9:12 says "neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." So instead of laying a bull on the altar, we can now present our body. Instead of burning incense, we can now offer a will surrendered. And instead of sprinkling blood, we can now offer life laid down daily.

These Old Testament sacrificial systems were never meant to be permanent. But were place holders, until the Lamb of God came to fulfill what goats and bulls never could. Hebrews 10:4 says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." When Jesus gave His life on the cross, He didn't just offer a sacrifice, but He became the sacrifice. While the blood of animals offered a temporary covering, the blood of Jesus brought a permanent cleansing. He fulfilled every offering ever made, every ritual ever practiced, and every debt ever owed. He BECAME the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering. Entirely. Fully. And willingly. It says in John 19:30 that "It is finished." He didn't start it, he didn't leave it pending, but it is finished. He paid the debt in full so that we could walk in the freedom of surrender, bringing our entire selves, not to atone for sin. But in response to the one who already did. True sacrifice is more than rituals or offerings but about giving God what matters the most. We no longer offer what we have but we offer who we are.

I would like to take a scripture reading from Genesis 22:1-12, "Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Here I am." "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you." The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. "Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back." So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?" "We have the fire and the wood but where is the sheep for the

burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son". When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. At that moment the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!" "Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."

Not only is sacrifice about giving up something important but it's a sacred act of offering in full surrenderance and obedience to God, no matter how extensive the sacrifice may be. Abraham had one son. Not just any son, but a son of whom both parents waited 25 years to be born. Abraham was nearly 100 years old, while his wife, Sarah was 90 and barren. They both spent decades barren, which brought shame and sorrow in their culture. God gave them a promise, a promise which took 25 years to take human form. Abraham didn't just love Isaac, but he waited, prayed, and believed God for him. He was the miracle they never thought would come. Genesis 17:19 says "Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant." He was the line through which nations would come, he was linked to every future promise: nations, land, and legacy. Sacrificing him would mean letting go of everything God had spoken over his life. Genesis 15:5 reads, "Then the Lord took Abraham outside and said to him, 'Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!'" He was the promise Abraham saw before it ever existed. And now God says, 'Give it back to me'. When God asked Abraham to offer Isaac, he wasn't asking for something Abraham didn't care about. But he was asking for the very thing He had given him. The thing Abraham loved the most. The miracle. In Genesis 22:2 God says, "Take your son, your only son... whom you love." He knew exactly what he was asking for. He wasn't just asking for something Abraham loved, but He was asking for Abraham's heart.

Genesis 22:3 says, "The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about." I couldn't possibly imagine what was going through his mind during this time. He wasn't just preparing wood, but he was preparing to surrender every aspect of his desires to God's will. He was preparing to give up his promise, his future, his testimony, his everything. Every moment must have felt like agony. But still, he obeyed. How hard it must have been to place every stone, knowing it would hold the most precious thing to him. Yet still, he built with obedience. I actually believe that this kind of surrender held SEVERAL layers of obedience. First, he responded with immediate obedience. Genesis 22:3 says, "Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey." He didn't stall, he didn't negotiate or ask for another sign. He responded immediately. He also responded with sacrificial obedience. True obedience often costs you something, the kind that lays down what is most precious. Obedience becomes authentic when you obey without knowing how it will work out. He had obedience rooted in trust. Even when he couldn't trace God's plan, he trusted God's character. He didn't need all the details but just needed to trust the one who gave the command. Obedience that took form without delay, without understanding, and without holding anything back. He saw sacrifice and obedience not as punishment, but as worship. He understood that laying down what you love is an offering to the One you love more. When thinking about Abraham, I don't just see a man of faith but a man of true surrender. A foreshadowing of the Father who would one day give us His only son. I believe this story wasn't just a historical moment, but a prophetic shadow of what was to come. While walking up the hill of the mountain, Isaac carried the wood for the offering. Unaware that he himself would be laid on it. Step by step, he walked beside his father in full trust. As they

climbed up the mountain, he asked the question, "My father...behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? (Genesis 22:7). Abraham answers, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." (Genesis 22:8). Words that extended forward into the reality of all eternity. In John 1:29, centuries later, at the Jordan River, it says "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Isaiah 53:7 "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He became the one offering and the one being offered. No one took His life from him, but he laid it down, willingly, lovingly and completely. Hebrews 9:25 "And he did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice." He took the place of every lamb, every goat, every altar.

While Isaac walked in innocent obedience, Jesus walked in willing surrender. While Isaac was spared by a voice from heaven stopping the sacrifice, Jesus was pierced for our transgressions, wounded for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). As His blood poured out, the veil in the temple was torn, the wrath of God was satisfied, and the way back to the Father was wide opened. When thinking of the weight of what He did, the only reasonable response is "Lord, what can I lay down for you?" "What can I present to you?" "What can I sacrifice for you?"

As I was preparing this exhortation, I asked a very powerful mentor of mine to share a time she made a powerful surrender for God. She couldn't recall a single moment. At first, I wondered why, but God revealed to me that some people live in such constant surrender that they don't mark the moments because every day is an offering. I could see that for her, surrender isn't just one dramatic decision, but a daily rhythm. And that made me reflect on my own journey.

Throughout my journey I remember always wanting it to be a priority to let the Lord guide me through all situations. Years ago, there were several friendships that I had with people who were deeply rooted in the world. And as I grew in Christ, the Holy Spirit began to reveal what was and wasn't helping me in my walk with Christ. He was calling me to let these relationships go. Not in pride or judgement, but in obedience. In the beginning, I never realized how much these friendships were anchoring me to an old life. A version that God was calling me out of. People I laughed with, people who have been there through different seasons. Deep down I knew they weren't walking with me but pulling me backward. I couldn't hear God clearly with all of the noise, so I obeyed. It was a hard surrender, but I knew that I couldn't present myself as a sacrifice to God while still holding onto relationships that He never approved. And looking back, I see now that this surrender was love. It was worship, and it was trust. Obedience will always cost something, but God will always honor the surrender. The moment I let go, I realized I was making room. Room for peace. Room for purpose, Room for God's presence to flow mightily in my life. I'm reminded of the book of Mark the tenth chapter, where the rich young ruler came to Jesus sincerely asking, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Mark 10:21 says, "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lack: go and sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." The next verse says, "At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions." Jesus knew that this man's wealth stood between him and true devotion. Jesus invited him to let go of what held him back and follow fully. This young ruler had everything but a heart fully surrendered. Jesus didn't just ask him to surrender his money, but He wanted what had mastered him. Surrender always

costs something, but its not just about what we give its also about what we refuse to lay down.

Abraham didn't want to sacrifice Isaac, it broke his heart, but he still said yes. He prepared the altar, the wood, and the knife. But most importantly, he prepared his heart to trust God, no matter the outcome. He told the servants, "We will go worship... and we will return." He believed that even if Isaac died, God could raise him. That is the embodiment of surrender. Not giving up blindly but trusting fully that God is able to restore what we lay down.

Abraham's obedience didn't make sense in the natural, but it was beautiful in the Spirit. It revealed a heart that didn't just love the gift but loved the Giver more.

Every day we are challenged to surrender our comfort, our own desires and attachments to follow Him more extensively. That is my sacrifice. That is my offering. Not burned on an altar, but lived out in the choices made every day. Matthew 16:24 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Daily, sacrificial surrender looks like choosing Him above all earthly pleasures. God wants our desires, our ambitions, and our relationships. Surrender is not just about laying Isaac at the altar, but its about laying ourselves there every single day. Our pride, our plans, our comfort. Every door that is shut, every invitation declined, every conversation walked away from, every no said for His sake, becomes apart of your altar. Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

As we present our bodies as living sacrifices, we allow the light of God's presence to shine deeper in our hearts. True and authentic surrender doesn't just change our behavior but exposes our hearts. When you genuinely surrender to God, it doesn't just look like obedience but reveals the condition of your heart in the process. Our motives, our thoughts, and our hidden struggles are put under the light of God's holiness. A light that doesn't come to shame, but one that comes to heal. John 3:19 says, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." So the flesh doesn't want to surrender; it offers in partiality but never in completion. It lays a portion on the altar, while keeping the rest behind closed doors. But when we say, "God, I present my body as a living sacrifice", were saying take my comfort, take my dreams, take the sin and break it off of me, take my flesh and crucify it, take my heart and purify it. David says create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10). Every day surrender is how we walk in true holiness; it is how we become vessels that God can use. Not perfect vessels, but ones that are willing. Ones that are yielded. And ones that are consecrated.

1 Peter 1:15 "But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy." Holiness is the fragrance of a life laid down. The mark of a vessel that God can fill. God doesn't ask us to surrender just to strip us, he asks us to surrender so he can fill us. When we lay down sin, He gives us purity. When we lay down control, He gives us peace. When we lay down our will He gives us purpose. Surrender isn't loss, but it's actually the beginning of true gain. Philippians 3:8 says "Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ." When you really see the worth of Christ, everything else becomes disposable. True surrender flows from a heart that has glimpsed the surpassing value of Jesus and chooses to let go in order to gain Him fully.

Psalm 139:23 "Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me And lead me in the way everlasting." The more we surrender, the more we invite God's light to search us. And in this light, sin loses its grip. Not only is surrender the path to obedience but it's the path to freedom. When you

surrender your life to God, His fire consumes what isn't Holy. His presence reveals what isn't healed. It's in the process of laying ourselves on the altar that God begins to cleanse, purify, and renew us from inside out.

What dream, what relationship, what habit, what mindset is He asking to place on the altar? Because until it is surrendered, He cannot consume it. And until he consumes it, transformation cannot take place. Earlier this month, my pastor preached about transformation. One of the things that he said that hasn't left me since, is that transformation brings you into divine alignment with God. He said transformation is not just about behavior modification but its about identity modification. True transformation doesn't start with changing habits, but it starts with surrendering identity. When we lay down who we think we are, God reveals who we really are. When we lay down the lies, the wounds, the masks, God in return gives us purpose. He gives us a renewed mind and a healed heart. One of the things he also says is that a transformed mind is not a mind that is easily manipulated or swayed by the ways and trends of the world, it is not a mind that accepts compromise as wisdom, but one that chooses truth even when it costs. One that chooses surrender, even when it costs comfort, reputation, or control. When we fully submit and yield ourselves to God, we are transformed. He is not looking for partial offerings, but hearts that say, "Lord, I'm yours. All of me belongs to you. Not just my words. But even the parts that I'm afraid to surrender. Even the parts that I'm wrestling with. Take it Lord, for I give it you. Surrender is not just about letting go of what's visible, but its about opening our hearts to what's hidden. The more we yield to Him, the more His presence shines into the corners of our hearts. Where God dwells, no darkness can hide. That's why the altar of surrender is so sacred, God cleanses our temples, He uproots what doesn't belong and he removes what has no authority to stay and calls us to repentance, not in shame, but with a Holy and passionate love.

Every time, we let go of something for God, it makes more room in our hearts for Him. The more room he has, the more He speaks, the more he fills, the more He heals. Some chase closeness with God through effort, without knowing that it not only takes effort, but it takes surrender.

Surrender is not weakness or defeat but its trust in the One who is stronger. It's the yielding of our will to God's perfect wisdom, knowing that in laying down our plans we rise in His purpose. When we surrender and allow His light to purify and transform us, it's like a seed being exposed to the sun, what once felt like lifeless soil, now becomes the ground for fruitfulness and limitless growth. His light makes the path clear, softens our hearts, and purifies our motives.

2 Corinthians 4: 7-9 "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" When your life is surrendered to Christ, nothing can destroy you. You are no longer sustained by your strength, but by His spirit.

Though surrender may be painful, though we may be walking towards the altar with pain in our chest. Abraham's story shows that you can obey God even with a breaking heart.

Psalms 34:18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

You can trust Him even when it doesn't make sense. That is the essence of surrender. To be the living sacrifice that burns on the altar of obedience. Holy. Acceptable. Pleasing to God. Sacrifice isn't just about losing something, it's about choosing to give something valuable, on purpose. As an act of worship, obedience, and love to the one gave everything for us. God, I present my body to you as a living sacrifice.

Is there someone that will come? Even if you come with a breaking heart. Even if your hands are trembling. Is there someone that will walk to the altar, not because you have every thing together. But because you finally admit that you don't. The altar is not a place of shame but it's a place of exchange. At the altar you exchange your ashes for beauty. You

exchange your mourning for joy. At the altar, your guilt meets grace. Is there one? One that will say "Lord, create in me a clean heart". One who will say "God I surrender. Not my will, but Yours be done." Even if you have to walk through tears. Even if it takes every ounce of courage just to move. Surrender isn't weakness its trust.

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