

Work: Living Sacrifices
Romans 12:1-2
Week of January 31

Today we continue our series on how our faith impacts our work life. Though we might think of work as a consequence of the Fall into sin, work was always a part of what God had planned for people. Work was something that God was doing Himself from the beginning!

*As part of each prayer cast, we'll meet a Hoper and hear their thoughts on work and how it intersects with their faith. **Today's guest is Tracy Bramer.***

*As you enter prayer now, take a moment to settle your mind. Put aside your concerns and what needs to get done today, or what didn't get done today. Take a slow, deep breath. Center yourself in His Peace. He is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and End. You are found in Him.
Be Still.*

Pause and Pray.

Jesus, I am here because I want to experience You. As I meditate on this passage, draw to mind those things that You would have me become more aware of. Center my heart and mind on Yourself. Use your Word to draw my heart to You. Amen.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

REFLECT.

I am struck by the depth of these verses. Let's take a moment to allow them to soak into our hearts and minds and pray through them.

First, Paul calls us his brothers and sisters. Family. Maybe you feel very connected to the body of Christ. You might have several Christian friends that you love and who love you. Or, Maybe you haven't experienced that, or not to the degree you would like to. As our Father, God's heart is for us to know and be known, to love and be loved by His other children. Take these moments to allow God to speak to you about these relationships in your life. PAUSE.

Paul instructs us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices because of God's mercy. Allow yourself this moment to dwell on the mercy that is represented in Jesus' sacrifice for you. The love that took Him to the cross in order for you to be restored. PAUSE.

As we consider the love of Christ for us, we are moved to offer Him our lives. Our day-to-day, moment-to-moment living can be a sacrifice to Him. Sometimes I think of this in a moment where I want to be impatient or caustic. Can I sacrifice my own desire to be hurtful because I'm tired or annoyed—can I lean into His strength and sacrifice that impulse? PAUSE.

Maybe there are times when you don't want to go the extra mile for a friend or co-worker. You don't want to answer the phone call or the text. What do they want now? Can you lean into His strength, and sacrifice your time and energy for someone that needs it? PAUSE.

The world has so many ways that it calls to us. One of those ways is the drive for control. This is certainly in conflict with the renewing that God calls us to. He wants us to acknowledge that He is in control, and we are not. Yet we are always wanting to hold onto the steering wheel. Pray specifically about the areas of life you strive to control. Is He calling you to something bigger and harder that is outside of your control? Is He calling you to release someone or something that your control is hindering? Where does He want to make progress? Ask Him to peel your fingers away from His plans. PAUSE.

PAUSE, PRAY AND ASK.

God, it says that as I accept your mercy, and am moved to sacrifice my own life for Your sake—that I will know more and more what your will is. I ask for that alignment. May I be moved on a daily basis to accept your mercy, lay my own life down, and be more completely aligned to Your will. I ask in faith, knowing that You give good gifts to Your children.

YIELD.

We return to the text.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

This prayer was taken from the work of Jefferson Floyd, author of *Neither Give Place*. In his work, Floyd coached practical steps to forgiveness and spiritual freedom. As you pray this prayer, consider an area of your life that you would like to release control of—that you would like to 'sacrifice' to the Father. It may be a person you love but hold onto too tightly, a

relationship you care too much about, a position you hold with a tight grip or a job you are consumed by. Your hold on this person or circumstance has become controlling and not life-giving. When the prayer pauses, name that person or position. In this way, we are acknowledging that there is nothing and no one in our lives that does not first belong to God. This right alignment restores not just us to right relationship with God, but also frees others from our expectations. Including, ourselves.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Because Jesus Christ is my Lord, I release this person or situation from all my anxiety, fear and control. Holy Spirit, I trust You to lead in this situation. I know that You will handle it in the way of love, joy and peace.

I place this person or situation at your feet, Lord. I cannot force my will. I cannot live life for this person, or orchestrate every detail of this situation. So I give it to You, Jesus.

As much as I may love or care for this person, or be concerned about this situation, Lord, you love and care more. I confess that the situation is totally in Your hands from this day forward, and I trust You with it.

In Jesus name, I release this person or circumstance from all my expectations. I place it on open palms to You God. I ask for your blessing, and I let it go. In Jesus Name, Amen.