



How Shall We Then Live? Part 1

1. The “spiritual worship” (or “rational service”/Christian lifestyle) God expects (the only one He will accept!) as the response to His saving mercy (or gospel) is:

1.1. the complete submission of our wills and emotions to only those actions that are approved of by God (1) “present [aorist: constant action] your bodies” = Daily submit your wills and emotions/feelings (Rom 6:12-13). “as a living sacrifice” = Personal control over what we entertain/pursue with respect to our emotions and wills has been terminated. Ownership of those things now belongs to God – i.e., what His Word identifies as “holy and acceptable”. Hence (Gal 5:24 “passions and desires” = emotions and will).

1.2. the transformation and renewal of our thinking that only happens by testing or making sure that what we believe agrees w/the will of God (Special Revelation) and what is good, acceptable and perfect (in this world) (General Revelation) (2) “conformed...transformed” [aorist = constant action] = *All truth is God’s truth* and something we are expected to be conforming our lives to VERSUS “this world” [αἰών] = Literally, “age” as in, “Spirit of the Age” – a phrase w/reference to the satanic, depraved way of thinking that is currently dominating the culture around us and suppressing the truth being communicated through God’s General and Special Revelation (Rom 1:18-21, 28; Consider also Eph 2:1-3; 1Jo 5:19). Hence (2Co 10:3-5). *Renewed thinking: 1) is the key to rewiring our wills and emotions (e.g., your baby diaper), 2) requires continuous listening/learning/change not inhibited by our present wills and emotions (e.g., the connection between the Maccabean revolt and the Jews opposition to Christianity’s inclusion of Gentiles and discounting of circumcision).

PNTM: The only lifestyle God will accept (in light of His saving “mercies” to us) is one that *daily* places all our moral faculties (the 3 influences on moral behavior): our minds, wills and emotions, under His complete authority and control - not temptation or the Spirit of the Age. Hence (Luk 9:23; Mat 6:9-10). This BTW is the “testing” (or test) that determines eternity: who will we listen to? God/His Word/His truth or Satan’s worldview and the sinful/selfish tug of our will and emotions (temptation)? Those entering the Reboot are only those people who lived this life like the Reboot - i.e., as though temptation did not exist. In the Reboot, we (like God – Jam 1:13) cannot be tempted. Hence the reason we will never sin in the Reboot (no ability to be tempted = no ability to sin). The ability (or lack thereof) to be tempted is what makes the difference between humans in the Reboot and humans in this life/world (the “Test”).

2. Other important reasons, we must be placing all our moral faculties (mind, will and emotions) under God’s authority and control is so that we:

2.1. properly recognize the limitations we possess and learn to appreciate, trust and depend upon those people in the church God has “assigned” (or “given”) those gifts and abilities we lack. IOW: we can’t get to heaven by ourselves. We need the help of others (3-6) “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment” = When we are honest in assessing ourselves according to the evidence found in Special and General Revelation, ignoring what our sinful/selfish mind. Will and emotions may be telling us (i.e., when we are practicing verses 1-2), we realize that none of us possess all the gifts/abilities necessary to live acceptable lives for our King. Hence (1Co 12:1-4 w/7 w/12-14 w/21).

2.2. will be obedient to use the gifts/abilities God has given us (since our gifts/abilities are critical to the spiritual lives of our bros/sis) (6-8a “...exhortation”) “if prophecy” = Like the office of apostle, prophets and the gift of prophecy longer exists in the church. We now possess something greater/better (See 1Co 13:8-10 w/Jam 1:25). In this respect, however, we still need teachers (verse 7; See also Eph 4:7-11). And once more, not everyone has been “assigned” that gift. PTNM: God is the One deciding who gets what (not us) (contra e.g., Solo Scriptura people).

2.3. possess the right attitude when using our gifts (8b) = Demonstrating “generosity” (Literally, “unmixed motivation” – void of narcissism, sincere) when we contribute, “zeal” when we lead, and “cheerfulness” when performing acts of mercy, is the attitude (and sign) of those whose mind, will and emotions are in submission to God when using their gifts (e.g., our worship team).

3. The (Holy Spirit's) 9 marks of a biblical church (a church whose people have submitted their moral faculties to God's authority and control) are:

(in re: to the covenant community)

3.1. loyalty ("love") that is conditioned upon righteousness (no unconditional love) (9) "Abhor...evil; hold fast...good" = The principles of "genuine" love/loyalty.

3.2. "brotherly affection" demonstrated through acts expressing high value (10) "honor" = Same word as (1Ti 5:17) referring to financial value (e.g., Dinner w/the saints = Dinner w/a king).

3.3. passion for obeying all of God's Law (11) "zeal" = "fervent" = Great passion in accomplishing an objective. "serve [δουλεύω = verbal form of "doulos" = slave]" = Obedience as a slave or obedience w/o exception or exclusion (e.g., a church that proudly preaches obedience to *all* of God's Law).

3.4. proper perspective on reality/this life (12) "Rejoice in hope" [of heaven – Rom 5:2] = Our happiness/ motivation for living is not found in the things of this world but how we can use this life and those things to get to the next world. "patient in tribulation" = We must pass the tests of this life to qualify for the next. We therefore are the most serious/committed/careful ("patient") to do the right thing when it is test ("tribulation") time. "be constant in prayer" = Our help from God to pass the test and get to the next world requires making regular requests for help from (not only others in the Body of Christ) but the supernatural realm (2Co 1:11; Dan 9:20-23 w/10:11-14, 19-21; Consider also Jam 4:2b).

3.5. abundant sharing with the covenant poor/needy and those covenant members entertained in our homes (13) "contribute" [κοινωνέω] = Abundant sharing; Act 2:42-47 = Notice the transition between providing for the poor and entertainment of others in the home is seamless. That because the principle governing them is the same as Rom 12:13 ("fellowship" = κοινωνέω). Again, dinner w/the saints = dinner w/a king.

(in re: to pagans)

3.6. genuine support and cooperation with all pagan governing authorities including those who "persecute" us (14) = Most likely a reference to Jesus' teaching in Mat 5:44 and Luk 6:27-28 whose target are the governing authorities (e.g., president, police officers). "bless" = Demonstrate respect and support versus seeking their destruction/damnation ("do not curse them"). Hence (1Ti 2:1-8) = Men praying for the governing authorities w/o attitudes of disrespect/rebellion/insurrection (e.g., flag w/"F@%k Biden").

3.7. genuine care and neighborliness toward our pagan neighbors including those who are less distinguished (e.g., the degenerate, derelict, foolish, hillbilly, less educated, less cultured, loser) (15-16) = The behavior listed in these verses is assumed to be a given when referring to those in the Body of Christ. Again, the focus is on those outside the church. "rejoice...weep" = Genuine support/compassion; "Live in harmony...associate w/the lowly... not...haughty...never wise" = Never acting like we are better than them – no matter who they are or how annoying. Jesus hung out w/ and brought to salvation many considered to be the pariah of society (e.g., tax collectors and prostitutes).

(in re: to all people)

3.8. righteous and peace-seeking behavior toward all people including those who do us wrong (17-18) "repay no one evil...give thought to do what is honorable [morally good] in the sight of all" = Responding righteously to those who do us evil is embraced by general society. "If possible, as far as it depends on you, live peaceably w/all = Only go to war when there is no other option; Hence (1Pe 3:9-12) = Our prosperity w/determined by our righteous and peaceable response to those who wrong us (See also Gal 6:9).

3.9. vengeance secured through God's prescription for justice (19) "never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God" = Do vengeance God's way (no vigilante justice/acts of "evil"/sinful revenge allowed) (20-21; See Lev 19:15-17). Hence (Rom 13:1-5) = God's vengeful wrath happens thru His appointed authorities - including those in

the church (Jer 51:11; Heb 10:30 w/Deu 17:2-13). God wants His people to seek vengeance – i.e., justice against wrongdoers (Deu 16:20; Deu 19:11-13; Num 31:1-2; Josh 10:13; Est 8:13; Psa 149:5-9; Eze 25:14; Act 7:23).