

Time Audit Chronicles: Living Sacrifices – Christian Conduct (Romans 12:1-21)

Prologue: A Call to a Transformed Life

The Presswood family gathered together, reading **Romans 12**, where the apostle Paul outlines what it means to live a life fully dedicated to God. Ariel had been pondering how being a “living sacrifice” could be a daily practice, while Alice, always imaginative, was pretending Mr. Fluffernutter was considering becoming a “sacrificial bunny” for the good of the world.

“Daddy,” Ariel asked, “What does it mean to be a **living sacrifice**? It sounds like we’re supposed to give up everything, but how do we actually live that out?”

Ryan smiled. “That’s a great question, Ariel. Being a **living sacrifice** means dedicating every part of our lives—our thoughts, actions, and decisions—to glorify God. It’s not about giving something to God once, like in the Old Testament sacrifices; it’s about continually offering ourselves—our whole lives—for His purposes. Paul is telling us to let God transform us so that everything we do reflects His love and His will.”

Ariel thought about this. “So, it’s like we’re giving God control over everything—not just what we do at church, but our whole lives?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “And Paul goes on to show what this looks like in everyday life. Let’s use the **Time Audit Machine** to go back and explore Paul’s letter to the Romans, and see how this powerful teaching shaped the lives of early Christians.”

The Journey Begins: Offering Our Bodies as Living Sacrifices (*Romans 12:1-2*)

The **Time Audit Machine** powered up, and the family found themselves in **Rome**, among the early Christian community. The apostle Paul’s letter was being read aloud to a small group of believers gathered in a humble home. The words echoed with authority: “**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.**” (Romans 12:1).

Ryan pointed to the listeners. “Paul is urging them to respond to God’s **mercy** by offering their lives completely to Him. It’s a call to live differently—not according to the patterns of the world, but in a way that reflects God’s will.”

Ariel watched as the Christians nodded in agreement, their faces earnest. “So, they’re supposed to let God transform how they think and act?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Paul continues, ‘**And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**’ (Romans 12:2). Instead of living like the world—focused on selfishness, greed, or pride—they were called to let God renew their **minds** so they could understand and follow His **perfect will**.”

Gifts in the Body of Christ (*Romans 12:3-8*)

Paul continued, urging the believers to recognize their unique roles within the **body of Christ**. “**For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.**” (Romans 12:4-5).

Ariel pointed to the scene. “Paul’s talking about how everyone has different gifts, but they’re all important, like parts of the body working together.”

“That’s exactly right,” Ryan said. “Paul is saying that God has given each of us **different gifts**, and we’re called to use those gifts to serve one another and build up the church. Some are called to teach, others to encourage, and others to give or lead. Every role is important, and every believer is a vital part of the **body of Christ**.”

Ariel nodded thoughtfully. “So, no one is more important than anyone else—we all need each other to grow and serve.”

Christian Conduct: Love in Action (*Romans 12:9-21*)

As the family continued observing, Paul’s letter shifted to practical instructions for living out the Christian faith. The words rang out clearly: “**Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.**” (Romans 12:9-10).

Ryan turned to Ariel and Alice. “Paul is describing what **love in action** looks like. It’s not just about saying you love someone—it’s about showing it through **kindness, honor**, and genuine care for others.”

Ariel smiled, watching as the early Christians shared meals, prayed together, and supported one another. “So, love isn’t just a feeling—it’s something we do.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “And Paul goes even further. He tells them to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and to continue in prayer. He’s reminding them that their faith isn’t just about themselves—it’s about serving others and trusting God, even in difficult times.”

Responding to Persecution with Good

The words grew more challenging as Paul addressed how believers should respond to **persecution**: “**Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.**” (Romans 12:14).

Ariel’s eyes widened. “Bless people who persecute you? That’s so hard! How could they do that?”

Ryan smiled. “It is hard, but Paul is teaching them to follow the example of **Jesus**, who forgave those who crucified Him. The early Christians were often persecuted for their faith, but they were called to

respond with **love**, not hate. Paul goes on to say, ‘**If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.**’ (Romans 12:18).”

Alice, holding Mr. Fluffernutter, piped up. “Does that mean we should be nice to mean people too?”

Ryan nodded. “Yes, Alice. It means showing **kindness** and forgiveness, even when people are unkind to us. Paul is teaching that **overcoming evil** with **good** is more powerful than trying to fight back with anger or revenge.”

Ariel nodded, reflecting on Paul’s final words in the chapter: “**Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**” (Romans 12:21).

Living Sacrifices: A Transformed Life

The family listened as the letter concluded, with Paul’s words calling the believers to live lives marked by **sacrifice**, **love**, and **service**. Ryan turned to Ariel. “Paul’s message in this chapter is about what it means to live a life fully surrendered to God. Being a **living sacrifice** means letting God transform every part of us—our actions, thoughts, and attitudes—so that we can reflect His love in everything we do.”

Ariel smiled. “So, it’s about living differently—not like the world, but like Jesus, showing love, forgiveness, and kindness no matter what.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “When we live this way, we not only honor God, but we also become a powerful **witness** to the world of what it means to follow Jesus.”

Key Teachings and Takeaways

1. **Living Sacrifices** – Paul calls believers to offer their lives as living sacrifices, fully dedicated to God. This means surrendering every part of our lives to His will and allowing Him to transform us.
 2. **Unity in Diversity** – The **body of Christ** is made up of many members with different gifts, all working together to serve and build up the church. Every role is important.
 3. **Love in Action** – True love is demonstrated through kindness, generosity, and service. Believers are called to show genuine care for one another and to put others’ needs above their own.
 4. **Responding to Evil with Good** – Paul challenges believers to bless those who persecute them and to overcome evil with good. This reflects the example of Jesus and shows the power of God’s love to transform even the hardest hearts.
 5. **Transformation through Renewal** – Paul emphasizes the importance of renewing our minds, rejecting the patterns of the world, and embracing God’s will. This transformation is the foundation for living a life that honors God and serves others.
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Final Thought: Living as a Testimony

In **Romans 12**, Paul gives a powerful vision of what it means to live as a **living sacrifice**. It's not just about avoiding sin—it's about actively living out **God's love** in every aspect of our lives. This passage reminds us that true transformation comes from the **renewal of our minds** and that our lives should reflect the values of God's kingdom. As we surrender ourselves to Him, we become a **testimony** to the world, showing that the power of **love, forgiveness, and service** can overcome even the greatest challenges.