

Stop being consumers
Rom. 12:1-8
Nov. 4, 2018 – All Saints
Big idea: Serving God and others beats selfish consumerism

A message to consumers

The customer is always right so demand your rights because they owe it to you. If you don't see Pomegranates in the store, demand that they provide them. Ask your doctor to prescribe Flordeflor to solve your stomach problems. Our bankers will help you with all your financial problems. Ever notice how it is all about me in this society. We are to tell our doctor what to prescribe because some commercial tells us we are an expert. We are to make stores and businesses cater to our specific needs above the needs of everyone else. We are to march in the streets and be belligerent on social media. Look what it has gotten us as a nation. We are divided and self-centered and constantly beating up on each other based on our own ignorance and the manipulation of commercials and politicians. There has to be a better way. In the book of Romans, Paul turns to the personal application after telling everyone about the cross. Dedication to God and to others is the basis for a community that works. It is the basis for a life that is full and satisfying. It creates communities that we want to live in and provides us with people who can help us in our times of trouble. You were saved for a purpose and this is how we are to live.

Dedicated to God

A. Willing hands v.1b *to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.*

What is most important to you? You only have 24 hours in each day and 7 days each week and so I would ask you how you spend your time. Add up all the God activities in your life. What is the time you spend in worship, in Bible study or devotions, or in service to others?

The problem is that life has gotten too busy and God gets pushed out. There is no time for God just like there is no time for cooking, cleaning, or taking care of the lawn. We want God to come and be there when we need help. Can God depend on us when there is work to be done in the kingdom?

Faith requires that we adjust our priorities. It is time that we Christians upped our expectations of what it means to be a Christian. It means weekly worship and not twice a month. It means finding one or two things that need to be done in our church or community for the Lord not thinking someone else will do it all.

Athletes know that you have to give yourself to the sport to gain the benefits. When did we start thinking that we can have joy in faith by sitting on the sidelines watching everyone else? The real joy comes as we work at Jesus' side and have the fun of seeing Him do miracles for us and for others as we serve.

B. Transformed minds v. 2 *be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is*

That will take a change from within. You have to think different. Consumers think that they have to fight for the rights and that it is all about them. God's people see the power that God puts at their disposal.

They see abundance, not scarcity. They see God as lifting them up instead of weighing them down. It is the Holy Spirit that will transform your minds. You just have to feed that mind with the right food. Most people starve themselves and the minds go empty. Feed yourself with Bible study, prayer and meditation, and your mind will be healthy and able to see things clearly.

Transformed minds are more likely to see through the lies of the culture and not be scammed. They see the clear paths that bring happiness and joy instead of despair and struggles. They understand more of what God is saying in scripture every time they read it and that gives them an advantage.

Transformed minds work with bodies given to the Lord to be able to do amazing things for themselves and others. They are not weighed down by the ideas and biases of the people around them. They think like God thinks and are often freed from the law and able to live in the gospel and in grace.

Dedicated to Each other

C. Humble and Caring v. 3 *Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.*

Up to this point in the book of Romans, Paul has spent a lot of time talking about the law that weighs people down and the grace of Jesus that frees them to live. Now he is telling us how that impacts our relationship with others. Being saved, we are free to care about others.

When your mind and body are dedicated to the Lord, you will live differently. First, you will be stripped of pride. The world is not about you. It doesn't owe you everything. You realize that it doesn't really care about you and you are ok with that. Finally, you are not owned by it as you try and get its respect. Instead, you have a self-worth based on your relationship with Christ. You are willing to try things for others because you care. You are not belittling yourself or others because you know that God cares for you both. That gives you the freedom to care.

In the end, you see people differently. You care for others because they are God's children, too. You want them to have God's blessings and are confident enough in the Lord's help that you know that helping others doesn't take away from what you have as a person. You are caring because God cares for you.

D. Working Together v. 5 *in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

You see their value and want to work together instead of working by yourself. Paul describes the church as a body with each person having gifts that we all need. If I am dedicated to others, I want to use my gifts for them just as I need them to use those gifts for me.

No gift is better or worse than others just as your eyes or ears, your hands or feet, or your heart or lungs are not better or worse than each other. Each gift and person has a place and was placed there by God to work together for the good of the whole person or church.

As they work together, they can do things no one person can do by themselves. Stop and think about how many body parts it took to eat breakfast this morning. You needed hands to put the food in your mouth and eyes to guide it. Teeth to chew and stomach to digest. That is just the start of it.

The point is that it is the same in the church. We need musicians, financial people, teachers, and repair people just to start. When they work together with the same goals in mind, this church hums. When two or three people work on a task together, more gets done by far than one person could ever do.

This sets Christians apart

Motivation – His mercy v. 1a *I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies*

This is what sets Christians apart. It starts with our motivation. Most people work with a tally sheet. I need to get back from someone as much as I put in. Christians do things in view of God's mercy.

They have already gotten more from God than they could ever give.

They dedicate themselves to God knowing that God continues to give and that they want to be close to God because they need His blessings. They dedicate themselves to others because these are the people God loves and serving gives them a chance to work by God's side.

The motivation is not about us. It is about God and all that He does for us. The tally sheet of life is always full. In God, I have everything that I need and I know that He will keep giving. He has given me the gifts I need to serve and radically transformed my mind so that I want, no I need to serve others to be happy.

You can see the difference in someone who is really changed by the Lord. There is a smile on their face and a confidence that others are missing. God has filled them and they are confident that they can change their world with His power.

Power – People squared v. 6 *We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.*

“One is the loneliest number that you’ll ever see” sang the group **Three Dog Night** back in the sixties.

One is still the loneliest number in our world and in the church as well. Such is the life of a consumer in our world. They want to keep all their marbles close to the chest lest others get ahead.

Those who dedicate themselves to God and to others will never be lonely. They have all the resources that they need at their fingertips and they have the wisdom of God to know how to use it. God has given them minds and bodies that they dedicate to God and find them supercharged.

Those who dedicate themselves to others in the church will find a wealth of resources as others return the favor and dedicate themselves to us. We will have teachers when we can’t teach and musicians to touch the heart when we can’t sing. Consumers will just have themselves.

It is good to give yourself to the Lord and others. God can do with that body what you can’t even dream of. So clean out the clutter of your busy life and make time for weekly worship and daily service to God and others. Dedication to God and others beats consumer lives every time.

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Church service at 9 PM
Sunday school at 10:15
Everyone is welcome
For other sermons, see www.32daysdevotions.com