

Ephesians 5:1 - 1 Therefore **be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us**, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. NASB

Jude adds **“22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; 23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”** Let us seek the Lord for discernment to know our place when we encounter various people. Some who are doubting need the gentleness of mercy, and truth spoken calmly and with patience. Some need to be “saved” and “snatched out of the fire.” Others need to be helped with mercy, but “with fear” taking care not to fall into their temptation or snare, but hating sin so much it is a detestable thing to you.

May God give us wisdom as we seek to glorify Him by being good stewards of the grace He has given us in giving us spiritual gifts. Let us therefore employ them for the common good, building up our dear brothers and sisters in their most holy faith. Let all the we do be done in love and for the glory of God!

1 Corinthians 16:14 - Let **all that you do be done in love**. NASB

A Living Sacrifice

Dear saints, let us see that one of our chief roles in the Christian Life is to love and serve the church with the gifts that have been given to us by God. As Paul began to exhort the Roman church to use their gifts, he first called them to the right kind of attitude and perspective about their Christian Life.

Romans 12:1-2 - 1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.** 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. NASB

When Paul puts us in the right frame of mind, he tells us that offering our bodies sacrificially is in fact our “spiritual service of worship.” We worship God aright when we sacrificially serve Him in the various ways we are gifted. This is not the way the world thinks, but like God’s Kingdom usually is so counter-cultural, we must be “transformed” from worldly thinking and have a “renewed mind,” a mind focused on the worship of God, according to His “good and acceptable” will. Paul goes on to explain this in the context of using our spiritual gifts to serve the body of Christ, according to how God has gifted each individual among us.

Romans 12:3-8 - 3 For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you **not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment**, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another**. 6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, **let each exercise them accordingly**: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. NASB

He reasons that we should have a **humble thought** and **sound judgment of ourselves**, recognizing that we have been given a “**measure of faith**,” as a member of the “**one body**,” and we are “**individually members one of another**.” Therefore, “**6 since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly**.” Our “**spiritual service of worship**” unto God is carried out when we **sacrificially** offer our **bodies** to use the **gifts** we have in **serving one another** in love. This is how Paul tells us the **body of Christ** is **built up** into the **full measure** of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12 - 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ**; NASB

Here is why it is of **utmost importance** that we understand how **vital** it is that we all realize that we **all** have a **role** to play in seeing the **body** be **built up**, and that this is how we **worship God** according to His “**good and acceptable**” will. The **key** to **understanding spiritual gifts** is this; we are **all gifted** and we **must** all **use** our **gifts** in **serving one another** and this is of **vital importance** for the church to become all it is **called by God to be**. This is why Peter exhorts us that we are not only to “**employ our gifts in serving one another**,” but that we do this as a “**steward**” of God grace to us.

1 Peter 4:10 - 10 As each one has **received a special gift, employ it in serving one another**, as **good stewards of the manifold grace of God**. NASB
Now if we are “stewards,” and a **stewardship** we have received from God, “**as good stewards of the manifold grace of God**,” it is therefore a **duty** and **responsibility**. The **Spirit** has **gifted each member** with gifts to **edify the body** and called us to be **stewards** of this **grace** He has given us. Let us **soberly** acknowledge

that if we are a “**steward**” of the **gift(s)** that we have from God, **He** will surely **hold us accountable** for its proper and effective use! Dear Christian, let us see that it is a “**gift.**” Our gift is **grace from God** to us **individually**, let us therefore receive it with **gratitude** and joy and put it to its **God intended use!** The Spirit gives **unique** and **special abilities** to **each member** of the Body of Christ to **enhance** and build up the **spiritual life** and **faith** of the whole body. Not only will **God** hold us **accountable**, but He will also give **great reward** for a job well done.

Hebrews 6:9-12 - 9 But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. **10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you may not be sluggish,** but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. See here we are exhorted to **continue to minister** to the **saints**, and to show “**diligence**” in this work “**until the end,**” and “**not be sluggish,**” but steadfast until the Lord comes. This of course is what **our Lord taught us** when He explained who was **greatest** in **His Kingdom**. Let us **take heed** to **His words**.

Mark 10:42-45 - 42 And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. **43 "But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be serve"** NASB

Jesus is worthy to be Served

Let us consider that our lives are not our own, and that we have been **bought** with a **price**. Indeed, it is the **highest price**, the **precious blood** of our **Lord** who **loved us** and gave **Himself** as a **ransom** for us, to **save us** from **sin** and **death**. Let us think of **our service** to **Him** with **much gratitude**, **reverence** and **privilege**. Who among the world has the **privilege** that we have to be the **servants** of the **Living God**, to **care** for **His people** and to so **please Him** by our **worship**? If our Lord would **love us** to the **end**, and give His **perfect sinless life** upon the **Cross** for us and **die for us**, can we not **live for Him**? Surely, we can, this is our **great privilege**, goal, and duty! There is **no higher King** than **Jesus**, and no one **more worthy** of our **love** and **service!**

John 13:12-17 - 12 And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. **14 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.** 16 "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. 17 "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. NASB

Let us also see that **our life** as the **Lord servants** and **stewards** is something He expects us to **always keep** at the **forefront** of **our minds** and **hearts**. To be **ready** for the **Lord's return**, is to be **diligently serving**, at **our own post**, carrying out our **God appointed** role when He returns.

Luke 12:35-40 - 35 "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight. 36 "And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. **37 "Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them.** 38 "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. 39 "And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 40 **"You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."** NASB

Let us consider the **blessed words** of **our Lord** in **His call** to **follow Him**.

Luke 9:23-26 - 23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.** **24 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.** 25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. NASB