

SEPTEMBER STUDY

I Surrender Myself



Key Verse: 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. 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 12:1-2, KJV*).

Man likes to think of himself as autonomous. A statement from literature class that has always intrigued me says—man is the measure of all things. How far from the truth that is. The Bible is absolute in declaring that God created man and did so in His image. We cannot even claim originality. So, when admonished to submit to the Lordship of Christ, we should immediately take steps in that direction, but that is not what happens much of the time. Is it because we do not really understand what is being asked of us, or are we so absorbed in our particular lives that we just disregard any other claims upon our meager existence? Yet, He was asked to submit, to surrender to His Father's will—becoming obedient to death on the cross.

Christ Emptied Himself *Philippians 2:5-11*

The celebration of Christmas is a time set aside to commemorate

the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Embodied in all that took place so long ago, the glory and pageantry that has become part of our celebrations, is pictured in the submission of the Son to the Father's will. The Son was fully God, but in obedience to God the Father, Jesus willingly left the majesty of Heaven and came to this world where He grew up, walked, and worked among man. No author or artist can do justice to the meaning of this act of submission, or the impact it would have upon humankind.

What did it cost Christ to step down from Heaven and become man? Obviously, He lost His place beside the Father. However, more was involved than leaving one place for another. The Creator became one with those He had created.

He gave up the majesty of Heaven to live among sinful, desperate, hopeless humanity; He watched as they scurried about trying to attain that which was theirs but for the asking. Despair must have been the picture that greeted Him as He lovingly looked upon those for whom He was destined to die. Jesus voluntarily laid aside His Kingship to become a servant to these very people.

He emptied Himself. Did He cease to be God? Of course not. When the Scripture says that Jesus emptied Himself, it refers

to laying aside His desires, His position; putting aside who He is to follow the will of His Father. It was only through this act of willingly letting go that He was able to become a servant and fulfill His Father's will.

Jesus' submission to the Father's will is ultimate obedience. Jesus left Heaven, came to earth as a baby, grew to manhood, and eventually gave His life so that we, His precious creation, could have eternal life. The Scriptures declare that God the Father highly exalted Him and that all people will bow before Him and proclaim Jesus LORD.

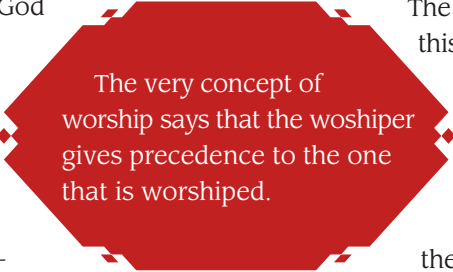
Name everything Christ had to give up to become our Redeemer.

What will you need to surrender (empty yourself of) to live obedient to Christ?

Man—a Living Sacrifice . . . an Act of Worship

Romans 12:1-2

The apostle Paul taught in Romans 12:1-2 that we are to present ourselves to God as living sacrifices. This is a voluntary act of submission, of surrendering ourselves to another. We are not dead but alive in Christ Jesus; as a living sacrifice the thought is one of ongoing, continual action. We are to present ourselves each day to our God and King as a living sacrifice.



The Scriptures tell us this is an act of worship. Worship also embodies submission. The very concept of worship says the worshiper gives precedence to the one

that is worshiped. In that, we give up control of our identity, our desires, our plans, our goals . . . everything and anything that defines us as a person.

The only way to accomplish this is to live voluntarily under the authority of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 5:22-23, the apostle teaches that the Holy Spirit produces within us the attributes of someone living under the Holy Spirit's authority. When this fruit is manifest in our lives, we are living in submission to Christ and are able to completely worship Him in spirit and in truth. We

have become obedient to Christ, and that is our ultimate sacrifice, our living sacrifice of obedience.

Do you see yourself as a living sacrifice?

What does it mean to worship Christ?

How is worship manifested?

Does it involve more than going to church on Sunday? Explain.

Transformation

2 Corinthians 5:17

A follower of Jesus Christ saved by grace through faith in Christ experiences a truly wonderful transformation. All that was before has become new. The Bible describes it as putting off the old

and putting on the new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The transformation begins with the renewal of our minds, the way we think. What goes into our minds is lived out in our lives. The Scripture says that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Now more than ever, Christians must guard what goes into their minds. What we see and hear affects what we think and ultimately how we live. So, before obedience there must first be cleansing.

No longer does the world hold an attraction; no longer do we have to live under the power of sin. We are free from death and its hold. The Holy Spirit turns our minds to godly pursuits; He leads us to think on that which is holy, just, and righteous. Each day as we yield to Him, He faithfully transforms us into who God wants us to be.

Where once we seemed to drift along, seeking all our sinful nature desired, now we have a purpose for being. We can see beyond this present evil world and commit ourselves to Kingdom work. We live in obedience to Christ, but our mind and hearts long for the day we finally put off the old and put on the new.

We travel a different path, one that leads to worship and service. The apostle Paul says this is our reasonable service, the natural outworking of surrendering to the

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Lordship of Christ, the emptying of ourselves.

Then true worship leads us to serve Christ and is reflected in our service to others. The living sacrifice we are called upon to make is a direct result of emptying ourselves of all that we once held dear, a complete and total surrender of who we are; all our desires, hopes, and ambitions. Our living sacrifice is a life of obedience to Christ.

Are you saved? Carefully consider this question. This is the first step in the transformation process.

What are you allowing to enter your mind? Maybe it is time for a little “house cleaning.”

What do you see as your purpose in life? Be specific.

Describe the many ways we can worship Jesus Christ. Is there a certain form of worship everyone must follow?

In serving Christ, we serve others. What are you doing to serve others? Be specific.

About the Author: Dianne Sargent lives in Turbeville, SC, near her son Brian and his family. Her second son Chris and his family are new Hanna Project workers. Dianne keeps busy as a part-time stylist for doctoral dissertations in the College of Education at Trevecca Nazarene University.