

Consecration – Teacher’s Guide

1) How can we show our gratitude to God for saving us?

A) The Bible says that the proper way to show our gratitude is to **consecrate** ourselves to God: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to present your **bodies** as a **sacrifice**—living, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).¹

2) What does it mean to present our bodies as a sacrifice?

A) Around four thousand years ago, God chose a man named **Abraham** to be the father of a group of people that would belong uniquely to Him. These people are known as the **Jews**. God made a **covenant** with them and gave them a system of **worship**. Part of that worship system was the practice of sacrifices.²

B) A sacrifice was made when an individual **offered** up something on an altar to God. Most sacrifices involved offering an animal (usually a sheep or bull; sometimes birds), but some involved offering grain or barley. God intended the sacrifices to be object lessons that would help His people understand **spiritual** realities. One of the lessons they communicated was that God wants us to consecrate our lives to Him.

C) The sacrificial system is the context for the command in Romans 12:1. When we present our bodies to God as a sacrifice, we **offer up** every part of ourselves to God. This sacrifice is described as “living, holy and acceptable to God.” It is “living” because we are spiritually **alive** in Christ; it is “holy” because we are **separated** from sin unto God; it is “acceptable” because God is pleased with the offering of what He has **cleansed**.

D) Presenting our bodies to God as a sacrifice is an act of **submission** and consecration. The motivation for this offering is the **mercy** of God, for He graciously gave His only Son to die in our place. The proper response (“reasonable service”) for us as new disciples is to willingly **yield** ourselves to Him. We must give up the right to have our own way, and we must surrender unconditionally to God’s will and purpose for our lives.

3) What does a consecrated life look like? How do we put this into practice?

A) When something is consecrated, it is **set apart** from everything else to a special, specific **purpose**. For example, an athlete who competes in the Olympics dedicates (consecrates) his life to the **training** required to achieve that goal. It affects what he eats, how much he sleeps, where he goes, who he associates with and how he spends his time. In the same way, when we consecrate ourselves to God, it affects **everything** we do.

¹ This translation is a combination of the ESV, NIV and YLT.

² This worship system is described in detail in the Old Testament books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

- B) The Bible gives us two practical directives for how to live a consecrated life. The first is to “consider yourselves **dead** to sin and **alive** to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:11) and the second is to “be **filled** with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

4) What does it mean to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God?

- A) Romans 6 begins with a question: Should a Christian continue **sinning** after they are saved? The answer is emphatic: “By **no** means!” (Romans 6:1–2). Paul then goes on to explain why. As Christians, we died to sin and are now alive to God in Jesus (Romans 6:3–10).
- B) When Paul says that we are “dead to sin,” he means that our **relationship** to sin has been severed—sin no longer has **control** over us. When we were sinners, sin reigned over us and we were under its control. As disciples, the only control sin has in our lives is the control we **allow** it to have (see the lessons “Spiritual Warfare” and “Conquering Sinful Habits”).
- C) When Paul says that we are “alive to God in Christ Jesus,” he means that we now have a **relationship** with God through our **union** with Christ. When we were sinners, we were dead to God, that is, we had no relationship with God and were spiritually dead. As disciples, we are now united with Christ in His **resurrection**. Through Christ we are spiritually alive and have been adopted by God as His children (see the lesson “Salvation”).
- D) If we, as disciples, are dead to sin and alive to God, then why are we told to “**consider** yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus”? The answer is that God wants us to live out in **practice** what is true of us in **spirit**. We are to demonstrate this truth (our new state) by how we **live**.
- E) There are two parts to obeying this command. First, we are not to allow sin to have control over our **thoughts, attitudes** or **actions** (Romans 6:12). This means resisting temptation and rejecting the influence of the world (Romans 12:2). Second, we must **yield** to the control of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:13). This means obeying God’s word and following the leadership of the Spirit.

5) What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

- A) The key to understanding what Paul means when he tells us to be “filled with the Spirit” is found in the **contrast** between the two parts of Ephesians 5:18. The full verse reads, “And do not get **drunk** with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.”
- B) Notice the contrast between being “drunk with wine” and being “filled with the Spirit.” When a person is drunk, we say that they are “under the **influence**.” This means that their attitudes, actions and words are being influenced by the alcohol in their bloodstream. They will say and do things while drunk that they would never do if they were sober. God does not want us to be under the influence of alcohol—instead, He wants us to be “filled with the **Spirit**.”

C) Being “filled with the Spirit” means that we are to be “under the influence” of the Holy Spirit. We are to be **yielding** to the Spirit and **allowing** Him to control our attitudes, actions and words. Just as a person is transformed by the influence of alcohol, we are to be transformed by the influence of the Holy Spirit. He will guide us to say and do things that are pleasing to God.

6) Is consecration something that we do just once?

A) No, consecration is a part of our **daily** walk with God. However, just as a long journey begins with the first step, so the consecrated life begins with the **first** dedication of ourselves to God.

B) Here is a suggested prayer for the first step of the journey of the consecrated life: “Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for saving me and giving me new life. I now give my life back to You and consecrate myself to You as a living, holy and acceptable sacrifice. I resolve to resist temptation and say ‘Yes’ to the Holy Spirit. I also purpose to yield every area of my life to the control of the Spirit, and I will endeavor, through Your grace, to walk each day according to His guidance. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

C) Here is a suggested daily prayer: “Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your grace which gives me the desire and power to do your will. Today I choose to consecrate myself to you. Help me to resist temptation and say ‘Yes’ to the Holy Spirit. Help me to live each moment under His influence. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”