

Consecration

1) I'm so grateful to God for saving me. How can I show my gratitude to Him?

- A) The Bible says that the proper way to show your gratitude to God is to consecrate yourself to Him: "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 my body 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), but others 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 you present your body to God as a sacrifice, you are yielding every part of yourself to God. This sacrifice is described as "living, holy and acceptable to God." It is "living" because you are spiritually alive in Christ; it is "holy" because you are separated from sin unto God; it is "acceptable" because God is pleased with the offering of what He has cleansed.
- D) Presenting your body 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 your place. The proper response ("reasonable service") for you as a new convert is to willingly yield yourself to Him. You must give up the right to have your own way, and you must surrender unconditionally to God's will and purpose for your life.

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

- A) When you consecrate something, you set it apart from everything else to a special, specific purpose. For example, an athlete who competes in the Olympics dedicates (consecrates) himself 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 you consecrate yourself to God, it will affect everything you 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 myself 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 a Christian, you died to sin and are now alive to God in Jesus (Romans 6:3–10).
- B) When Paul says that you are “dead to sin,” he means that your relationship to sin has been severed—sin no longer has control over you. When you were a sinner, sin reigned over you, and you were under its control. As a Christian, the only control sin has in your life is the control that you allow it to have (see the lessons “Spiritual Warfare” and “Conquering Sinful Habits”).
- C) When Paul says that you are alive to God in Christ he means that you now have a relationship with God through your union with Christ. When you were a sinner, you were dead to God, that is, you had no relationship with God and were spiritually dead. As a Christian, you are now united with Christ in His resurrection. Through Christ you are spiritually alive and have been adopted by God as His child (see the lesson “Salvation”).
- D) If you, as a Christian, are dead to sin and alive to God, then why are you told to “consider [NIV “count”] yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus”? The answer is that God wants you to live out in practice what is true of you in spirit. You are to demonstrate this truth (your new state) by how you live.
- E) There are two parts to obeying this command. First, you are not to allow sin to have control over your thoughts, attitudes or actions (Romans 6:12). This means resisting temptation and rejecting the influence of the world (Romans 12:2). Second, you 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 says 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 you to be under the influence of alcohol—instead, He wants you to be “filled with the Spirit.”

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

6) Is consecration something that I do just once?

A) No, consecration should be a part of your 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 yourself to God.

B) Here is a suggested prayer for the first step of your journey in 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 as you continue to resist temptation and yield yourself to the Holy Spirit: “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.”