



SENT: with Humility & Gifts

Lyrics from Frances Havergal's "Take My Life and Let It B" are used in this week's devotionals.

Day 1 — Therefore

Read Romans 12:1-8. Paul has spent 11 chapters sharing the Gospel message and telling of our great need and God's great mercy; now he begins Romans 12 with therefore. Because of all that God has given us in Jesus, we, therefore, are called to respond to God's love and grace. We must dedicate our lives to God; our faith and our thankfulness should be demonstrated in how we live. And the Spirit is the one who empowers us to live transformed lives. Reflect on God's great love. Thank and praise God. Ask the Spirit to reveal to you what the therefore means for you, today. Pray, "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

Day 2—Sacrifice

First Century people understood the concept of sacrifice. Sacrifice was part of how people approached God. The Hebrew Scriptures teach much about sacrifice. Jews sacrificed animals; in some pagan religions, people even sacrificed their children to their gods. God used the Jewish sacrificial system to point to Jesus and to the kind of sacrifice of which Paul speaks, a sacrifice given in response to God's amazing grace. Isaiah 53:4-11 and John 1:29 speak of Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. Read 1 Samuel 15:22, Psalm 50:23; 51:15-17, Matthew 9:13, Romans 12:1, and Hebrews 13:15-16. What sacrifice is God asking of you? Pray for the desire to offer yourself to God.

Day 3—Sacrifice as Worship

Prayerfully read Romans 12:1. Would it be easier for Paul's readers to bring an animal offering to an altar or to offer themselves to God? Paul ties sacrifice to worship. Consider that worship is much more than what we do when we gather in church. Our worship is manifest in how we live our lives responding to what we value above all else. What do you value most; what is on the throne of your life (God wealth, entertainment, renown, fitness, pleasure...)? Worship recognizes God's worthiness. What do you think Paul means by "spiritual act of worship"? Ask the Spirit to help you pray, with sincerity, "Take my heart—it is Thine own, it shall be Thy royal throne."

Day 4—True Worship

Read Romans 12:1-2. Paul speaks of sacrificing our bodies (all we are) to God; he uses the words "holy" and "acceptable" as he refers to this dedication; he calls it our "spiritual act of worship." We turn from the world to God. How much of us does God want? How much have you offered? Is life about God pleasing us, acting for our good pleasure, or is it about the Spirit transforming us according to God's will? God loves us perfectly. Do we trust that God's will and way will bring us the greatest and truest joy? Read John 4:23-24. Pray, "Take myself—and I will be ever, only, all for Thee," and ask the Spirit to guide you to worship in spirit and truth.

Day 5—Being Transformed

Do you like yourself the way you are? Do you resist the idea of God transforming you? Or, perhaps, you don't see yourself as valued and treasured by God. Read John 3:16, Romans 12:1-3, and 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17. God loves us tenderly and desires close fellowship with us. We know more of God's love and intimacy as we allow ourselves to be transformed. Though we are new in Christ, the Spirit's transformation is a process. What does Romans 12:2 say about our minds? Pray, "Take my will and make it Thine—it shall be no longer mine."

Day 6—Proper Perspective

Read Romans 12:3-8. When we allow the Spirit to transform our thinking, we see ourselves, and others, as our loving God sees us. We become humble before God, and love others with the love God first showed us (John 13:34-35, 1 Peter 5:6, and 1 John 4:19). We learn to trust God's heart and purpose for our lives, and we see ourselves as part of a whole, as members of the body of Christ. Each is valuable and necessary. Our unity is rooted in Christ (John 15:5, Romans 12:5). Pray, "Take my love—my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store."

Day 7—Sent with Gifts

Read Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7, and 1 Peter 4:10-11. God gives each believer spiritual gifts; we are to use these gifts to benefit others and bring glory to God. Therefore, there is no reason for pride or for self-abasement. Because Jesus died for us, we are to live for him (be living sacrifices)! Our lives are to be defined by this principle. Do you know your spiritual gifts? Ask the Spirit to reveal them, and help you use them, to bless others and honor God. Pray, "Take my hands (substitute 'gifts') and let them move at the impulse of Thy love."