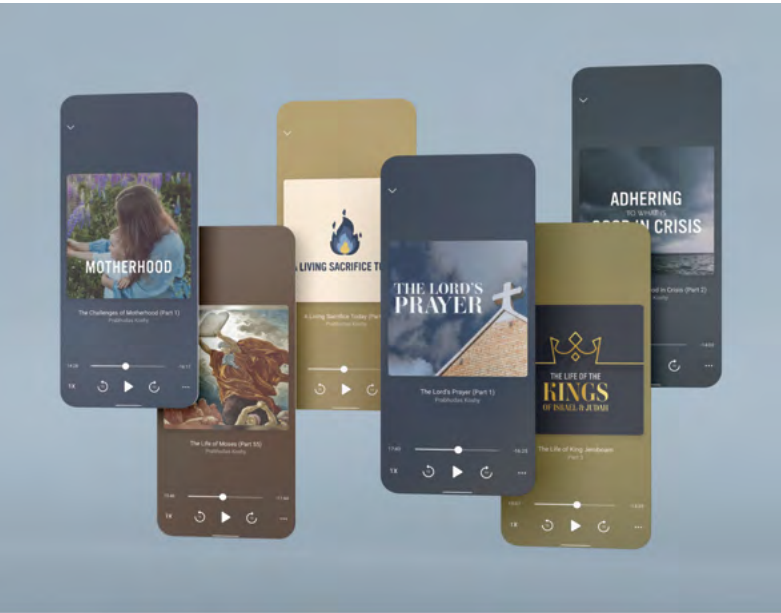


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Be a Consecrated Christian





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“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
—2 Timothy 2:15



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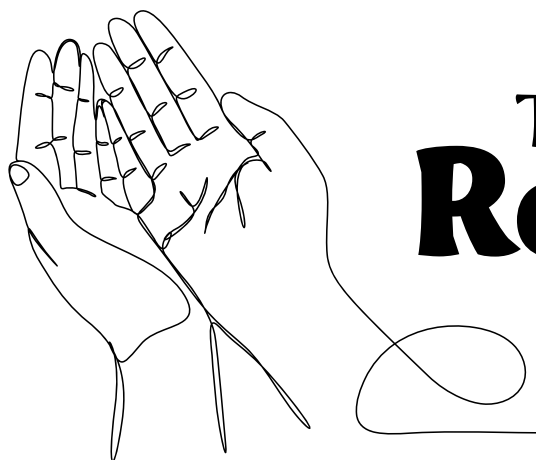


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The Christian's Renewed Life

RENEWED LIFE INVOLVES BODY AND SOUL

In Romans 1–11, the apostle Paul—by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—lays the groundwork for the Christian faith, explaining God’s gracious redemptive plan. Such magnificent divine benevolence that grants us His great salvation compels a response. Gratitude alone is insufficient. Paul insists that consecration, the total surrender of our lives to God, manifested in our daily actions, is the only fitting response. Hence Paul’s clear directive in Romans 12:1–2.

“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**...”

Unfortunately, there is a misconception among some that salvation solely concerns the soul, leaving the body free for worldly pursuits. This is dangerous dichotomising. Our physical existence is an integral part of our being, and as such, it must also be dedicated to

God. A life divided between spiritual devotion and worldly indulgence is contradictory. True consecration demands the surrender of our entire being, both body (“present your bodies” [v.1]) and soul (“renewing of your mind” [v.2]).

CONSECRATION OF OUR BODIES

In v. 1, Paul encourages us to consecrate or offer our bodies to God completely. This is the first aspect of our consecration. Now, the Greek word (*paristemi*) for “present” conveys ideas such as “stand by”, “offer yourself”, “yield something”, or “place something at one’s disposal”. So, to “present your bodies” means to make yourself available and ready for God’s use. Our desires for our bodies, whether in appearance or use, should be for the Lord’s glory and His holy will. Anytime we allow our bodies to be used by any man or for anything outside of God’s will, we are offering our bodies for unholy purposes! We must fight against our bodily desires and passions. Consecration requires us to stand with God.

Paul urges us to “present your bodies a living sacrifice”. The metaphor, “living

sacrifice”, instructs us that we should devote our entire lives to serving God. In the Old Testament, when the Jews sacrificed animals to God, they would slaughter the animal and lay it on the altar. Similarly, we are on the “altar” of God’s service, but not as a dead animal! Christ died for us, so that we may live in Him, and be active in service unto God.

This sacred presentation includes every part of our bodies—eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc. Are our eyes focused on what honours God, or are they consumed by worldly distractions? Do your eyes see things that are not godly on the mobile phone you hold in your hands? Do your ears listen to music and conversations that uplift the soul, or are they polluted by harmful influences? Are your bodies adorned in a manner that reflects your identity as God’s children, or are they clothed in immodest apparel? And where do your steps lead you—towards a life of holiness or a path of compromise and sin?

Have you dedicated your body solely to God? You should desire that your body be used exclusively for the Lord’s glory and His divine will. We should not lift a finger unless it is for the Lord’s glory. Whenever you allow your body to be used outside of God’s will, you are effectively yielding it to an ungodly thought or person, or the world, or the devil. So, let our mouths offer praises and thanksgiving, our hands generously support God’s work, our legs follow where He leads, our eyes study the Scriptures and delve into His Word, and our ears listen to His teachings and godly music. By doing such things, we present our bodies as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God”.

LIVING WITH A RENEWED MIND

In v. 2, Paul draws our attention to another aspect of our consecration: the need to offer our mind to God. The mind is where all our thoughts originate, and where our passions are controlled or let loose. If our mind is not offered up to the Lord, it will be misled to follow the evil present in this world. Hence Paul’s continued admonition in v. 2: “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.”

There are two facets of offering our minds to God. The first one mentioned is that we must “be not conformed to this world”. The Greek word for “be conformed” means allow oneself to be fashioned according to something. So, we are advised here that we should not fashion ourselves after this world. The world’s standards and values are often opposed to God’s will. Ephesians 2:2 reminds us that the world belongs to Satan, who seeks to promote sinful lifestyles and rebellion against authority—“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”. As Christians, we cannot behave like the world. We need to be different from worldly people (unbelievers), and this difference is the evidence of God’s love and power that saved us from our sins. Furthermore, John 15:19 says, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth

you.” Remember, friendship with the world is enmity with God (cf. James 4:4)!

Secondly, we are also to be “transformed by the renewing of [our] mind”. The Bible uses the metaphor of transformation to describe this process of renewing our minds. The process of transformation can be likened to a caterpillar’s metamorphosis into a butterfly. A real change must be seen in our lives, and that change can only be worked out by the renewing of our minds. The Greek word translated as “renew” means a complete change for the better. This spiritual transformation of our minds happens when we yield to God’s Word to work on our minds through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through listening to and meditating on God’s Word, we learn to reject the patterns of worldly thoughts (which are displeasing to God) and to think according to the will of God, that we may live a life pleasing to Him. In the process, we are thus renewed and transformed!

CONCLUSION

A renewed mind is a mind that is set on God’s will and not the world’s. The ultimate outcome of a renewed life is: the ability to discern and embrace what is truly good, pleasing, and perfect according to God’s will. Let us seek the Holy Spirit’s guidance through prayer, and rely on His power to be renewed daily. May we show the world that we have been transformed by the truth and grace of God. ■

Prayerful Resolve of a Consecrated Christian

A consecrated Christian has eternity’s values in view. He ought to resolve no longer to be charmed by “things on the earth”, but rather to allow “things above” to allure his spiritual sights and preoccupy his affection (cf. Colossians 3:2). Such a consecrated aspiration is crystallised in the apostle Paul’s deep godly resolve conveyed in Galatians 6:14—“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”. Such a prayerful resolve reflects a heart wholly submitted to God for the exaltation of Christ alone.

Paul’s words in this verse were uttered against the backdrop of the Judaizers who distracted some in the churches in Galatia from Christ’s perfect and powerful Gospel of salvation. They misled some of these converted Christians into putting their confidence in their own ability to keep the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. These false teachers of Judaism gloried in their legalism, as they had succeeded in turning some Galatian Christians from the Gospel of Christ to follow their strict adherence to their insistence on observing Jewish ceremonies. In the previous verse, he had in fact rebuked this erroneous, conceited thinking—“For neither they themselves who are

circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh” (Galatians 6:13). Paul fully understood that without God’s grace, through which Christ was given to be our Redeemer and Justifier, we would have remained as condemned sinners (cf. Romans 3:27-28).

A PRAYER OF SURRENDERED BOASTING

Truly, Paul knew he had nothing to glory in himself or in his achievements—“But God forbid that I should glory”. Paul’s language is strong. “God forbid” translates a Greek phrase of strong rejection—“May it never be!” He was expressing a strong prayerful wish that he would never boast in anything self-exalting. He desired to be stripped of every inclination to seek honour from his righteousness, success, or possessions. In other words, his mind must be free from any desire for or expectation of human praise. His prayerful ambition was that he would be delivered from self-exaltation and spiritual pride.

In the context of this verse, Paul exposed the motives of the Judaizers, teachers who insisted that Gentile believers must be circumcised and observe the ceremonial laws to be fully accepted by God. Paul argued that they did so to avoid being persecuted and to boast in the outward conformity of their converts. Their focus was on external religion, not inner transformation. The false teachers boasted in the flesh—in outward marks of religiosity, such as circumcision.

We must be aware of our potential to succumb to subtle arrogance that can

cause us to take glory in our religious rites, roles, titles, performance, etc. So, like the apostle Paul, we must seek God’s help to cast down every “trophy” of the flesh. The consecrated believer’s prayer must echo Paul’s self-abasing stance of a heart emptied of self, so that it may be filled with Christ: “O Lord, forbid that I should glory in anything of myself, my intellect, my beauty, my success, or my religious heritage. Let all boasting be silent before the weight of Thy glory.”

A PRAYER ANCHORED IN THE CROSS

Without question, Paul’s glorying was only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ—“save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”. He was not speaking of just the wooden beam on which Christ was hung, but all that it means: the perfect atoning sacrifice Christ made for the forgiveness and justification of sinful, guilty, and condemned humanity. The cross was the symbol of God’s merciful provision for the removal of His wrath against us, that we may be eternally reconciled to God and be heirs of all His promised blessings, including heaven. The cross is not merely the entry point of salvation; it is the daily triumph and glory of the believer in all that God has provided for us through Christ (cf. Romans 8:32).

This consecrated resolve of Paul acknowledges the centrality of the cross as the believer’s sole claim before God. Paul utterly rejects any grounds for boasting in himself, his achievements, or religious observances (like circumcision, which he has discussed earlier in the Book of Galatians). The cross is the heart of a Christian’s theology, ethics, worship,

ministry and life. The desire and prayer of a consecrated Christian's life and ministry ought to be enjoying and fulfilling the purposes for which Christ died on the cross.

Likewise, may our prayer of consecration be thus: "Lord, teach me to live under the shadow of the cross. In all duties and experiences of my life as a Christian, may I humbly live for the cross of Christ, and not for the honour of self and the world. May the cross be my identity, my song, my hope, and my anchor."

A PRAYER TO BE SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD

Paul also testified that in view of all that Christ has achieved for him through His death on the cross, the "world" is "crucified" unto him. The "world" (with all its sinful pleasures, earthly treasures, and honours) has been put to death, and is no longer fascinating for the consecrated Christian to pursue. For the believer to say, "by whom (Christ) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world", is to declare that the world no longer holds charm for him. Christ alone is his passion and pursuit on this earth. The world's allure is dead to and powerless against oneself. The world, in its rebellion against God, promotes self-exaltation and self-glory, so the believer ought to recognise its dreadful spiritual state, and pray to God for strength to maintain a separation from it.

Paul sees not only the world as dead to him, but also himself as dead to it. This is a two-way "crucifixion"! Like Paul, every consecrated Christian should consider the world

to be "crucified" through Christ. The believer, living by Christ, has a new identity in the world. He is no longer a worldly citizen, but a citizen of heaven on earth. His loyalty is no longer to this world, but to Christ. He lives not for earthly gain, but for divine purposes in Christ. Because of our admiration for Christ, the world should grow dim in our minds. Its pleasures should lose their sweetness, its ambitions their shine, and its applause its value. May we realise that "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:16-17).

It behoves the consecrated Christian to pray thus: "Lord, make me dead to the systems and values of this fallen world. Help me to detach myself from its pride, its lusts, its carnal passions. Guard me from loving what Thou hast taught us to hate in this world. May I be quick to sever the cords that tie my heart to worldly prestige, fleshly desires, and selfish ambition. Let Thy cross separate my soul from this present evil world, that I may always live for Thy glory." Amen. ■

Be Clothed with Humility



Every day, we wake up and choose what we will wear. We choose those outward garments for their comfort, fashion, function, etc. Arrayed in our chosen attire, we step out to meet the world. Yet there is a garment far more significant than that which covers the body, one that truly matters before both God and men, for it adorns the soul, governs the conduct, and sanctifies the whole life.

God's Word counsels us to "be clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5:5). Being adorned with humility is of far greater value than any outward ornament or attire, as Peter advised in 1 Peter 3:3-4, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

HUMILITY BEFORE GOD

Humility is the posture of the soul that acknowledges God's greatness and our unworthiness. Isaiah 57:15 declares, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a

contrite and humble spirit". God is "the high and lofty One"—far above all creation, eternal and unbounded by time, "whose name is Holy", set apart in purity and perfection, unapproachable by sinful man. And yet, this same God, in astonishing grace, condescends to dwell with the lowly in heart!

The Word of God commands us to be humble in order to walk with God. A soul cannot stand proudly, but must bow itself before God in repentance. The humble heart makes room for God's nearness. He who inhabits eternity chooses to commune with those who tremble at His Word. Let us therefore humble ourselves before Him, for in our lowliness, we find the abiding presence of the Most High.

To be humble before God is also to recognise our absolute dependence on Him. Every breath, every gift, and the only hope of salvation come from His gracious hand, for "what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). The humble heart confesses, like David, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (Psalm 40:17). Living humbly before God brings rich and enduring blessings that cannot be earned by human effort or outward religion. James teaches that the humble soul is the special recipient of God's

grace and favour: “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6). Pride places us in direct opposition to the Lord. But to the humble, to those who bow low in reverence and dependence, grace is the undeserved favour from God, His strength given in our weakness, and His mercy in our need. The proud cannot receive it, for they do not sense their need. But the humble are open vessels, and God fills them again and again. Consecrated Christian living begins and continues in a spirit of lowliness before the Lord.

HUMILITY BEFORE OTHERS

Humility before others flows naturally from humility before God. When we see ourselves rightly before the Lord—as undeserving sinners saved by grace—we are far less inclined to elevate ourselves above our brethren. Instead, we become eager to serve, and quick to honour others. Walking humbly with God shapes how we deal with others—justly, mercifully, and humbly (cf. Micah 6:8). Scripture teaches us that true greatness in the kingdom of God is marked not by position or praise, status or recognition, rank or applause, but in the quiet, selfless posture of a servant’s heart (cf. Matthew 23:11). In the Lord’s eyes, the one who prefers others has already attained greatness. The Lord is also committed to honouring and lifting those who humbly stoop to help and honour others (cf. Matthew 23:12).

Humility in the community of God’s people means esteeming others above ourselves, and serving others without seeking praise, advantage or reward. The proud seeks honour from others;

the humble gives it. Romans 12:10 instructs us: “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another”. A humble person is eager to respect others. He is concerned about the good, the growth, and the honour of those around him.

The consecrated Christian’s humility is also crucial to the maintaining of fellowship and unity in the church. Without humility, there can be no lasting peace in relationships, whether in the church, the home, or the wider community. Philippians 2:3 exhorts us, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” This “lowliness of mind” is a Christ-like view of self and others that promotes grace and unity. A humble heart does not seek to prove itself superior; instead, it seeks peace (cf. Hebrews 12:14a). It readily forgives because it remembers how much it has been forgiven by God. It does not keep a record of wrongs, but looks for ways to restore fellowship with other believers, as it is mindful of how Christ humbled Himself even unto death for our reconciliation (Philippians 2:5–8). To prefer others for God’s glory is not weakness—it is greatness, even Christ-likeness, as God’s Word defines it.

HUMILITY—A MARK OF WISDOM

The humble also remain teachable and meek in spirit. They will acknowledge that they do not know everything and must be guided by God and those who are godly. While the proud resist counsel, the humble listen and are well-advised. Indeed, a humble heart

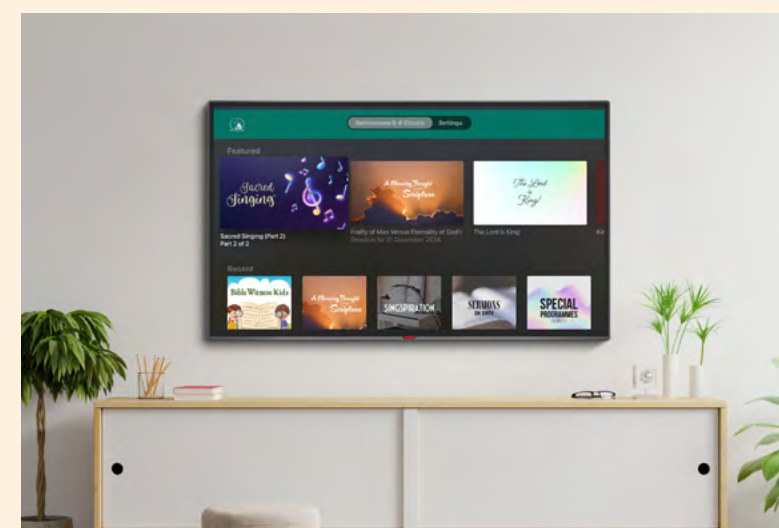
listens, receives correction, and grows in wisdom (Proverbs 13:10). Moreover, “The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility” (Proverbs 15:31–33). A humble, teachable heart receives correction, and thus God’s help, and thereby grows in wisdom.

Furthermore, humility fosters spiritual growth, while pride hinders it. Humility opens the way to wisdom and maturity. Humble hearts that recognise their need for spiritual growth and maturity welcome correction and instruction, and are grateful for the help they receive (cf. Proverbs 11:2). But the proud resist correction and refuse to learn, leading to spiritual stagnation and downfall. 1 Corinthians 8:2 warns, “And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth

nothing yet as he ought to know.” True spiritual knowledge and growth occur only when we do not assume that we have attained full knowledge and spiritual growth. This is affirmed by James, who exhorts us to “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21b). A humble spirit is necessary to receive and grow through God’s Word.

CONCLUSION

The consecrated Christian must “be clothed with humility”, which should cover every aspect of life—our appearance, our conduct, our prayers, our service and our relationships. Humility is not weakness; it is strength that stems from being yielded to God. As we humble ourselves before God and before one another, we reflect the character of Christ—and prepare ourselves to receive more of His grace, “for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5b). ■



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Be **Fervent** in **Reading** God's Word

To the consecrated Christian, the Bible is not meant to be left on the shelf, but to be read and meditated on day and night (cf. Psalm 1:2). Hence the importance of being fervent in the reading of the Bible. Whether in public or private, the reading of God's Word is not a mere formality; it is a means of grace. Yes, that has been a deeply biblical and historical conviction among many sound Christians throughout the ages.

When Scripture is read, whether in the gathered assembly or in the quiet of one's home, it is not simply the mechanical recitation of words. It is God Himself addressing His people. The Reformers called the reading of God's Word one of the *means of grace*. Although it may seem like an ordinary thing to do, it is a God-ordained channel through which the Holy Spirit communicates life, faith, and sanctification.

Several key biblical truths support the conviction about the importance of reading Scripture.

THE WORD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any

twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

The Word of God is no lifeless page of ink and paper. It is "quick", alive and living with the breath of God; and "powerful", able to accomplish all His purposes. When we read it, whether publicly or privately, the Holy Spirit wields it like a finely-honed sword, cutting through our self-conceited ideas and deception, exposing the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and laying us bare before the Lord. Yet the same blade that pierces also heals, bringing conviction that leads to repentance and comfort that restores the weary soul.

The Word of God is living and enduring; it is the divine seed by which we are born again (1 Peter 1:23). It works faith in the heart through hearing (Romans 10:17), sanctifies God's people in truth (John 17:17) and transforms lives by the Spirit's power to the glory of Christ. To read Scripture is to place ourselves in the hands of the living God, who searches us, sanctifies us, strengthens our faith, and shapes us into Christ's likeness (cf. Isaiah 55:10–11; Jeremiah 23:29).

The reading is not a dead ritual because the Spirit of God wields it to pierce, convict, and comfort.

PRIVATE READING OF THE WORD

Private reading of the Word draws the believer into an intimate fellowship with the living God. As we open the Scriptures in solitude, the Spirit speaks to our hearts through the inspired truths, guiding, correcting and comforting us.

Like the psalmist, we can say, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97); and testify, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). In those quiet moments, the voice of the Shepherd is heard (cf. John 10:27), leading us deeper into His will and nearer to His heart.

The psalmist's delight in God's law (Psalm 1:2; 119:97) demonstrates that meditation on the Scriptures serves as a means of daily refreshment and consecrated spiritual growth. The act of reading and meditating on God's Word is a means, not an end, for God Himself is the end. Through the Spirit's working, the Scriptures, read in faith, draw us closer to our God and Saviour.

In the New Testament, we see private engagement with the Word shaping the lives of disciples. The Berean Christians "searched the scriptures daily" to examine and be sure of Paul's teachings as Scriptural (Acts 17:11), showing diligence in personal study. Timothy, who was taught the Scriptures from childhood, was urged to "continue... (in) the holy scriptures" (2 Timothy 3:14–15), underscoring the lifelong role

of Scripture in the personal growth of a young believer. Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27–35) reveals God's readiness to meet those who read His Word and seek understanding. These examples show that private reading is not isolated from God's presence; it is where He meets His people, instructs their minds, and kindles within them love and worship for Him in their hearts.

READING AND INSTRUCTING OF THE WORD IN OUR HOMES

From the earliest pages of Scripture, God's covenant people have been charged with making His Word central in the home. The family is God's first institution, and it is designed to be a miniature sanctuary, where His truth is known and obeyed.

The LORD God commanded His people to teach His Word at home. His command through Moses is foundational: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6–7).

This charge is given to parents to act as instructors of His Word, by reading and teaching it in their households. The Word is to be woven into the rhythms of daily life: in conversation at the table, in journeys, in rising, and in resting. Such dissemination of instruction assumes the Word is known, read, and applied in the home. Family worship, with the reading of Scripture, prayer, singing

unto and praising of God, is a practical outworking of such a commitment.

Christian homes are not merely residences, but centres of teaching, hospitality, and mutual exhortation—first to their household and then to others (cf. Acts 2:46; 5:42; 10:22, 24; 16:32; 18:7–8; 20:20; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2).

PUBLIC READING OF THE WORD IN THE CHURCH

Public reading of Scripture is a God-ordained element of worship, not a mere human tradition. Paul's charge to Timothy—"give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:13)—places it alongside preaching and teaching as central to church life. Paul's instruction to Timothy shows that reading is not a filler between hymns and sermons—it is an act of worship and ministry!

In Nehemiah's day, "they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense" (Nehemiah 8:8), and the people worshipped. The New Testament continued this pattern. Jesus Himself read publicly in the synagogue (cf. Luke 4:16–21). In Acts 13:15, after the reading of the law and the prophets in the synagogue, Paul was invited to exhort the people—showing that public reading prepared hearts for preaching. In Colossians 4:16, Paul instructs that his letter be read publicly in the Colossian church, as well as in the Laodicean church. The Book of Revelation opens with a blessing upon "he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy" (Revelation 1:3), affirming the spiritual benefit of hearing Scripture together. These

examples reveal to us that from Israel's assemblies to the early church, God has ordained public reading of His Word as a channel of grace, instruction, and corporate encouragement.

CONCLUSION

The reading of God's Word is never presented in Scripture as an optional or ceremonial exercise. Whether in the secret place of private meditation, or in the living room of the house for family worship, or in the worship hall of a church gathering, the reading of Scripture is a holy duty, a privilege, and a means of grace. The Lord has given His Word not to be kept on the shelf—but to be read, that it may dwell richly in His people and be passed from generation to generation. ■

**The LORD God
commanded His
people to teach His
Word at home...
The Word is to be
woven into the
rhythms of daily life:
in conversation at the
table, in journeys, in
rising, and in resting.**



Be Fruit-Bearing

Jesus' words in John 15:16 proclaim to all genuine Christians, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

SALVATION INITIATED BY GOD

Jesus emphasises to His disciples that their calling was not initiated by themselves, but by Him. He chose them first, underscoring that salvation and service are rooted in God's gracious choosing. According to Jesus, our relationship with God is entirely based on His initiative, and not on human choice or merit. God chose us even "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). Our salvation is an act of God's grace, flowing from His eternal will, in which He graciously and purposefully chooses individuals to belong to Him.

As the apostle John would later write in his first epistle, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). This foundational truth should humble us, and dispel any sense of spiritual pride in reminding us that our relationship with God is a result of His loving choice, and not our own merit. Knowing that God has chosen us also brings assurance to our soul. If He has initiated our salvation, we can trust that He will sustain it. This gives believers confidence that,

despite our weaknesses, His hold on us is secure and eternal.

CHOSEN TO BEAR SPIRITUAL FRUIT

Beyond salvation, we are mindful that we are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works... that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). That is to say, every consecrated Christian will be fruitful in good works. Jesus chose His followers for a consecrated purpose: to "go and bring forth fruit". The "fruit" here includes manifested qualities of the transformed lives of Christians, such as love, joy and patience, which Paul has listed in Galatians 5:22–23 as "the fruit of the Spirit". Even more, "fruit" also includes those who respond to the evangelistic efforts of His followers. When we share the Gospel and others respond in faith, they become part of the spiritual "fruit" that remains eternally, a testimony to God's work in the world!

Jesus further encourages His followers by promising that He will provide whatever they ask of the Father in His name. This assurance is given to those who submit to God's will and are committed to bearing fruit in service to Him. The promise of answered prayer is both a blessing and a reinforcement that God will equip His chosen ones for the mission He has given them. We are not left to our own resources. Rather, God supplies all that we need for a

fruitful ministry, including strength, wisdom, and provisions.

As chosen vessels, we are empowered to bear lasting fruit through His Spirit. Each step we take in service, prayer, and obedience, brings glory to God, and confirms our calling as His chosen people, equipped to make a lasting impact for His Kingdom.

Called to be benevolent

In Hebrews 13:16, God’s Word encourages all Christians, “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” God calls His people to live lives marked by kindness and generosity, underscoring the importance of selfless acts as a way to reflect His character. Through these acts, we become a living testimony of His goodness. That’s another way consecrated Christians bear fruit.

The first command in this verse, “to do good”, emphasises our duty to reflect God’s kindness in practical ways. Scripture is filled with reminders of God’s goodness, such as in Psalm 145:9, which declares, “The LORD is good to all”. As His children, we are called to mirror this goodness in our own lives. Good deeds pleasing to God include sharing the Gospel with others, praying for those in need, providing practical help to the poor, offering service within the church, and simply showing compassion and patience in our daily interactions. By doing good, we let God’s light shine through us, drawing others to Him.

The second command, “to communicate”, calls believers to a

spirit of generous fellowship. The Greek word for “communicate” here is *koinonia*, which means “fellowship” or “sharing”. This goes beyond merely offering material support; it involves being aware of the needs of others and extending support, encouragement, and love. We are called to a life of intentional sharing, opening our hands to bless those around us, just as Christ gave Himself for us.

This verse reminds us that the good we do and the love we share are not only beneficial to others, but are also “sacrifices” that bring joy to God. True Christian generosity often requires sacrificing our time, energy, and resources. Just as Old Testament sacrifices involved offerings to God, these sacrificial acts of kindness are offerings of our lives, demonstrating our love for Him. Sacrifices involve giving up something valuable to us, and through these acts, we worship God by honouring His care for His needy people. This perspective ought to transform our charitable acts from mere duties to expressions of gratitude and worship.

Conclusion

Such acts of charity mirror God’s ultimate act of love and sacrifice in giving His Son for us. When the fruit-bearing Christian shows generosity, he embodies the love Christ displayed on the cross, making his kindness an extension of Christ’s love to the world. In doing so, he honours the sacrifice of Christ and participates in His mission to meet human needs, reflecting God’s compassion and grace. That’s how consecrated Christians “go and bring forth fruit”. ■

Bible Trivia—Joshua 10

Sarah Yong

A. Read the passage from your Bible. Ascertain if each statement below is “True” or “False”. Then circle the given letter in the relevant T/F column respectively.

- 1. The king of Jerusalem feared greatly when he heard that Israel had destroyed the cities of Ai and Jericho.
- 2. He gathered four kings to come and help him smite the great city of Gibeon that had made peace with Israel.
- 3. The men of Gibeon dared not ask Joshua to come to save them and help them fight against these kings, because they had previously deceived the Israelites.
- 4. The LORD told Joshua not to fear, for He had delivered the enemies into his hand.
- 5. As the enemies fled from before Israel, the LORD sent great lightning from heaven and smote them.
- 6. Joshua also asked the LORD for a sign, whereby the sun stood still upon Gibeon and the moon stayed in the valley.
- 7. The LORD had fought for Israel and given them victory; so Joshua, with all Israel, returned unto the camp at Gibeon.
- 8. In the meantime, the five defeated kings hid themselves in a fortress.
- 9. Joshua commanded that the five kings be slain, and their bodies be hanged upon the trees, and later be buried in the cave at sunset.

T	F
A	Z
D	Y
C	E
G	X
H	I
L	M
P	O
K	R
S	T

B. Fill in the spaces below with a circled letter from the T/F column above (corresponding to its statement number)—to complete the important biblical fact that follows.

Joshua conquered all the neighbouring cities and took their lands, because the _____ of _____ was with them.
6 7 8 2 4 7 2 5 9 8 1 3 6

Answers to Bible Trivia—Joshua 9 (Vol. 25, Iss. 4, pp. 24-25)

- 1) Jericho, Ai; 2) sacks, asses; 3) bottles, bound; 4) shoes, feet; 5) garments; 6) bread, mouldy; 7) Egypt; 8) three; 9) wood; 10) water

Wang Ming-Dao

(1900-1991) - Part IX

Retold by Jenny Lok
Layout & Art by Andronicus Koshy

The happy occasion awaiting Wang Ming-Dao – his marriage to Liu Jing-Wun, the daughter of Pastor Liu –



finally came on 8 August 1928 in Hangjoui (Hangzhou).

The holy matrimony was officiated by Pastor Liu's teacher, Pastor Run Jih-Ching of the China Inland Mission.

God amazingly provided the young couple with temporary lodging, which was a mere walking distance from Miss Liu's home.

On the wedding day, Wang Ming-Dao's mother-in-law presented Wang and his wife Jing-Wun with a Bible each.

Written on each Bible was a Scriptural verse meant to exhort the couple.

In Wang's Bible, it was written:

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16).

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

To Jing-Wun, her mother had the following encouragement:


The newly-weds arrived in Peking on 18 August.

Instead of a joyful and loving welcome from both Wang's mother and sister, Wang and his wife Jing-Wun received the cold shoulder.




I wonder why your mum and sister are so unhappy with me?

Did I do anything to offend them?




No, my dear, not at all. Well, it's their own prejudice or unreasonable attitude towards you because you were not born in Peking. Moreover, they are also suspicious of in-laws in general. I thought all these have been put aside since they had readily agreed to our engagement and subsequently marriage.



But I was wrong! I wish that you don't have to bear with my mum and sister's distrust of you!

My Heavenly Father has allowed me to go through this trial and suffering. Perhaps He has lessons to teach me. I must not retaliate against your family members.

I'm so glad that you are looking to the Lord for grace and strength to cope with this extremely trying time!




Both Wang Ming-Dao and Jing-Wun soon realised that marriage was not always a bed of roses, as they both had a strong personality.

As a result, on certain occasions when the couple were in conflict (often over trivial matters), neither was willing to give way.

Wang was, however, glad that they stood united on issues of great importance.

All that Wang could say of their differences was:



Thank God He wanted to use this to rub off our corners so that we might both become smooth stones.

Meanwhile, the work in Peking was growing.

With the help of his old friend Shih Tien-Min and a fellow believer, the church rented the "She-Chiao Hall" located at No. 23 Chien-Sha-Mien Lane in 1933, to meet the needs of the increasing number of worshippers. As to the cost of rental, Wang Ming-Dao trusted the Lord for provision through the tithes and offerings given by the church members.

Over time, Wang Ming-Dao felt a burden to purchase a plot of land to build the church. Henceforth, an offering box was used during meetings to start collecting funds for a new church building. A total sum of \$2,000 was collected by springtime of 1936.

A year later, a new church hall (located at 42 Shih-Jia Lane), measuring 70 feet long and 40 feet wide, was built by the end of July at the cost of \$6,792. An additional small room upstairs was added later, with a view to create space for more people in the future. The church building was named, "The Christian Tabernacle".

Alas! The Japanese army invaded China in 1937, and brought the country under its control till 1945.

"The Spiritual Food Quarterly", which was in publication, then faced the threat of having to shut down.



You know by now that the Japanese require all publications to include slogans which promote their political ideas. So, what is your decision on this matter?

I'm aware that if we refuse to advance the Japanese cause, we might have to cease publication of "The Spiritual Food Quarterly" or be arrested for violating their law! However, I'm ready for anything.



As the saying goes, 'A soldier is trained for a thousand days; he is used only briefly.' This is the time that God wanted to use me, and whatever the cost, I must not flee as we approach the battle!

The Lord did honour Wang Ming-Dao's desire to please Him – the Japanese military left him alone!

In 1942, Wang faced yet another spiritual challenge – the Japanese established the North China Christian Federation Promotion Committee, and required all churches, including Wang's, to join the organisation or be punished.

Wang, his wife Jing-Wun, two fellow church workers, and another brother took the matter before the Lord in prayer.

Immediately, Wang's mind turned to the verse in 2 Corinthians 6:15 –

**"And what concord hath Christ with Belial?
or what part hath he that believeth
with an infidel?"**

*The answer was clear to Wang:
he could not be yoked together with unbelievers!*

The North China Christian Federation Promotion Committee was obviously being used by the Japanese for political purposes. Wang knew that many churches had compromised out of fear, but he would resist all attempts to pressure him and his church to join the Federation. Surely, it was against God's will to associate with those who did not stand for the Truth.

Moreover, God's name and Wang's own testimony would be at stake!

To be continued



DESK & WALL 2026 CALENDARS

Bible Witness Desk and Wall Calendars for 2026 are now available! Our 2026 calendar presents original digital paintings of the colours, blossoms, and landscapes surrounding our mission works far and near, inviting quiet reflection on God's handiwork in those places. Each page also features lines from hymns and spiritual songs for the edification of souls. The artworks are painted by Clara Cho, a member of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church.

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