

RTO™ School of Prayer
The Living Sacrifice Prayer • Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

by David Mozdin

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“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2](#)Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

By God’s sovereign timing, this lesson is being written and presented during the Christmas season, although it is relevant for every day of the year. The connection of these verses to Christmas is through the action of giving, in this instance the giving of self. (I wanted to call this lesson “The Selfie Prayer” as an attention getter, because, after all, some of us are always interested in selfies, right? I see SO much of that on social media. It’s OK to tell the truth in church!) As we all know, one of the most prominent parts of Christmas is the tradition of gift giving and, how we have SO blown this out of proportion. Lord have mercy! But I digress.

According to my research, the tradition of gift giving at Christmas has its roots in pagan rituals held during the winter. As the emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the officially recognized true religion of Europe (ending hundreds of years of persecution), he also wanted to end pagan rituals by converting them into practices that related to Christianity. Among these were declaring December 25th as Christ’s birthday, and the justification for gift giving being re directed to the biblical example set by the Magi, also known as the Three Wise Men, who gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (gifts fit for a king) to the child Jesus. (See Matthew 2:11).

This indicates a noble and righteous motivation for gift giving, and in our rush to knock ourselves out to get the right gifts for others (especially the children and grandchildren), to get that newest, latest, most popular, that “everybody-has -to-have-it”-soon-to-disappear-fad, or to make sure we’ve given our loved ones our special gift wish list, do we ever stop to ask **“What gift can we give to Jesus?”** After all, God has given us SO much, He has given us life, He has given us *eternal* life through giving us His only

begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior (Alleluia). Christ has given us Himself, His life, His blood, His sacrifice on the cross to forgive our sins to save us from the wrath of God in hell. God has given us the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ to carry on the work of the Kingdom of God within us. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...." (2 Peter 1:3).

As Matt Redman has written in his song "Breathing the Breath", "We have nothing to give that didn't first come from your hands", and "Who has given to you as if you needed anything?" In our humble and sinful state, we could also identify with a character from a popular Christmas song, "The Little Drummer Boy", who sang "I have no gift to bring (Pa-rum-pum-pum-pum), that's fit to give the King...". We too have no gift to bring that's fit to give our King, but like the little drummer boy, we can do as he did, doing what he did best, "I played my drum for Him, I played my best for Him".

The little drummer boy had the gift of playing the drum, a gift which he gave back to the King, and we have gifts which, through the agency of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11), He has given us. So we can give back to Him what we do best, according to our gifting (1 Peter 4:10).

To expand upon this, we can give back the gifts He has given us to include the totality of our very selves, hence the reference to the key verse of this lesson, Romans 12:1-2, to give ourselves completely and sacrificially. This is something we need to do and ought to do each and every day He has given us life in this world, each day that we live for Him. Like a magazine or internet program subscription or an interest-bearing financial investment, our gift as a living sacrifice can be the gift that keeps on giving, just as God through Christ and the Holy Spirit keeps giving us. Praise Him!

To properly give ourselves to the Lord, we need to be prepared. Before we give a gift to anyone do, we not make sure that the gift is properly prepared, presentable, is appropriate for the recipient, and nicely wrapped?

There is some irony here, that in preparing to give ourselves, we need to ask God for what we need to be able to do this. We're giving ourselves to Him, yet we are needful of Him. Christ has said; "...apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5). It's like going to someone and saying, "I want to give you a gift, but I don't have the money to purchase it, could you please give me the money so I can do this?" We go to our Father in prayer as He says, "Ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7). We pray to the one True Mediator/Intercessor (1 Timothy 2:5), Jesus Christ, we pray in His Name (John 14:13-14), we pray in faith, the faith He gives us (Matthew 21:22, Ephesians 2:8).

At this point, I'd like to reveal the back story of this prayer, I normally don't like to include a detailed account of my own personal experience in these lessons, but I agree with Steve, a pastor friend who once said, "It's OK to talk about yourself while teaching or preaching but pick your spots." I believe this is one of those spots.

In late 2015, early 2016, I made a commitment to the Lord to regularly attend RTO, and while there I met some men who invited me to attend a Saturday morning prayer group at a church in the western suburbs of Chicago. Among the men I met there was a man named Dr. David Roth, and we had a few conversations together. Along the way, he gave me his business card, and on the back were listed about 6 or 7 brief prayer requests tied to specific Bible verses. This immediately struck me as a good prayer to pray, because the prayer seemed oriented to strengthening one's relationship with the Lord.

I put the card in my prayer room with my other prayer material and began to pray it as part of the rotation of different prayers that I pray. Let me say here that, coming from a ritual liturgical background, from time to time I pray prewritten prayers. The majority of my prayers are from the heart in the Spirit, yet I believe periodic prewritten (or written) prayers from the heart are acceptable to the Lord. The wonderful part about written prayer is that it helps to clarify our thinking to make honorable and relevant requests as we boldly go to the Throne of Grace (Hebrews 4:16).

Over time the Spirit moved me to add more requests to the initial ones, and the appropriate Scripture to accompany them, and I revised and rewrote the list. Another beautiful part about keying these requests to specific Bible verses is that this can be viewed as a continuation of a previous School of Prayer lesson, "Praying God's Word". And I believe it is also further evidence that the Bible is the best prayer book anyone can own. There are now nineteen requests. They are:

- 1.) **Forgive me.** Psalm 51:1-5. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that you may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment. Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

This is our most basic need, as we have been sinners since our conception and need to be rightly reconciled to God, who is without sin (Habakkuk 1:13a) and under whom we stand condemned

to His wrath in eternal hell. (Psalm 9:17). We can only gain His forgiveness through the once for all sufficient sacrifice of God's only begotten Son, the spotless Lamb of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If we embrace Christ by faith for forgiveness of our sins, repent of our evil ways and believe that God has raised Christ from the dead, then we will be saved. We will obtain God's forgiveness and will be able to continue to receive it for the sins we will continue to commit until we are perfected with Him in glory. (Philippians 1:6, 1 John 3:2). If you have not yet already done so, please embrace Christ by faith for the forgiveness of your sins, fleeing the wrath to come, and your need to be right with God will be filled.

- 2.) **Thank you for forgiving me.** Luke 17:15-16. [15](#)”Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; [16](#)and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks.” This is from the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers, we can imitate the one man’s example, recognizing and giving thanks for the magnitude of the healing and the awesomeness of the One who provided it!
- 3.) **Clean my heart.** Psalm 51:10. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” After forgiveness, we seek renewal, and restoration. Verse 12 can also apply, “Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”
- 4.) **Guard my heart.** Proverbs 4:23. “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”
- 5.) **Take every thought captive.** 2 Corinthians 10:5. “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,”. The continual true knowledge of God is paramount. (Jeremiah 9:24, Hosea 6:6). It is also good to know that the all-knowing *God knows our thoughts*, “But He (Christ), knowing their thoughts” Luke 11:17
- 6.) **Guard my tongue.** Psalm 19:14, 141:3. “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.” “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.” This is the culmination of requests 3, 4, 5, as Christ Himself has said, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matthew 12:34).
- 7.) **Convict me of my sin.** John 16:8. “And when He (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:” The Holy Spirit is the active agent in convicting us of sin. Also, Psalm 139:23-24 (NKJV), which you can pray directly as it is written.

“Search me, O God and know my heart; Try me and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting.” If you pray that in the Spirit, God *will answer*, He wants you to be right with Him. Remember, unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers, Psalm 66:18, If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”

- 8.) **Keep me from temptation and sin.** Psalm 19:12-13 (NKJV), two more verses you can pray directly from the Scriptures; “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.” Also, Matthew 6:13, the very words of Christ, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”
- 9.) **Humble me.** James 4:6-10, the process of humility, “[6](#)But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” [7](#)Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8](#)Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9](#)Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10](#)Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. Also 1 Peter 5:6, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you,”
- 10.) **Teach me to pray.** Just as the disciples asked Jesus to pray, (Luke 11:1), we can do likewise. Lord, teach me to pray biblically, radically, boldly, fervently, humbly, in faith, interceding, and without ceasing. Matthew 6:9-13, a pattern for prayer, “Pray then like this” (v. 9) Luke 11:1-13, another pattern, Ephesians 6:18, another previous School of Prayer lesson, “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.” Colossians 4:2, “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “pray without ceasing.” James 5:16, [16](#)”Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”
- 11.) **Increase my faith.** Luke 17:5. “The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’” This request comes after Christ warns and rebukes the apostles concerning temptations to sin and forgiveness of those who sin against you (vv. 1-4), two difficult issues for any believer! The Pulpit Commentary notes; “They (the apostles) evidently felt their weakness deeply (in response to Christ’s warning/rebuke), but a stronger faith would supply them with new strength; they would thus be guided to form a wiser, gentler judgment of others, a more severe opinion too of

themselves.” Matthew Henry wisely writes; “The increase of our faith is what we should earnestly desire, and we should offer up that desire to God in prayer.”

12.) **Give me mustard seed size faith.** Luke 17:6. Building on our previous request to increase our faith, this is the type of faith we ask of God. “And the Lord said, ‘If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.’” The Pulpit Commentary again; “The Lord signifies that a very slight **real** faith, which he compares to the mustard seed, that smallest of grains, would be of power sufficient to accomplish what seemed to them impossible. In other words, he says, ‘If you have any real faith at all, you will be able to win the victory over yourselves necessary for a perpetual loving judgment of others.’” What a rebuke to their (and our) request, yet full of grace and truth, just as Christ is! Christ also addresses this in Matthew 17:20; “‘For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.’” NOTHING will be impossible with a measure of faith, says Christ. This is most likely where we draw the saying “faith to move mountains”.

13.) **Fill me with Your Spirit.** Luke 11:13 “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” This is our gracious Father, always giving lavishly! Praise Him! In our School of Prayer lesson on Praying in the Spirit, we learned of all the benefits of having the Holy Spirit within us. The apostles Paul also exhorts us in this in Ephesians 5:18; “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,”

14.) **Give me Your wisdom.** James 1:5-8. **5**“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. **6**But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7**For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8**he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” Even more reason to have asked God for an increase in faith (requests 11 and 12), so you can enjoy the grace of the promise of these verses, *from God who gives generously to all without reproach*, but with a warning that this *must be asked for by faith*, or *nothing* will be received.

Please note that this request is for **GOD’s** wisdom. James addresses this in chapter 3, verses 13-18; **13**“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works

in the meekness of wisdom. [14](#)But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15](#)This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16](#)For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. [17](#)But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. [18](#)And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” While man’s wisdom is often well intentioned, and can contain some measure of truth, but not being rooted and grounded in God’s truth, can easily become unspiritual and demonic, as verse 15 says. The result of having God’s wisdom is peace in you and out of you, as verses 17 and 18 say.

15.)**Make me to understand, know and do Your will.** 1 John 5:14-15. [14](#)”And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. [15](#)And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.” Drawing from yet another School of Prayer lesson, we learned that this is a key to effective radical God honoring prayer. We learned about U-K-D, understanding, knowing, and doing God’s will. Ephesians 5:14, “Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Romans 12:2, a part of the key verse for this lesson, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind (reading, studying, living out God’s word in the Bible), that by testing you may discern (observe and notice) what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Matthew 5:10, as Christ taught us, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We keep a heavenly focus as we live here on earth, knowing our permanent home will one day be in heaven, come Lord Jesus! 1 John 2:17; “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” Doesn’t this good news about God’s will want to make us cry out, as David did, “I delight to do Your will. O my God”? (Psalm 40:8)

16.)**Give me a servant’s heart.** 1 Samuel 3:9; “Speak Lord, for Your servant hears.” Isaiah 6:8; “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’” And to remain humble in this, Luke 17:10, as Christ has said; “So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants, we have only done what was our duty.’”

17.)**Teach me servant leadership.** A spiritual gift of leadership is not a requirement for servant leadership but having a servant’s heart will cause you to act like a servant leader. John 13:1-15.

This is the account of Jesus humbling Himself to wash His disciples' feet (a lowly task that no one else wanted to do) at the Last Supper, the night before He was crucified. He tells them, and by extension, us, in vv. 13-15, **13**"You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. **14**If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15**For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

18.)**Use me in Your kingdom.** Isaiah 6:8 again, "... who will go for us? Then I said, 'Here am I send me.'" This is where we offer to give back to God the gifts He has so graciously given us. Rom 12:6; "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them;" 1 Peter 4:10-11; **10**"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: **11**whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

19.)**Give me eternal life, that I may "know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."** Most of this request is taken directly from the words of Christ in John 17:3. When we speak of eternal life, not only do we speak of it in terms of time, eternity, forever, but also a quality of life. A quality of life consisting in perfect sinless fellowship with God Himself, (Revelation 21:3-4) and with fellow saved believers, no more sin, heartache, fighting, strife, tears, disease, death, O bring it on Lord!

A key to eternal life is knowing God, as Christ says in this verse. The meaning of the word "know" in the Bible is different from our modern use of that word. According to Vine's Bible dictionary, the word comes from the Greek word "ginosko", which means "understand completely", to "convey the thought of connection or union", such as in Genesis 4:1; "Now Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain..." It implies an intimate relationship, not necessarily sexual. It is more than casually knowing someone, not like, "Yes, I know him to say hello..." Paul makes a plea to know God in all His fullness in Ephesians 4:13; "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," Paul's own personal plea for his knowledge of God is evident in Philippians 3:10; "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and may share in His sufferings."

God Himself makes known the importance of knowledge of Him in Hosea 6:6 (NKJV); “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” God even lets us know that we can boast about our knowledge of Him, Jeremiah 9:24; but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

What is the best way to know about God, to continually learn more about Him? Read, study, meditate upon, pray on, be obedient to His word in the Bible.....DAILY. This is how we are “transformed by the renewal of your mind” as our key verse in Romans 12:2 states.

20.) **Thank you.** This is not a request, but it is what needs to pour out of our hearts for answering the 19 requests just listed, just like the leper who was healed in Luke 17:15-16; “Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; [16](#)and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks.” Ephesians 5:20. “giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 1 Thessalonians 5:18; “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” These verses make it plain those things for which we are to be thankful to God, in other words, EVERYTHING! When? ALWAYS! “In all circumstances, and the 1 Thessalonians verse is an indicator of doing God’s will (an answer to request #15). We can also thank God for hearing and answering our prayer, as Jesus did in John 11:41; “And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard me’”.

21.) **I love You Lord.** While this is not a request either, it is a fitting conclusion to the 19. 1 John 4:19. “We love because He first loved us.” Romans 5:5. “because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” John 14:21. “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” These verses explain why and how we love the Lord. When you think about Who He is, ALL He has sacrificially and graciously done for us, besides responding with worship, praise, and thanks, don’t you just want to cry out “I love You Lord!?” Do we ever even say it out loud to Him when we pray?

Summary-Conclusion We’ve done a wide and sweeping biblical view of what we need from our God and Father to be able to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him, holy and acceptable.

You can pray all these requests at once, you can pray several of them at a time, you can pray one at a time, stopping to read and meditate upon the companion verses, you can pray the one(s) the Holy Spirit leads you to pray, depending upon your situation. You can add requests as the Spirit leads you during your time in God's word. This is how I have prayed it, for many years now. Here are the requests, minus the verses and commentary:

Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, Blessed Holy Spirit, I offer myself, this body, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to You. Please:

Forgive me. Thank you for forgiving me. Clean my heart. Guard my heart. Take every thought captive. Guard my tongue. Convict me of my sin. Keep me from temptation and sin. Humble me. Teach me to pray biblically, radically, boldly, fervently, humbly, in faith, interceding and without ceasing. Increase my faith. Give me mustard seed size faith. Fill me with Your Spirit. Give me Your wisdom. Make me to understand, know and do Your will. Give me a servant's heart. Teach me servant leadership. Use me in Your Kingdom. Give me eternal life, that I may "know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Thank you for hearing and answering. I love You Lord. Amen. Alleluia!

For a copy of a transcript or questions, please contact dmozdin.dfp@gmail.com