

ROM 12:1 **"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."**

Understanding our union with Him and the resultant divine righteousness gives us a valid "**presentation**" to God. The word to present means to dedicate, separate, to present ourselves unto God. This is a response of faith to God who has already placed us "**in Christ.**" It is acknowledging our position "**in Christ.**" It does not mean that we need to do this to be accepted by or with Christ, but that we understand we are accepted "**in Christ.**" The logical conclusion is to present not just our souls or human spirits only but our bodies as well! For the sophomore believer (who has a little knowledge but thinks they have a lot) it is easy to present their souls and even their human spirit. They can stay at home and read or listen to someone's tapes, skipping the series if the interest isn't there. But to present their body takes sacrifice, dedication and devotion. It takes believing passages like 1CO 6:19-20 **"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."**

Presenting ourselves to God means to dedicate oneself to God, to devote your body as holy and dedicated to Him, knowing that you will never enter into sinless perfection or be perfectly holy in this life. Giving your body, soul and spirit, that's a difficult thing to do. Most people can't because it takes tremendous humility and perseverance to do so. You have to learn to handle the old sin nature's tendency to react and judge and you have to learn to handle other people and their old sin nature. So, some give their soul and become very intellectual and even introspective, others give their soul and human spirit and learn spiritual things. But there are some who do all three, or try to their best to do all three. Added to that they use their time, talent and treasure as best as they can. These are the ones who are a privilege to be around, the ones who make the environment for learning doctrine so comfortable. These are the ones who don't just dedicate their soul and spirit but also their body. This is taught in ROM 6:13 **"and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."**

Here we have the determinant factor in presenting ourselves to God found in the phrase, **"as those alive from the dead."** We know that our old nature or old self did not rise from the dead. The sinful Adamic life was crucified on the cross. ROM 6:6-7 **"knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died [with Christ] is freed from sin [the sin nature]."** The "new man" emerged from the death that He died and the resurrection which took place. This new man, this new life realized from "positional truth" is what God wants you to present yourselves to Him with. This new Christian life we are told to present to God, COL 3:3 **"For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."** It is the only life He accepts.

Another aspect of positional truth that is very vital to understand is our identification with The Lord Jesus Christ. We need to identify with His death, burial, and resurrection. As in all realms of positional truth, this identification is not experiential but a matter of placing our faith in the facts contained in the Word. God provides the facts before He calls for faith. ROM 10:17 **"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."** It is not until the facts of our identification with Christ are "understood" that we are told to exercise faith. Once we understand our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection then we are directed to "consider" as ROM 6:11 says **"Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."** The key word in this verse is "consider" which means to conclude or take into account, to determine or to decide. It would be impossible for God to suggest that we "consider ourselves" as having died unto our sin nature and then having become alive unto Him in Christ, if the information to do so was not provided and if it were not already true of us. Nor could He ever call upon us to present ourselves to Him as alive from the dead in ROM 6:13, if He had not already made us new creatures in Christ.

However, true as our identification with TLJC is, If we are not aware of the facts, we derive little benefit from them where we need them most, in our daily life." To consider that something is true is to see it clearly or to believe it. Therefore, it is not until we recognize that we are free from the power of the sin nature and its' lust toward immoral or moral degeneracy that we become a servant of righteousness. ROM 6:17-18 **"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of doctrine to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."**

There is absolutely no reason why you as a believer should not enjoy the equal privilege and equal opportunity that God has given you to be a winner. You have been given fantastic things including mystery doctrine. Saints of the Old Testament did not know "Church-age mystery doctrine." They did not realize that God would have a royal family or that every believer would be a priest. They did not realize that the royal family would have the privileges of royalty, that they would be "special" and have the greatest opportunities in their relationship with God. When Moses and the other writers of the Old Testament wrote, they prophesied a lot of things. They prophesied about the rejection of the Jews, about the First advent, they prophesied about the Tribulation and the Millennium. But, they always skipped over the Church-age. This was a mystery and positional truth is a part of that mystery. The Old Testament has a great deal of benefit for us but it is not where we find our doctrine regarding "the Church-age." The mystery in EPH 1:9 **"God had made known unto us [His saints] the mystery"** was not known and you are a part of this mystery, you are the saints and never before has this information been revealed! Moses, Abraham, Isaiah and the others of the Old Testament were curious about it! They were curious, but they did not know about it, amazingly, little curiosity, interest exists among believers today about this mystery. Our relationship with God is based upon being "in Him" and understanding positional truth is also essential in overcoming sin. The mature believer and the spiritually minded believer is conscious of sin *"in him"* but he is fully assured that there is no sin *"on him"*. 1Jo 1:8-10 **"If we say [assert] that we have no sin nature, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth or doctrine is not in us. If we acknowledge [name and cite] our sins, He is faithful and righteous, with the result that He forgives us our sins [known sins] and purifies us from all unrighteousness [unknown sins]. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word [Bible doctrine] does not reside in us."**

The believer who understands this enjoys freedom to come boldly unto the throne of grace in order that he may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. When he does sin, his conscience and communion with the Father being disturbed, causes him to confess and receive restoration. He knows 1JO 2:1 **"My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; He knows his advocate!"** On the other hand the "condition centered" Christian is just the opposite. He has no other recourse but to *"fight against the indwelling sin nature"* and to seek to control self as best as He can. To this intolerable burden is added the frustrating fact that God does not seem to help him in this endeavor. One of the main reasons why so many believers are spiritually ill as well as mentally and physically sick, is a guilty oppressed conscience. They are occupied with and laboring under the burden of their unrighteous condition. There is liberty in our "righteous position" but burden in our "unrighteous condition." Sadly enough, there are many of God's people today who do not know anything about a "pure" and perfect conscience. Instead they are bound by a bad conscience, honestly aware of their sinful condition but only vaguely aware of their perfect position. As 1CO 8:7 says **"their conscience being weak is defiled"** or TIT 1:15 **"To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled."** or HEB 9:14 **"how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"** or Heb 10:22 **"let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled {clean} from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."**

The basic reason for a guilty conscience is the indwelling "old sin nature". Although redeemed by Christ from the penalty and bondage of sin, many believers are spiritually helpless and useless by an overwhelming burden of guilt because they do not understand positional truth or they do apply what they have learned.

Even the Old Testament believers knew the importance of deliverance from guilt. In PSA 32:5 David said **"I acknowledged my sin to Thee, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin."** The agony of guilt is found in such passages as PSA 38:4 **"For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me."** This is why we are told in ISA 43:18 **"Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past".**

Our guilt cannot be relieved through removal of sin within because that principle will be present as long as we reside in our unredeemed body. There cannot be any hope of relief through improvement of self, since in the flesh there dwells "no good thing" to improve. As one writer put it "Faith is

dependence upon God. And this God-dependence only begins when self-dependence ends." Self-dependence comes to its end for many believers, when sorrow, suffering, affliction, broken plans and dead hopes bring them to the place of self-helplessness and defeat. Most believers have difficulty in realizing and facing up to the relentless fact that God does not hurry in His development of our Christian life. Many believers get in a rut and feel that they are not making progress unless they are seeing results on a daily basis.

Moses was forty years in the desert, Paul was three years, after his first testimony, the point is that there are no shortcuts to fulfill the spiritual life. True spiritual growth involves pain as well as joy, suffering as well as happiness, failure as well as success, inactivity as well as service, death as well as life. The temptation to shortcut is especially strong unless we see the value of, and submit to, the necessity of the time element. In simple trust we must rest in His hands, as PHI 1:6 states, **"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you an absolute good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."** It will take until the day of Christ. The point is that since God is working for eternity, why should we be concerned about the time involved? ROM 8:29 **"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;"** All growth is progressive, it is from measure to measure, from stage to stage. There are great days, days of decisive battles, days of crises in the spiritual life, days of triumph in the Christian life. But there are also idle days, days that seem to be apparently useless, as far as the spiritual life is concerned. However, in those days God is still not working within us. Any experience that makes us more aware of our need of God contributes to our spiritual progress and growth. Paul writes in 1TH 5:24 **"Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass."** So often when we go through certain difficulties and trials, we pray for strength, encouragement and victory, for mastery over the forces of evil and our thought is that in some way the Lord is going to come through for us with some overt victory. However, what God wants to do many times is to enlarge us to possess all that He has for us.

To increase our capacity to handle pressure, to become immune to the trials and difficulties that inevitably we all have to face. The Lord said in the upper room discourse, the night before His death in JOH 14:27 **"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."** In JOH 16:33 **"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."**

God will put us through some exercise, through some experience that takes us by surprise for our own spiritual development so that we end up with an increase capacity in our spiritual life.

The problem that we all have at times is to be too self-centered and introspective.

We want everything done yesterday. When in reality, when the Holy Spirit reasons with man, He does not reason from what man is for God, but from what God is to man. Most believers are too concerned about what they are to God and whether God can accept or reject them. The Holy Spirit always reasons down from what God is, and this produces a total change in our life. Sadly today, most believers actually reason just the opposite--from themselves to God. When all is going well they feel God loves and accepts them, but when they are stumbling and everything seems to be going wrong, then they feel that He does not love and accept them.

When in reality, there is nothing about us to commend us to God except our position and acceptance in Christ. This is why God loved us from before the foundation of the world, in REV 13:8 and 17:8, our names were written in the book of life before the world was even created. A few principles concerning believer who understands his position in Christ:

1. Realizes that to believe and to consent to be loved while unworthy, is one of the great secrets of the Christian way of life.
2. Refuses to make resolutions and vows; for that is to trust in the flesh.
3. Expects to be blessed, though realizing more and more his lack of worth.
4. Realizes that God's chastening is a mark of His love and grace.
5. Realizes that to hope to be better and therefore acceptable to God is to fail to see yourself in your position in Christ.
6. Realizes that to be disappointed with yourself, is to have believed in yourself.
7. Realizes that to be discouraged is unbelief concerning God's purpose and plan for you.

Paul said in ROM 14:22 **“The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.”**

ROM 14:23 **“But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.”**

To have confidence in ourselves and in our little system of good deeds is to be blind because we have no standing before God, in ourselves. The lack of divine blessing in our lives therefore, comes from unbelief, and not from failure of devotion. It comes from rejection of who we are in Christ and then failure to execute the spiritual life. To preach devotion first, and blessing second, is to reverse God's order, and preach law, not grace, for the Law made man's blessing depend on devotion whereas grace confers undeserved, unconditional blessing.

The problem is that so many believers have been afraid to really believe God.

Never forget that God's ways are not always man's ways. To some believers, constant danger is the only motivation for a relationship with God, and that is why many churches use fear to try and keep their disciples in line. Fear, too, has a place in Christianity, but God has higher and more effective motivations than fear, and one of these is love. 1JO 4:18 **“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”** Fear produces the obedience of slaves; love generates the motivation and obedience of sons. ROM 8:28 **“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”**

ROM 8:29 **“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;”**

The secret of healthy spiritual growth is to know and settle upon this fact as set forth in Romans 8:28-29.

When we see that all things are working together to make us more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ, we will not be frustrated and upset when some of these things are hard and often difficult to understand. We will be able to rest upon the Lord Jesus Christ and say to our Father as Job did in JOB 13:15 **“Though He slay me, I will trust in Him.”**

It is one thing to know what God's purpose is for our lives, but it is another to know something of the means He uses for us to enter into that purpose. One of God's most effective means in the process of our spiritual growth and transformation is failure. Many believers are simply frantic over the fact of failure in their lives, and they will go to all lengths in trying to hide it, ignore it, or rationalize about it.

All the time they are resisting the main instrument in the Father's hand for conforming us to the image of His Son. HOS 5:15b **“In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”** Or PSA 50:15 **“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”** Failure where self is concerned in our Christian life and service is allowed and often engineered by God in order to turn us completely from ourselves to His source for our life, TLJC, who never fails us.

We should be consistently and lovingly learning about our Lord and Savior, who is revealed to us in the Word. The Holy Spirit will quietly and effortlessly change the center and source of our lives from self to Christ. Therefore, we end up with a viewpoint like John the Baptist, JOH 3:30 **“He must increase, but I must decrease.”** Or, as the apostle Paul said in GAL 2:20 **“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;”**

Under the law of volitional responsibility and reaping what we sow, God has a natural law in force to the effect that we are conformed to that on which we center our interest and love. If we are attracted to this present evil world, we become increasingly worldly; if we pamper and live for self, we become more and more self-centered; but when we look to TLJC, we become more and more like Him, 2CO 3:18, 1JO 4:17.

If we are to be like Him, then God in His grace must do it. The sooner we come to recognize it the sooner we will be delivered from another form of bondage.

The Holy Spirit says, "You cannot do it; just withdraw; come out of it. You have been in the arena, you have been endeavoring, you are a failure, come out and sit down, and as you sit there behold Him, look at Him." Don't try to be like Him, just look at Him, just be occupied with Him, behold Him, look upon Him through the Word.

Come to the Word for one purpose and that is to meet the Lord.

PHI 2:13 **"for it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you motivation] and to work [He gives you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure.**

He is working everything together for this one purpose: "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh", This is life.

PHI 1:21 For me, living is Christ, likewise dying is profit.

There will be times when it seems like our needs are not being met and if we are not confident enough and assured of our standing with God, there is a tendency to question our relationship with Him. Our fellowship can and does change, sometimes for the worse, sometimes for the better, but our relationship will never change.

Once a son, always a son.

Gal 3:26 "For all of you are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

You will always be an heir of God no matter how you fail or succeed.

Gal 4:7 "Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, a child of God, and if a son, then an heir through God."