

The Counsel of God

Throughout this life's journey we live with countless kinds of advice, counsel and teaching. We remember our parents' thoughtful counsel, and beneficial advice from friends and neighbours.

Though the words of wisdom and counsel were based on their loving concern for us, they were still very limited. Our God who created the heavens and earth, loves us so infinitely. He sent Jesus to the cross where He died to save us, and now He continues to show His great love by counselling us. God's counsel in His Word has become a beacon of light revealing His directions to all believers for eternal life, and in all areas of everyday living. For this reason it is important to know His counsel and live by it. Then we will glorify God through a successful Christian walk. Those who do not, live in uncertainty and confusion with their lives ending finally in misery.

God counsels us in Romans 12:1 to: *"...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."*

The sacrifices in the Old Testament involved killing animals, shedding their blood, placing the blood on the altar of God, to be consumed by fire. But, here God tells us to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, to totally dedicate our bodies to God.

Even after becoming a Christian by accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, unless one determines to give himself to God as *"a living sacrifice"*, he will still be captivated by the sins of the body and continue to live in pursuit of sin and

worldly greediness (2. Peter 2:22). Since Jesus shed His Blood and died on the cross as our sin sacrifice, we no longer have to be slaves of sin. So, we must shake off the old habit of committing sin.

If we earnestly seek the help of our Lord in prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit will quicken our conscience so that amazing will-power and determination will arise from our inner person. Then we will be able to live boldly with the power of the Holy Spirit and be able to exercise our personal will-power to walk rightly.

For us to offer a "sweet smelling sacrifice" to God we must know that the "old man" was crucified, buried and is now resurrected with Christ, enabling us to truly worship God and praise Him. Our praise and worship has become a sweet smelling sacrifice, we have become an acceptable offering to God. We are His children. We need to mortify the wrong desires of our body... becoming a living sacrifice every day, as we behold Jesus' cross.

Worship to God by those who have not crucified their sinful desires on the cross, but are still carrying old habits of sin, cannot be true worship. It may follow a form of worship, but it has not been accepted by God. They are hypocrites and religionists. Because a few Christians have not totally consecrated themselves to Christ, society has often falsely accused all Christians of being the same.

We must staunchly choose to live by the counsel of God in the Word. We must offer our bodies as a

"living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God".

By our own human ability or effort, we cannot overcome the sinful desires of our flesh. The apostle Paul confessed: *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* (ROM 7:24).

To overcome the lust of the flesh, we must totally cling unto Jesus Christ every moment of every day. When we humbly come to Him on our knees and seek His help, the Holy Spirit will empower us to overcome the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Our effort is powerless. His effort is powerful and gives us strong will-power and divine enablement.

God's children must believe in God, who not only saves their souls from hell, but who gives them power and authority to fight against sin; so that they are not afraid of any challenge of sin, but are confident they will overcome and glorify God through their daily battles. We must offer our bodies to Him as clean vessels that live in His righteousness.

God admonishes us to: *"...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."* (ROM 12:2). Originally, God gave the dominion and authority of the earth to Adam and Eve. But when they fell, they surrendered it to satan, and evil has increased in the world since that day. However, we should not be conformed to the world. We should not be conformed to a humanistic kingdom.

We must resolutely turn toward God and walk in Christ's number one living principle. We must staunchly forsake atheistic secularism and not even drift toward such a trend.

We are living in a wicked world, so we should renew our hearts and minds daily. We must educate ourselves in the Word of God instead of obeying the humanistic guidelines of the world. We must fear God and absolutely follow His will regarding all the issues of life.

Believers should learn at the foot of the cross, in prayer, that they became righteous because their sins were forgiven at Calvary and they were reconciled to God through Jesus' death on the cross. They were healed when Jesus took their infirmities on the cross. Their curse was broken and removed when Jesus Himself became the curse on the cross. Believers must remember they are in Christ Who overcame the power of death and now, **because He lives, they too can live victoriously every day.**

As believers, dwell on these truths, and you will be transformed, enjoy the peace that Jesus has given, and live by faith. The more knowledge we learn and retain of the kingdom of God, the deeper our hearts will be renewed. We should continually study the Word of God, and then live it out in our daily lives.

Some Christians obey God's will only when it is profitable to them. They immediately turn back when God's will seems to contradict their personal views for gain. Such people are really selfish people and are not men and women of faith. Our Christian attitude should be: "Even if this should bring some personal loss to me I will choose to obey God's counsel."

As we live in tune with God's Word we are easily led by the Holy Spirit. **If one truly wants to walk with the Holy Spirit he must live with integrity and joy, discerning what is God's good, acceptable and perfect will, and then totally follow it.**

If we truly want a peaceful and good life, we must not follow the trend of the world, but daily behold the cross of Calvary, through the help of the Holy Spirit, and renewal of our hearts and minds in His grace, obeying His will. God wants us to live and follow His will all through this life.

God counsels us to live according to the gift He bestowed upon each of us and according to the degree of faith apportioned by God. God does not have any unwanted children. He loves and needs each of us. Because of this He gave each of us a particular measure of faith to use in His Kingdom.

Some are given the gift of prophecy, which proclaims the good news of God to His people. God admonishes these to minister according to their degree of faith.

Some are given the gift of serving, so they should serve faithfully, looking to God instead of being affected by people's comments. Being recognised, or not, they should work according to the degree of their faith. God will recognise them and reward them accordingly.

Some are given the gift of exhortation. These are believers who are good at encouraging people in despair. These gifted people visit and pray for people when they are passing through trials, comfort them, and share the Word of God, so that the suffering can repent, be comforted and strengthened. If you are a person who feels urged to encourage those fallen or discouraged Christians you have the gift of exhortation. You must sincerely practise your gift according to your degree of faith. We find many such Christians among the deacons and elders in our church.

Some believers have received the gift of almsgiving. They have a fervent desire to give something to the hungry, the forsaken, or those in need. These people should sincerely practise their gift and God will bless them abundantly. Koreans were helped greatly by

foreigners who sent tons of goods when we were suffering in the aftermath of the Korean Conflict. Now it is our turn to help the needy of our global town. I pray many more Korean Christians will receive this gift of almsgiving and benefit the kingdom of Christ.

Some are given the gift of administration. With this leadership quality they manage and organise well. Through the loyalty of these people, God's kingdom is continually being expanded.

Some are given the gift of mercy. Wounded hearts can only be healed by Christians who minister to others with mercy. Believers with this gift visit and console Christians who are hurting.

When we minister to people in our gifted area, we should minister voluntarily, not expecting any repayment from the recipient. We are to exercise our gift with a pure motive and glad heart for the glory of God. Our heavenly Father apportioned His gifts to us according to His measure. We, as God's children should consider, "What gift did I receive from God?" Then we should minister to one another accordingly. If we say it is enough that we attended church faithfully, then we must ask ourselves what does the work of God mean to us? An indifferent attitude is simply a rejection of God's will and place of ministry for us in the body. God expands His kingdom through His children. What gift do you have? Do not bury it in the tomb of laziness. For the glory of God, find your gift, develop it, practise it and you will grow as an obedient child of God.

The purpose of God's counsel is to assure overflowing life and benefit to every believer. By faith, we must receive His counsel, live rightly and return the glory to God through our maturity. God wants each of us to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable.

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Source: 'Church Growth', Spring 1991

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