

Giving God Control Of Your Leftovers



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

Giving God Your Leftovers

Learn how to give God more than just the leftovers of your life

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Giving God Our Leftovers

We want to see whether God approves of these attempts to serve Him.

God Demands More Than Our Leftovers

Before we consider some specific areas people will often give God their leftovers in, let's search the Scriptures to see whether or not God wants the leftovers of people's lives.

God will accept what is left – but not only what is left

The question that we are considering is not whether or not God will accept any leftovers in our lives. He will take some leftovers – but only when they are the best we have to offer! There are times, physically, when it is the end of the month and you are waiting for pay day and you only have leftovers to offer to others.

What God requires is that you put Him first – with whatever you have. If you only have \$20 left for the month and you want to do something to serve the Lord with that \$20, He will absolutely accept it! If you have finished your day ahead of schedule and you have 15 minutes extra, He will absolutely accept those 15 minutes in Bible study, prayer, or in some other way you want to serve Him. But, that's not the problem I am trying to address in this lesson. In fact, that is the complete opposite of the problem I am attempting to address. What I have just described is a mindset that desires to put God first in every area – even when you only have a few minutes, a few dollars, etc. leftover.

God will not accept only our leftovers

The problem comes whenever we are consistently only giving God the \$20 we have left at the end of the month. When we are planning how we will allocate the financial resources God has given to us and we make preparations for everything and everyone else besides Him – and we only give Him the \$20 left in our budget.

I love leftovers in the refrigerator! But, as much as I love leftovers, there are some times when it would not be proper to serve leftovers. If you were to have an important business associate or client to dinner, you would certainly not want to serve them leftovers. If you were preparing a meal for someone who had lost a loved one, you would certainly not just gather up whatever you had leftover in the fridge and cupboards and take it to them (unless this is all you were capable of doing).

You see, our leftovers convey a certain idea to others. There are clearly some contexts in which our leftovers may be appropriate and others when they are not appropriate. Sometimes, leftovers are the best you have at a particular time. However, generally speaking, leftovers convey ideas about priority. If you were always given someone else's leftovers, you may get the idea that you were not as important as another! The entire concept of "leftovers" is that somebody else gets the best of what you have.

Now, I'm not talking about social etiquette in this lesson. I'll let you figure out the appropriate situations to serve leftovers in – socially. However, I simply want you to see that serving leftovers can send messages to others – particularly about priority. Now, I want you to think about leftovers in a spiritual way. I want you to think about the ways in which we can serve God the leftovers of our lives and the message that we convey to God whenever we do.

The purpose of this lesson is to consider some areas in which people often give God their leftovers.

Or, when we are only consistently giving God the 15 minutes that we have left at the end of our days. After we have worked a hard day, spent time with our families, watched some television, surfed the internet, played video games, etc. Then, to remember right before time for bed, “I have not read my Bible.” “I have not prayed to God.” And, we only give Him the time that is left.

Or, when we make all of our plans for our weeks. We plan out our work schedules. We plan out family activities. We plan out our kids’ school activities. We plan out what we would enjoy doing throughout the week. Before we know it, the week is full of things to do and places to go. Then, we look at our schedules and see where we can fit going to worship God with the local church at. “Wednesday night is full; can’t do that one. Sunday night will interfere with the ball game. But, I think we can make it on Sunday morning (probably not for Bible study, though, since we will be tired from all the running we are planning to do on Saturday) – and only if we hurry out when services are over so that we can make it to the kids’ piano recital scheduled for Sunday afternoon.”

These are just examples of how we can consistently make God settle for our leftovers. But, while the specifics change from person to person, the underlying thought process and improper prioritization looks the same! So, consider some a couple of passages with me to illustrate how God hates to settle for leftover service and devotion.

(1) Malachi 1. As Malachi is raised up by God to be a prophet to the Israelites (particularly to the inhabitants of Jerusalem), he is being used to rebuke their apostasy. In fact, the work of Malachi comes after the time of exile and the return to Jerusalem. The work of rebuilding Jerusalem (as described in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah) is past. Now, the people have quickly fallen into a state of apostasy again.

Thus, as Malachi begins to prophecy to the people, his prophecy is identified as the “burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi” (1:1). The people would certainly not desire to hear the message that Malachi would be telling them. His message throughout this first chapter is one that is full of

rebuke for failing to give God what He was due to receive from them. In similar manner, people today who only desire to give God their leftovers will not like to hear this message. It will be a burdensome message to them!

In verse 2, the Lord wants to remind His people how He had loved them. “‘I have loved you,’ says the Lord” (1:2). Yet, the Lord anticipates their response: “In what way have You loved us?” (1:2). Then, He proceeds to explain how He has blessed them rather than blessing Esau (see 1:2-5). Surely, throughout the Old Testament, you can read story after story describing the great love God demonstrated for the people of the nation of Israel. He blessed them above all other nations and truly made them His special people. However, Israel routinely rebelled against His ways and wanted only to give God what was convenient for them.

In verse 6, God questions them, “A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence?” It seemed like common knowledge that God should have been honored by His people. They surely understood that earthly fathers should be honored by their children and earthly masters should be honored by their servants. But, where was God’s honor from His children and His servants? Where was His reverence?

Even the priests who were responsible for attending to the service of God and offering the sacrifices to Him were not honoring God as they should have been! In fact, verse 6 continues, “To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’” Clearly, God knows that these people won’t think they are guilty of despising the name of the Lord. Can’t you just hear their reaction to this charge? “What do you mean by saying we have ‘despised’ your name? Aren’t we still serving You? Aren’t we bringing sacrifices and offerings to You?”

Now, before we see God’s response, let’s pause and reflect upon the prophetic words of Malachi to God’s people and His priests in the Old Testament, considering these words also as a warning to those who are God’s people and priests in

the New Testament. Notice how all Christians are described in 1 Peter 2:9-10: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” Would God tell Christians today (who are His people and priests) that they have despised His name? How would we respond to that charge?

Why did God claim that they had despised His name? Consider Malachi 1:7-14: “You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’” By saying, “The table of the Lord is contemptible.” And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” Says the Lord of hosts. ‘But now entreat God’s favor, That He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?’ Says the Lord of hosts. ‘Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you,’ Says the Lord of hosts, ‘Nor will I accept an offering from your hands. For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations,’ Says the Lord of hosts. ‘But you profane it, In that you say, “The table of the Lord is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.” You also say, “Oh, what a weariness!” And you sneer at it,’ Says the Lord of hosts. ‘And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?’ Says the Lord. ‘But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished — For I am a great King,’ Says the Lord of hosts, ‘And My name is to be feared among the nations.’”

To summarize, God says that they despised His name because they only offered Him their leftovers! Instead of offering God the best of what they had (the unblemished animals He had

instructed) and the firstfruits of what they were blessed with, they only offered God the ones with defects and that which would not cost them anything! They were taking the blind, lame, sick, stolen, etc. and offering them to the Lord. Now, consider this: How much of a sacrifice is it really to offer God a lamb that cannot walk? What kind of sacrifice is it to offer God a lamb that you stole from someone else?

Certainly, God is not pleased with these attempts to serve Him! In fact, God says that they should even try to offer the same quality of sacrifice to their governor. See if he would even accept that kind of sacrifice! Then, God is seen as even wishing someone would just shut the doors so that fires would not be able to be kindled on His altar in the vain way they were offering them! Thus, God would rather not have offerings made to Him at all rather than receive the kinds of vain sacrifices they had been offering to Him!

These people had given God their leftovers! They tried to give Him what they felt they could “get by” with; but, they were not giving Him the best of what they had to offer. They should have known better. In the same way, God’s people today need to evaluate if they are giving God their leftovers. Would even our earthly parents or our earthly employers be satisfied if we gave the same amount of effort and had the same level of dedication in their service as we give to God in His service? Would God rather that we completely cease serving Him rather than give Him the kind of service we are giving Him today?

(2) Luke 9:57-62. Notice the account given in this passage concerning the way some individuals had desired to serve Jesus. “Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, ‘Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’ Then He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.’ And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’”

As Jesus encountered three individuals who all have some desire to follow Him, notice carefully *how* they wanted to follow Him. The first individual wanted to follow Jesus – and said he would follow Jesus wherever He went. However, Jesus warned Him that it would take great dedication and commitment. He said that foxes had holes and birds had nests; but, Jesus did not have such luxury. It would truly take a great commitment to Jesus’ cause, then, to make all of the sacrifices necessary to serve and follow Him!

The second individual was called to follow Jesus. And, this individual was going to follow Jesus – *after* he first went and buried his father. However, Jesus rebukes this kind of prioritization! Jesus wanted his focus to be entirely on preaching the kingdom of God!

The third individual said he would follow Jesus. But, he *first* wanted to go and say goodbye to those in his house. Again, Jesus rebukes this lack of commitment. He told the man that the one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for God’s kingdom!

So, what do we learn from these three individuals about how to follow Jesus? The problem (as particularly seen in the last two individuals) was that they would follow Jesus *after* they did what they wanted to do. They were looking back and were not focusing entirely on Him! In the same way, whenever we start following Jesus and then keep looking back to the physical things and become distracted in our service to God by them, we cannot serve Him acceptably. Why? Because the result is giving God our leftovers! We do not focus entirely on what He wants from our lives and serve Him accordingly. We try to serve Him – and serve the desires of our own flesh.

God does not have to settle for our leftovers!

There is a problem inherent in the mindset of giving God our leftovers. We convince ourselves that God should be pleased with our service. We convince ourselves that giving God what we have leftover will be good enough for God. We convince

ourselves that giving God our leftovers will surely be better than giving God nothing at all.

However, the entire premise for giving God our leftovers is flawed. We think God should just accept whatever we choose to give to Him rather than understanding that God is the one who tells us how He expects to be served and worshiped! Remember, He is the Almighty Creator of this world, the Giver and Sustainer of life (both physical and spiritual life). He is the one who sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross so that we could be forgiven of our sins. He is the one who has all authority in Heaven and on earth. He is the one who will Judge the world in righteousness.

So, God is not the one who is in need of mankind! Paul realized this when he was preaching to the Athenian idolaters in Acts 17:25: “Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.” We have to remember that it is we who are in desperate need for God! We are the ones who had separated ourselves from Him because of our sin – and deserved to spend eternity in Hell fire (see Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8). God did not owe us this salvation. He did not have to send Jesus and watch His only begotten Son endure ridicule, torture, beatings, and be killed by crucifixion! He did it because He loved us – and wanted us to have the opportunity to be saved eternally (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-11; 1 Timothy 2:3-4)!

Now, if we realize our great dependence upon God, we should realize our need to serve and worship Him in the way He desires to be served and worshiped! Fortunately, He has revealed what He wants from us. Whenever we read His instructions in the pages of His word, we can know what it takes to please Him. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” So, if we want to please God in every way, we will be dedicated to searching the Scriptures to discover what His will is – and putting all of His instructions to work in our lives!

Always remember this: We (as sinners who are in need of the salvation God offers) are not in a position to bargain with God! We cannot approach God and say, “God, I know You have commanded me not to forsake the assembling of the local church; but, I will only serve You if You allow me to miss some assemblies whenever they are not convenient for me.” Or, “God, I know You expect Me to teach Your word to others; but, I’m not interested in doing that – so, I will just put more money in the collection plate for someone else to do the teaching work.” Or, “God, I know that You don’t want me to dress immodestly; but, I won’t serve You unless I can dress in the way that I believe is fashionable.”

Serving God just does not work like this! Rather than trying to bargain with God (as though God needs us to serve Him), let’s empty ourselves and recognize our complete dependence upon God – and give ourselves entirely to His service. Then, we realize that living in His service means living according to all of the things He has revealed in His word!

God demands the best of what we have

When we do search the Scriptures to understand what God requires of those who live in His service, we should recognize that He demands the best of what we have. He does not expect more from us than we are capable of giving. But, He also does not expect less from us than we are capable of giving.

Therefore, as we attempt to serve God, we should recognize that our service is going to cost us something! Our service to God will never be acceptable to God as long as we are only giving Him what is convenient and easy for us to give. Consider the example of King David, when he realized that a sacrifice should cost Him something.

After David had sinned, he desired to erect an altar and make an offering to God. In 2 Samuel 24:18, David was told to “Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” Whenever David came to Araunah and said that he desired to buy his threshing floor to make an offering, Araunah said, “Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here

are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king” (2 Samuel 24:22-23). However, David responded, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24) – and he proceeded to buy the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver!

In order for our service to be acceptable to God, it must cost us something! We cannot just worship and serve God when it is convenient for us. Instead, in order to truly serve God, He expects the best of what we have in our lives – even when our service and worship is costly to us! This is just as we can see whenever God demanded the best of the sacrifices Israel offered in their sacrifices in the Old Testament. God demanded the best of the flock (or whatever the sacrifice was) – and He demanded the first of what they were blessed with! His service was to be first and foremost on their minds and He was to be given what He deserved before anything else!

Areas In Which People Give God Their Leftovers

Having established the fact that God does not accept leftovers – and would rather people not serve Him at all than serve Him in a vain way, let’s consider some specific areas in which people often try to give God their leftovers.

Loyalty

This is a point that concerns our allegiance. To whom or to what do we pledge our allegiance? Whenever we prioritize anything in our lives, where does God enter our thoughts? Is He *always* top priority – regardless what the question or the decision is? Or, has He become an afterthought (after we have considered something else – even if it is just one other thing)?

Certainly, God demands to come first in our loyalty. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all

these things shall be added to you.” Now, please recognize that first means first! It does not mean in the “first-tier” (along with a few other people/things). It does not mean a “close second.” It means absolutely before anything and anyone else! This is the place Jesus tells us to put God (God’s righteousness and His kingdom). In fact, in the context of this passage, Jesus even tells us that God must come before the pursuit of the physical necessities of life (i.e. food, drink, and clothing)!

Unfortunately, many professing Christians are guilty of placing God further down on their priority lists. The reason is simply due to the fact that they have deeper loyalty to something or someone else! Maybe it’s greater loyalty to a job. Maybe it’s greater loyalty to family. Maybe it’s greater loyalty to a friend. Maybe it’s greater loyalty to sports or hobbies. Maybe it’s greater loyalty to television or recreation. It could be anything or anyone.

However, as we have already seen, if God is not first in our lives, then He will not be in our lives! He will not accept any place in our lives other than first place! Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). We simply cannot give our loyalty *partly* to God.

He won’t accept our empty service – when we try to “go through the motions” and appear as if we are completely loyal to Him, while we are not really devoted to Him. To some who were “lukewarm” in their service to God, Jesus rebuked: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16). Again, He would rather that we completely give up serving Him than try to only partially commit ourselves to Him! Our lukewarm service that is full of giving God leftovers is pictured by Jesus as making Him want to vomit us out of His mouth!

Time

Benjamin Franklin said that time is the stuff life is made of. Time may very well be the second

most important possession that we have (second only to our souls). Certainly, we all have only a limited amount of time. The duration of our lives are limited. Our days have only a limited amount of hours (24). Each week only has 168 hours. Therefore, we have to make decisions regarding how we will spend this time.

But, whenever we are making decisions about how we will spend our time, where is God relative to our decisions? Does He get first consideration? Do we block out definite times that belong to Him – and schedule everything else around Him (i.e times to assemble with the local church, times for personal Bible study, times to do good to others, etc.)? Or, do we give God what is leftover in our schedules?

We must not fool ourselves to think that God is unconcerned about how we spend our time! God surely knows that time is the “stuff” life is made of. He knows that time means opportunity. And, God knows how we are choosing to spend our time – whether He is truly coming first or whether He is being given our leftovers!

Therefore, God has given us the instruction in Ephesians 5:15-16: “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” God knows that we have limited time to use during our lives. So, He wants us to use our time wisely and make sure that we make time for what He expects us to be doing. To “redeem” time means to buy it up. It means that we get the most out of it that we can possibly get. Certainly, we cannot re-create time once it is missed. So, we must be living every day wisely and making decisions that God wants us to make concerning the best use of the time we have been given!

Certainly, there are many ways in which God wants us to be using our time in His service. He expects us to work and provide for our families. He expects us to study His word. He expects us to fulfill our roles in our families. He expects us to spend time in prayer. He expects us to do good to others. He expects us to teach His word. He expects us to assemble with the local church. All of these things will demand something of our time! For instance, Paul wrote, “Walk in wisdom toward those who are

outside, redeeming the time” (Colossians 4:5). It will certainly take time to teach someone the gospel – and we need to make sure that we are making time and taking advantage of opportunities to accomplish that responsibility! The same is true for everything God wants us to be doing as Christians.

Though we are all certainly busy, we must always remember that God must not be given the leftovers of our time! Do not put your own selfish desires and interests above God when you consider how you will allocate your time. Carefully consider the time that you have been allotted – and make very wise and intentional decisions to use your time in such a way that will demonstrate that God truly does come first in your life!

Money

Most people work hard for the money they make. Many work long hours and it never seems that they can “get ahead.” It seems as if there are so many demands for how we allocate the funds that we bring in. We try to provide sufficient housing for our families to live comfortably, we want to put enough food on the table, we want to make sure our families have the proper clothing, we make preparations for hospitalization and medical care, we want to make sure we have reliable transportation for our families, etc., etc., etc.

However, if we are not careful, we will spend all of the money we receive without using any in the service of God. Or, perhaps we might have some leftover funds that we can allocate to God – after we have designated the rest for other things. Are we careful to properly designate the right amount of the money we receive to use in God’s service? Or, is God an afterthought (i.e. after our necessities, after our luxuries, after our recreation and entertainment, etc.)?

Remember, it is God who has blessed us with all of our blessings (including our means of livelihood)! Every good and every perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). Why is it, then, that so many people are willing to spend so much of their money on comforts of life (i.e. expensive vehicles and houses), entertainment (i.e. television service, sporting/recreational activities, vacations), and

various physical desires (i.e. shoes/clothing beyond necessity, electronic devices, “toys,” etc.) without first considering how they can give back to God?

Certainly, God’s portion should come first (off the top) – not from what is leftover! In order to correct this, we need to remember what Jesus taught in Matthew 6:33. He tells us to seek God first (His kingdom and His righteousness). And, if we do this, He says that God will give us everything we *need*. Is it possible that we spend far too much of our money pursuing things that are not even necessities of life? Then, after we have committed to so many of these different areas, we do not have much left to give back to God! We need to reverse this thinking. We need to learn to put God first (even in how we use our money) and determine that everything else will take a back seat to Him – even if it means that we (or our family members) will do without some of the things we desire!

There are certainly things God wants us to be doing with our money in His service. For instance, God expects His people to contribute on the first day of every week to the work of the local church. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 instructs, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” Let us not be guilty of robbing God in this manner – as some were guilty of robbing God in tithes and offerings in Malachi 3:8-10 (when they were not giving Him what He deserved).

In addition to the responsibility for God’s people to contribute to the work of local churches on the first day of the week, God’s people have many ways to serve God using their money. For instance, we have the responsibility to do good to all men as we have opportunity (Galatians 6:10). We can also do great work in God’s kingdom by using our money to spread the gospel in some way.

Who are you like? In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus watched how folks put money into the treasury. He

saw some who were rich put in a great amount. Then, He took note of one poor widow who put in two mites (a very small amount). However, consider Jesus' conclusion: "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood" (Mark 12:43-44). This woman was sacrificial – which, as we have seen, is exactly what God wants from us!

Life

Everything that our lives consist of needs to be evaluated. Think about our energy, abilities, opportunities, relationships, health, etc., etc., etc. It is certainly not uncommon for folks to spend their lives living for themselves in pursuit of earthly enjoyment – and think that they will turn to the Lord at the end of their lives. However, by this time, there has been a great deal that has been wasted! And, there is an inherent failure in such a mindset that truly is not interested in serving God. Now, this is not to say that God will not accept an individual who turns to Him at the end of their lives; it is simply a warning about wasting our lives and our resources for the entirety of our lives.

How much of our lives do we really think about God in? Do we think about Him in relation to our abilities, thinking how we can use our abilities in His service? Do we think about Him in our health, thinking about how we can use our levels of health to serve Him? Do we think about Him in our relationships, thinking about how we can use our relationships to influence others to serve Him? Does He get the first consideration in all of these areas? Or, is He only given what is leftover in each of these areas?

For instance, consider what is said in Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" Rather than wasting our youthful years in pursuit of our physical desires and pleasures, God wants us to focus on Him! He wants us to determine to follow Him from the time of our youths. He wants us to give Him the best of our lives

– at every stage of life (in youth, in middle age, and in old age)!

Romans 12:1-2 describes how we are to be viewing our lives: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." So, we are to present our lives to God as living sacrifices. Now, remember (from earlier in the lesson) that a sacrifice must cost us something! Therefore, God does not want us to present the leftovers of our lives to Him. Instead, He wants control of our entire lives! He wants our entire lives to be focused on serving and glorifying Him!

Consider why we should be willing to present our lives to God as living sacrifices to be used in His service, to His honor and glory. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." God is the one who has bought us – with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, redeeming us from our sins. We are His. Therefore, we must choose to give our lives to be used entirely in His service, not leaving Him with our leftovers!

Conclusion

Are you giving God the best you have to offer Him – in every area of your life? Or, are you giving Him your leftovers?

God clearly deserves, demands, and expects more than the crumbs that fall from life's table! He is the one who spoke the world into existence. He is the one who created man from the dust of the ground. He is the one who created woman from the rib of man. He is the one who loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to the earth to die on the cross! He expects our best, not our leftovers!

Please carefully evaluate every area of your life and consider what message you are sending to God. If you are giving Him your leftovers, you are telling God that there are other things and/or other people who are more important to you than He is!

Now, before closing this lesson, please take a moment to consider what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-27: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Jesus says that there will be many people eternally condemned on the Day of Judgment – even among those who had professed to be His followers. They believed in Him. They had even done many good things in His name. Maybe we could say that they attended some church services. They contributed some money to the work of the local church. They did some good deeds to others. They prayed some. They studied the Bible some. But, they did not fully give themselves to being obedient to the will of God and allow Him to have full control over their lives!

Therefore, these individuals were building “houses of sand” – living lives that appeared to profess some godliness. However, when the Day of Judgment comes, God will expose their lives for what they truly were – whether they truly lived for Him or not. If they did not, they will not escape the destruction God will bring upon them!

Don’t give Him your leftovers. Give your life entirely to Him today!

Study Questions

1. God Demands More Than Our Leftovers

Will God accept what you have leftover? Explain.

Will God accept *only* your leftovers?

(1) What can you learn from Malachi 1?

(2) What can you learn from Luke 9:57-62?

Does God have to settle for your leftovers? Why or why not?

What does God expect and deserve from you: Your leftovers or the best that you have?

2. Areas In Which People Give God Their Leftovers

How do people give God their leftover loyalty? How can you give God the best that you have in this area?

How do people give God their leftover time? How can you give God the best that you have in this area?

How do people give God their leftover money? How can you give God the best that you have in this area?

How do people give God their leftover life? How can you give God the best that you have in this area?

***Are you giving God the best you have to offer Him – in every area of your life? Or, are you giving God your leftovers?**

***How does Matthew 7:21-27 warn you about giving God your leftovers?**