

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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PERSONAL CONSECRATION: DESIRE AND DELIGHT

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The church is only as strong as the individual members are strong. A necessary element in keeping a church strong is the personal consecration that is manifested in the life of each member of the church. As each member steps up to his or her responsibility to live a life dedicated to serving a sacred cause, then a church conveys a true spirituality strong and influential for good in the community.

Consecration, the act of separating from a common to a sacred cause, is clearly commanded in the Scriptures. Paul writes, “*I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service*” (Romans 12:1). Our lives are not to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2) but consecrated, as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God. This is a service we render unto God understanding the necessity of serving a Holy God with a holy life (I Peter 1:14-15).

In order to do this, Paul states that we must be

“transformed by the renewing of our mind” (Romans 12:2). A change of life in consecration will only come through a new way of thinking.

First, we must manifest a desire for the things that are above. Paul writes, “*Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.*” (Colossians 3:2). No one will “seek” things he does not “desire”. The determined mind, set on heavenly things, and desiring these things above the things upon the earth, is a necessary ingredient in a consecrated life. This pattern of thinking separates a Christian from the person of the world. Jesus exhorts us to have this mind set, when he says, “*...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where thy treasure is, there will be your heart also*” (Matthew 6:20-21).

Do you enjoy the company of people in the world and worldly things more than the company of Christians engaging in spiritual activities authorized from heaven? Have you begun to avoid the company of Christians because you feel uncomfortable around them? Would you rather go to the movies, and engage in recreational ac-

tivities instead of meeting with the people of God to worship? If so, you surely are not manifesting a mind with affections “set on things that are above”. Consecrated living is being lost in your life.

Looking at this point another way, it is true that what gives us the greatest delight is that which is closest to our heart. Therefore, the amount of pleasure we get from the church succeeding in its mission is clearly an indication of how much we love the church. It takes planning, work and sacrifice of each member for the church to succeed in meeting its responsibilities. When we find ourselves having more pleasure in the social, fraternal and civic affairs of this life, and not willing to rise up and gladly meet the needs of the church, then our affections are on the wrong things. In the lives of such members, personal consecration is probably absent, or about to crumble due to the lack of a solid mindset. Where is your affection? What gives you the greatest delight? Personal consecration is waiting for your answer.