

## Don't Let Your Love Grow Cold

**Matthew 24:9–12 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup>“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.

<sup>10</sup>And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

<sup>11</sup>Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

<sup>12</sup>And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

- *There are many reasons why our love for Jesus can grow cold. Tribulation, persecution, offences, false teachers, false prophets, and disappointments to name only a few. These, among other reasons, can contribute to our love growing cold.*
- *Jesus Himself warned that although God is faithful to hear and answer our prayers many will fail to remain faithful as the time of His return draws near. “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:7–8).*
- *One of the tactics the enemy uses to cause Christians to become disheartened, discouraged, to lose their first love, and backslide is their earnest desire to serve and obey God!*
- *When a believer is struggling with a specific sin, addiction, or thought pattern and they fail, the enemy heaps shame and condemnation upon them. They desired to please God and now feel they are complete failures. This causes them to withdraw from fellowship with God and other believers. Their love grows cold because they are confronted with the iniquity that surrounds them and their own failures and struggles.*
- *When a believer fails or falls into sin they have a choice. They can confess their sins and receive forgiveness, flee from God in shame, make excuses for what they have done, or justify their actions and deny they have a problem.*
- *Apostle Paul warned that one of the ways that the love of many will grow cold is because believers, instead of dealing with their sins, will develop false or unhealthy doctrine to conform to the ungodly standards of this world and justify their sins. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers.” (2 Timothy 4:3)*
- *God is pleased when we fervently desire to serve and please Him but it is important that if we do fail we turn to Him knowing that He is there to forgive us, cleanse us, restore us, and teach us to be overcomers. “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 2:1).*

- *Religion is shame-based. The Gospel is grace-based. Religion causes us to focus on our failures and sins in a vain effort to use shame to cause us to change. The Gospel causes us to look to Christ and to embrace His love and mercy so that through His grace we will change.*

**Genesis 4:1–8 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup>Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD.”**

**<sup>2</sup>Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.**

**<sup>3</sup>And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.**

**<sup>4</sup>Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,**

**<sup>5</sup>but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.**

**<sup>6</sup>So the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?**

**<sup>7</sup>If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”**

**<sup>8</sup>Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.**

- *Cain and Abel provide a contrast between religion and relationship; between self-effort and grace; between the flesh and the spirit.*
- *Cain in self-effort tried to please God, but he sought to win God’s favour through his own strength and pride and he refused to follow the way God had provided.*
- *Abel found favour with God because he simply accepted God’s provision of grace and sacrificed “the firstborn of his flock” prophetically pointing to God sending His only begotten Son to be our Lamb.*
- *Cain knew that the land had been cursed because of Adam’s sins and that his own self-effort would never bring forth an offering pleasing to God. “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (Genesis 3:17b-19a).*
- *No matter how hard we strive in our self-effort the flesh will never be able to please God. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7-8).*
- *When we strive to please God in our own strength it only produces frustration, anger, and conflict with others. “Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”*

- *We must learn to consecrate our lives to God so we will cease trying to live in our own self-effort, but through the grace of God and the life of Jesus Christ in our reborn spirits.*

#### Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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.

#### Romans 12:1-2 (Williams Translation)

“I beg you, therefore, brothers, through these mercies God has shown you, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, devoted and well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mould your minds continue to transform yourselves, so as to find and follow God’s will; that is, what is good, well-pleasing to Him, and perfect.”

- *Romans 12:1-2 clearly links the idea of consecration and sacrifice.*
- *“I beg you”*
- *There is a deep desire in the heart of God that we would consecrate our lives for His glory.*
- *There is a natural resistance in our souls to consecrate our lives.*
- *“through these mercies God has shown you, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice.”*
- *Our primary motivation to become living sacrifices should be because we are moved by God’s mercy and grace that He has poured out upon us.*
- *“through these mercies God has shown you, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice”*
- *The very act of consecration is a deliberate act and not something that automatically takes place without our conscious choice.*
- *“a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, devoted and well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.”*
- *The motivation of a living sacrifice is to be “devoted and well-pleasing to God.”*
- *“a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, devoted and well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.”*

- *Being consecrated should not be looked upon as some heroic sacrifice but something that is perfectly reasonable and in line with all that God has done for us and desires from us.*
- *“Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mould your minds continue to transform yourselves, so as to find and follow God’s will; that is, what is good, well-pleasing to Him, and perfect.”*
- *Part of consecration is to stop living by the standards that are acceptable in this selfish evil age.*
- *“Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mould your minds continue to transform yourselves, so as to find and follow God’s will; that is, what is good, well-pleasing to Him, and perfect.”*
- *To be a living sacrifice means that we have new ideals.*
- *To be a living sacrifice means that those new ideals change the way we think and evaluate things.*
- *In a self-centered world the most important goal is winning, but as living sacrifices the most important goal is that God is glorified.*
- *“Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mould your minds continue to transform yourselves, so as to find and follow God’s will; that is, what is good, well-pleasing to Him, and perfect.”*
- *“Continue to transform yourselves” clearly signifies that consecration is a process in which we are personally involved.*
- *Consecration is not only a change of what we do but also who we are.*
- *“Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mould your minds continue to transform yourselves, so as to find and follow God’s will; that is, what is good, well-pleasing to Him, and perfect.”*
- *It is impossible to develop consecrated lives without a deep relationship with the Word of God.*
- *When we pray we speak to God.*
- *When we read His Word God speaks to us.*
- *Romans 12:1 refers to us as living sacrifices.*

- *There were five main categories of offerings in the book of Leviticus.*
- *The Sin Offering, Trespass Offering, Peace Offering, Grain Offering, and the Burnt Offering.*
- *The Burnt Offering is the offering that deals with consecration.*
- *The Hebrew word for “Burnt Offering” comes from the Hebrew root meaning, “to go up, ascend, climb.”*
- *The Burnt Offering is better described as The Whole Burnt Offering.*
- *To live consecrated lives requires us not to hold anything back.*
- *The one making a burnt offering had to really believe that God was real.*
- *There was no benefit to the one making the sacrifice—it was all for God.*

**Mark 12:28–33 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup>Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

<sup>29</sup>Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.

<sup>30</sup>And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.

- *What is the greatest commandment? To fully consecrate our lives to God.*
- *Our consecration is not made under duress but motivated by love.*

<sup>31</sup>And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

- *The second commandment is a direct result of the first one.*
- *If our lives are not truly consecrated to God we will not be able to love our neighbor as ourselves because we will continue to be selfish and self-centered.*

<sup>32</sup>So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He.

<sup>33</sup>And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

- *The scribe understood that the whole burnt offerings represented personal and total consecration to the Lord.*

**Leviticus 1:3–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup>If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD.

- *The first thing we notice about the burnt offering is that the sacrifice had to be without blemish. God gave His best and wants from us our best.*
- *“Of his own free will” – This sacrifice was not mandatory but offered out of love for God.*
- *“At the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord” – the place of consecration opens the way for a deeper level of fellowship with God.*

**John 15:13–14 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

<sup>14</sup>You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

**Leviticus 1:4-5 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup>Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

<sup>5</sup>He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

- *The one making the offering must be the one who actually slays the sacrifice.*
- *Others cannot do the consecrating on our behalf.*
- *We need to be the ones who make the hard decisions and choose to die to our selfishness and become living sacrifices.*
- *We have to learn to live and learn to die: live for Christ and die to ourselves.*

**Leviticus 1:6–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup>And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces.

<sup>7</sup>The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire.

- *Not only was the slaying of the sacrifice the responsibility of the one offering it, but he was also responsible for cutting it up very precisely so it could be sacrificed.*
- *The priests prepared the fire and placed the sacrifice on the altar, but the sacrifice was prepared by the one making the sacrifice.*

**<sup>8</sup>Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar;**

**<sup>9</sup>but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.**

- *This offering is also described as a sweet scent or odor to the Lord.*
- *The four areas of consecration:*
- *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”*
- *The Whole Burnt Offering was divided into four parts corresponding to these four principles.*
- *Head, fat, entrails (innards) and legs.*
- *The head speaks about the mind.*
- *Our minds are to be consecrated so that they think and agree with God's thoughts.*

**Isaiah 55:7–9 (NKJV)**

**<sup>7</sup>Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.**

**<sup>8</sup>“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.**

**<sup>9</sup>“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

- *Our thoughts and ways are not God's thoughts and ways but they ought to be!*
- *Having a consecrated mind is to have a mind that is conformed to God's thoughts. This is possible because we already have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16).*
- *The entrails (innards) speak about the soul.*
- *The soul can speak about the whole man but in the context of this verse it speaks about our emotions, our identity, our self, our inner man, our feelings, our desires.*
- *A consecrated soul life is when our desires and feelings line up with God's feelings and desires. What rejoices God's heart rejoices our heart and what grieves God's heart grieves our heart.*
- *The fat speaks about the heart.*

**Matthew 6:19–21 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup>“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

<sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

<sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- *The heart is the treasure house or storehouse of the soul.*
- *Fat is the storehouse of the body.*
- *Our heart is what motivates us.*
- *The heart is always directed god-ward.*
- *But the question is this: “What god do we serve?”*
- *If our hearts are consecrated then our motivation will be to seek to please and serve the Lord. Our attitude will govern our actions.*
- *If our hearts are given over to greed then our hearts will seek money and success.*
- *What does “strength” correspond to?*
- *The legs of the sacrifice speak of strength.*
- *When we push through the resistance from the flesh to a place where Jesus is first in our lives—that requires strength as we overcome the flesh.*
- *The flesh always makes us spiritually lazy. A Christian in the natural can be a hard and diligent worker but can fail to be able to motivate himself to spend time with God.*
- *Malachi gives us a clear picture of what it is like when we try to present unconsecrated lives before God.*

**Malachi 1:7–8 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup>“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.’

<sup>8</sup>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.

**Malachi 1:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>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.



- *“The table of the Lord is contemptible.”*
- *The four things that made the sacrifices unacceptable to God:*
- *Blind; lame; sick and stolen.*
- *Blind: Our minds become blinded to God’s ways and His love.*
- *Sick: Our souls become sick and grieved with the things of God.*
- *Lame: We have no strength to walk with God but we hobble along spiritually while doing other things with energy and zeal.*
- *Stolen: The treasures that God has put in our hearts so we can serve Him have been stolen and we now serve Him with lip service.*
- *We will only find our Christian lives fulfilling and fruitful when we begin to seek God to teach us how to live a fully consecrated life.*