

# Prayer for Serenity

God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change;  
Courage to change the things I can;  
And the wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;  
Taking, as Jesus did,  
This sinful world as it is,  
Not as I would have it;  
Trusting that You will make all things right  
If I surrender to Your will;  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,  
And supremely happy with You  
Forever in the next.

AMEN

*--Reinhold Niebuhr*

## THE LIVING SACRIFICE

When we were baptized into Christ, our former existence came to an end. A new life began. We were, in fact, “buried” with Christ; we died, so far as our old life of sin was concerned; we were raised with Christ when we emerged from the death of sin; and we were given a new life.

Romans 6:3 Baptized into Christ Jesus cf Galatians 3:27 “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (AMP) – We have been incorporated in him, have become members of his body (1 Corinthians 12:13); and so have shared by faith union with him those experiences which were his historically – his crucifixion and burial, his resurrection and exhortation.

Baptism seals the believer’s deliverance from the bondage of sin and his entry into a new life of freedom.

Romans 6:4 Buried...with him by the baptism into death Burial sets the seal on death, so the Christians baptism is a token burial in which the old order of life in sin comes to an end, to be replaced by the new order of life.

Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father The “glory” here is more especially God’s glorious power (Ephesians 1:19 – 20; cf Colossians 2:12).

We too might walk in newness of life This is the new **mode** or **quality** of life which results from the impartation of Christ’s risen power to the believer.

Romans 6:5 United with him in the likeness of his death Lit. “planted together in the likeness of his death` and **united with him** in a **resurrection** like his. This is a reference to the future resurrection – harvest of the people of Christ.

Romans 6:6 Our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed. Put out of action!

Romans 6:7 He who has died is free from sin (lit. has been justified from sin) ‘A dead man is no longer answerable for his sin.’ Death pays all debts. So those who have died with Christ have the slate wiped clean and are ready to begin their new life with Christ freed from the enslavement of the sin nature.

Romans 6:8 We shall also live with him In our present newness of life as well as in the resurrection age.

Romans 6:10 he died to sin, once for all In his death, he dealt effectively and conclusively with sin, winning a victory that needs no 2<sup>nd</sup> fight and leaves no 2<sup>nd</sup> foe!

### RENEWED MIND WALK

Romans 6:11 Turning Point! You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. This is no game of “let’s pretend.” Believers should consider themselves to be what God in truth has made them. The Spirit has come to make effective in us what Christ has accomplished for us and to enable us to become in daily experience, as far as may be in the present conditions of morality, what we already are ‘in Christ Jesus’ and what we will be fully in the resurrection life.

Romans 6:12-14 Stop presenting yourselves In the day to day confrontation with sin, stop giving in. But yield (“present yourselves”) as those that are alive (grace) from the dead, and your members as instruments (weapons) of righteousness unto God. Paul calls for a determined commitment. Sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. The law demanded obedience, but grace supplies the will and the power to obey; so grace breaks the mastery of sin as law could not.

“To run and work the law commands;  
 Yet gives me neither feet nor hands.  
 But better news the gospel brings;  
 It bids me fly, and gives me wings.”  
 Grace was given, that the law might be fulfilled.

In view of all that God has accomplished for His people in Christ, how should His people live? We should present ourselves to God as a “living sacrifice,” set apart for Him. Instead of living by the standards of the world at discord with God, we as believers are exhorted to let the renewing of our minds by the power of the spirit transform our lives into conformity with God’s will.

Doctrine is never taught in the Bible simply that it may be known; it is taught that it may be translated into practice. Paul repeatedly follows up on exposition of doctrine with an ethical exhortation, the latter (practical application) linked to the former (doctrine), as is indicated with the word “therefore”

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you by the mercies of God or I appeal to you – Paul tends to use a more diplomatic approach at turning points in his arguments, especially in introducing an

ethical exhortation. He appeals to the new nature rather than the old nature (desire to control and be rebellious).

Present your bodies Paul now brings out in more detail what is involved in our presenting ourselves to God to be used in His service.

A living and holy sacrifice The sacrifices of the new order do not consist in taking the lives of others, like the old animal sacrifices, but in giving service of one's own (Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5).

Your spiritual worship NEB, the worship offered by mind and heart. The service of obedient lives is the only reasonable or logical response to the grace of God.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world or age is distinguished from the age to come. It is possible, with the enablement of the spirit of God, for believers living temporarily in this age to conduct themselves as heirs of the age to come, the age of renewal and resurrection. Because we are a `new creation` in Christ, `the old has passed away, behold the new has come` (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is by the power of the indwelling spirit, the pledge of our inheritance in the age to come, that we can resist the tendency to live according to the standards of this world!

But be transformed (the verb metamorphoo) The only other place where it occurs in the New Testament is 2 Corinthians 3:18 of believers being `changed` into the likeness of Christ `from one degree of glory to another by the operation of the Lord who is the spirit`

2 Corinthians 3:18 As the `veils` are removed from our minds, so that the truth of the gospel is no longer hidden from us. Thus it is in `the light of the gospel` that we behold `the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God,` if we see `the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ!`

And we all...are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another! This changing into his likeness takes place as an extended process. The verb `metamorphoo` (`we are being changed`) is in the present tense, indicating the continuous nature of the change, while the words from one degree of glory to another stress its progressive nature. The continuous and progressive transformation by which believers are changed is the moral transformation which is taking place in our lives so that we reflect more and more to the likeness of God expressed so perfectly in the life of Jesus Christ.

For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit, the spirit's activity is the major characteristic of the new covenant of the transformation of believers and is wholly attributable to His work in our lives.

Romans 12:2 ...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that we may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God. God's will refers to His purpose for the life of the believer. It implies His guidance or direction in all of life's decisions. Dedication is an act of surrender or submission to His will for our lives, whereby we become a "living sacrifice." Daily dependence on God results in our transformation into the image of Christ. As believers, we should evaluate every decision on the basis of biblical principles, knowing that obedience brings God's blessings and fastens encouragement in our faith as we see the will of God come to pass. Surrendering and giving ourselves completely over to God enables us to be in control of our lives.

## **CONDITION OF THE MIND**

### **THINK POSITIVE THOUGHTS**

I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Psalm 34:4 NASB

### **BE GOD MINDED**

You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind (both its inclination and its character) is stayed on you, because he commits himself to you, leans on you, and hopes confidently in you. Isaiah 26:3 AMP

### **MEDITATE ON GOD AND HIS WORKS**

I shall be fully satisfied, when I awake (to find myself) beholding your form (and having sweet communion with you). Psalm 17:15 AMP

### **FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD**

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3 NASB

### **BE GOD-LOVES-ME MINDED**

God is love, and he who dwells *and* continues in love dwells *and* continues in God, and God dwells *and* continues in him. 1 John 4:16b AMP

### **FEAR NOT**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love cast out fear. 1 John 4:18a NASB

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 KJV

### **BE RIGHTEOUSNESS CONSCIOUS – NOT SIN CONSCIOUS**

For our sake He made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in *and* through him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 AMP

### **HAVE AN EXHORTATION MIND**

He who exhorts, in his exhortation (encourage the best to come out of each other).  
Romans 12:8a NASB

### **DEVELOP A THANKFUL MIND**

Through Him, therefore, let us constantly *and* at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of the lips that thankfully acknowledge *and* confess *and* glorify His name.  
Hebrews 13:15 AMP

### **BE WORD MINDED**

My son, attend to my words; consent *and* submit to my sayings. Let them not depart from your sight; keep them in the center of your heart. For they are life to those who find them, healing *and* health to all their flesh. Proverbs 4:20-22 AMP

### **BE CHRIST MINDED**

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.  
Romans 13:14 ESV

For who has known the mind of the LORD, that he will instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:16 NASB

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:5 NASB

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.  
Ephesians 5:1-2 NASB

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17-19 NASB

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21 NASB

To God Be The Glory!

## THE WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4)

Ephesians 2:10 God has ordained that we should walk in good works.

4:1 Walk worthy of the calling (Colossians 1:9 and 10).

4:17 Do not walk in the futility of your mind.

5:2 Walk in love.

5:8 Walk as children of light.

5:15 Walk circumspectly (careful to consider all circumstances and possible consequences, having wisdom, prudence).

Ephesians 4:1-3 The calling is outlined in the first three chapters. We need God's help which is why humility is the first listed.

4:17-19 The unbeliever's walk

- Futility (serving no useful purpose, completely ineffective, uselessness) of their mind
- Darkened in their understanding
- Excluded from the life of God
- Because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart
- Having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Ephesians 4:21-25 Knowing and accepting truth are essential for putting off the old you and putting on the new you.

Ephesians 1:13 The word of truth is the true word, and the word contains truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 The failure to understand the Bible and/or to divide it rightly hinders man from knowing the truth.

Ephesians 5:1-7 Wrong doctrine always causes wrong practice.

4:15 The way we grow together as a church is by speaking the truth in love.

4:21 The truth is in Jesus (John 8:31-36).

4:24 The new man is created in righteousness and holiness of truth. Our lives must measure up to the truth and never the other way around. The Scriptures detail the two walks.

4:2 and 26 Lay aside falsehood; speak truth.

5:9 The fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth.  
John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 16:8-11 The spirit will convict us of sin if we allow it.

Ephesians 6:14 The first part of our armor is your loins girt about with truth.

<p>THE NEW YOU WALK REQUIRES VIGOROUS HONESTY</p>
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Until we face reality and admit that our lives are not working and that our sinful behavior is out of control, nothing can change. The very first step for freedom is the admission that we have a problem. When we confess our sins and stop trying to manipulate the affairs of our lives by our own ideas and willpower, God can begin to help. 1 John 1:5-10; Psalm 32:3-6

**Three pronged evil of the old nature:**

- 1) Desire to control**
- 2) Rebellion**
- 3) Denial**

Children learn early on that denial is a seemingly good way to protect themselves. Human nature is as such when children are told not to do something or to do something they do not want to do, they react. When children are held accountable or responsible for their behavior, they react in a similar way. They cry, scream, and throw themselves down; some hit their heads on the floor. What they say in this state of mind is meant to hurt their parents and to redirect attention away from their wrong behavior. "I hate you." "You don't love me." "You are not a good mommy." "You are mean." These emotional outbursts are human nature attempting to avoid obedience and responsibility. Good parents do not buy into this nonsense but stand their ground and help

the children to mature by shouldering responsibility. If a person does not learn to accept the responsibility of his or her wrong doings, he or she will grow into an irresponsible adult who blames anybody or anything for his or her own wrong behavior. Such a soul is trapped.

Denial has many faces for masking our sins and problems. It appears in different ways and operates in various fashions. Denial serves as our primary survival skill but actually produces the opposite result – continued slavery. We “protect” ourselves by not admitting that anything is wrong. We ignore the real problems by replacing them with a host of elaborate explanations, rationalizations, and distractions such as minimizing, blaming, excusing....

The beginning of freedom is admitting the problems and stopping the excuses.

**Simple rejection or contradiction (lying):** Telling yourself and others, “It is just not so.” When Peter was confronted about his association with Jesus, he lied in response. John 18:17 – “The slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, ‘You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?’ He said, ‘I am not.’”

**Attacking:** To become angry and irritable when reference is made to the sin or problem, thus avoiding the issue. Mark 14:70 and 71 – “...After a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, ‘Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.’ But he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know this man you are talking about!’”

**Shifting the blame:** To recognize the problem then blame someone else for its cause. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the devil. “The way you are talking to me is not loving.”

**Minimizing:** “Only a little.” “Only once in a while.” “It is no big deal, just a little issue. Don’t worry.” “I am not using heroin, only smoking a little pot.” 1 Samuel 15:10-21 – Saul minimized his disobedience and also blamed the people.

**Rationalization:** “I told a small lie, a white lie. It didn’t hurt anybody, so what is the big deal?” “Yes, I cheated a little, but everyone cuts corners.”

**Excusing:** “Yes, I did it, but you would too if your parents treated you the way mine did me.” “I can’t help it; I was born this way.” “All people who are my nationality act this way.” “I’m a man. What did you expect when you neglected me?”

**Diminishing credibility:** “You are crazy; I never did that!” “You are the one with a problem. You are thinking evil and judging me.” “What is wrong with you?” Some people in the church tried to soil Paul’s credibility so what he said would not be believed.

**Comparison:** Shifting the focus to someone else to justify behaviors. “I am not as bad as so and so”

**Uniqueness:** Thinking you are different or special. “I am not like everyone else. My situation is different.”

**Distraction:** Being a clown and getting everyone laughing or having angry outbursts meant to frighten which are intended to take focus off the subject.

**Hopelessness and helplessness:** “I’m a victim. I can’t help it.” “There is nothing I can do to get better.” “I am just a no good sinner who will never change.”

**Tomorrow:** “Yes, I have a problem, and I plan to stop with the New Year (or tomorrow, next week, right after...)”

**Compartmentalizing:** Separating your life into compartments in which you do things that you keep separate from other parts of your life.

Ephesians 5:6-20 Walk worthy of the Lord; walk in love; walk in light; walk wisely.

# Word Doers #5

James 1:22 Prove yourselves doers of the word...

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## Memory Exercises, part two

One – run – horse running in circle – Surrender and take control

Two – zoo – monkeys in cage – human nature is sinful (broken)

Three – tree – bent over tree – gift of grace

Four – door – wedge in revolving door – mercy seat, Passover blood of Christ

Five – hive – bees flying out of the hive – two Adams

Six – sick – hypodermic needle – flesh versus spirit

Seven – heaven – golden gates, St. Peter – control and rebellion

Eight – gate – railroad crossing gate – redeemed

Nine – wine – pouring from the wine bottle – justified by blood of Christ

Ten – den – den of lions – be transformed