

OFFER



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I bring the best and worst of me to God

TRY THESE IDEAS

Confession Retreat: Get away to a private, quiet, place for a few hours and ask the Lord to convict you of areas that are not aligned with His character. Write them down. Create a plan for eliminating those areas. Ask an accountability partner to help you stick to it.

Memorize: Write Romans 12:1-2 on a card, carry it with you, and memorize it. Once it's memorized, journal about the verses by discussing each phrase in light of what it might mean specifically in your life.

Recognize: When you recognize a sin in your life, take time to name it and admit it to God. Share your feelings surrounding it and whether you are willing to turn from it or not. Ask the Lord for the help you need to obey His will and move away from sin.

Praise: Consider the situations and events that you are proud of or makes you happy. How may God have played a part? Give credit and appreciation to the Lord by giving Him the honor and glory.

Inventory: Make a list of what you have. Don't just think about possessions, but include financial resources, time resources, abilities and talents. Go back through each one and ask if there is a way you can redeem it so that it honors God. What can you offer to God? How will you offer it to God?

Give: Many people develop financial plans, but few develop giving plans. Take time to develop a "giving plan" of what you hope to give this year and how you hope to grow in your giving. Think about your long term legacy and ask what you want to be able to do by the end of life to resource God's mission.



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Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with God

Offer *I bring the best and worst of me to God*

Deepening our relationship with God comes from regularly sharing ourselves with Him. He knows us intimately, and throughout the Bible He is frustrated with people who try to pretend, cover up, or only offer a part of themselves. We must authentically share all aspects of our lives with God, inviting Him into both the shameful and the things worthy of celebration. To be known fully and loved fully is the greatest level of relationship. We offer our whole selves to God not only to relate more deeply, but to be transformed and utilized more fully for His glory.

PRACTICES

CONFESSION: As we read God's Word, listen to it being taught, and learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we will quickly come upon attitudes, thought patterns and actions that are out of alignment with who God made us to be. God calls us to confess, which means agreeing with Him that what we've done/believe is sin. God is faithful to forgive us and this act of humility, feeling the weight of being out of alignment, is helpful to shape us and cause us to delight in who God is and who He's made us to be. This should be practiced regularly.

KNOW YOURSELF: It's difficult, or even impossible, to offer ourselves fully without truly knowing ourselves. We are all created in the image of God and meant to display aspects of God to the world. We each exemplify character traits and gifts that point people to our Maker and Designer. The more aware we are of how we are wired, the better we can lean in to our uniqueness and offer ourselves and our gifts back to God. There are many tools out there like the Enneagram, personality tests and spiritual gifts analysis which are helpful in this discovery process. You can also talk with an insightful Christian friend or counselor who could help you better understand yourself. Remember: the goal of this practice is to live more fully into who you are, and to point others to God and glorify Him.

LIVING SACRIFICE: In Romans 12:1 we are invited to "offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God". There is so much imagery here that connects us back to the Old Testament. The idea is that we surrender our lives to God, and are set apart for His purposes. This is the greatest act of worship. We release claim on our lives and ask God to be the leader in our lives. This is both an act of ongoing commitment verbally, and intentional movement physically. Regularly choose to bring yourself to God as a servant and a sacrifice to God.

DIG IN

Read 1 John 1:9

Why do you think it's important to God (and us) that we go through the process of naming our sin and humbling ourselves before God?

Read Romans 12:1-2

What implications does the term "living sacrifice" cause you to think about? What might it look like practically?

How does verse 2 potentially inform verse 1? How does it help you understand what it means to "offer" yourself?

Read Romans 12:1-8

What additional insights do you gain regarding offering your full self to God?

Read Psalm 139

What encourages you from this text?

Are there any fears or questions that arise as you read it? If so, name them...

Pray verses 23-24 and then sit and listen. Pay attention to what enters your mind as you invite God to search you fully. What was revealed to you in those moments?

RESPOND

Of the three practices (Confession, Know Yourself, Living Sacrifice) which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.



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