

Practical Consecration

by J.R. Miller

J.R. Miller's sermon emphasizes the importance of practical, daily consecration to God in our everyday lives and interactions.

Scripture: Proverbs 16:3, Romans 12:1, Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Practical Consecration", "Daily Surrender"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of practical consecration in daily life, arguing that true dedication to Christ involves a continuous, daily commitment rather than a one-time emotional experience. He encourages believers to surrender their plans and time to God each morning, allowing Him to guide their actions and interactions throughout the day. Miller illustrates that every encounter can be seen as an opportunity for ministry, urging Christians to view interruptions as divine appointments rather than annoyances. By focusing on daily consecration, believers can transform mundane tasks into meaningful service, fostering patience and love in their interactions with others. Ultimately, Miller's message is about making consecration a living, practical experience that infuses everyday life with purpose and divine significance.

Transcript

"I used to chafe and fret when interrupted in favorite pursuits--but I have learned that my time all belongs to God, and I just leave it in his hands. It is very sweet to use it for him when he has anything for me to do--and pleasant to use it as I desire, when he has not." Elizabeth Prentiss

A great deal of our talk about 'consecration' is very vague and visionary. We are told that we should make an unreserved transfer of ourselves to Christ--and we want to do it. We wish to keep nothing back from him. We adopt the formula of consecration, when we connect ourselves with the church. We use the liturgy of consecration continually in our prayers, saying over and over again--sincerely enough, too--that we give ourselves wholly to Christ. We sing with glowing heart and flowing tears, the rapturous hymns of consecration. And yet, somehow, we are not wholly consecrated to Christ. Saying it, praying it, singing it, ever so honestly and with ever so endless repetition, we are still painfully conscious of failure in fact, and we become discouraged, sometimes even doubting altogether the reality of our conversion, because we cannot consciously keep ourselves on the altar.

One trouble is that the consecration we aim at--is emotional rather than practical. Another trouble is, that we try to accomplish too much at once. We attempt to make over all our life, in its endlessly varied

relations, and all our present and future, once for all in a single offering, and then it seems to our limited experience, that that should be final. The spirit and intention are right enough--but the fact is that in actual life, such a 'one-time consecration' is quite impracticable. Theoretically it is correct--but in experience it will always be found vague and unsatisfactory. The only truly practical consecration, is that consecration which seeks to cover the actual present. However fully we may have given ourselves to Christ at conversion, it will avail nothing--unless we renew it with each separate act and duty as it presents itself to us.

Consecration may be greatly simplified, and may be made intensely practical--if we bring it down to a daily matter, attempting to cover no more than the one day; and if we each morning formally give the day to the Lord, to be occupied as he may wish, surrendering all our plans to him, to be set aside or affirmed by him--as he may choose.

For example, I seek in the morning to give myself to my Master for that day, saying, "Take me, Lord, and use me today as you will. I lay all my plans at your feet. Whatever work you have for me to do--give it into my hands. If there are those you would have me help in any way--send them to me or send me to them. Take my time and use it just as you will." I think no farther on than today. I make no attempt to give months and years to Christ. Why should I, before they are mine? I have this one brief day only, and how can I consecrate that which I have not yet received?

This formula of consecration is a transfer of one's plans and ambitions into the hands of Christ. It is a solemn pledge, too, to accept the plans of the Master for the occupation of the day, no matter how much they may interfere with arrangements we have already made, or how many pleasant things they may cut out of the day's program. We will answer every call. We will patiently submit to every interruption. We will accept every duty. We will go on with the work which seems best to us--if the Master has nothing else for us to do; but if he has, we will cheerfully drop our own plans, and take up that which he clearly gives instead.

So, sometimes, the very first one to come to me in the golden hours of the morning, which are so precious to every student, is a book-seller, or a man with fountain-pens or stove-polish; or perchance only a pious idler who has no errand but to pass an hour; or it may be one of those social news-venders who like to be the first to retail all the freshest gossip. Interrupted thus in the midst of some interesting and important work, my first impulse is to chafe and fret, and perhaps to give my visitor a cold welcome, not hiding my annoyance. But then I remember my morning consecration.

Did I not put my plans and my time--out of my own hands--and into my Master's? Did I not ask him to send me any work he had for me to do, and to make use of me in ministering to others as he would? If I was sincere and would be loyal to my words, must I not accept this early caller as sent to me for some help or some good which it is in my power to impart to him? If I would carry out the spirit of my consecration, I must neither chafe, nor fret, nor manifest any annoyance at the interruption, nor do anything to give needless pain to my visitor.

I have an errand to you, O man my brother! What it is I know not. Perhaps here is a heavy heart that I can cheer by a few kindly words. I cannot buy anything. I cannot give up an hour to hear my friend recount, for the hundredth time, the story of his past exploits. I cannot listen to the wretched gossip which my mischievous visitor wants to empty into my ear; and yet--may I not have an errand to each? It may be that I can send my book-selling friend away with a little bit of song in his heart. He came from a very dreary

home this morning. He is poor. He has gone from house to house, only to have door after door rudely shut in his face. He is heavy-hearted, almost in despair. He greatly needs money, which perhaps I cannot give to him--but he needs far more. Just now a brother's sympathy--which I can give--and a kind, cordial reception, a few minutes' patient interest shown in listening to his story, a few encouraging words, any suggestion or help I may be able to give--will do him more good than if I were to buy a book in the usual unchristian way in such cases.

Or may I not be able to drop some useful word into the ear of the idler or of the gossip-monger, which may be remembered? I must, at least, regard my visitor as sent to me with some need that I can supply, or wanting some comfort or blessing which I can impart.

Or the errand may be the other way. He may have been sent to me with a blessing. All duty is not giving; we need to receive as well. We ought to get some good from everyone we meet. God can oftentimes teach us more by interrupting our quiet hours and by setting all our pet plans aside--than if he had left us to spend the time over our book or in our work.

Let us at least beware that we do not send out of our door with fretted frown--one whom God has sent to us either with a message or a blessing for us. For even in these commonplace days, God sends his angels, though they may come unawares, not wearing their celestial robes--but disguised in unattractive garb.

Such a simple consecration is easily understood, and becomes very practical as we carry it out in life. It deals with living in its details--and not in the mass; in the concrete--and not merely in the abstract. It is not theory alone--but practice also.

Also, it seems easier to give just one short day at a time--than to try to span far-stretching years in our consecration. A day is a short reach. We can bear almost any burden or interruption for so brief a period. Then it gives a holy meaning to the common week-day routine of work and contact with other lives--to live in this simple way. All work is divinely allotted, and the voice of our loving Lord is heard calling us at every turn. It imparts a sacredness to all our meetings--even our most casual meetings with others. There is no chance that the eternal God does not guide. You have an errand to everyone who comes in your path--or he has an errand to you! You may be very weary--but if there is a call for Christlike ministry--you must obey it. You may have your robe and slippers on after a hard day's work, and outside it may be dark and stormy. But that does not matter; either you must withdraw your morning's consecration, or you must follow the voice that calls you to deeds of mercy and love.

If we learn well this lesson--it takes the drudgery out of all duties. It lifts up the commonest interactions of life--into blessed service at Christ's feet. It makes us patient and gentle--when dealing with the most disagreeable people. It imparts a high, a divine, motive to all friendship and companionship. It teaches us patience amid the interruptions and disarrangements of our plans. It disciplines our wayward wills in little things--and brings them into subjection to Christ. It takes the frivolity out of our conversation. It makes us ever watchful of our influence over others--and of our treatment of them. It makes us ever ready and eager both to receive and impart help and blessing.

Also, it makes consecration to Christ not a dim, far-away, merely theoretical thing--but a living, practical experience which charges all life with meaning, and which takes hold of the most commonplace things in our commonplace week-day routine, transforming them into beautiful ministries around the feet of God!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/practical-consecration/>

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