

Must I Make a Sacrifice?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Rom. 12:1-2

1. Contemporary Christians struggle with the Bible principle of sacrifice.
 - a. The helplessly ignorant believe that because we are no longer required to sacrifice sheep and oxen, that we have no need to make sacrifices at all
 - b. The hopelessly worldly make no sacrifices at all, but serve the Lord as long as it is convenient and doesn't interfere with things they think are more important
2. "I went into church and sat on the velvet pew. I watched as the sun came shining through the stained glass windows. The minister dressed in a velvet robe opened the golden gilded Bible, marked it with a silk bookmark and said, 'If any man will be my disciple, said Jesus, let him deny himself, take up his cross, sell what he has, give it to the poor, and follow me.'" (Soren Kierkegaard, in "And I looked Around and Nobody was Laughing.")

I. WHO AM I?

A. A Poor Person – The Widow's Mites

1. I am someone Jesus observed.
2. I am on a fixed income.
3. I am poor financially, but rich spiritually.
4. I am alone in this world.
5. I am found only in the books of Mark and Luke.
6. I am a woman.
7. I rebuked the rich by my example.
8. I gave everything I had to God.
9. Though I am poor, I gave more than all the rich.
10. I am the widow of Mark 12:42 and Luke 21:2 who gave her last two mites to the Lord - Mark 12:41-44.
11. It is not a sacrifice if we give only what we can afford, whether it is money, possessions, time, etc. - 2Cor. 8:1-5
12. It is not sacrifice unless it is given with the right purpose and for the right reasons. Jesus was watching how people gave - Matt. 6:2
13. It is sacrifice when we give to God things that we genuinely need.
14. Widows were the most neglected members of society; she needed that money.

B. A Preacher – Paul

1. I was born a pureblooded Jew.
2. I met Jesus personally and became an apostle.
3. I preached the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.
4. I wrote several New Testament books.
5. I gave up everything that I had built in my lifetime for Jesus.
6. I suffered beating, imprisonment, shipwreck, and other persecutions for the cause of Christ.

7. Before I became a Christian, I fasted for three days.
8. Apostle Paul who was once Saul of Tarsus - Phil. 3:4-8; 2Cor. 11:23-28
9. Sacrifice involves the relinquishment of all personal accomplishments for Christ. There is nothing man can achieve that is too noble to sacrifice for the sake of Christ - Matt. 16:25-26
10. It is not a sacrifice when we try to serve God from our recliner. If our life doesn't involve personal loss and suffering for the sake of Christ, then we have made no sacrifice - John 15:20; 2Tim. 3:12

C. A Pilgrim – Abraham

1. I lived under an ancient covenant.
2. I lived in tents all my life, even though I came from a wealthy family.
3. I was a rich and powerful man in my day.
4. I was not a high priest, but offered sacrifices with one.
5. I sacrificed the proximity and comfort of family to follow God.
6. I cast out one son and offered up the other to please God.
7. I am spoken of in the scriptures as the "friend of God," and "the Father of the Faithful." - Heb. 11:8-10; Gen. 22:1-12
8. Sacrifice is to obey God regardless of impact on our family - Matt. 10:37
9. Sacrifice means that we trust God to provide whatever we need.
Abraham didn't know what kind of land awaited him - Prov. 3:5-6
10. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son because God asked him
11. God has asked us to give him everything we have today as a living sacrifice. Do we hold anything in our lives for our own selves?

II. SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

A. 1Peter 2:5, 9 - What is the spirit of sacrifice?

1. It is said that Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, once had captured a prince and his family. When they came before him, the monarch asked the prisoner, "What will you give me if I release you?" "The half of my wealth," was his reply. "And if I release your children?" "Everything I possess." "And if I release your wife?" "Your Majesty, I will give myself." Cyrus was so moved by his devotion that he freed them all. As they returned home, the prince said to his wife, "Wasn't Cyrus a handsome man!" With a look of deep love for her husband, she said to him, "I didn't notice. I could only keep my eyes on you- -the one who was willing to give himself for me."

B. What sacrifices must we make?

1. Our bodies, as living sacrifices - Rom. 12:1-2
2. Our manner of life characterized by sacrificial love - Eph. 5:1-2
3. Our praise and thanksgiving, by prayer and song - Heb. 13:15
4. Our sharing with others - Heb. 13:16; Phil. 4:15-18
5. Our dying for the Lord - Phil. 1:20, 2:17; 2Tim. 4:6

C. The purpose of our sacrifices

1. In the Old Testament, sacrifices were offered to restore those out of fellowship with God and by those wanting to thank the Lord for His care
2. But in the New Testament, only Jesus can provide the sacrifice needed to restore us back to God (Heb. 10:11-18); we cannot sacrifice our way into heaven.

3. All of our sacrifices are to express thanksgiving and praise, love and devotion, for the goodness and mercy God has shown to us!

D. The nature of our sacrifices

1. It must be the best we have to offer - Mal. 1:6-11

2. It must be offered with sincerity and zeal - Mal. 1:12 - 2:9

3. It must be offered in conjunction with righteous lives - Mal. 2:13-16

Conclusion:

A. Mal. 3:13-18