



Sacrifice - Paying the Cost

Throughout the Old Testament the Jews were called to offer animal and food sacrifices to God. These sacrifices in the context of worship were to enable the Israelites to express different thoughts and feelings to God. (examples:- sacrifices for thanksgiving, repentance, adoration) As Christians we are not called to make these sort of sacrifices to God. Nevertheless we are called to give to the Lord all that we are and all that we have in service to Him. For a Christian the whole of one's life is devoted to God that He might use it as He sees fit. In every sense we are called to be "Living Sacrifices to God, Holy and pleasing in His sight."

Discuss - (In group / or small groups)

Q1) How do you think it will cost you to live your life as a Christian?

Q2) Why do you think denying ourselves for the sake of following God's plan is hard?

Q3) How do you think we can build ourselves up to overcome our selfish instincts for the sake of God?

So what does the Word of God teach us about being a Sacrifice to God?:-

Fact 1 - Living Sacrifice – Is our Spiritual Act of Worship!!

Bringing our lives to Jesus, submitting them to Him and allowing Him to use us as He sees fit, is all about a full and complete act of surrender and worship to God. It is perfectly reasonable that just as Jesus has given His life as a sacrifice for us, a sacrifice that sets us free from sin, so in the same way we respond to Him by giving our lives as living sacrifices back to Him. In every sense He died for us. Yet we are called living sacrifices because although there is a sense of complete surrender and dying to our old life and patterns of sin – our lives are now set apart for Him to be lived for His purposes. This commitment to both die to self and live for Christ should be a daily sacrifice that we make as an act of worship to Him.

Romans 12 v 1 – 2

Luke 14 v 25 – 33

Fact 2 – To live a sacrificial lifestyle to God is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Himself.

When we look at the life of Jesus one thing is clear. We see that the reason He lived was to do the work and will of His Father in heaven. Jesus declared this a number of times, that He had not come to do His own will or fulfil His own desires, but what He did came out of what the Lord had revealed to Him. We see this clearly in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus fully takes on the weight of all that it will mean to go to the cross. As He wrestles with the burden that He will take on – He fully submits and declares "Not my will but yours be done," even though He knows it will result in His death. In the same way Jesus calls us to put the interests of God and His Kingdom before our own desires and ambitions. He calls us to **deny ourselves** when our interests or desires are contrary to God's. Alongside of this is the call to be fully obedient in **crucifying** the "I" in our lives, that the will of God may be done. As we do this we know that in heart and action we are truly **following** in the footsteps of Jesus. It is not always easy to follow God's will for your life sometimes on a personal level it costs us greatly, however this is the true journey of a true disciple that we sacrifice ALL for His name. Mark 8 v 34 – 38

Matthew 26 v 36 – 46, Philippians 2 v 1 – 11

Fact 3 – In sacrificing All to the Lord now – we gain All things!!

Jesus in His promises clearly lays out for us that the more we are sold out for God and do not make claims on our lives – the more God will secure us both now and in the life that is to come. Jesus may not call you to make big sacrifices for Him in your life.

However whatever He asks us to do we should be joyfully willing to do it. The promise is a clear one the more we put Jesus first and sacrifice our own desires that are not of Him, the more He will give back to us both now and in the life that is to come.

Luke 18 v 24 – 30

Fact 4 – Called to be joyful in our Sacrifice to Christ

One of the true signs that we have begun to really become a true "Living Sacrifice," is that when we are called to put the interests of Jesus before our own, that we do not moan about how much it costs us. We are called to joyfully give unto the Lord. In fact the Greek word for joyful found in 2 Corinthians 9 v 7 "*hilaros*" actually is translated in the English to mean hilarious!! So what is being said in this verse is that we are called to be hilarious, joyful, good – natured givers to the Lord. Whether that is a sacrifice of 10% of our income (tithe) or the whole of our lives!!

It is not always easy to be a living sacrifice and put the interests of Jesus before our own. The reason for this is that there are real times when it does cost us. However the joy comes in knowing that we are doing what the Lord would have us do. The joy is in the knowledge that we are following in the footsteps of Jesus Himself. The joy is in recognising that all that we give to the Lord as a sacrifice, He in the long term gives abundantly more back to us to secure our lives in Him. 2 Corinthians 9 v 6 – 15

