

#104 Making Right Sacrifices

Q: "I go to church four times a week, give tithes and offerings, read my Bible, pray for others and serve sacrificially, but I'm just not happy. Our family is usually happy at home but we seem to quarrel a lot, what could be wrong?"

Isaiah 1:11,13 "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord...Bring no more vain obligations..."

A: The people in Isaiah's time were experiencing a lot of strife even though they made regular sacrifices to God. We can give regularly to God of our substance in both finances and time and still be making the wrong kind of sacrifices to Him, and not receiving His promises, because we do not see the connection between strife in our lives, and sacrifice. What is the honest purpose behind your sacrifice?

Philippians 2:4 "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Q: That's what I do, I'm always taking care of the needs of others before my own, isn't that a good thing?

A: It is very noble to look after the requests and physical needs of others, but what about the cry of each heart to be understood, loved and affirmed? Might you be looking down upon those you serve as being beneath your spiritual level? Do you truly esteem them better than yourself, or are you "doing them a favor" because you're such a good servant of God?

Philippians 2:3 "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."

Q: How can I esteem them better than myself, when they won't cooperate?

James 5:9 "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door!"

Q: "But how can I help it if someone in my house is grumbling and unhappy no matter what I do for them? How is that my fault? How can I sacrifice any more for them? If they would just read their Bible and pray more, they would be happy and we wouldn't be having these problems!"

A: The deception of outward righteousness is very strong. Self-righteous contempt, no matter how graciously disguised, is still contentious 'grumbling' and puts you under judgement, causing your good works to be ineffective. By projecting every scripture upon whomever you decide needs to hear it, you are missing the life in it for yourself.

1 Corinthians 10:12 "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Q: What? How could I be fallen when I live so closely to God and His word?

Proverbs 21:2-4 "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts. To do justice and judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. A high look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin."

A: Acts of condescending kindness, and sweet suggestion, show disapproval and constantly "plow up" areas in others you've decided need improvement. It is not your place to improve others, but to bless them.

Romans 14:10 "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

Q: I haven't meant to judge anyone, I only wanted to help them. How will they get better if no one tells them?

Ephesians 4:29-31 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

A: Any word from your mouth that causes contention or grieving in someone's heart, grieves God. His ways are always to build us up, not to tear us apart. As servants of God we must ask ourselves, "How it is possible that someone near to me, would not feel affirmed and loved? Am I giving gracious loving kindness like Jesus?"

Eph 4:32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

A: So often we as Christians would not think of correcting, or speaking to others in the same way that we regularly speak to, or about, our own spouse, sibling, or child. God cannot use your life as He has planned, if you grieve the Holy Spirit of God by constant correction, then blame disharmony on others. Joy must come from out of a heart cleansed and filled with living water of the Holy Spirit so that grace and kindness flow from your innermost being.

John 7:38 "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

A: Living water is more than speaking great Christian-ese! Living water is words of refreshing and life. Do self-righteous words, or does life pour from your mouth?

Revelation 12:10-11 "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

God never intended for us to carry the weight of being responsible for the spiritual growth of anyone but ourselves. Don't join hands with the accuser, becoming trapped in the bondage of criticism, and powerless to have a victorious life – cast him down!

2 Cor 10:5 "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

When you have a thought of "helping" someone, don't let it out of your mouth, take authority over it. Think of what you would say to and about that person if you were his lawyer in court, and let every word you say be as though Jesus said it.

Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to...bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

The Holy Spirit of God lives in you to heal broken hearts and to set free those you expect so much of, especially yourself.

Psalms 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart – these, O, God, thou wilt not despise."

Prayer: Dear kind and loving Father, forgive me my pride and for not being completely broken before You. Thank you, Jesus, that You give me grace and rest. Help me to pour living water upon those You've given me, just as You pour Your life into me. Thank you Lord, for abundant forgiveness and abundant life. **In Jesus name, Amen.**



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Bringing God's Word
For Life's Questions

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