

What Pleases God: Sacrificial Sharing

Ponder: Do Christians offer sacrifices?

Scripture: “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:16, NKJV).

Wait a minute! I thought sacrifices were for the Old Testament. We live under the New Covenant. Why are we talking about sacrifices?

True enough, Christians don't burn lambs or bulls on a bronze altar as God commanded His people under the Law of Moses. But sacrifice remains an important aspect of service to God. Christians are “a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5).

God has always been pleased for His people to share. Mosaic Law included special arrangements to care for the poor. Corners of fields were left unharvested so the poor could glean from them. Even some of the tithes were for the benefit of the poor and foreigners (Deut. 14:28-29). The early church likewise assisted the needy as they “sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all as anyone had need” (Acts 2:45). Paul instructed the preacher Timothy to “command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (1 Tim. 6:17-18).

As the Hebrews writer connected sharing with sacrifices, he implied that our sharing must involve a real and noticeable loss to us. When you give your dog table scraps, it really isn't a sacrifice; and when we toss a few scraps to the poor (a shirt that no longer fits us, or a couple of dollars we don't need anyway), it just doesn't qualify as sacrifice. Think of the poverty-stricken Macedonian brethren who contributed “beyond their ability” to the fund Paul organized for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1-5). Now that was sacrifice!

God is the giver of all that is good. We please Him when we share sacrificially.

Song: “Take My Life And Let It Be Consecrated, Lord, To Thee”

Prayer: Merciful Father, we thank You for being so generous and kind toward us. Help us, we pray, not to trust material wealth, but to use it to Your glory by helping others. In Jesus' name, Amen.