

givers are the ones God prizes. [8] God is able to make it up to you by giving you everything you need and more so that there will not only be enough for your own needs but plenty left over to give joyfully to others. [9] It is as the Scriptures say: "The godly man gives generously to the poor. His good deeds will be an honor to him forever." [10] For God, who gives seed to the farmer to plant, and later on good crops to harvest and eat, will give you more and more seed to plant and will make it grow so that you can give away more and more fruit from your harvest. [11] Yes, God will give you much so that you can give away much, and when we take your gifts to those who need them they will break out into thanksgiving and praise to God for your help.

- a. In God's plan for blessing what is the connection between your giving and God's giving to you? 2 Corinthians 9:6 (Proverbs 3:9-10)

- b. How does your attitude toward your giving influence God's response to the gift and how He responds to that gift? 2 Corinthians 9:7

- c. Check which of the following that are NOT God honoring motivations for giving: (Philippians 4:19; Galatians 6:7)

- You see the desperate needs of those around you.
- You see the financial need of your church.
- You see what Jesus Christ has done for you.
- You feel forced to give.
- You fear what others will think.
- You give just to please others.
- You give to keep others from pestering you.
- You give to get personal honor and recognition.

Friday:

4. Sacrificial giving better your life by making you more like Christ.

Galatians 2:20-21 (Living)

I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. [21] I am not one of those who treats Christ's death as meaningless. For if we could be saved by keeping Jewish laws, then there was no need for Christ to die.

- a. What happens to one who is "crucified"?

- b. If one who is "crucified" is killed, then what does that mean needs to happen to your old "self" directed motivations for life?

- c. What do you get from God through Christ in return when you allow God to replace the old "self" ruled life?

- d. Now that Christ lives in you to replace the old "self" ruled life, what new motivations, desires, choices, and values should dominate your life?

- e. This "crucifixion" experience has two parts. First is the one time part when you invite Christ into your life. The other is how you make the Lordship of Christ a visible reality. How often does this surrendering of control need to be done? Luke 9:23 (Living)

Then he said to all, "Anyone who wants to follow me must put aside his own desires and conveniences and carry his cross with him every day and keep close to me!"

FELLOWSHIP NOTES

*Reaching People for Christ
and
Helping believers grow to be like Him*

Betting on a BETTER LIFE

...through sacrifice

Are you one of those who is always saying, "I will settle my relationship with God later?" If you are, then you are betting your eternal destiny against whatever it is that has captured your focus, fame, fortune, or personal pleasure.

You are betting that you will have plenty of time later for God. Read the obituaries everyday for a week and make note of how many people your age have died that week. You are gambling against odds over which you have no control.

While you are gambling on your own eternal destiny, you are also gambling on your children's eternal destiny and everyone else that your commitment to God's service could influence to make a positive decision to receive Christ into their lives.

Why not place the destiny of precious children, friends and your own where you are already promised to WIN. Hebrews 11:40 (BBE)

*Because God had kept some better thing for us...
(Jeremiah 29:11-13)*

The "Better Life" begins with you praying to invite Jesus into your life. However don't become one of those who are content to stop there. Inviting Jesus into your life is not an end within itself. It is the beginning of a relationship in which you must participate if you are to enjoy the most out of the "Better Life" God has prepared for you.

In the previous lessons you learned that you can participate through "commitment" and "service". In this lesson you learn how to participate through "sacrifice".

Sacrifice is not considered a popular subject because it means you are being asked to give up something of value. There is only one underlying motivation that can drive you to sacrifice: LOVE.

John 3:16 (Living)

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Monday:

Sacrifice is giving and giving is love. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- a. Evidence of love is seen in the exchange. What did Christ get and what did you get in the great exchange?

- b. When people trade in business it is always for things of equal value. You received God's righteousness, which is something of immeasurable worth. Did Christ ask for any extra in the trade of your worthless sinful nature for His righteousness of great value?

- c. How can you show your gratitude for Christ's evidence of LOVE?

2. The ultimate expression of love. Romans 5:8 (NIV)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- a. Did Christ die for you because of all the good things you did and because you honored God and included Him in your Life? _____

- b. What do you think motivated God to do such an unusual thing as allowing His Son, Christ, to die for someone who did not care anything about Him and continually dishonored Him?

- c. How will this ultimate expression of His Love help you to more completely trust Him and want to worship Him?

3. And the ultimate example of love. 1 Peter 2:22-24 (MsgB)

He never did one thing wrong. Not once said anything amiss. [23] They called him every name in the book and he said nothing back. He suffered in silence, content to let God set things right. [24] He used his servant body to carry our sins to the Cross so we could be rid of sin, free to live the right way. His wounds became your healing.

- a. Christ was driven by His love for you to suffer and die in your place for something that you did. What does this example tell you about what could happen to you as you try to help others?

- b. Christ faced this trying experience with patience, calmness and confidence. Whom did He believe was in control of the future outcome of this suffering? 1 Peter 2:23

- c. Does your daily life reflect your belief that your God is in complete control, no matter what the physical circumstances? What attitudes, beliefs, and commitments do you need to change so your life follows Jesus' ultimate example of love? _____

Tuesday:

Sacrificial giving better your life. Ephesians 5:1-2 (Living)

Follow God's example in everything you do just as a much loved child imitates his father. [2] Be full of love for others, following the example of Christ who loved you and gave himself to God as a sacrifice to take away your sins. And God was pleased, for Christ's love for you was like sweet perfume to him.

Jesus certainly set the example of perfect love. He offered Himself as a sacrifice for those who did not know Him and even for those who would not accept Him as their hope of eternal life. That kind of love

is expressed from the perspective of giving and expecting nothing in return. "Getting" is a big part of the non-Christ like perspective within every human being. Christ in you can change that.

1. Sacrificial giving better your life by breaking the grip of materialism. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (Living)

Tell those who are rich not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone, but their pride and trust should be in the living God who always richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. [18] Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give happily to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them. [19] By doing this they will be storing up real treasure for themselves in heaven--it is the only safe investment for eternity! And they will be living a fruitful Christian life down here as well.

- a. Most people look at wealth and the acquiring of wealth as something for whom? 1 Timothy 6:17 _____

- b. Why is the security that you get from having material possessions only a false security? 1 Timothy 6:17 _____

- c. In whom should your pride and trust be placed that offers you a secure footing? _____

- d. When God entrusts material possessions to an individual is it for that individual to lavish upon himself? _____

- e. If you are filled with the love of Christ what will you do with your material resources? 1 Timothy 6:18 _____

- f. When you share those resources with others out of love for them, what really happens to the material things? _____

- g. So what is the only wise, safe investment? _____

Wednesday:

2. Sacrificial giving better your life by blessing you in this life.

Deuteronomy 15:10 (MsgB)

Give freely and spontaneously. Don't have a stingy heart. The way you handle matters like this triggers God, your God's, blessing in everything you do, all your work and ventures.

- a. What attitude does God want you to have toward giving?

- b. What attitude just comes naturally for most people? _____

- c. Scripture states that your attitude toward giving "triggers" God's attitude toward how He blesses you. Take a look at yourself. Will God be generous with His blessings to you? _____

- d. Based on Scripture does God bless you so you can selfishly indulge your own pleasures, or does He bless you expecting you to be a responsible steward of material things making you a channel through which He blesses others?

Thursday:

3. Sacrificial giving better your life by growing your generosity.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 (Living)

But remember this--if you give little, you will get little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much. [7] Everyone must make up his own mind as to how much he should give. Don't force anyone to give more than he really wants to, for cheerful