

WHAT WE GIVE TO GOD

Men should be very deliberate and thoughtful about what they give to God. For God said through Malachi the prophet, "You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation." They robbed God because they had not given of themselves and of their means to the One which had given them all things.

We also rob God if we simply give Him what is left over or what is not good to us. In Exodus God told the Israelites to offer Him a lamb without blemish. They were not to go out to the flocks and find the lame, the weak, the old, but to find the very best. That is what God was clearly asking them to give. When He asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac, we should reflect upon what God was really asking for. When we carefully consider it, I think we must come to the conclusion that God was asking Abraham for what Abraham love most. He still wants that of us today! What do we love most, if not our time? Our time is the essence of our life.

Consider what God gave us in the incarnation of his Son. Christ was the lamb without blemish. He was sacrificed for us. Seeing this, we should be more willing than the Israelites to hold nothing back from our gracious God. The first thing we must give is what we surely do love - our life. We should give God our lives without reserve or restriction. As Paul said to the Romans, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service". Yes, considering what God has done, it is both reasonable and necessary.

So can we say that we are giving God our best? Let us not try to just get by, offering Him what is left over or unwanted. Instead, let us give Him the best we have of our life and our means.

Editor's Note: The above was written by Phil Loftis and copied from The Bussell Banner, the weekly bulletin from the Bussell congregation in Cookeville, Tennessee. I do not personally know Phil, but the gist of this article is one that every one of us needs to take to heart. According to Malachi, the way in which Israel was robbing God was that they were not paying their tithes and offerings (Mal. 3:8). When we fail to give to God as He has instructed for this Christian age (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:6-7), we are robbing God too! Nuff said!

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OH, BUT FOR THE JOY OF WORSHIPPING GOD

Upon the occasion of the first observance of the passover, while still in the wilderness of Sinai, "...there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel?" (Num. 9:6-7). Now apparently, it was not considered a really grievous thing to these men, to worship God. Contrarily, they were grieved that they would be unable to worship.

Luke records a conversion of an Ethiopian saying, "...a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet" (Acts 8:27-28). With the mode of transportation being "a chariot", there can be no doubt that this Ethiopian considered it to be a great blessing and privilege to be able to worship God.

With both of the above examples, it is evident that those who would "worship God in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), will do all that is in their power to overcome any and all obstacles that would interfere with or block them from being able to worship God. In a land and society wherein those who would wear the name "Christian" will use just any and every excuse they can phantom to excuse themselves from the assembling of the saints; one has to wonder if they see no joy in worshipping God.

Little space need be used to point out that there is absolutely nothing inherent in the worship of God that is difficult, egregious or painful. But, when we consider the person and character that is the object of our worship, the Almighty God in Heaven, certainly the opportunity to bow down before Him should be a joyful one. Just having the privilege to call ourselves "sons of God", results from the love of God and is a worthy blessing of its own (I John 3:1).

A really good meal can be enjoyed much more when we can eat of it alongside family and friends, rather than eating alone. In much the same way, being able to worship God in the fellowship of our spiritual brethren makes the experience much more joyful. Let us strive to grasp all the joy of worship that we can.

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