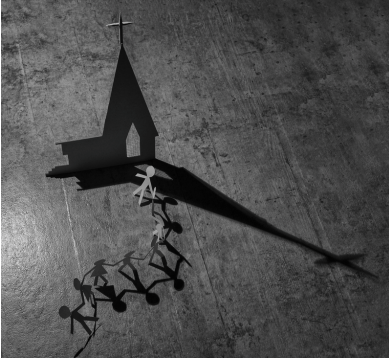




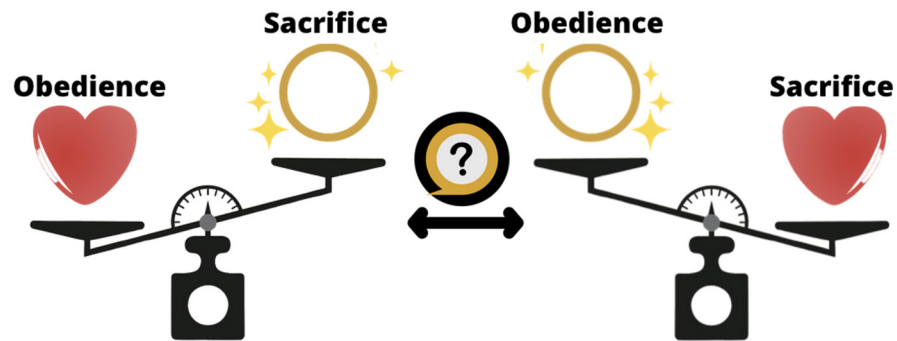
Is Obedience More Important Than Sacrifice?

Proverbs 21:2-3: (NASB) *²Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. ³To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice.*



As Christians, we are always reminded of the importance of sacrificing our own will to do the will of God. Our faithfulness is a direct result of the effort we put into our sacrificial lives. The Old Testament overflows with regulations and propriety regarding making sacrifices to God. These include not only animal sacrifices but grain, oil and other things as well. In short, sacrifice is an enormous part of the entire Bible. Why? Were sacrifices to be made to get God's attention? Is sacrifice in the Old or New Testament to show God we are sorry for our sins? What about the principle of obeying God's will? How does that fit in? Can we obey without sacrificing, and can we sacrifice without obeying? If we were to

put obedience on one side of a scale and sacrifice on the other side, which would carry more weight?



Obey (Old Testament): Strongs #8085 *shama*; to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience)

To obey is to hear with understanding and following through intelligently and loyally. It comes from both the heart and mind.

(Source: https://www.aish.com/jl/li/ht/Understanding_the_Sacrifices.html; Excerpts from an article by a Jewish Rabbi) We often think of sacrifices in the Temple in terms of buying off an angry deity with lots of blood and guts. Alas, these pagan ideas show how much our thinking has been influenced by other cultures. God is not lacking anything and does not need our sacrifices - animal or any other kind. The offerings that were brought in the Temple, like all the commandments, were not done for God. They were done for us.

There is a big difference between the pagan idea of sacrifice and the Jewish understanding of sacrifice.

 **obedience is a process:**

It takes time to learn what the Bible teaches.

"You don't know what you don't know." Fellowship is an important part of learning to be obedient to God.



Several words are used for sacrifice in the Old Testament. This one seems to encompass them all:

Leviticus 1:2: (NASB) *Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When any man of you brings an **offering** <7133> to the LORD, you shall bring your **offering** <7133> of animals from the herd or the flock.*

Offering: Strong's #7133 *qorban*; something brought near the altar, i.e. a sacrificial present

Sacrifice does not have to be an animal sacrifice. It is something we give to God.

Sacrifices were meant to be an *outward* manifestation of *inward* love and loyalty towards God.



 **Obedience is a process:**

It takes insight to observe faithful Christian examples.

As we start to learn, observe others who are stronger.



When I look at my life, the examples before me were my mother-in-law, Josie, who was a rock of Christian faith. I learned so much from her. Also, Rick's mom and dad, Richard and Anna May, were wonderful Christian examples to me early on in my Christian walk.

We will be touching on these OBEDIENCE BUILDING BLOCKS throughout the podcast.

It is easy to misuse sacrifice to appear obedient.



Misusing Sacrifice
to Appear Obedient:

Example One:
**King Saul and the
pitfalls of personal ego.**

We want to believe we have carried out the will of God, even though we customized and personalized it in the process. King Saul was guilty of this:

1 Samuel 15:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰*Then Saul said to Samuel, I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.* ²¹*But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.*

King Saul was not supposed to leave anyone alive or take any spoil. He was blaming the people even though he allowed Agag to live. Humanity is very good at diverting blame, especially when in a position of power.

1 Samuel 15:20-21-23: (NASB) ²²Samuel said, Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in **obeying <8085>** the voice of the LORD? Behold, to **obey <8085>** is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is as the sin of divination (**sin of spiritism**), and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.

To obey (to hear intelligently with the implication of following through) is better than sacrifice - Saul knew he disobeyed but blamed others. He was sacrificing to God anyway. He broke some of the most important commandments. He was sacrificing WITHOUT obedience. Such misplaced thinking, conclusions and actions always result in a dramatic loss of further opportunities to serve God. WE NEED TO LEARN TO OBEY IN ORDER TO SACRIFICE, NOT SACRIFICE IN ORDER TO OBEY.

Three words that stand out in these verses. *Heed, rebellion and insubordination.* These were the components of King Saul's downfall, and we want to avoid them at all costs. In Hebrew, heed means "to prick up the ears and hearken." Rebellion is defined as "bitterness." Insubordination means "stubbornness or to be insolent." The lessons are to avoid these three pitfalls: take God's words to heart and listen to His commands. Do not be bitter nor rebel against God. Always look to God as our superior.



IN ORDER
TO

**Sacrifice
Lesson:**

Feeding our misguided ego by a public display of sacrifice that should be meant for God may convince us of our faith, but it actually convicts us of our pride.

Whatever we offer to God should be as a result of obedience; if not, it will end up being bitter.

Obedience and sacrifice are meant to work together. It begins in the heart and ends as an offering to God.

Sacrifice grows out of obedience. How then do we handle sacrifice when we commit horrible sins?

This is one of those areas where we can easily get off course. Our worst sins can often come to us because of complacency. We become too comfortable with something, and it is too easy to take further inappropriate steps. It would be simple if we could backtrack; fixing this is much more challenging.

The momentum of sin happens one step at a time.





Misusing Sacrifice to Appear Obedient:

Example Two:
King David and the price
of grossly negligent sins.

Sacrifice is not the answer when we have grossly sinned. Often our gut reaction upon realizing our gross sins is to be sorry - deeply sorry - and this is good. But if we live in that sorrow and try to offer God this or that to make up for our sin, we have missed the point. Only true heart repentance - only a dramatic about-face in our actions along with an active attempt to right what we have made wrong - will bring us once again before God.

Our heart needs to be fervent for God, not cold. Only true heart repentance will bring us to obedience so that God can accept our sacrifice. King Saul's heart was as cold as ice. He was given privilege and honor, but he became self-centered.



Obedience is a process:

It takes mistakes to learn, and with God's forgiveness we can move forward.

We can learn from observing the mistakes of others, but if we cannot, we need to learn from our own mistakes which sometimes is best.

David, in a Psalm written after one of his gross sins, prays first for a renewed obedience:

Psalms 51:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your holy spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.

David was seeking forgiveness which we need to do. This means to ask for it, look for it, act on it and live it. To live forgiven is to live in obedience to God's ways.

He then acknowledges what he knows God really wants from him:

Psalms 51:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise. ¹⁶For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

What a contrast between David's attitude and King Saul's! David understood God did not delight in his sacrifices without a broken spirit that admitted his disobedience and mistakes. God wants our actions to be driven by a righteous heart, by Christlike thoughts, words and deeds. Obey first, before sacrifice!



Obedience is a process:

It takes humility to see our mistakes and missteps.

This is a mirror question - “Where have I gone wrong?”

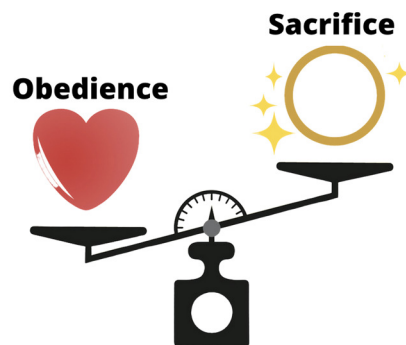
Doing all of this IS obedience, and therefore IS the sacrifice God will accept from us. Our obedience is one of the offerings we give to Him:

Proverbs 21:1-3: (NASB) ¹The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. ²Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. ³To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice.

Remember, “obey” means to listen intelligently (our mind’s understanding), but it must filter down to our heart (act with proper motivation). We need to put the two together.

To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice - this concept is found in at least ten places in the Bible: 1 Samuel 15:22, Psalms 40:6-8; Psalms 51:16,17, Proverbs 21:3, Isaiah 1:11-17, Jeremiah 7:21-23, Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8, Matthew 12:7, Mark 12:33 and Hebrews 10:8,9.

Obey first and give our offerings to God second. Examples of our offerings include spending our time and talents in the Lord’s service.



David needed to repent.



Repent: Strongs #3340 *metanoeo*; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction)

Repentance: Strongs #3341 *metanoia*; compunction (for guilt), by implication, reversal

Compunction: noun
uneasiness of mind due to feelings of remorse or guilt; twinge of conscience.

The idea of repentance is to reconsider, turn around and go in the other direction.

Example of Strongs #3340:

Matthew 11:21: (NASB) Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have **repented** <3340> long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

The *sackcloth and ashes* are strong tools of recognition. This is an evidence of deep sorrow and a public display recognizing a deep distress. But sorrow is only the beginning of the process.



The Repentance Process: Repentance is not regret. Regret causes us to *pause* because something we thought or did does not sit well in our hearts or minds. Repentance causes us to stop, observe, process, conclude and then fundamentally *change direction*.

For more on the topic of repentance, please see CQ Episode 1082: How Do I Live a Life of Repentance?



Remember, repentance is not regret. Judas is an example. He regretted what he had done to Jesus but that is as far as it went. There was no true repentance. "Sorry, my bad," is not enough.

What does a Christian's sacrifice look like? We are not bringing an animal, grain, oil or incense, so what do we bring?

We bring ourselves, our opportunities, thoughts and actions to God. We sacrifice EVERYTHING in our lives. Instead of doing what we want to do as human beings, we do and think about what God would have us to do. Obedience puts us in the right frame of mind to sacrifice.



IN ORDER
TO

**Sacrifice
Lesson:**

**Even when we commit terrible sins,
it is our desire to be obedient
that lights the way for true
repentance, which opens the door
to acceptable sacrificing to God.**

Even in the hardest circumstances of our worst choices, our willingness to obey is our forgiveness foundation.

**So far, we have two individual examples.
How do obedience and sacrifice work with a whole nation?**

What serves as a principle for one should also be a principle for the masses. Think about this. Saul, the first king of Israel, was DIRECTLY TOLD about obedience and sacrifice. David, Israel's second king, DID NOT NEED TO BE TOLD, as he undoubtedly knew of Saul's downfall. Now we can look at Israel as a nation and how THEY WERE UNDOUBTEDLY EDUCATED on the past experiences and missteps of their previous leaders.



**Misusing Sacrifice
to Appear Obedient:**

**Example Three:
Israel and the lure
of social acceptance.**

This sounds like the society we are living in now.



Sacrifice becomes worthless to God when the direction of our lives does not reflect obedience to His ways. Our life's path directly reflects the destiny of any "sacrifice" we offer up to God.

For Israel (this next prophecy we will discuss was to the two-tribe southern kingdom of Judah) to be called Sodom is telling, as they had fallen into widespread, lip-service sacrificing while their lives actually mocked God.



I think, do I mock God? Looking back in my Christian walk with all my mistakes, yes, I have done that in the past. I don't want to do that again and bring reproach to God with my lack of obedience. Those words are a wake-up call. It would break my heart to continue to do that when I should know better.

Obedience is a process. Do not expect perfection in our actions and thoughts along the way. We want to anticipate growth, observation and learning along the way. This is part of our offering to God.

Back to the prophecy:

Isaiah 1:10-17: (NASB) ¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah. ¹¹What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me? Says the LORD. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle; and I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. ¹²When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts?

God did not take pleasure in their offerings because the people were not being obedient.

Trampling of My courts - (Source: Matthew Poole Commentary) The courts of my temple, which were two, that of the priests, and that where the people assembled, (2 Chronicles 4:9). So, this reproof seems to be directed against both priests and people, as unworthy to enjoy this privilege.

They were all guilty of offering sacrifices *out of repetition* and not out of obedience.

¹³Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. ¹⁴I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. (God is saying: Your Sabbath, your new moon ritual, is of no meaning to Me. The sabbath was not important to the people. When WE offer our lives to God, it has to have importance to us. We must do it with sincerity.) ¹⁵So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. ¹⁶Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

For more on the topic of the sabbath, please see CQ Episode 1127: What Does the Sabbath Look Like for Christians?

Isaiah was telling Israel that if they wanted to honor their God, they needed to do the following - *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.* The literal sacrifices come after the heart and mind are in place to honor God.



Sacrifice is designed as a tool for connection to God. We need to look at our lives as offerings. We feed off of one another's example. (What are we eating?)

Outward group gestures with no inward conscience are not acceptable to God:

1 Peter 2:5: (NASB) *You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

THE GESTURES ARE WONDERFUL, BUT OBEDIENCE MUST COME FIRST OR THE GESTURES ARE WORTHLESS. WE CANNOT FOOL GOD.

 **Obedience is a process:**

It takes maturity to be consistent.

It takes time to mature. It takes some longer than others. We cannot be too judgmental. For us to judge our own obedience is key. We should not judge the obedience of someone else unless it is harmful to others. It is important to listen to be sure what we are thinking is actually true. Do what Jesus did.

This message was to the ten-tribe northern kingdom; it held the same warnings as the messages to the two-tribe southern kingdom we just discussed:

Hosea 6:4-7: (NASB) *⁴What shall I do with you, O Ephraim (the ten-tribe kingdom)? What shall I do with you, O Judah (the two-tribe kingdom)? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud and like the dew which goes away early. ⁵Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; and the judgments on you are like the light that goes forth. ⁶For I delight in loyalty (kindness, piety) rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. ⁷But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant; there they have dealt treacherously against Me.*

God has no desire for the *loyalty of a morning cloud* - billowing and obvious until the sun burns it away to reveal nothing but vapor.

Both Adam and Israel *transgressed the covenant* - obedience was put aside for something else. This is not the way to honor God.

What is the substance of my personal obedience? A billowing cloud or a living example of heart and mind desiring to serve God?

Obedience over sacrifice is like a chronological building block that consumes every part of God's plan. If we are called to be footstep followers of Jesus, obedience has to be the reason we offer anything to God.



Extraordinary care must be taken to avoid being a poor example of obedience. We also must thoroughly resist following poor examples. Sacrifice has its place.



All of Israel was clearly warned. This tells us that the obedience and sacrifice equation was a major foundation.

Do not follow the crowd! How do we go about properly lifting ourselves above the crowd's standards?

It is obvious that a proper understanding of obedience and sacrifice is necessary on all levels of life. The next danger we may encounter regarding obedience and sacrifice is our perception of ourselves. Do I see myself as better than others because of my brand of Christianity? What is the right balance?

Everybody wants loyalty, consistency and someone who will not quit. But everybody forgets that to get that person, you have to be that person. — Anonymous

What do we do if our heart is just not into what we should be doing? If our heart is not into going to our church service one morning, do we stay home? NO, WE SHOULD GO. We should say, *Lord, my heart is not in the right place. I know this is the right thing for me to do, please help me to get my heart in the right place.* Pray for the proper heart condition.



Obedience is a process:

It takes compassion and mercy when there is a lack of obedience in others.

The longer we walk in Christ, the gentler we should become. We should become more merciful.



**Misusing Sacrifice
to Appear Obedient:**

Example Four:
**The price of
feeling superior.**

To use sacrifice as a tool to condemn others is a calculable result of the misrepresentation of sacrifice. We must always avoid a pattern of thinking which says, "I know, you do not, and you are therefore unacceptable."

This is destructive and contrary to what sacrifice is intended to accomplish:

Matthew 12:1-7: (NASB) ¹*At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath, and his disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. ²But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, Look, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a sabbath. ³But he said to them, Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, ⁴how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? ⁵Or have you not read in the Law, that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and are innocent? ⁶But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷But if you had known what this means, I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice (Hosea 6:6), you would not have condemned the innocent.*



When Israel misrepresented sacrifice in the Old Testament, God scolded them dramatically. Jesus reminds the Pharisees of their ancestry.

Condescension condemns the innocent; therefore, condescension condemns the heart of those who are condemning:

Matthew 9:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰*Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners? ¹²But when Jesus heard this, he said, It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: I desire compassion, and not sacrifice for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*

There it is again - Jesus was teaching this all-important lesson, which was exactly how King Saul failed. He was rejected as a king because of his sins - not heeding, being rebellious and insubordinate.

This lesson is one of the core factors of the entire history of humanity in relation to God. We need to obey God first and foremost and then let it move to our hearts.



How important is all of this? So much so, that when someone showed an understanding of the appropriate relationship between sacrifice and obedience, Jesus was quick to acknowledge them:

Mark 12:28-34: (NASB) ²⁸*One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the foremost of all? ²⁹Jesus answered, The foremost is, hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is One Lord; ³⁰and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. ³¹The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. (Jesus answered by combining several pieces of the Law into a single statement that puts God first.) ³²The scribe said to him, Right, Teacher; You have truly stated (he now repeats what Jesus said)... ³³...is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. ³⁴When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, he said to him, You are not far from the kingdom of God. After that, no one would venture to ask him any more questions.*

The scribe understood obedience was more important than sacrifice. Jesus told the scribe - *You are not far from the kingdom of God.* This scribe was not condescending. Jesus compliments anyone who sees the godly relationship between obedience and sacrifice.

This totally disarmed the scribes and Pharisees. It is the “us against you” mentality. But when we can acknowledge another is right, it can change the conversation.



Even if we DO know more than another, let us always obey the example of Jesus - respond in a positive godly way as we continually offer our will to God.

It is far too easy to look down on others and write them off. We want to do what Jesus did.



Personal ego, gross sins, social acceptance and superiority, all misguide sacrifice. What else is there?

So far, we have seen how easy it is to take a shortcut to make ourselves look good in pretty much every area of life. The last thing to talk about is the human capacity to adapt to an increasingly godless society. Even with this pattern, obedience and sacrifice must be kept in perspective.

In this final segment, we are going to be focusing on how we can stay godly and obedient in our society.

The following quote gives a sense of what loyalty means in today's society:

Some people are not loyal to you; they are loyal to their need of you. Once their need changes, so does their loyalty. — Anonymous

This is like society, but it is also like a lot of Christians' faith. We are loyal to God when we feel we need Him, but when we are doing okay, we feel we do not need Him as much anymore, so we move onto something else. This is not the way it ought to be.



Trish contributes: Obedience causes our character transformation. Sacrifice is the "works" based on that character transformation.

We want to put ourselves in a position to grow through obedience and to apply that growth so that the things we do are honorable before God.



Misusing Sacrifice to Appear Obedient:

Example Five:
The subtle temptation of progressively degraded morality.

The temptation is subtle: a small thing here and there until we look up and realize how degraded our morality has become. We need to correct our behavior frequently, in small, quiet corrections so we do not need to do large, showy corrections.

Watch how the following texts go from reasonable to despicable. They depict the issue of making offerings for our sinful behavior instead of being accountable for it and changing our behavior. This reveals the tendency of humanity towards a dramatic outward show rather than taking humble corrective measures. We often quote Micah 6:8 (the last Scripture below), but what about the prior verses? How do we get to the conclusion of the well-known eighth verse? This should be a huge wake-up call.



This attitude is where we get our extreme society today - in this passage, Israel says, I have sinned, so:

Micah 6:6-8: (NASB) ⁶*With what shall I come to the LORD and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? (This is reasonable, yet useless if our hearts are in the wrong place, but it is at least reasonable.)* ⁷*Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams (thousands of rams for a personal sin are unreasonable and still useless if our hearts are not in the right place - keep the animals and get your heart right!) in ten thousand rivers of oil (exaggerated and yet still useless)? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul (heinously dark and evil, utterly insulting before God and obviously worse than useless)?* ⁸*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

It is a matter of degrees. Should I do what is reasonable? Should I do what is unreasonable? Should I do what is IMPOSSIBLE so that I can show I am repentant of my sins? Should I do these outward things, even to the sacrifice of my child? This evil repulsed God. Israel should never have fallen to the type of worship that went on in the heathen nations around them. We should never let our own sense of morality become as degraded as the morality of those around us who do not understand God.

What do we need to do to get right before God? *What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* All God wants is obedience. Just, loving, humble obedience. True sacrifice is born out of humble, loving obedience. This causes our character transformation so that we can offer sacrifices to God that are acceptable. We are working on the transformation, even though not always perfectly. Sometimes we fail, but we keep trying. God loves our effort. He loves our hearts and minds working together, even if we are feeble.

 **Obedience is a process:**

It takes a heart filled with love towards God to be faithful.

This is the epitome of what we have been talking about. In all the examples we discussed, it is always the same. OBEY GOD FIRST. That is the goal. Heart sincerity and our love for God will move us to obedience. We do not need to be perfect in our obedience, but there has to be an effort - an effort of the heart and the mind in agreement that even if we fail a thousand times, we will keep on trying.

Sacrifice alone was never the answer - even for Jesus himself. Jesus DID sacrifice ALL, and yet he knew that such sacrifice without 100 percent obedience would not be acceptable.

Obedience IS the best sacrifice. Our transformed character is the best offering we can give to God.



A prophetic view of Jesus:

Psalm 40:6-10: (NASB) *“Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; my ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required (this is telling us that it is not about the offerings. What IS it about?). ⁷Then I said, Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. ⁸I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart. ⁹I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I will not restrain my lips, O LORD, You know. ¹⁰I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation.*

God’s Law was written in Jesus’ heart. Jesus knew it in his mind, and it was written in his heart. And because of this, he had to proclaim God’s righteousness, His faithfulness, His salvation, His lovingkindness and His truth. He could not contain it because he was full of love for God.



Out of Jesus’ obedience came his sacrifice, and out of his sacrifice will come reconciliation between God and man.

God said three times - *This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.* Jesus did not need to say it himself. God said it because Jesus always obeyed. God accepted Jesus’ sacrifice because he obeyed perfectly. Jesus always gave God the credit, not taking it upon himself.

That is the example. Obedience is always better than sacrifice, but obedience requires us to sacrifice as well.



Obedience is the “heart” part of our life. (“Yes, I have committed to following God’s will through Jesus. My heart is in the right place.”) Sacrifice is the “doing” part, the offering. We give up our own will and offer our lives to God. *Quote from the Life Application Bible: “Being religious” (going to church, serving on a committee, giving to charity) is not enough if we do not act out of devotion and obedience to God.*

With obedience in mind, here are some of the sacrifices we can happily give:

Hebrews 13:15-16: (NASB) *¹⁵Through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. ¹⁶And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

In many cases, not all, churchianity today displays showiness, lip-service, jokes and entertainment. They have lost their focus on obedience. We want to be careful not to fall into that. We can use humor occasionally to break the ice or to emphasize a lesson. But we need to focus on opening the word of God, to understand its meaning.

The depth of our praise and the fruit of our lips is an offering that connects us to Him. He is well-pleased if with our praise, we exalt Him in our lives, rather than just praise superficially.

We can apply a rephrasing of the Dennis Quaid quote from the movie *The Rookie* to our lives, “Do you know what we get to do today? We get to play baseball!” We should say, “Do you know what we get to do today? WE GET TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD.” There is no greater blessing in our lives.





IN ORDER
TO

**Sacrifice
Lesson:**

Regardless of the conditions of society or the experiences of our lives, obedience before God IS our most important obligation. When we continually abide in this mindset, the offerings we give to God through Christ help us to truly bless God.

It does not matter what the degraded society around us looks like, acts like, thinks like or talks like. The standard for us is always the same. If we focus on that standard, regardless of what else is happening, we find our obedience and can bless God. When we bless God, we adore Him.

Philippians 2:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*Do all things without grumbling or disputing;* ¹⁵*so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.*

These are ways that we can sacrifice right there. Are we *above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*? Are we a light to the people around us? Do we stand for something godly, something good, something righteous so that others can look and feel inspired by our actions? Even if they do not like it, they still see the higher standard God has set before us.



Obedience and sacrifice are like inseparable twins. We need both in our Christian lives. Our sacrifices - the works we do and what we offer to God - are not acceptable unless our heart and mind are together, focusing on becoming what God would have us become. We are imperfect; we will fall. But then we need to get up again and ask for forgiveness. Obedience leads to the sacrifices of life that God can truly bless. Is there anything better than God's blessing?

*So, is obedience more important than sacrifice?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on June 8, 2020
Ep. 1129: How Can I Be a Giant Slayer Like David?
Warriors of God Series



Bonus Material and Study Questions

Loyalty means nothing unless it has at its heart the absolute principle of self-sacrifice.
— Woodrow Wilson

Here is some interesting background on Old Testament sacrifices and offerings:

(Source: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/sacrifice/>) The offering up of sacrifices is to be regarded as a divine institution. It did not originate with man. God himself appointed it as the mode in which acceptable worship was to be offered to him by guilty man. The language and the idea of sacrifice pervade the whole Bible.

Sacrifices were offered in the ante-diluvian age. The Lord clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of animals, which in all probability had been offered in sacrifice (Genesis 3:21). Abel offered a sacrifice "of the firstlings of his flock" (Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 11:4). A distinction also was made between clean and unclean animals, which there is every reason to believe had reference to the offering up of sacrifices (Genesis 7:2, 8), because animals were not given to man as food till after the Flood.

The same practice is continued down through the patriarchal age (Genesis 8:20; 12:7; 13:4; 13:18; 15:9-11; 22:1-18, etc.). In the Mosaic period of Old Testament history definite laws were prescribed by God regarding the different kinds of sacrifices that were to be offered and the manner in which the offering was to be made. The offering of stated sacrifices became indeed a prominent and distinctive feature of the whole period (Exodus 12:3-27; Leviticus 23:5-8; Numbers 9:2-14).

Quoting Psalm 40 relating to Jesus:

Hebrews 10:1-10: (NASB) ¹For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? ³But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵Therefore, when he comes into the world, he says, sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. ⁶In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of me) to do Your will, O God. ⁸After saying above, sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them. (which are offered according to the Law), ⁹then he said, Behold, I have come to do Your will. He takes away the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Loyalty and devotion lead to bravery. Bravery leads to the spirit of self-sacrifice. The spirit of self-sacrifice creates trust in the power of love. — Morihei Ueshiba

Israel (in this case, the two-tribe southern kingdom) fell into this pattern and passed it down through generations. Christianity is likewise guilty of generational rituals of giving for the purpose of appeasing our own conscience or for the purpose of getting:

Jeremiah 7:21-26: (NASB) ²¹Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat flesh. ²²For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. ²³But this is what I commanded them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you. ²⁴Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward. ²⁵Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them. ²⁶Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers.



Christian Questions Weekly Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and Study Questions

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CQREWIND

to **22828** to get started.



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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1128: Is Obedience More Important Than Sacrifice?

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1128-obedience-sacrifice/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. How is the Jewish idea of sacrificing in the Old Testament different from the pagan idea of sacrifice? What were the sacrifices to represent? (See Leviticus 1:2 and CQ Rewind Show Notes)
2. Why were the prophet Samuel (and the Lord!) angry at King Saul for bringing back King Agag and the choicest of the things of the Amalekites to sacrifice to the Lord? Why was this not an act of faith? (See 1 Samuel 15:12-15,18-23)
3. When we have grossly sinned (truly moved away from God) what is the ONLY course of action to bring us right with God again? (See Psalms 51:10-12;15-17) How did David exemplify this and what steps did he take to achieve righteousness before the Lord? (See Psalms 51) What was the difference between Saul and David in their attitudes and in their hearts?
4. What is the difference between repentance and regret? (See CQ Rewind Show Notes for this episode and for *Episode 1082: How Do I Live a Life of Repentance* which has graphics on the repentance process.)
5. What is the foundation of our forgiveness, even when we commit terrible sins? (See Psalms 119:40, 112, 40:7)
6. In what ways might we be guilty (like Israel) of repeated offerings to God (Israel observed feast days and sabbaths) that are no longer meaningful because our lives do not show obedience? (See Isaiah 1:13-17; CQ Rewind Show Notes for *Episode 1127: What Does the Sabbath Look Like for Christians?*)
7. How did the Pharisees use sacrifice as a tool to condemn others? (See Matthew 12:1-7) How does condescension condemn the heart of the one who is condemning? (See Matthew 9:10-13) Are we guilty of feeling superior to others because of our knowledge of God's plan? What course of action should we take?
8. What is the relationship of obedience and sacrifice? What do we need to do to get right before God? (See Micah 6:6-8; Psalms 40:6-10) What is an appropriate sacrifice that we should offer up to God frequently? (See Hebrews 13:15-16)
9. How can we protect ourselves from the degradation of society's immorality? (See Philippians 2:14-15; Psalms 40:8-10)
10. **OBEEDIENCE IS A PROCESS** - go back through the CQ Rewind Show Notes and list the steps in this process for a summation blessing!