



eLesson 023

Text: Varied

Subject: Obedience

Six Sacrifices

This lesson applies to all believers. It is about the six sacrifices that we, as believer-priests, should offer to God. It is *not* about earning salvation through obedience. It is about every believer's individual responsibility to offer sacrifices to God ... about your sacrifices and mine. Those sacrifices do not save us from our sins. It is impossible to earn salvation by our offering of sacrifices ... or by any good works. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."* Ephesians 2:8-9. Jesus, as our High Priest, gave Himself as the ultimate, complete, and final sacrifice for our sins, Hebrews 7-10. We can do nothing to add to the sufficiency of His sacrifice for us on the cross.

This lesson is not about Church leaders. There are Church leaders identified by titles including Pastor and Priest. However, this lesson is not specifically about Church leaders ... except in their responsibilities as individual believers. This lesson does not compare one form of Christianity to another. It is simply about every believer ... and applicable to every believer. The Bible states that we are believer-priests. *"But you are a ... royal priesthood,"* 1 Peter 2:9. *"And He has made us to be ... priests to His God and Father,"* Revelation 1:6. We are priests. We are to offer sacrifices to God. *"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,"* 1 Peter 2:5. Did you know that you are a believer-priest? Did you know that you should offer sacrifices to God? You must understand the six sacrifices to offer these sacrifices.

Sacrifice #1 ... Your body as a living, holy, and acceptable offering. *"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."* Romans 12:1. Offer yourself to God ... motivated by His great mercies. The Greek grammar of Romans 12:1 implies a one-time offering ... rather than a continual offering. That is a one-time sacrifice where we, in a sense, lay ourselves on His altar. This is not salvation. It is a sacrifice offered after we are saved. It is an event in which we unreservedly give ourselves to God. That verse tells us that our sacrifice must be acceptable. That means that our sacrifice might be unacceptable. Have you offered yourself to God as an acceptable sacrifice? Or was your sacrifice unacceptable? The unblemished Lamb sacrificed Himself for you. What kind of sacrifice have you offered back to Him? Your sacrifice must be holy. He rejects an unholy sacrifice. He accepts one that is holy. How do believers offer themselves to God? The answer is ... in a prayer of submission and dedication. Do not do that casually. It is a very serious thing to do. It is saying to God, with no limits and with no reservations, "Here am I ... do with me as you please in any way, place, or time." More information on this sacrifice can be found at http://mydisciplemaker.org/the_sacrificed_life.html. Have you offered yourself as a living and holy sacrifice to God? If your sacrifice is acceptable to God, it does not have to be repeated. This is a one-time sacrifice ... however, the following five sacrifices are to be offered continually.

Sacrifice #2 ... Praise. *"Through 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,"* Hebrews 13:15. The Greek word translated as "give thanks" does not mean simply expressing gratitude. It is a more comprehensive word meaning to *declare, profess, celebrate, acknowledge, and praise*. This verse could be paraphrased, *"With the help of Jesus, we should continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the praise of our words as we declare, profess, celebrate, and acknowledge Him for who He is."* Are you doing that? Do you really praise God in words? Do you praise Him continually? There is a separate Greek word in this verse, translated as "continually" to emphasize the fact that we should continually offer our sacrifice of praise ... it is not simply implied from the verb form. In addition, the words "fruit of lips" indicate that this praise is to be vocalized. Words of praise to God should fall, like fruit, from our lips. Our sacrifice of praise should be audibly expressed rather than just mentally spoken in silent prayer. It could be easy to spend an hour asking God for His intervention and provision. In addition, God has done so much for us that it should be easy to thank Him for an hour for His many answers and many blessings. However, could you pray for an hour doing nothing but praising God? Could you praise Him for an hour without the meaningless repetition that Jesus warned about in Matthew 6:7? Could you do that? Will you try? You might want to incorporate parts of some of the praise Psalms (such as 145-150), the Song of Moses (Exodus 15), the praise songs of Revelation (in 4, 5, 7, 11, 15, and 19), or even some great praise hymns of the Church (ones with depth and little repetition). Do not limit your praise to a one-hour event. However, the experience of praising Him for one hour might open the floodgates of praise from your lips. Offer your sacrifice of praise ... for with such a sacrifice God is pleased.

Sacrifice #3 ... Good works. *"And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."* Hebrews 13:16. Did you know that doing good is a sacrifice to God? Good works are not a prerequisite for salvation ... they are a consequence of our salvation. We do good works because we are saved ... not to become saved. Good works are important. *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them,"* Ephesians 2:10. *"Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds,"* Titus 2:14. God wants you to walk in good works ... to be zealous for good deeds. Are you? Each morning you should pray, "Lord, open my eyes to see opportunities for good deeds ... give me a heart, hands, and feet that are willing to do good works as a sacrifice to You." Hebrews 13:16 warns us to not neglect doing good. Since our good works do not save us, we might be lulled into forgetting the importance of doing good. God warns us not to neglect this important sacrifice. Doing good is a sacrifice that pleases God. Are you offering your sacrifice of good works? How are you doing at doing good?

Sacrifice #4 ... Koinonia. *"And do not neglect doing good and sharing (koinonia), for with such sacrifices God is pleased."* Hebrews 13:16. The Greek word *koinonia* is translated as *sharing* in this verse ... or as *communicating, fellowshiping, being generous, or contributing* in some other translations. What does *koinonia* mean? Some Christian groups use this word synonymously for fellowship ... in the sense of simply being together in a spiritual setting. However, it means much more than that. *Koinonia* is the full participation, in Christ, between two or more believers ... as in the early church, Acts 2:42. It is a word that describes our fellowship with Jesus, 1 Corinthians 1:9 ... and our sharing with His blood and with His body, 1 Corinthians 10:16. *Koinonia* describes our fellowship with God, 1 John 1:3 ... and our communion with the Holy Spirit, 2 Corinthians 13:14. It is also used for meeting one another's needs through sharing resources (including finances), Romans 15:26 and 2 Corinthians 9:13. The Bible warns us not to be bound together with unbelievers because light should not have fellowship (*koinonia*) with darkness, 2 Corinthians 6:14. We are to be bound together in *koinonia* with other believers. What is our sacrifice of *koinonia*? It is our full participation with other believers ... being seamlessly integrated into His Body. It is a fellowship that is far beyond sitting with other believers in rows in one place on one morning each week. *Koinonia* is full participation with one another in the Body of Christ as each of us does our part, serving and being served. We should *"grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of*

the body for the building up of itself in love." Ephesians 4:15-16. That is *koinonia*. That is a sacrifice that pleases God. Does that describe your experience with other believers in the Body of Christ? Believer-priest, are you offering your sacrifice of *koinonia*?

Sacrifice #5 ... A broken spirit ... a broken and contrite heart. *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."* Psalm 51:17. Do you think that this is an unusual sacrifice? Is God really pleased with a broken spirit and with a broken and contrite heart? Both uses of the word *broken* in this verse are from one Hebrew word meaning to be broken, crushed, or shattered. The Hebrew word translated *contrite* means bruised, crushed, and contrite. Here is an expanded paraphrase, *"The sacrifices of God are a broken, crushed, and shattered spirit; a broken, bruised, crushed, and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."* Sometimes Christians seem to despise the one whose spirit and heart are being broken and bruised. Too often we seem to be an army who shoots its wounded ... even those wounded in spirit and heart. However, God does not do that. *"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."* Psalm 147:3. Other believers sometimes reject the one whose heart is being bruised and crushed ... but God is near to the contrite and lowly of spirit. *"For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"* Isaiah 57:15. Believer-priest, your sacrifice of a broken spirit and a broken, contrite heart is not despised by God. In the words of Jesus, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 5:3.

Sacrifice #6 ... New believers. *"But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."* Romans 15:15-16. We are to be ministers of the Gospel performing the priestly duty of proclaiming the good news of Jesus. The resultant new believers are our sacrifice to God. Each of us has a combination of God-given talents, gifts, and opportunities to use in the process of helping others come to faith in Jesus. Each and every believer can be involved in some aspect of bringing people to Jesus. Too often, this sacrifice is ignored. Too often, believers think that evangelism should be left to others who are specifically gifted for evangelism. I have heard Christians try to excuse themselves from their personal responsibility by saying, "I don't have the gift of evangelism." I tell them that they are correct ... because no one has the gift of evangelism. The Bible mentions no such empowering gift given by the Spirit. There are evangelists who are one of four types of leaders in the church ... given by Jesus to equip the saints for the work of service, Ephesians 4:11-13. Evangelists do evangelism and they equip other believers to be effective witnesses. Evangelism is not a gift given to a few believers ... it is a responsibility given to all believers. Every believer should be involved in some aspect of bringing others to Jesus. Do not think of yourself as just a sower or just a waterer. You may be a sower for one ... a waterer for another ... and a harvester for someone else. The new believers that come out of the full process of evangelism are the sacrifices that all who participated in that process offer to God. Are you doing your part? Believer-priest, are you offering your sacrifice of new believers to God? For training in effective evangelism, visit <http://mydisciplemaker.org/courses.html>.

How are you doing as a believer-priest? Some believers do not know that they are believer-priests. Many do not know the six sacrifices that they should offer. Many do not offer their six sacrifices to God. What about you? Has this lesson taught you new truth? Has it reproved you? Which sacrifices have you neglected? What correction is the Holy Spirit giving to you? Make a list of the six sacrifices to help you evaluate your obedience as a believer priest. Write some self-evaluation comments after each one. Is change needed? Pray about them. Then add some Spirit-prompted correction after each ... your commitments to obedience. Believer-priest, are you offering your six sacrifices to God? Is God satisfied with your sacrifices?



Study Questions Answers at end of lesson.

1. Which believers are believer-priests?
2. Without looking back at the lesson, list the six sacrifices of a believer-priest.
3. Looking back at the lesson, list the six sacrifices of a believer-priest.
4. What does a holy priesthood do?
5. What living sacrifice should you offer?
6. When would this sacrifice be unacceptable?
7. Should this sacrifice be repeated?
8. What words should describe our sacrifice of praise?

9. What does the Bible say about our good works?

Ephesians 2:8-9:

Ephesians 2:10:

Titus 2:14:

Hebrews 13:16:

10. What is the sacrifice of Koinonia?

11. What kind of spirit and heart is a pleasing sacrifice to God?

12. What is the sixth sacrifice of a believer-priest?



Personal Reflection

No answers provided for these questions.

1. Did you know that you are a believer-priest?

2. Did you know that you are supposed to offer sacrifices to God?

3. How did you do in listing the six sacrifices at the beginning of the study questions?

4. Has your living sacrifice been offered to God ... and accepted?

5. If it has not, what are you going to do about it?

6. Right now, try to do nothing but praise God for five or ten minutes ... just praise Him without thanking Him. How did you do?

7. How have you been doing at your sacrifice of good works?

8. Describe your sacrifice of Koinonia.

9. If you have had a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, did you know it was an acceptable and pleasing sacrifice to God? How have you treated other believers with such hearts and spirits?

10. Have you brought others to the Savior? How is your sixth sacrifice?

11. Which sacrifices are you offering in a pleasing way?

12. Which sacrifices need work?

13. What are you going to do to improve your obedience as a believer-priest?

14. What has God taught you in this lesson?



Answers to Study Question

1. Which believers are believer-priests? **Each and every believer is also a priest.**
2. Without looking back at the lesson, list the six sacrifices of a believer-priest.

**Your body as a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice.
Praise.
Good works.
Koinonia.
A broken spirit ... a broken and contrite heart.
New believers.**

3. Looking back at the lesson, list the six sacrifices of a believer-priest.

Same as above.

4. What does a holy priesthood do? **Offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**
5. What living sacrifice should you offer? **Your body as a holy and acceptable sacrifice.**
6. When would this sacrifice be unacceptable? **When it is not holy.**
7. Should this sacrifice be repeated? **Yes, until it is accepted ... then it does not need to be repeated.**
8. What words should describe our sacrifice of praise? **Continually ... verbally ... with thanks to His name.**
9. What does the Bible say about our good works?

Ephesians 2:8-9: **Good works do not save us.**

Ephesians 2:10: **We are created for good works, prepared beforehand, to walk in them.**

Titus 2:14: **We are to be zealous in our good works.**

Hebrews 13:16: **They are a sacrifice that pleases God.**

10. What is the sacrifice of Koinonia? **Sharing ... fellowshiping ... meeting each other's needs ... being seamlessly integrated with other believers in the Body of Christ.**
11. What kind of spirit and heart is a pleasing sacrifice to God? **A broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart.**
12. What is the sixth sacrifice of a believer-priest? **New believers.**

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