

*"Holding forth the Word of Life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." **Philippians 2:16-17 KJV***

Service and sacrifice when offered from a lover's heart are never considered a loss, rather a gift. Whatever the loss it is considered well spent. If you consider your service to God a sacrifice, you do not know or love Him as intimately as you could. It is only through God's Word in your thoughts, revealed by the Holy Spirit of God, and known in your life that you may know God. If you know God, you will love Him more than Life itself, because you will know that without Him you would have no life, no love, and no future. Knowing God is not a casual, passerby, relationship, but a deep, unspoken, fire that ever smolders and springs into live flame at His slightest breath.



As for sacrifice, Paul said, *"(I speak as a fool) I am...in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* Denying desire in favor of Truth is your "reasonable service" to God! Our sacrifice to God is praise in peril, thanksgiving in trial, and a witness to others of His grace and love in spite of their persecution of us. Our Lord in His dying agonies at the hands of angry men pled for their lives saying, *"Father! Forgive them. They know not what they do!"* If you study the Old Testament you'll find the sacrifices to God had to be the first of everything and without spot or blemish. Faith in Christ delivers spotless souls to God. *"Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be Holy (pure) and without blemish."* Faith is unquestioning obedience to Truth, because of a passion for Truth! Not out of duty or desire for provision, but out of love for Christ. *"We love Him because He first loved us, for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life."* If I love God, I will abound in service to Him reflexively. My every conscious thought will be of Him and how I may please Him. If motivation is Holy, deeds will be Holy. His praise and person will ever be on my heart and lips. Have you not observed just such a phenomenon between lovers? Not poverty, hardship, or calamity comes close to quenching the fire that burns within them. Nay, it fans its flame! Could the same be said of our love for God or do we just think of Him fondly; His gifts being more desirable than His favor?

There's naught within the lover's heart,  
'Twill cause their burning love to part,  
And even in the darkest night,  
It springs alive – a burning light! -CGP

What motivates your service to God? Is it love of the gift or the Giver? Many know His gifts, but few know His love. Drown self in the infinite sea of Love that God has had for you since before time began! God reveals Himself to men through His Word, because it draws their heart to Him like the whispered passion of lovers. Jesus, *“the Word made flesh,”* said with double entendre, *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”* He was lifted upon the Cross and God’s Word is lifted up to men through preaching and witness. Do you know what word was translated “witness” in Acts 1:8? It is the Greek word *“martus.”* It is the same word as “martyr.” Let that sink in for a moment. God said, *“I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”* Let the cacophony of human desire fade into the symphony of the Saviour, Lover of your soul! There will be no service nor sacrifice too great for the One you find there! Faith will be transformed into fathomless love!

*“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39 KJV*

C. G. Palmer