

Happy New Year 2014! I am praying that you are enjoying this New Year and that you are gainfully employed serving our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus!

At this time of year at our Church we have Faith Fellowship which is an opportunity for us to sacrifice financially for those in the mission field and our sacrificing for the Lord. We make a commitment and financial pledge to support the missionaries and trust the Lord in supplying the finances. In many times that means denying self to identify the financial resources. After all, isn't that a definition of sacrifice, denying self for others? Jesus tells us that the second greatest commandment is to love each other as we love ourselves. To love, many times, means to sacrifice. Loving involves giving of ourselves, or sacrificing of ourselves to one another. Jesus loved us so much that he made the ultimate sacrifice when he willingly gave himself to us when he died on the cross at Calvary.

Webster's New Century Dictionary defines sacrifice as: **"the surrender of something valuable for the sake of something more important or worthy; loss without return** ."

Our servicemen and servicewomen sacrifice themselves by willingly, not being forced, give of themselves to go into harms-way with the risk of injury and death itself, to support and defend our constitution and freedoms we enjoy as citizens of our country.

But the greatest commandment Jesus said was to love God with all of our heart, soul, and strength. To love God this way, involves sacrifice. **1 Peter 2: 5** tells us that **"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ**

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So, that begs the question, what kinds of spiritual sacrifices are acceptable? Lets list some:

1. **Prayer:** An amazing scene is recorded for us in heaven, for an angel is seen at the altar offering up to God incense mingled with “ **the prayers of the saints**” (Rev 8:4). Jesus himself prayed and taught us to pray. We generally pray and think of others much more-so than self.

2. **Giving:** This was previously mentioned with the example of giving to the mission field, but well worth restating again. Giving is the use of our financial resources for the furtherance of His kingdom become “ **an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God** ” (Philippians 4:18)

3. **Praise:** There is a song we used to sing taken from Psalms called “**We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.**” **In some way, not fully comprehended by us, we can “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.**” (Hebrews 13:5)

). David tells us in Psalms that we are to come to the court of God with both praise and thanksgiving.

4. **Good work and sharing:** “**But to do good and to communicate (share) forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased**” (Hebrews 13:6)
We should never forget that we are saved entirely by God’s grace, but also created specifically unto good works (**Ephesians 2:8-10**)

Lastly

5. **Ourselves:** We have been given a command that we may “**present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service**”
(**Romans12:1**).

So as Christian Leaders, we have a responsibility in sacrificing for those who we lead. The 5 examples above are ways that we can draw from to sacrifice for those whom God has placed in our charge. As a young Ensign in the Navy I was taught to care for my people and, in many instances, try to put their needs ahead of my home. By God's Grace, I have tried to comply with that in both my military career and in my civilian career.

God is a magnificent God! He can be trusted with our prayers, our resources, our praise, our work, and our lives in how we live our lives, living to Him. His perfect sacrifice made it possible for our sacrifices to be meaningful!!

If you have not yet accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, won't you do so today? Paul says today is the day of Salvation, now is the accepted time.

Christians In Leadership -- Acceptable Sacrifice: What The Bible Has To Say About It

Written by Scott Evans

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Ref:

1. **Days of Praise, Sept-Nov 2012.** Institute for Christian Research, Dallas, Texas

2. **The Holy Bible (KJV)**

3. **Webster's New Century Dictionary**