RELATIONAL
RELATIONSHIPS
SACRIFICE
RMPP EVENT 46

SCHEDULE

Welcome and Zoom Etiquette

Opening Prayer

Speaker Introduction
Steve Odera

Message
Relational Relationships; Sacrifice

Q&A and Discussion

Breakout Rooms

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RELATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS: SACRIFICE

SYNOPSIS

Do you see sacrifice as giving in or appearing weak? Do you consider sacrifice a negative action or trait? What if you viewed sacrifice differently - the view that sacrifice leads to someone and something good. As you learn about different expressions of sacrifice, your relationship with God and others will be impacted.

| *Event Messages and Devotional Booklets*

You can find RMPP messages and devotional booklets from events past and present at: https://themstproject.com/events

| *Scripture Reflection*

If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.
Luke 9:23 (NLT)

And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet.
John 13:14 (NLT)

EVENT 46

| *Questions to Consider*

Where in my relationships do I need to show deeper commitment through sacrificial love?

Do I see serving others as a burden or a privilege?

Identify one area where pride or selfishness hinder connection and practice self-denial in that area for one month. Journal changes you notice.

Select one act of service you can offer someone close to you, without seeking recognition. Reflect afterward on how it has affected the relationship and your heart.

| *Recommended Reading*

Sacrifice - Experience a Deeper Way to Love
Josh McDowell, Sean McDowell

The Will of God: Understanding Self-Denial
C.M. Hinshaw

The Good Dad: Becoming the Father You Were Meant to Be
Jim Daly

NOTES

SACRIFICE: IT'S FOR TODAY

DEVOTIONAL 1

Sacrifice is not a random idea that comes and goes with the fleeting times, but is an act that God's Word teaches us to do continually.

"That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. . . So, Jesus healed many. . . Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray." - Mark 1:32-35 (NLT).

It had been a long day for Jesus. After having dinner at Simon's home, it would've been nice to just sit back and relax. But after sunset, many of the town's sick and spiritually-oppressed were coming to Him to be healed. Jesus didn't turn them away - He healed many. What time do you think Jesus got to sleep that night? Yet even before sunrise, Jesus was up again and went out to talk with His Heavenly Father. Relationships are costly and require sacrifice, whether it's your relationship with God, or your relationship with someone else. Let me share with you several examples of relational sacrifice.

Jesus Sacrificing for Others

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice, providing a way for all to be forgiven and reunited with their Heavenly Father. But Jesus also made many smaller sacrifices on a daily basis. Remember the "woman at the well?" Here again, Jesus was tired and hungry after walking all morning. But that didn't stop Him from striking up a conversation with a woman who needed "living water." The result of that one conversation impacted an entire village (John 4:1-42).

And then there was Jesus' investment in the lives of His disciples - all those daily and late-night conversations over three years. Jesus not only impacted their individual lives, but was able to entrust them with His Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). Yes, discipleship is costly and sacrificial, but nothing else is more rewarding for you, and pleasing to God.

A Pastor and Friend Sacrificing for Me

When my wife and I were newly married, we began attending a small church in Hawaii. The church was so small, that we met on Sundays in an elementary school cafeteria - sitting on those low tables! The church was so small, that our pastor needed to continue working as a house painter in order to support his family. But in addition to pastoring a church and

painting during the week, he took the time to meet regularly each week one-on-one with a few men in the church. Costly - yes. Sacrificial - you bet! But extremely impactful in the lives of those men. As he met and shared his life with me each week, my faith grew faster than at any other time in my life. He also provided me with an example of how I could later impact the lives of other men in a similar way.

Opportunities for Us to Sacrifice for Others

When my wife and I first moved to Thailand and got involved in a local church, God provided us with the opportunity to disciple young believers new in their faith. We met with them in our home every Tuesday evening for more than a year, reading and discussing God's Word together, and sharing our lives with one another. Over ten years, our relationship with those individuals has only grown stronger and deeper as we watched them grow in their faith. Just last week, I was invited to one of their weddings. It has been extremely rewarding to see how God has used these relationships to mold these individuals into fine, upstanding men and women who have dedicated their lives to living for Jesus. Nothing else has brought greater meaning and fulfillment to our lives!

As my wife and I grow older, we want to continue to be sensitive to those individuals whom God continues to send our

way. Currently, my wife meets regularly with several younger women. I am also meeting weekly with a young man who was recently baptized and is excited to learn more about his newfound faith. I find it thrilling to spend time with someone so eager to learn more about how to walk with Jesus on a daily basis.

What About You?

Who has God recently brought into your life? Might God be giving you an opportunity to be a catalyst, a mentor, an "older brother" in someone's life? Sure, sacrifice will be involved. But this is always the case with something that is worthwhile. Take a step of faith, and be involved in someone's life. When you die, the only thing you can take with you are the men and women who have given their lives to Jesus through you. You will find that there is no greater or more fulfilling investment than this.

Roger is retired and living in Bangkok, Thailand, with his wife Siri. They are members of Evangelical Church of Bangkok, and are both involved in discipleship ministry.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. Where would you be without Jesus' sacrifice for you?
2. Share about those who have made sacrifices in their lives for you.
3. Who has God recently brought into your life? Can this be an opportunity God is giving you to touch someone with His love? How can you initiate a relationship with this individual?

| *Read*

2 Timothy 2:2

| *Reflect on This*

"The strongest evidence of love is sacrifice." - *Carolyn Fry*

SACRIFICE: IT HAS A PURPOSE

DEVOTIONAL 2

If God calls His people to a lifestyle of sacrifice, then there is a purpose for doing so. Do you understand the purpose of this, and are you willing to embrace it?

In order to be able to grasp the concept of sacrifice, we need to first understand what sacrifice is. What is biblical sacrifice? The word "sacrifice" has a profound significance in biblical teaching and in spirituality. Its fundamental concept that includes the essence of devotion, love and commitment to God, and to others.

It isn't just about giving up something valuable. It embodies the act of worship and is an expression of faith that reflects our relationship with God. There is no weakness in sacrifice; in fact, it is the opposite. It takes strength and commitment. I'm sure that we're all familiar with the story of Abraham, and how God asked him to sacrifice the very son that God had promised him and who was the one who would make Abraham the father of many nations, as found in the book of

Genesis. The actual sacrifice of Isaac is found in Genesis 22: 1-19. Here are a few of the truths that I see in this story.

1. Abraham did not hold the life of his son as an idol. In other words, he did not put his love for his son before his love for God. In Exodus 20:3 it says "thou shalt have no other gods before me."

2. Abraham showed no hesitation. Genesis 22:3 says "he rose up early in the morning and prepared what he needed." He did not take time to think about it; he did not take time to argue with God and asking Him if this was really what He wanted him to do.

3. Abraham was committed to doing the will of God. He had total faith in God, and he believed God's word.

So how do we apply this to ourselves daily? First, we need to look at ourselves honestly and see what it is in our own lives that we put before God. Everyone's list will be different, but here are some of the things that get in my way.

1. Scrolling through social media
2. Sports, both participating in and watching on TV
3. Favorite TV shows, TV series and movies

4. Relationships
5. Work

Making anything in our lives more important than God's work becomes an idol and keeps us from doing God's work. I want to clarify that both relationships and work are necessary, the problem comes in when we put them first instead of in their proper place. With work, consider it as a means of support for your family and don't make it into something you become so absorbed in that it keeps you from God's work and time with your family. And also be alert to the fact that it can become our identity, which then turns it into an idol in our life.

It's the same thing with marriage and relationships, the equation should be God first, wife and children second. But that holds true for all relationships: when you put someone or something before God your life gets out of balance. God must always be first! And the only way we can do this is by setting our personal desires aside. To put God first you must know God. And the only way you can know God is to spend time with him. In my life, my time is now my own since my children are all grown and on their own and my wife is already gone. So where does sacrifice come in in my life?

My time: I set a specific time every morning to worship and to praise him in obedience to Psalm 145:3 which says, "great

is the Lord and worthy of great praise." After worship, I go to the Lord in prayer, not giving him a wish list of what I need or desire, but in intercession for others. Lastly, I spend time in Bible study, meditating on the word and then reflecting on the meaning of what I have just read. As 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "study to show thyself approved."

I also serve in my local church as I mentor and disciple young men and new believers to help them walk in Christ and grow in the knowledge of our Savior and his word. I also hold an in-home Bible study every Thursday night for my neighbors and friends. Our purpose is to serve others and to advance the kingdom of God, even if that means giving up our own personal desires. Mark 9:35 reminds us that "anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all. And John 12: 26 says, "whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant will be also."

So, what is the Isaac in your life. Refer to the list you made earlier and if like Abraham, God asks you to give that Isaac up, would you?

Luis is a layman who serves God and others and helps them to grow in Christ! He has been living in Southern Oregon, USA for the past 18 years.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. Is there anything in my life that I have put before God?
2. Am I committed to the work of God?
3. And if asked by God to put something down, will I be quick to do so or will I hesitate?

| *Read*

Ephesians 5:2

| *Reflect on This*

"Not one man has ever sacrificed for his Lord without being richly repaid. If the cross is only contrasted with earthly pleasures lost, it may seem hard and threatening. But when the cross is weighed in the balances with the glorious treasures to be had through it, even the cross seems sweet." - *Walter J. Chantry*

SACRIFICE: DENYING SELF

DEVOTIONAL 3

No one enjoys the thought of denying themselves something, but when God calls His people to deny sinful pleasures, are you answering that call consistently?

Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. 13 Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. - Romans 6:12-13 (NLT)

Sacrifice is at the very heart of the Christian life. It is more than giving something up; it is the daily, deliberate choice to deny self so that Christ may reign in us. In Romans 6, Paul reminds us that since we have been brought from death to life in Jesus, our bodies, minds, and desires no longer belong to sin. The call is not just to avoid wrong but to surrender ourselves fully to God as instruments of righteousness. This is the sacrifice of denying self.

1. We Serve Self

Each of us knows the pull of self-gratification. Our natural

instincts are not inclined toward holiness but toward satisfying cravings, ambitions, and desires. Paul names these "evil desires" (Romans 6:12). These desires may not always appear destructive at first—sometimes they wear the mask of comfort, pride, or control. Yet when left unchecked, they rule us like a harsh master.

This is vividly pictured in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32). The younger son was consumed with self. He wanted his inheritance early - a shocking and selfish request in that culture. His demand essentially meant: "Father, I want your wealth, but I don't want you." That is the essence of sin—grasping for gifts while rejecting the Giver.

When he left home, the son believed indulgence would bring fulfillment. He pursued pleasure and freedom, but soon he discovered he had enslaved himself to hunger, shame, and emptiness. What began as "living freely" ended in bondage. This is the danger Paul warns against in Romans 6. When we offer ourselves to sin, we imagine freedom but in reality, we actually become captives. To live for self is to lose ourselves; to deny self for Jesus' sake is to find ourselves.

2. The Turning Point

The beauty of the Prodigal Son's story is in his repentance. Broken, desperate, and humbled, he "came to his senses"

(Luke 15:17). He saw clearly that life apart from his father was not life at all. The turning point came when he chose to deny himself—his pride, his independence, his stubborn will—and return home in surrender.

Romans 6 calls us to the same turning point. To deny self means we stop excusing our sin, stop feeding old desires, and stop presenting ourselves to unrighteousness. Instead, we rise and go to the Father, yielding every part of ourselves to Him. Notice Paul's emphasis: "Offer every part of yourself to Him as an instrument of righteousness." Not just the visible parts—our speech, our actions—but also the unseen parts—our motives, our thoughts, our desires. Sacrifice begins at the deepest level.

3. Grace That Empowers Sacrifice

Some may hear "deny self" and feel overwhelmed. How can we sacrifice so much when our flesh is weak? Paul answers in Romans 6:14: "For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace." Grace is the key. Under the law, sacrifice was driven by obligation and fear. Under grace, sacrifice is empowered by love and secured by Jesus' victory. We are not left to deny ourselves by sheer willpower. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now empowers us to put sin to death and live in righteousness.

The Prodigal Son experienced this grace in the embrace of his

father. The father ran to him, clothed him with a robe, placed a ring on his finger, and celebrated his return. The father did not receive him as a servant but as a son restored. Grace not only forgave the past but reestablished his identity. And so it is with us. When we turn from self and yield to God, He meets us with grace. He not only forgives us but fills us with His Holy Spirit who helps us stop our self-indulgent behaviors.

4. Living as Instruments of Righteousness

Denying self is not a one-time act but a daily surrender. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me (Luke 9:23)." Each day presents choices: whether to serve self or serve Christ. Paul uses the language of musical instruments. An instrument in the wrong hands brings destruction, but in the right hands it brings beauty. Our bodies, our minds, our gifts, our time—all can be instruments of sin or of righteousness. Sacrifice means placing ourselves in God's hands, allowing Him to use us for His glory.

I have shared before that I used to struggle with pornography. It was a secret that made me feel ashamed and dirty in my soul. I was self-indulgent and the isolation took me away from those who loved me and the God who loved me unconditionally.

With the help of a men's small group, counseling for intimacy disorder, and a desire to live in the light of righteousness and freedom, Jesus broke the power of this sinful pleasure in my life and the Holy Spirit gave me better impulse management. I am so grateful that my heart and soul now belong more consistently to Jesus and that His grace is still enough to keep me from the sins of the past.

5. The Joy of Denying Self

Sacrifice sounds heavy, but its fruit is joy. When the Prodigal Son returned, the household erupted in celebration. What he gained by returning far exceeded what he thought he lost. Likewise, what we give up in self-centered living cannot compare to the joy of walking in God's presence. Romans 6 reminds us that we have been brought from death to life. Denying self is not a loss but an exchange: the mastery of sin for the freedom of grace, the emptiness of indulgence for the fullness of Jesus.

So here is the challenge: each day, don't ask yourself, "What do I want right now?" Instead, we must ask, "What would please the Lord?" In your marriage, your work, your appetites, your ambitions—submit them all to Him. When you do, you'll discover that God's design for pleasure is not a prison but a pathway to freedom.

Mike lives in Puyallup, WA, USA. He and his wife recently moved back from Thailand after being missionaries in Thailand for 21 years. He serves on the global board of MST and is currently helping MST United States get started. Mike's passion is to serve and mentor men who are searching for Jesus.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. In what areas of your life do you struggle most with letting sin "reign," and how can you offer those parts of yourself to God as instruments of righteousness?
2. Like the prodigal son, what steps of humility and surrender might you need to take to return fully to the Father's will?
3. How does remembering that you are "under grace" rather than "under law" strengthen your ability to deny self daily?

| *Read*

Romans 12:1

| *Reflect on This*

"No sacrifice should be too great for Him who gave Himself for us." - *Harry Ironside*

SACRIFICE: LOVING AND SERVING OTHERS

DEVOTIONAL 4

It is a sacrifice to love and serve others, especially those we find different and challenging, but when God calls His people to love and serve others, are you answering that call consistently?

Sacrificial love and service are hallmarks of the Christian faith. As Christians we are called to love and serve one another. To do this well is to do it sacrificially. Jesus himself showed us how to love and serve and it was through the sacrifice his time, energy, and his very life. Sacrificial love and service is not easy and even Jesus himself expressed his frustration with those whom he came to love and serve. Through looking at Jesus' example we can be inspired and directed on how to love and serve well in sacrifice. As followers of Jesus, we are commanded to love and serve each other. Jesus tells us in John 13:34-35, "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." He states very clearly that one of the very ways that we will be known as Christians is by how we love one another. Jesus also gives us an example and directive to serve one another

through his lesson to the apostles when he washes their feet. In John 13:14 Jesus says, "And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet." To be like Jesus is to serve and he desires that we should serve one another. In Galatians 5:13 this idea is further emphasized when it says, "For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love." These sentiments can be found throughout the scriptures that the call to follow Christ is the call to love and service for each other.

The Bible also shows us that loving and serving each other is a sacrifice. In fact, it says in 1 John 3:16-18, We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions." This scripture points out that "real" love is shown by Jesus through his sacrifice. It is not saying the sacrifice can be a part of love, but that it is necessary for the expression of real love. We also see a call to sacrifice our own interests in the service to one another in Philippians 2:3-4 where it says, "Do nothing out of selfish

ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others". When we serve others, as Jesus did when he washed the disciples' feet, there is a sacrifice of something. Oftentimes the sacrifice is our very own pride. As a result, we grow in humility as this is the natural outcome of sanctification and spiritual maturity. When loving and serving one another, sacrifice is a necessary and important part.

Loving and serving others is not easy. And acknowledging the component of sacrifice helps us see why. But sometimes the people we are called to love and serve make it even more difficult. I have found in my own life that this can be a great test of my willingness to walk out the Christian life. It can be very easy to love and serve those who are lovable. But when I am faced with the challenge of loving and serving difficult people, my obedience to God is tested. Even Jesus struggled with those that he was sent to love and serve. We see this demonstrated in Matthew 17:17 when Jesus said, "You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." Even our Lord Jesus, who was perfect and sinless, was frustrated with being around difficult people. But he still made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us, while we were still sinners.

So, how can we serve and love sacrificially even when it

is difficult? How can we sacrifice for people who might be challenging to love and serve? I believe we can find guidance on this in Luke 22:42 where we see Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane praying to God the night before his trial and crucifixion. In light of the greatest sacrifice that the world has ever known and the unimaginable suffering, Jesus prays, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." We see here that sacrificial love and service is not about us, but about God's will being done. We seek to serve and love others because in doing so we are conveying God's love to those around us. We are submitting to the Lord and seeking to be more like him.

In conclusion: we are called to love and serve one another as followers of Jesus. This love and service comes with sacrifice that is to be embraced. This is not easy, especially when those we are serving are imperfect humans. However, as we seek Christ's example, we can put our personal desires aside and seek God's will by serving and loving sacrificially.

Nicholas is a husband and father of two boys. He is passionate about seeing men walk in God-given freedom and purpose. He has been involved with MST in various ways, but in June, 2024 Nicholas moved to Thailand for the purpose of joining MST as staff. He is originally from Maryland, U.S.A.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. Who has God placed in your life that you should be in loving service to?
2. What are the obstacles to loving and serving those in your life sacrificially?
3. If you were to seek God's will above your own, what would he have you do to serve and love those around you in a sacrificial way? Name the sacrifices that you will have to make and offer them to God as an act of obedience and worship.

| *Read*

John 15:13

| *Reflect on This*

"The highest form of worship is the worship of unselfish Christian service. The greatest form of praise is the sound of consecrated feet seeking out the lost and helpless." – *Billy Graham*

SACRIFICE: PRAISE AND GRATITUDE

DEVOTIONAL 5

In the ups and downs of life, praise and gratitude can be difficult, especially when we don't feel like it, but when God calls His people to praise and gratitude, are you answering that call consistently?

But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your Salvation. I will sing to the Lord, Because He has dealt bountifully with me - Psalm 13: 5-6

In our most challenging moments, our praise for God shines with unparalleled brilliance. It is often in our times of vulnerability and weakness that our Heavenly Father performs His greatest works. The essence of navigating trials and hardships lies in setting aside our pride and personal ambitions, and turning it instead to God with hearts full of praise and gratitude. By shifting our focus from a self-centered perspective to the greatness of the Creator, we not only invite divine intervention into our own lives, but also inspire transformation in others. Our expressions of gratitude can resonate deeply, creating opportunities for God to enact

life-changing moments in us, and those around us. The two verses mentioned above are from the thirteenth chapter of the book of Psalms. David expresses his anxiety and distress over his circumstances. As you delve into the entire chapter, you'll notice a remarkable shift in David's perspective, moving from turmoil to peace. This transformation occurs as he chooses to recall God's mercy in the face of his struggles. David grapples with feelings of confusion and pain, questioning how long his enemies will triumph over him. Yet, he soon discovers that the antidote to his despair lies in celebrating God's abundant mercy. Ultimately, he lifts his voice in song, rejoicing in the salvation that God provides.

The people around us observe our journey through life—family, friends, colleagues, community members, and even adversaries. Recently, I faced some challenging moments, grappling with technology issues and awaiting news about a job opportunity. One morning at church, someone approached me and remarked on my struggles, asking how I manage to stay positive. The truth is, I haven't always maintained that positivity; I've experienced my share of frustration, tears, and complaints. I've questioned God about my suffering and wondered how long it would last. Yet, I refuse to dwell in that negativity for too long. I choose to acknowledge God's greatness and mercy, finding joy in my salvation despite

the hardships. Paul and Silas recognized the transformative power of heartfelt praise and worship. In Acts 16:17-31, we learn of their imprisonment for faithfully serving God. Many would understandably feel anger and despair in such a dire situation, especially after being beaten and incarcerated by Roman authorities. It's a familiar scenario for many of us: striving to live righteously only to find ourselves trapped in circumstances that feel suffocating. In moments of pain and dwindling faith, Paul and Silas chose to respond differently; they began to pray and sing hymns at midnight, as noted in verse 25. Their act of worship not only uplifted their spirits but also created an atmosphere for divine intervention, leading to miraculous events where chains fell off and prison doors opened. This powerful display of faith caught the attention of those around them, culminating in the prison guard's urgent question in verse 30, asking how he could be saved.

We must actively strive to honor God with a spirit of gratitude in every moment and situation we encounter. Embracing a mindset of praise and thankfulness can lead to a deeper sense of peace in our lives. It is a daily commitment to affirm our trust in God's mercy, as expressed in Psalm 13:5, which reminds us to rejoice in His salvation. When we neglect to express gratitude, we risk believing the false notion that God is distant, leaving us to rely solely on our own strength to confront challenges.

Engaging in praise and worship opens the door for God's power to work within our lives, revealing insights and solutions that may have previously eluded us. Moreover, by choosing to embody praise and gratitude rather than negativity, we become a source of inspiration for those around us, even if we are unaware of their observation.

Find comfort in knowing that God accompanies you even as you navigate through the darkest moments of life. In these challenging times, remember that you are not alone; divine presence surrounds you. Resist the urge to be swayed by your emotions or the overwhelming nature of your circumstances. Instead, embrace God's boundless mercy with a spirit of humility, gratitude, and praise.

Rich is a researcher, investigator, and freelance writer based in Southeast Asia. He supports missionaries in spreading the message of Jesus Christ and works towards ending child trafficking and sexual exploitation. Rich is well-educated in Biblical Studies, Historical Studies, and Political Science, which equips him to comprehend the intricacies of cross-cultural missions and anti-trafficking efforts. He applies his research and investigative skills to offer effective solutions to complex issues.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. When was the last time you faced a difficult situation in your life, and how did you respond to the challenge? (Reflect upon the results)
2. Ask yourself, do you daily give God praise and gratitude during the challenging situations, as well as the good situations.
3. Are you thankful for what God has done in your life? Are you trusting God to guide and provide for you and your family?

| *Read*

Psalm 95:1-3

| *Reflect on This*

"For one who has made thanksgiving the habit of his life, the morning prayer will be, "Lord, what will you give me today to offer back to you?" - *Elisabeth Elliot*

SACRIFICE: JESUS SETS THE EXAMPLE

DEVOTIONAL 6

In a world with a me-first mentality, focused on comfort and convenience, Jesus not only teaches us how to sacrifice but also shows us how to live out a sacrificial life. Are you following the words and example of Jesus?

I often wonder what people think when they hear the word sacrifice. I'm guessing it's a feeling of dread that comes over them like they're being asked to do a task they'd rather not do. For instance, in my own life that feeling of dread comes when someone asks me to help them move. I never really had to think about sacrifice as a single man. I was not a Christian when I was single and the laws of this world guided me. Once I got married, I quickly learned the meaning of sacrifice. I learned that in order to have a complete and wholesome marriage it was going to involve me sacrificing many things for my wife. Have you ever had a weekend planned with your friends only for the wife to tell you she had some plans for the both of you that same weekend? Word of advice: sacrifice those plans with friends. That's just one of many sacrifices that I learned that needed to be made in a marriage. How about your life as a single

or married person? Well, there's going to be sacrifices that will require your whole being.

As I started studying scripture and digging deeper into how to walk this Christian life, I started to see sacrifice everywhere. First in the Old Testament, then continued on through the New Testament, by the many examples of our Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples. The Old Testament is full of animal sacrifices for atonement and worship. The New Testament introduces Jesus' one time sacrifice as the ultimate atonement for sin. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16)." As Christ carried our sins through his sacrifice on the cross, we are no longer bound by those sacrifices of the Old Testament. Our act of worship isn't to bring a sacrifice, but to worship the one who was the ultimate sacrifice. In worshiping Him, we become like Him. Ephesians 5:1-3 says, "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."

God requires us to walk in love. The secret of love is sacrifice, serving and loving others cannot be done without sacrificing yourself.

What immediately comes to my mind is Jesus' example of washing the disciples' feet in John 13:1-17. Before dinner, Jesus disrobed and girded himself with a towel and began to wash the feet of his disciples. If this was the custom in our modern time, I can't imagine that I would be the first one to jump up and follow in Jesus' example. Honestly, that would be a hard one for me, but that was love and sacrifice in action. Jesus states in Luke 9: 23-24, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." Denying ourselves will take sacrifice. Salvation is free, but it will cost you everything. And Romans 12:1-3 says, "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. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Our minds get renewed by studying scripture and letting it wash over and cleanse our minds from the bombardment of this world. But we must sacrifice our time to study the scriptures. Ever notice how it's so hard for us to read our Bibles for 30 minutes but how easily we can sit through a 2.5-hour movie? How about our speech? Have you considered the use of our words? Hebrews 13:15-16 instructs us, "Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips,

giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

What comes from our lips is regarded as fruit, as fruit from a tree reveals the nature of the tree. Our fruit should reveal the nature of God. It will take sacrifice as our tongue is the most untamable part of our body. Just think back on today and how many times your words were used to praise and worship God or how many times it was used for poison. All of these points are an example of sacrifice. Not sacrifices to get us into heaven, but sacrifices that we offer up in honor of Jesus whose life was an example of sacrifice. A life half lived for God is not a true sacrifice. We can study our bibles and know scripture but it must follow us into our everyday life to be applicable. I pray that this devotional brings to our attention the need for us to actively offer our entire person to God each day. In turn, turning our daily lives into a living sacrifice which honors God and blesses others.

Brian lives with his wife and son in Detroit, MI. They have seen God work in their lives according to His faithful promises. This experience has strengthened their marriage and their walk with the Lord, leaving them with a burning desire to be ambassadors for Christ and share the gospel to all who will listen.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. What can you put into action in your own life from this devotional?
2. How can you be a blessing to others?
3. Did you ever think about your life as being a sacrifice before this booklet?

| *Read*

1 Peter 2:5

| *Reflect on This*

"You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed. Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan." - *John Bunyan*

LOOKING BACK...

DEVOTIONALS 1-6

During this connect group cycle, we pray that you have been challenged, encouraged, and inspired as you pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity in your life. We want to encourage you to now take some time to reflect on the last six devotionals and see how you can consistently apply the many truths that have been shared and that you have learned in your life.

Devotional 1

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 2

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 3

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 4

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 5

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 6

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

FAST AND PRAY FOR YOUR WIFE

Each month, we encourage you to set aside a time to fast and pray for your wife (or future wife) for one or all of the following points. As husbands (or future husbands) commit to praying and fasting for their wives, we will see a significant spiritual breakthrough and a spiritual legacy created.

Serve Her

My wife is not a project I need to work on or change; instead, I want to serve her better as her husband, lover, and friend.

Love Her

I want to love and support my wife better so that our marriage reflects Christ's love for the Church.

Honor Her

I want to honor my wife's emotions better by being a safe place where she can freely share her feelings without my trying to solve every problem.

Respect Her

I want to respect my wife better by learning to appreciate the unique talents, gifts, and perspectives she has. Couples should complement one another and not compete with each other.

Listen to Her

I want to be a better listener. I want to listen to my wife with my heart and not just my ears.

INTRODUCING RMPP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

| *What Is RMPP?*

Real Men Pursuing Purity (RMPP) is a community of men who are committed to growing in integrity, purity and wholeness through relevant teachings, accountability, mentoring and honest dialogue. You might not be sure that you really need to be part of a community like this because you don't struggle with compulsive addictions or sexual sin. While it is very important for many men to focus primarily on resisting sexual temptation and sin, we want to inspire and challenge you to pursue more. Although growing in purity is a big part of the vision for RMPP, it's much more than that. It's also learning about deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment with like-minded brothers. We believe that when we invite Him into these areas, He will extend His healing hand and bring about wholeness. Max Lucado says this very well.

EST. 2014

"Our Savior kneels down and gazes upon the darkest acts of our lives. But rather than recoil in horror, he reaches out in kindness and says, "I can clean that if you want."

We are men who are not willing to settle for a life of spiritual mediocrity. We choose to relentlessly pursue greater depths of purity and wholeness for ourselves and for our families. Welcome to the RMPP community.

| *How does RMPP support the local church?*

RMPP does not intend to replace or represent a church; it only creates a safe place for men who want to stay active in their own church community. When a man joins the RMPP community he joins other like-minded men who desire to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. He is choosing to walk out in greater honesty and vulnerability. He is choosing to pursue purity in all aspects of his life. Aspects such as deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work

boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment.

We then pray that as these men grow in greater maturity that they would influence their families. That they would impact their communities and their work places, and that they would be an example for other men in their home church. We believe that as men take hold of the awesome and holy call to live lives that reflect Christ, that the church will be inspired and the world will take notice.

| *What happens next?*

If you have ever attended a men's retreat, you probably remember being deeply impacted by worship, challenged by teaching, and being in community with many men who shared your excitement and enthusiasm for growth and change. A few weeks or months down the road, the gathering became a distant memory as you settled back into the routines of daily life. We don't want to create just another mountain top experience. We are committed to creating a long-term mentoring relationship for everyone who attends an event. That is why you are holding this devotional book in your hands. As you flip through these pages you will see that there devotionals with corresponding

questions. Each devotional is meant to solidify the teaching of the event by encouraging and challenging you, as well as helping to stimulate discussion through thought provoking questions, verses and quotes.

| *Who writes the devotionals?*

Christian men from around the world have written these devotionals and have overcome real issues in their life through God's grace, goodness, mercy and love. We hope and pray that their testimonies and stories inspire, challenge and point you to Christ.

| *What are RMPP connect groups?*

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue both purity and wholeness within an environment of peer support and encouragement. The journey to greater purity and wholeness is a journey that involves inviting other men to walk alongside of you. It is a place where you can share your prayer requests, victories, and struggles and where you can be heard, prayed for and challenged to grow in all areas of life. A connect group is designed to be a support system for you for as long as you want.

During your time in a connect group you will be:

***Challenged*:** You will be challenged to grow in your love for Biblical truth. The men in your group will challenge you to grow in your knowledge and application of God's Word thereby enabling you to stand firm in the midst of life's trials.

***Encouraged*:** You will be encouraged to persevere when life, work, and numerous responsibilities may seem overwhelming. The men in your group will support you through prayer, encouragement and a listening ear.

***Inspired*:** You will be inspired to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. While pursuing Christ-likeness may not always be easy, it will also be worth it. The men in your group will be there to inspire you on that journey.

***Accountable*:** The men in your group, as well as your group leader, will support you and hold you accountable as you pursue greater freedom and victory. Be assured that whatever you share in your group will be strictly confidential.

| *When are the events held?*

RMPP events are held online 4x a year in February, May, August, and November.

| *Who can attend?*

RMPP events are open to all men worldwide.

| *What about privacy?*

Because of the sensitive nature of RMPP events, video or audio recording by participants is not allowed. Also, details of personal testimonies are not to be published via email, social media, or in any other form. Thank you for contributing to a safe and secure environment that helps build honesty and vulnerability.

| *Who started RMPP?*

Real Men Pursuing Purity was founded in 2014 and is an initiative of The MST Project.

MEET THE TEAM

THE MST GLOBAL BOARD

Christian Lenty is the founder and director of The MST Project, a ministry that seeks to mentor men into a pursuit of sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity. Christian has lived in Thailand for over 21 years and resides in Bangkok with his wife.

Rex DeKoning is the 60-year old husband and father of a large family. A former nurse and pastor, he now works in Thailand with New Counseling Service as a counselor. Rex has experienced great healing of addictive behaviors after he confessed everything and began to live an accountable life. Rex is highly motivated to inspire other men to seek out a mentor, as it has helped him to walk freely, build honesty and vulnerability.

Nick Chilver is married and is part of a blended family containing 6 children. He is grateful for the people God has brought into his life and across his path. And as he continues to learn to better reflect Him, it is his prayer that God will grant

him the privilege of helping others on the path to freedom and into the Light. He resides in Thailand with his wife.

Mike B. Wood is married to his wonderful wife of 28 years. He is a Pastoral Counselor in the area of sexual recovery therapy. He is a man in process, passionate about bringing men together to share life together. This is where we study God's Word together and share the challenges we face. This inspires us to accept what God has freely given us: His love, mercy, grace and acceptance. He and his wife have lived in Thailand for 18 years.

Steve Odera has been happily married to Liz for the last 43 years and they have two wonderful adult children. After serving as a pastor in Bangkok, Thailand, for seven years, Steve returned to his native Kenya in 2023, where he and Liz are involved in the family enrichment ministry – their sweet spot - in their local church.

EVENT DATES AND RESOURCES

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

| *2025 Event Dates and Zoom ID*

Mark your calendars, plan to attend, and invite a friend to one or all of the events below.

Event 47: November 22
Zoom ID for all events: 561 433 8821

| *The Pursuit of Purity*

The book, The Pursuit of Purity, is meant to transform the way you think and live, putting you on a lifetime path of purity and wholeness leading to consistent victory.

***W*:** themstproject.com/pathway-to-purity
***E*:** hello@themstproject.com

THANK YOU

| *With Gratitude*

We would like say thank you to the following for their contribution to RMPP.

Financial Donors

Thank you for generously providing funding that allows for RMPP events, seminars, and translation of materials.

Devotional Authors

Thank you for writing devotionals that inspire, encourage and challenge each of us to pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness and Christlike maturity.

| *Scriptural Oversight Team*

RMPP has a Scriptural Oversight Team consisting of several pastors from local churches that review all devotionals for theological integrity.

CONNECT GROUPS

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity within an environment of peer support, encouragement, and accountability.

Connect groups are held worldwide on a weekly basis. To inquire about joining a group or to find out more information please email **hello@themstproject.com**.

If you are interested in starting an RMPP connect group at your church, men's ministry, Bible study, college group, etc., please contact us. We'd love to support you and have the resources to help you.

JOIN ONE
TODAY!

AUGUST 2025