

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Cheap Sacrifices

By definition, a sacrifice costs the worshipper something of value. But too often the “sacrifices” that we offer God indicate we don’t understand the concept very well.

“And Ornan said to David, ‘Take it to yourself, and let my lord the king do what is good in his eyes. Look, I also give you the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give it all.’ Then King David said to Ornan, ‘No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing.’ So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place” (1 Chron. 21:22-25).

King David was desperate to buy the threshing floor of Ornan in order to halt a plague that had broken out among the population of Israel, a plague for which David was personally responsible. If he could quickly build an altar and offer a burnt offering at this site, the plague would be stayed (v. 18-19).

The property owner, Ornan the Jebusite (named Araunah in 2 Sam. 24), was a generous fellow, and offered to give David everything he needed at no charge—the property, the wood, even the oxen for the offering. With that

sweet deal, David could fulfill God’s demand at no cost to himself.

But David refused Ornan’s offer, and insisted on paying full price for the property. He explained, “I will not . . . offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing.” David understood that a “sacrifice” that cost him nothing was not a sacrifice at all.

Look at the offerings of other Bible characters and it’s obvious they saw a sacrifice as a painful cost to pay for the privilege of honoring God. Abraham understood the meaning of sacrifice when God told him to offer his only son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. He did not hesitate to make the offering, until God stopped him (Gen. 22). The early disciples in Jerusalem sold their lands and houses and donated the proceeds to meet the needs of the poor among their number (Ac. 4:34-37). The value of a sacrifice is not measured in strictly monetary terms; even two small copper coins can constitute a major sacrifice, if that’s all you have to live on (Lk. 21:1-4).

This is a lesson that is sorely needed among God’s people today. We have

grown soft in our comfortable surroundings, and no longer appreciate the real meaning of a sacrifice. Instead of expending something of real value in God’s behalf, we seek to skate by with as little cost as possible, confident that God will be happy with whatever scraps we toss His way.

For example, we will assemble with our brethren whenever we can—if we don’t have anything else planned *and* the weather is fine *and* I’m in a good mood that day. When the collection plate comes by, I’ll dig around in my wallet for a stray dollar bill; sorry, that’s all I can spare today (and this is the day after I plunked down a wad of cash for a new 60” LED HDTV).

And we call this “sacrificing for God.” Who are we kidding?

David insisted on paying a significant price for his sacrifice, because he knew that otherwise it was worthless. We need to do an honest assessment of our sacrifices for the Lord, and determine if we’re trying to get by on the cheap. You can be sure God is keeping records.

– David King