

Marriage A Sacrifice?

An elder of a church responded “sacrifice” to the question how do you love your wife as the Lord loves the church? The response has its roots in the scripture verses Eph. 5:25-30, specifically the phrase “*gave himself for it*.”

I thought about this response. The thing I did was look up the definition of the word “sacrifice,” which means:

surrender of something for the sake of something else : giving up of some desirable thing in behalf of a higher object b : something given up or lost

The elder’s response is common and well accepted answer. However, is it true? Does a successful marriage require sacrifice by one or two of the parties? Does this approach lead to a better marriage? In a husband loving his wife as the Lord loves the church?

There can be no doubt that the phrase “*Jesus gave himself for the church*” involved a sacrifice on Jesus’ part, the cross. As a result of this fact, is a man correspondingly required to sacrifice in order to love his wife at Jesus loves the church?

Let us consider a similar situation. When one is in the world, does the one make a sacrifice when giving up the world to gain Jesus? NO. The person loses nothing when he gives up the world. The person makes a decision, to stop something that is harmful (sin) to him, and choses something that is beneficial (Jesus). See Romans 6:16-23.

In Genesis Chapter 2, God made man. At

first, man was a solitary creature, alone.

Genesis 2:18 KJV — And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Genesis 2:24 KJV — Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

God created a companion for the man, Eve, and joined them together in marriage. From this we see that man has two identities personal and social. There is individual behaviors and social behaviors Man is first an individual, then societal. Hence there is an individual growth and a relationship (social) growth. (called Sociology) Now consider:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 KJV — Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Acts 20:35 KJV —... to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

2 Corinthians 8:14 KJV — But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 KJV — But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to

make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work...12 but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; See Gal. 6:7,

Psalms 127:3-5 KJV — Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Psalms 115:14 KJV — The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

2 Peter 3:18 KJV — But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...(Eph. 4:15)

Proverbs 31:30-31 KJV — Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates. (Read other verses)

Deuteronomy 15:4 KJV — Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it:

1 Thessalonians 5:23 KJV — And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless (identifies components of our being)

Deuteronomy 30:19 KJV — I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have

set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: (God made each person, gave each person the power of choice.)

John 15:5 KJV — I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. John 15:11 KJV — These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full...John 15:16 KJV — Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 17:13 KJV — And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. See Isaiah 43:7, Jer. 9:23-24

From these verses we conclude: God made man to have communion with him. God made man a social being. Even though we have not seen God, we may learn of Him through our interactions with the world we live in and with our fellow man (mankind). God purposes that we grow in the knowledge of Hm.

Further, true happiness can only be realized by first uniting oneself to Jesus. In the Sanctuary Service, the priest made two offerings. The first for himself, then one for the congregation. Similarly, the order is the same in our identities, the individual first, corporate second. We must first meet with Jesus as individuals, then corporately.

God made man as a free moral agent, with

the power of choice to act (Deut. 30:19, Joshua 24:15, Isaiah 66:4). God gave man a role to play in his development (2 Cor. 6:1; 1 Cor. 3:9). The Law of the Second commandment states that all choices have consequences both in result and degree; blessings result from obedience and calamitous results from disobedience.

Acting as an individual, I may experience a level of happiness. However, when I cooperate with others, a higher level of happiness is possible. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts (Eccl. 4:9-10). Further, regardless of whether individual or social, a giving or may we say an investment (sowing) is necessary to realize any happiness (reaping). Most importantly whatever choices we make must be of free will (see above 2 Cor. 8 and 9; Isaiah 1:19;.Judges 5:2,9; 1 Chron. 29:6; Rom 14:23) **This is the key “free-will.”**

This proves false the supposition which promotes “sacrifice” results in, is necessary for a happy marriage. Why? Because sacrifice in this sense is not of free will, but the connotation is that you have to give up, something you want, that you view desirable, in exchange for, in order to obtain a happy marriage. Hence your marriage can never be happy, for the possibility always exists that there may be something you treasure more than a happy marriage that one will not part with. Remember the analogy of the sinner.

Where does the theory/concept of “*sacrifice*” regarding marriage originate? In selfishness. One who is not born again. When Adam and Eve ate from the tree, they became carnal,

meaning earthly, sensual, aka the lust of the flesh. They also desire to become lord over others. This means that people choose their spouse based upon the flesh, a hot looking babe, rather than character, with the idea that he/she may enslave their spouse to his/her passions and desires. These marriages are by definition antagonistic relationships, and as such result in various degrees of misery and given enough time are doomed to fail.

Ephesians 5:28-31 KJV — So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

The mindset, perspective of these verses is that the marriage relation is a union which is a part of you. The idea that my union with my wife is a part of me, and as such I must nurture, grow that aspect of my being has been lost. The mindset, that through the marriage union, I can experience a greater joy in my being and experience and knowledge of God has been lost. True marriage is a free will choice to participate in the marriage relationship, from which an experience results that cannot be experienced as an individual. Read Proverbs 5:15-20, 1 Peter 3:7

There is more to be said on this subject. Remember the true sacrifices of God are a meek and gentle spirit (Psalm 51:17). God be with you as you consider this.