

An Offering To The Lord

*"...I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."
So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them."
2 Samuel 24:24 (NIV)*

In the Christian Churches hour of worship there is commonly a time when the ushers take up the "tithes and offerings". This is a quiet moment when offering plates are passed around and people are given the privilege of returning to the Lord a portion of what He has so generously given them.

When my children were young, I made a practice of allowing each one of them a turn at putting our family offering on the plate as it passed by us. As in most Christian families we wanted our children to recognize our responsibility and joy at giving back to the Lord on a regular basis.

As the children grew up we sought to explain to them that Christian giving was not a time when we gave to the Lord from the excess of our income. Rather our giving was to be a large enough amount that it required us to forgo some things we might have otherwise enjoyed.

By giving to the Lord what we might have used for ourselves we seek to show the Lord how great our gratitude really is for

His generosity toward us.

In the case of David in today's text he was freely offered the animals and wood for a sacrifice to the Lord. He instantly realized that offering God what cost him nothing was inappropriate. All offerings to the Lord ought to cost us something.

Perhaps a Christian family should defer buying a new car for a year or two in order to give to a Christian worker the \$6,000.00-12,000.00 they might have otherwise spent on the new car over that one or two year period. Or instead of planning to buy a car that would cost \$600.00 per month, the family might buy a less expensive vehicle costing say \$500.00 per month so that they can put another \$100.00 per month into the offering.

This is a simple illustration of what I mean by offering to the Lord what costs us something. As Christians we need to be as generous with the Lord as is possible. We know we cannot out give Him but we need to be enthusiastic and as faithful as we can be in gratitude for what we have received.

One thing is likely very true for most of us in the western world and it is that we ought to be giving the Lord a little or a lot more than we do. One pastor asked his church members to plan to give exactly a tithe of their weekly income on a certain Sunday a few weeks hence. The plan caught the imagination of the congregation and apparently most of the wage earners did exactly that on the planned Sunday. The church's offering was several times the usual and it broke the pastor's heart and surprised the embarrassed people.

If needed, can you catch the spirit of King David and begin offering to the Lord what costs you rather than continuing to offer to the Lord what costs you nothing?

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