



## Lesson #4 - ... That Is Built on the Sacrifices of Many and Not Just the Gifts of a Few

### Introduction: What's in it for me?

Even if we don't say those words out loud, they're often the filter through which we run nearly every decision. If I am kind to someone, I'm hoping they'll return the favor. If I am generous, I am hoping I'll get some sort of reward or blessing.

While we may not act in overtly selfish ways, we all tend to be self-focused. But God calls us to live sacrificially instead of selfishly. He calls us to be a church that serves the needs of others, joyfully and willingly. We can't make this shift on our own—we need God's help. The good news is, He is more than able to change our hearts and minds, to make us into people who are becoming more like Him—Who was and is the ultimate sacrifice.

A church made up of sacrificial people will not only be effective at helping others, they'll draw others toward Christ. As much as our nature tends to ask, "What's in it for me?" we all have something inside us that wants to live for a cause greater than ourselves. The church provides us that divine opportunity.

### Focus Verses: Romans 12:1 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

### Open it! Start with prayer!

1. Tell about a time you were asked to sacrifice—giving something or giving up something. What happened? How did that feel? Or, flip it! Have you ever benefitted from someone else's sacrifice?

2. Most people have someone for whom they'd be willing to make a sacrifice: their children, spouse, or perhaps another family member. Is there a person or organization you'd readily sacrifice your comfort or resources for?

### Explore it!

3. Watch the video for Session 4. Take some notes about interesting quotes, questions, or ideas:

3.a. **Read Acts 2:44-47.** <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

# PBCC LifeGroups: *I See a Church...*



## **Reflect on it! Acts 2:44-47**

4. What does this passage say about how the believers lived? What do you think it looked like to have "everything in common"?

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5. The early church was together more than just once in a while for worship services. They spent a lot of time together, saw one another as family. How is that different from how the church is today? How does it affect our ability to spread the Good News?

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6. In the video, we heard, "If your only interaction with others is on the weekend, you're missing out." How can you interact with others from your church apart from weekend services at church?

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7. In the video, we heard about sacrificing our talents for the church—giving of our unique abilities. What is one thing you do really well? Something that you could teach others? How could you use your particular skills or gifts at your church in order to strengthen it?

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## **Apply it to your life...**

7. In the video, we were challenged to sacrifice our time, talents and treasures. What is one next step you could take in any one of these areas? Which of those three is most difficult for you to sacrifice? Explain.

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8. How might living more like an Acts 2 church impact your community, especially unbelievers in your city or town?

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9. Groups grow closer when they serve together. How could your group serve someone in need? You may want to visit someone who is sick, provide a meal for a family going through difficulty, or give some other practical help to someone in need. If nothing comes to mind, spend some time as a group praying and asking God to show you who needs your help. Have your thought about how your LifeGroup could serve your community in this capacity?

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To go deeper, check out the resources on the church website under the LifeGroups tab.

## **How can we pray for each other this week?**



## Going Deeper in Lesson 4

### READ 1 PETER 2:4-5, 9-10

- ✓ This passage uses a metaphor of stones to describe a spiritual reality. What do the stones represent?
- ✓ Verse 5 talks about "spiritual sacrifices." What do you think that means? How are the sacrifices of our time, talent and treasure also spiritual sacrifices?
- ✓ Now look at 1 Peter 2:9-10. According to this passage, what rewards does God give to those who make sacrifices?

### READ HEBREWS 13:15-16

- ✓ What do you think this text means by "the sacrifice of praise"? What specific actions and attitudes would you engage in when bringing God a sacrifice of praise?
- ✓ Verse 16 tells us to "do good and share"—in other words, to give sacrifices of our time and our treasures. Who can you do good for this week? Who can you share with?

## Daily Reflections:

**Day 1.** **READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6** Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.  
**CONSIDER:** What does it mean to sow generously? Compare and contrast generosity and sacrifice. What promises does this verse contain?

**Day 2.** **READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7** Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.  
**CONSIDER:** What does it mean to be a cheerful giver? How does this apply to giving of your time, talents and treasures?

**Day 3.** **READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:8** And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.  
**CONSIDER:** In your own life, or the life of someone you know, how have you seen this verse lived out?

**Day 4.** **READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:9** As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor their righteousness endures forever."  
**CONSIDER:** What does it mean to scatter your gifts to the poor? How can you give not only your money, but also your time and your talents, when it comes to helping the poor? What promise does God make if we do so?

**Day 5.** **READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-11** Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.  
**CONSIDER:** What does this verse promise to those who make sacrifices to God? Why does God enrich us (verse 11)?

## Day 6.

Reflect on any thoughts God has put in your heart and mind about the things we have looked at in this session and during your devotional time this week. You may also want to write down observations or questions that you'd like to share with the group at your next meeting.