

A Life Of Sacrifice

- Ron Stullenbarger -

Living for our own gain adds stress, pressure, and chaos to life, successfully robbing us of all the transcendent peace available through sacrificial living. We were never created to be our own provider or sustainer. We were never meant to develop our own source of joy and purpose. The only place we will find lasting peace is in complete surrender to God's intention for us: a life of sacrifice.

Jesus was our perfect model. He did everything according to the will of the Father. Jesus said in Luke 9:23-25, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"* Jesus makes it clear that sacrifice is the gateway to finding the life God intends for us. It's the pathway that leads to the perfect will of our heavenly Father.

If you are like me, living life sacrificially initially sounds dreadful and unattainable. It feels impossible based on past experiences and present selfish desires. But, we need to take time to know the God to whom we are sacrificing our lives. We need to renew our mind to the perfect love of Jesus who would lay down His own life for us before ever asking us to follow in His footsteps. The life God intends for us is better than anything we could discover on our own. If He is asking us to live sacrificially it must be wholly and perfectly for our benefit.

We are not sacrificing our own wills, plans, and dreams to a God who has less satisfying plans for our lives. We are not surrendering a happier, better life for something less, boring, or meaningless. Jesus said in John 10:10, *"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."* God has plans greater than we could ever ask or imagine in store for us if we will lay down our dreams to make space for His. He has inexpressible joy for us if we will exchange what has made us temporarily happy for His dreams and visions that are full of purpose, meaning, and adventure.

Jesus willingly laid down his life and received everything He had dreamed of: restored relationship with you. What's waiting for you on the other side of sacrifice today? Find out as you engage in the act of surrender during study and prayer.