

SACRIFICE

Craig Rees

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

Proverbs 15:8

If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers
are detestable.

Proverbs 28:9

Prayer can be practiced as wrongly as sacrifice. We aren't asked to choose prayer over sacrifice but put both into action in the right way. It's a both/and not an either/or.

“What we need is not a linear ‘or’ but a two-dimensional ‘and’ that presses us to see the surprising connections between two things we thought we had to choose between – and perhaps even to discover that having the fullness of one requires that we have the fullness of the other.”

[A. Crouch, Strong and Weak, p.14]

Sacrifice

The act of giving up something great for the sake of something considered greater. The willingness to give up something valued, for the sake of something more valuable.

Prayer

An act of communion with God or, as Ralph Martin puts it,

“Prayer is, at root, simply paying attention to God”

[The Fulfilment of All Desire, p.121].

Prayer and No Sacrifice

If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable.

Proverbs 28:9

No Sacrifice and No Prayer

These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.

Isaiah 29:13

Sacrifice but No Prayer

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Proverbs 21:3

The craving of a sluggard will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing. The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—how much more so when brought with evil intent!

Proverbs 21:25-27

“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.”

Matthew 6:2

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:6-8

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Walk humbly – “a life walk that is not proud (Prov. 11:2) but is attentive, careful, and prudent to follow God’s will”
[G.V. Smith, Hosea, Amos, Micah, p. 554].