

RENEWING THE SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE

Note to the speaker:

Help all to see that the spirit of true Christianity is a spirit of giving and self-sacrifice. Encourage them to examine themselves to see if their service to Jehovah fully reflects this spirit. Point out in practical ways how they can cultivate this spirit in themselves and in their children. Warmly appeal to them to imitate the thousands of others who are truly displaying the spirit of self-sacrifice today

THE WORLD ENCOURAGES SELF-INDULGENCE, NOT SELF-SACRIFICE (7 min.)

Everything today is designed to appeal to self

The idea is to get what you can while you can; get the most and the best; you can never get too much

The world uses such expressions as: “I did it my way,” “You have to look out for number one,” “Get yours now,” “The end justifies the means,” “Do your own thing”

Many parents, feeling that they “should be free to live their own lives,” neglect their children (g89 3/22 5)

What are the results of self-indulgence?

Unhappiness, frustration, dissatisfaction, and misery

The Israelites were an example of what happens to the self-indulgent

They murmured, complained, had “selfish craving” (Nu 11:34)

Contributed to unhappiness and brought death for many

World has not learned from that or other experiences in history

People ask: ‘Why be self-sacrificing when no one really cares and the modern world has so much to offer?’

Why disown yourself when people everywhere are doing just the opposite—being self-assertive and demanding more and more for themselves? Why not try to “gain the whole world” or at least a good portion of it? (Mr 8:36)

GOD’S SERVANTS ENCOURAGED TO BE SELF-SACRIFICING (12 min.)

Israel’s blessings depended on their sacrificing the best (Mal 1:14; 3:10)

Jesus was self-sacrificing in leaving heaven (Php 2:5-8)

For this he had great joy (Ps 40:8; Heb 12:2)

He was especially zealous for Jehovah’s service (Mr 1:32-39)

Jesus always sacrificed his own interests in order to please God (Joh 5:30)

Jesus encouraged his disciples to be self-sacrificing (Lu 9:23-25; w90 8/1 16)

Bible shows that they were (Mt 4:20; 19:27)

This means that they gave up certain things in life so as to please God more fully and to put Kingdom interests first

What are some ways in which this is being done by Jesus’ disciples today? (w86 6/15 12)

Sacrificing one’s position in the business community by being identified as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses

Giving up time that could be spent in recreational or materialistic pursuits for meetings and service

Entering full-time service (Ro 12:1, 2; 2Ti 2:15)

Giving up certain worldly entertainment, music, careers (g86 2/22 13-17)

Willing to suffer imprisonment (Ac 5:29; w89 3/1 18; w89 6/15 27)

Being prepared to obey Jehovah’s Word even unto death (Mt 10:28; yb89 119-23; yb88 151-4)

Having a regular share in the ministry (w92 2/1 27-8)

ARE YOU A SELF-SACRIFICING PERSON? (19 min.)

In view of the Bible’s encouragement for Christians to be self-sacrificing, ask yourself: ‘Am I a self-sacrificing person?’

Jesus’ command to ‘seek first the Kingdom’ applies with equal urgency today (Mt 6:33)

Examples of those who endured hardships in the 1930’s and 1940’s show that they had the self-sacrificing spirit (Speaker may relate experiences of Ernest E. Beavor [w80 3/15 8-11], Ilse Unterdörfer [w79 11/1 8-14], or others listed under “Life Stories of Jehovah’s Witnesses” in *Watch Tower Publications Index*)

Thousands of missionaries sent out by Watchtower Bible School of Gilead have left their families and homes

Have sacrificed a so-called normal life in order to preach the good news to the ends of the earth (Mr 10:29, 30; Heb 6:10)

Thousands of others have served as pioneers in their homelands

Many willing to serve in different parts of the country, establishing and building up congregations

Many have served at Bethel homes throughout the earth, providing literature and support for the work in the field

In all of this, we have seen a fulfillment of Psalm 110:3, which gave a glowing description of the self-sacrificing spirit (Read) (w84 5/1 17-22)

Because of this self-sacrificing spirit, we are seeing a fulfillment of Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:19, 20, and Acts 1:8

It is clear from these scriptures that God's Word commissions all dedicated servants of God to be fully involved in Kingdom service (*w86 1/15 13*)

Are you fully involved?

If you are a parent, are you inculcating in your children the desire to go into the full-time service? (De 6:6, 7)

Or are you and your family largely oriented toward making a better and more comfortable living now?

Jesus warned about "the deceptive power of riches" (Mt 13:22)

Material riches have limitations; they fail when needs are greatest; they cannot provide good health or prevent death

Life does not depend on material possessions (Lu 12:15-21; *w86 7/15 31*)

CULTIVATE THE SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE (5 min.)

Do you show a self-sacrificing spirit by serving Jehovah as fully as your circumstances allow?

Can you devote more time to personal Bible reading and study?

Do you study regularly?

Is it possible for you to spend more time in Kingdom work?

How many hours do you spend in recreation or watching television?

Is it properly balanced with Kingdom work? (Eph 5:15, 16)

Are you a parent? The best time for your children to learn the spirit of self-sacrifice is during childhood (2Ti 3:14, 15)

Give them work to do; let them learn that life is not easy (*g90 9/8 6*)

Take time to train them, study with them, discipline them (Eph 6:4; Heb 12:11)

Are you an elder or a full-time minister? Is there something you also could do?

Can you improve the quality of your service?

Can you make yourself a better Christian? (Ga 5:22, 23)

THE COURSE OF SELF-SACRIFICE BRINGS THE GREATER HAPPINESS (2 min.)

Work for spiritual riches that will never fail (Mt 6:20; *w89 7/15 13-14*)

Apostle Paul showed the superiority of spiritual riches (1Ti 6:17-19; *w88 10/15 21; w86 6/15 5-6*)

Be content with what you have, and serve Jehovah with rejoicing (Ac 20:35)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)