



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR AUGUST 10, 2012

MODERN SACRIFICES

Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Hebrews 13:16, NIV)

GOLF'S ETIQUETTE MAY BE DISAPPEARING. I say this as a coach of high school players who seems always to be pushing his players and others to "pick up the pace" and "play ready golf."

What results, I have noticed when playing amateur tournaments myself, is that some young players have little sense of honors. Even when play is slow and we're waiting on every tee, if they want to step up first and hit it, they will—even in front of a birdie. I don't think they're being rude. We've just trained them in a new direction: speed of play is everything.

Which just goes to show you that "good" still stands out. Order of play on the golf course may be a little thing, but in other arenas of life, when people behave in generous, honoring ways, others notice.

You may have noted that Christians are often criticized for their "morals" these days. More accurately, we're criticized for our lack of morals, for our general inability to practice what we preach. We could take that in one of two ways: as a dismissal of God and his people, or as a cry for God's people to actually live as their God directs. Maybe what people really want—what their souls are crying out for—is a real live demonstration of excellence in the earth.

That's why it should not surprise us when we encounter calls to goodness in the pages of Scripture. People want to find good people. They are aching to latch onto someone who truly cares. And if God's people aren't doing this, who will?

Sadly, we are often too busy with our theological arguments and biblical mandates to do good, to live out the Scriptures. We go over and over, for instance, the doctrine of salvation by grace, agreeing that we can do nothing to earn God's favor. Undoubtedly, we cannot earn God's *saving favor*, but Scripture is clear that there are very specific ways to please God. And today's passage lands us right in the midst of one of those ways. We please God today not by our animal sacrifices but by the sacrifices that true goodness requires of us. We please God by serving others. We please God by doing good.

Winning respect

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 and 1 Peter 3:15-16. What qualities are recognized as honorable, even by those who do not live by these qualities?

The way of love

Read John 13:35 and John 15:13. What is the hallmark of Jesus' disciples? Give an example of how this might be demonstrated.

Read Acts 4:32. How were the believers in the early church living out the sacrificial way of love? Should we make an effort to go so far in our love today? What would it require of us?

What specific call is God placing on your life today as you reflect on these passages?
