

Sacrificing Your Future

“Never sacrifice the future on the altar of the present.”

The RULE

- A. Your *future* is what lies ahead. It is what you will experience in life ... and in eternity.
 - 1. Your spiritual future is only seen by faith, and your natural future only by maturity.
 - 2. Parents and pastors can see present choices and better estimate your future results.
 - 3. While only God knows the details, He has promised consequences to your actions.
 - 4. You build your life one block (or day) at a time. How great will the building be?
 - 5. Today is one of those blocks; tonight is also one of them. Build well starting now.
- B. *Forfeiting* is losing things by choice. You can lose future blessings by foolish choices.
 - 1. It is giving up any hope for victory in a game by not even attempting to play it.
 - 2. If you let life happen without thinking, you will forfeit blessings by ignorance.
 - 3. If you choose short-term or sinful choices, you will forfeit blessings by rebellion.
- C. The *present* is now. It can be reduced to life, to time, five senses, two lusts, and pride.
 - 1. Every day, including today, you will make many choices to think, speak, and act.
 - 2. Every day, including today, you will choose both what you will and will not do.
 - 3. The present presses upon your senses, for it is always upon you and coming at you.
 - 4. What you do today is determining your future – you can never forget this rule.
- D. The *altar* is your desire or need for immediate gratification of some short-term goal.
 - 1. The altar is where sacrifices are burned – it is a present choice to burn your future.
 - 2. The lustful demands inside you for pleasure or success overwhelm future concerns.
 - 3. Lusts on the inside and peer pressure and temptations outside supply its stones.
- E. A *sacrifice* occurs when you choose a short-term pleasure at the cost of your future.
 - 1. It is choosing a thing now, in the present, that will ruin a thing later, in the future.
 - 2. If done ignorantly, you hungrily devour a pleasure now oblivious to consequences.
 - 3. If done rebelliously, you haughtily decide that you want it regardless of the future.
 - 4. Have you ever done anything you later regretted? Surely! Multiply it by a billion!

The WISDOM

- A. Decisions made today determine your tomorrow, form your habits, or waste your life.
 - 1. Wise men consider where they are going, but fools deceive themselves (Pr 14:8).
 - 2. Wise men consider the lives of the wicked and see their destruction (Prov 21:12).
 - 3. Wise men look ahead and see potential danger or loss and avoid it (Pr 22:3; 27:12).
 - 4. Wise men look at the assets/income of the slothful and see sacrifices (Pr 24:30-34).
- B. Moses prayed and exhorted Israel to wisely consider their latter end (Deut 32:29).
 - 1. Wisely seeing your last end includes circumspection and redemption (Ep 5:15-16).
 - 2. Youth should remember their Creator while young, so said Solomon (Eccl 12:1-8).
 - 3. The Bible carefully warns against the things increasing carefulness (I Co 7:29-35).

- C. No one ever plans to live dysfunctionally or ruin his life, so how does it often happen?
 1. How many men could have done much better? Most never approach their potential.
 2. You must learn the perspective to always ask, What will this choice cost me later?
 3. Temperance is self-discipline to sacrifice the present for the future (I Cor 9:24-27)!
- D. Do not be deceived by any means to put the emphasis on the present over the future.
 1. You may think you are getting away with sin, but you are wrong (Psalm 50:18-23).
 2. You may think others are getting away with sin, but it is only fool's gold (Pr 1:32).
 3. The way of transgressors looks rosy, but it is hard (Pr 13:15; 14:12; 16:25; 21:16).
 4. Christian liberty is a wonderful thing, but it is limited by expediency (I Cor 6:12).
 5. A multitude of wise counselors can help immensely by being outside your lusts.
- E. Greater instruction eliminates excuses of ignorance and increases duty (Lu 12:47-48).

The GOOD EXAMPLES

- A. Joseph sacrificed the intimate pleasures of Mrs. Potiphar to obey God (Gen 39:7-12).
- B. Moses sacrificed the pleasures and riches of Egypt for a future reward (Heb 11:24-27).
- C. Jesus gladly endured the cross for joy at God's right hand (Ps 16:8-11; Heb 12:1-3).

The BAD EXAMPLES

- A. Esau sacrificed lifelong blessings for hunger for food (Gen 25:29-34; Heb 12:16-17).
- B. Achan sacrificed his life and his family for clothing and some cash (Joshua 7:20-21).
- C. Samson sacrificed most everything for sex with a wicked woman (Judges 16:15-17).
- D. Saul sacrificed his office as king for foolish fear and impatience (I Samuel 13:8-14).
- E. David sacrificed his future for present sex with Bathsheba (II Sam 11:1-5; 12:7-14).
- F. Gehazi sacrificed his health and his family's for clothing and cash (II Kings 5:20-27).
- G. Regathered Israel sacrificed financial success for selfish impatience (Haggai 1:4-11).

The APPLICATION

- A. It is far better to sacrifice the present on the altar of the future for your future blessing.
- B. Let us progress in our consideration of this rule of righteousness from least to greatest.

Body weight: a present choice and then another for food results in weight gain difficult to lose, for the future is your proper weight, which is sacrificed for present tempting food.

Exercise: a choice and then another to skip a workout result in not working out at all.

Late to bed: late pleasures of the night lead to painful rising and groggy performance.

Productivity: diligent perseverance in any pursuit is sacrificed for a little extra sleep or pacing jobs, as procrastination is culprit here – putting off today's duties until tomorrow.

Athletics: a future champion is sacrificed for extra sleep, favorite foods, or less training.

School work: a choice to play or sleep leads to painful cramming and/or poor grades.

Academic choices: the decision to skip semesters or put off school leads to greater pain.

Tobacco: a healthy future without addiction is sacrificed by peer pressure to be cool.

Drunkenness: constant sobriety in reputation is sacrificed for carelessness or peers.

Driving: safety, low insurance, and a good name are sacrificed for being cool or tough.

X-Sports: a healthy and safe future for yourself and others is sacrificed for cheap thrills.
Auto care: the future is a long-lasting engine sacrificed for playing instead of changing the oil: Fram wisely advertised for many years, You can pay me now ... or pay me later.
Transferable skill: often sacrificed for short-term cash of slothfulness leads to poverty.
Employment: consistent progression and rewards are sacrificed for comfort and sloth.
Honoring parents: a long and blessed life is sacrificed to disrespect them today in retorts.
Giving: the commandment for God and your own good is sacrificed for foolish spending.
Savings: this commandment for your own wellbeing is sacrificed to spend it all quickly.
Credit: strong credit takes time to establish but is sacrificed one late payment at a time.
Debt: no one plans to be a net or foolish debtor but it occurs with one loan at a time.
Business: management sacrificed their long-term existence for short-term financial gain.
Television: the future joy in the Holy Ghost is sacrificed for vegetating or fear of men.
Friends: a holy, profitable, and productive life is sacrificed for peer popularity with the wrong crowd; remember that friends will make your future (Pr 13:20; I Kgs 12:12-15).
Dating: purity and a happy marriage are sacrificed for lustful temptations or popularity, or dating without regard to the possibility of marriage gets you locked into a bad one.
Virginity: the honor and value of this gift from God is often sacrificed foolishly for lust.
Marriage: the failproof measure of the fear of the Lord is sacrificed for beauty or favors.
Children: exceptionally wise and godly children are sacrificed for home peace and ease, because either the parent cannot or will not discipline them or starts the process too late.
Birth control: you sacrifice your carefree life and many other things by thoughtless acts.
Bitterness: blessings of peace and joy are sacrificed for one unresolved offence at a time.
Speech: being gracious and a friend of kings is sacrificed for emotional, impulsive talk, so the Bible rules of reducing speech and being swifter to hear than talk are excellent.
Wisdom: accumulating true knowledge is sacrificed for play, work, or sleep (Pr 18:1).
Reputation: unless you are careful, a little folly can sacrifice your good name (Ec 10:1).
Death and hell: you can sacrifice your future in this world and the next with a woman.
Church: a body full of vitality and blessing is sacrificed for mere convenience and ease, for you miss whenever there is an opportunity to do so, and you neglect church duties.
Spirituality: fatness and fruitfulness are sacrificed by daily carnality and slothfulness.
Eternity: standing confidently before God with assurance and evidence to enter heaven is sacrificed for selfish, sensual slothfulness here on earth with its fleeting pleasures.

The CONCLUSION

- A. We must prove all things and be circumspect (I Thess 5:21; Eph 5:15-17; Pr 4:4-13).
- B. Sin's pleasure lasts but a season; a hypocrite's joy is short (Heb 11:24-26; Job 20:4-5).
- C. Jesus clearly saw this rule and chose future joy over present deliverance (Heb 12:2).
- D. You must learn the perspective to always ask, What will this choice cost me later?
- E. It is far better to sacrifice the present on the altar of the future for your future blessing.