

Learning from His Sacrifice

Ready:

"Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." -- 2 Peter 3:18a

Set

If you have been around sports, you probably know about sacrifice. For example, baseball has the sacrifice fly. That is when a flyball is caught, but by catching the ball, it allows a runner to score. The Boston Celtics teams of the 1980s were known as unselfish teams, giving up shots for better ones, not caring about who scored.

Or maybe you have a parent who wakes up early during the week or who travels on weekends so you can play hockey or volleyball or do gymnastics. Generally, sports call for a sacrifice from the athletes, coaches, parents and even fans, and include sacrificing someone's time, effort, money and rest for the chance to play and get better.

Sacrificing something to play and get better can be good, but there are deeper levels of sacrifice in our lives. Did you know that NBA player David Robinson was a sacrificial athlete? He was drafted by the San Antonio Spurs in 1987, but prior to suiting up for them in 1989, he fulfilled his two-year obligation to the Navy. Former Red Sox star Ted Williams was a pilot in World War II AND in the Korean War. He was one of the greatest hitters in MLB history but served over four years for America. After the events of September 11, 2001, former NFL safety Pat Tillman gave up millions of dollars to serve in the Army. He lost his life while in the Middle East in 2004.

These men gave up their time, money, the chance to break sports records and even gave up their lives for something that they believed was bigger than themselves. That is **true sacrifice** --the laying down of that which is important for what is deemed more important.

That is what **Jesus did**, and He did it for you and me. Mark 10:45 says that Jesus came to "*give His life as a ransom for many.*" He willingly laid His life down and allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross to bear the punishment we deserve. That is **the ultimate sacrifice!** That was the Son of God! He didn't have to die, but He obeyed His Father so we would not have to die for our sin. He saw us as important. Even in sports, we can attempt to follow Jesus's example of admiration for us. Here's how:

- **It can show love:** We show love to others by giving of ourselves. Sacrifice comes from a desire to think of others more highly than yourself. You don't need to die for your sport, but as an athlete, you can be humble and show respect and kindness to others. As a coach, you can give up extra time for the athlete who is struggling, whether that's in

sports, the classroom or in life. That is showing love.

- **It can change a culture:** When we give of ourselves, it inspires others to do the same for others. What can happen when a team or a school or a community starts thinking of others? Culture can change.
- **It can change a life:** Nothing we can do will ever be on the level of Jesus dying on the cross, but when we give of ourselves to others in need, it could help turn a life around. When you give sacrificially to someone in need, or serve someplace like at a soup kitchen or shelter, or just spend time with someone who is lonely, you could impact that person's life for the better.

Christ gave His life to pay our debt. We may never need to give our life for another, but when we sacrifice for others, we mirror Christ to those around us.

Go

- When have you ever gave of your time, talent or treasure to another?
- When has someone given of their time, talent or treasure to you?
- In what ways do we reflect Christ when we sacrifice for another?

Workout

Mark 10:41-45; Matthew 26-27

Overtime

"Father, thank You for the faithfulness of Your Son to take my sin to the cross so we can commune together. Now, help me to serve and sacrifice for others so they can see You. In Jesus's name, amen."

Bible Reference:

2 Peter 3:18

Mark 10:41-45



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