

REFLECTIONS

September 17, 2006

**“...for I seek not to please myself but him
who sent me.”**

John 5:30

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is something that does not come easily for me. Sacrifice means giving up something I want to keep for myself. It may be a possession I have, a position I hold, or an activity I enjoy, but sacrifice always calls me to look beyond my self interest. That is the reason I respect so highly those who do it so freely. One such example is the true story of Eric Liddell portrayed in the 1981 movie, *Chariots of Fire*.

Eric found himself competing on a worldwide stage at the 1924 Olympic Games; and he was competing for perhaps the most cherished prize in the world—Olympic gold. The movie tells the compelling story of the challenges he faced along the way and the choices he made in reaching his destination.

He was a devout Christian whose family were missionaries in China. Eric’s plan was to join his family where he would use his gift of teaching and his deep understanding of the Bible to serve God in a foreign land. But he was confronted with the choice to join his family in China or to seize the opportunity to run in the Olympic Games.

Eric’s decision was surely not an easy one, but he explained it this way, “*God made me for a purpose—[to be a missionary in] China. He also made me fast. When I run, I feel His pleasure. To give it up would be to hold it in contempt. It’s not only fun, but to win is to honor Him.*”

But Eric’s choices did not end with that one. His race was scheduled to be run on a Sunday. It was a situation that caused Eric to examine his options. “*If I win, I win for God, but to run would be against God’s law.*” So without hesitation, Eric made the choice to forego the event even at the price of Olympic gold.

Usually what we sacrifice is not restored, but God was gracious to Eric. When one door closed another was opened. Eric was allowed to compete in a different event that was held on a different day, and on that day he claimed the Olympic Gold Medal.

The messages in this movie are many. This one is about discerning God’s purpose for our lives from how God wants us to achieve that purpose. To most of us, the choice would be difficult; but not for Eric. He understood that there is a time to use our talents to honor God and a time when we honor God by setting them aside.

God made each of us for a purpose. When we use our God given talents for that purpose it brings us joy and God pleasure. There are times though, when we must set aside our talents to serve God only. It is in those times that we are reflecting the Savior.

“You are the light of the world.”

Richard +

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