



REFLECTIONS

March 18, 2012

**Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your
strength.**

Deuteronomy 6:5

Sacrificial Love

Munna's fried chicken was a delicacy in our family. If we had had any marketing insights, Colonel Sanders might never have been heard of. I can still picture the family around the table with moist lips anticipating the treat piled high on the platter before them. And by meal's end the platter was empty, and except for the piles of thoroughly cleaned bones on them, so were all the plates. And Munna never had a bite of it.

Munna ate the feet. She left the good pieces for everyone else. In my life, I have never known anyone else who ate chicken feet. She said she liked them, but I think she ate them so her family could have the good pieces. It was an act of sacrificial love.

Love manifests in sacrifice. Where there is love, sacrifice is not made in the course of duty, or to follow tradition, or in obedience to command. Sacrifice is as much a part of love as those warm feelings from the heart.

Giving back to God is an act of sacrificial love; but too often we look upon it as a duty. We encourage the act of giving during stewardship campaigns, but it is encouraged more as obedience to a command. And I suppose that the sacrifices prescribed to the Israelites through the laws given to Moses were also perceived to be legal requirements imposed by God. God wants obedience, but He is really looking for gifts from the heart.

"The multitude of your sacrifices — what are they to me?" says the Lord.

*"I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of
fattened animals;*

I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

Isaiah 1:11

God wants our love. That's what He asks of us. The best expression of it is found in the sacrifices we make. Munna's love was expressed by choosing the chicken pieces that no one else would eat. It was an act of sacrificial love, but it likely did not feel like a sacrifice to her at all. Sacrificial love does not feel like sacrifice. Rather it is a gift from the heart, given for the well being of another not as a duty, or a tradition, or a command.

Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. It won't feel like a sacrifice. It will feel like a gift from the heart.

And that's what brings God pleasure.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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