

Nexus of Sacrifice and Self-Discipline

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In much of the affluent western world today, the importance of sacrifice and self-discipline is diminishing rapidly to the point it will no longer garner serious consideration. This is borne out by many government policies and programs that reward those who expect “other people” to work hard and tighten their belts, so the “unfortunate” can benefit from the labor and good faith of those who are willing to sacrifice and go without something for an unspecified period of time.

In contrast to this modern “self-serving ethos”, the importance of sacrifice and self-discipline was embraced and encouraged by a Democratic President of the United States only six decades ago. By revisiting his inaugural address we can see how far America, and “the west”, has drifted into a weak and selfish ideology that will eventually bring any nation to ruin, unless it is reversed.

John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address inspired children and adults to see the importance of civic action and public service. His historic words, “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country,” challenged every American to contribute in some way to the public good (Quote from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum)

Fast forward to 2021-2022, the current Democratic President of the United States, and his party, introduced numerous government programs that “enable” people to do very little for their country, themselves, and their families. This ideology also diminishes an individual’s “self-worth” and the sense of achievement that comes from working hard and contributing to the

well-being of others, and by extension the country as a whole.

The byproduct of a self-disciplined philosophy is a country that is more prosperous, strong, and successful. Or, as President Ronald Reagan stated, “A rising tide lifts all boats.” And he believed the way to achieve this was through less government intervention as follows:

- 1) Reduce the growth of government entitlement programs.*
- 2) Reduce government discretionary spending, which means shrinking government agencies.*
- 3) Reduce the public debt by cutting deficit spending and tightening the money supply, which is meant to strengthen the dollar and reduce inflation.*
- 4) Reduce the cost of doing business by lowering capital gains taxes, thereby increasing manufacturing output.*
- 5) Increase the amount of money in the hands of consumers by lowering income taxes.*
- 6) Reduce the cost of doing business by reducing regulation, which is also intended to promote business competition, ultimately lowering consumer costs.*
- 7) Reduce or eliminate government guarantees, subsidies, and price supports, which allows the free market to determine the cost of doing business, and businesses to thrive or fail without government interference (www.teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/23935).*

But having to sacrifice one’s time and energy for the benefit of someone else, or one’s country, is no longer fashionable in much of the western world today. Instead, a self-serving ideology of entitlement is becoming more and more

pervasive, and the Apostle Paul described this as a characteristic associated with “the last days”, that we are living in right now.

*But know this, that **in the last days perilous times will come:** ²For men will be lovers of themselves (narcissistic), lovers of money (greedy), boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving (lacking genuine compassion), unforgiving (holding grudges), slanderers, without self-control (no self-discipline), brutal (against anyone who opposes them), despisers of good, ⁴traitors (against their own country), headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness (WOKE ideology) but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2Tim. 3:1-5; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).*

Some of these characteristics have had a negative impact on other nations, and civilizations, throughout man’s history and the consequences were devastating. This is why it is so important for the next generation to understand that “the world does not owe them a living.” In other words, they need to be prepared to sacrifice some time and energy in order to reach their goals and not expect someone else, including the government, to provide every possible form of assistance to them. Central to this is teaching young people to discipline themselves, which is increasingly a foreign concept. For instance, if a young person has to take a year off after graduating from high school to work and save for their higher education, that is exactly what they should do. It’s like the analogy of the boy who had to work hard, after school hours, to buy his own bicycle. Once he achieved this goal, he made sure his bicycle was properly maintained and locked up when not in use. In contrast, the boy whose

parents bought him whatever he wanted, including a bicycle, simply threw it on the ground when he wasn’t using it and he never properly maintained it or safely stored it after use. Why? Because if it was damaged or stolen his parents would simply buy him another one. This approach teaches young people that they are somehow entitled to whatever they want, and they don’t need to appreciate what they have or express genuine gratitude toward those who have provided their needs and wants. Sadly, this eventually leads to an entitled and ungrateful ruling class. So it should be no surprise that the USA, and much of the western world, is now in a state of moral decline. This is the product of an affluent and ungrateful society that believes “the world owes them a living” or, more accurately, taxpayers can “foot the bill” for every extravagant “give away” they can come up with.

God’s word has much to say about sacrifice and self-discipline because these characteristics are central to Almighty God and His son Jesus Christ; as well as the loyal angels who serve them. For instance, Almighty God allowed His son to experience various hardships in order to strengthen his character further, and hone his self-discipline which was critical for the commission his Father had given him.

*(Christ) who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him (Almighty God, the Father) who was able to save him from death, and was heard because of his godly fear (deep respect for his Father), ⁸though he was a son, yet **he learned obedience by the things which he suffered** (Heb. 5:7-8; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).*

*He (Christ) is despised and rejected (forsaken) by men, **a man of sorrows***

(pains) **and acquainted with grief**. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we did not esteem him (Isa. 53:3; cf. Heb. 2:10-18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It was through a myriad of hardships that Jesus Christ's self-discipline was refined to the point he could endure sacrificing his life in order to provide the opportunity of "everlasting life" for every sinner who repents of their sins (cf. Acts 2:38).

He (Christ) went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (Mt. 26:39; Ed. note in parenthesis)

He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, Your will be done." (Mt. 26:42)

This willingness to sacrifice, for the benefit of others, is divorced from today's reality where politicians tell their supporters to "sacrifice" while they refuse to exercise "self-discipline" and obey their own rules/edicts. In yet another example of this, some politicians in Great Britain have been acting as if the rules they created for COVID-19 management do not apply to them.

The latest revelations – that (Prime Minister Boris) Johnson attended a garden party with some 30 guests at 10 Downing Street in May 2020, and that members of his staff gathered for "wine-time Fridays" regularly during the pandemic – are just the most recent in a series of alleged violations of Covid-19 lockdown protocols by Johnson and members of his government. Johnson apologized this week to members of Parliament for flouting lockdown rules, and his administration is already facing an inquiry by a top civil servant into several

other instances in which Johnson or members of his staff gathered socially, potentially breaking the law (Even Tories are over Boris Johnson's scandals after "Partygate" by Ellen Iloanes; Jan 15, 2022; Voxmedia; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As this article continues to point out, average citizens have been denied many activities that were previously considered "normal", and completely reasonable in any civilized country.

(This conduct by hypocritical politicians) *could prove to be too much for a nation exhausted by nearly two years of lockdowns, especially after those rules prevented many Britons from seeing their loved ones dying of Covid-19, or grieving those losses with family and friends (Even Tories are over Boris Johnson's scandals after "Partygate" by Ellen Iloanes; Jan 15, 2022; Voxmedia; Ed. note in parenthesis).*

This situation is by no means unique to Great Britain; many politicians have conducted themselves in a similar arrogant manner in other countries around the world. Again, this reflects a generation of leaders who "are above the laws they create for everyone else". This is the epitome of hypocrisy, but it is not unique to our generation. In fact, it is a characteristic of man's governing authority throughout history.

*For they (the ruling class) bind heavy burdens, hard to bear; and they lay them on men's shoulders; but **they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers*** (Mt. 23:4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Sadly, any politician who attempts to emulate Christ's example of self-discipline, combined with a willingness to sacrifice whatever is necessary to improve the lives of others, would not last long in any of man's systems of government. In

fact, anyone trying to do this would be mocked and summarily defrocked. This is why we are left with "the dregs" until a new leader appears who will remove every form of self-serving governance, as described in many prophecies pertaining to Christ's return.

Then comes the end, when he (Christ) delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵*For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet (1Cor. 15:24-25; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

In order to be part of this new world government under the leadership of Jesus Christ, people need to repent of (turn away from) any self-serving tendencies and seek with all their might to begin living in accordance with Almighty God's value system, which is summarized by His law and commandments. And yes, this too requires a willingness to sacrifice; by giving up many things that were previously viewed as convenient and desirable.

Then Peter said to them, "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38; Ed. note in parenthesis).

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹**And such were some of you.** But you were washed (by immersion in the waters of baptism following one's repentance of sin), but you were sanctified (set apart to serve God), but you were justified (forgiven of sin) in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the (Holy) Spirit of our*

God (the Father) (1Cor. 6:9-11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

If any politician today had assistance from Almighty God's Holy Spirit, they would have the self-discipline to act in a manner that is the antithesis of man's self-serving governing authorities. But, as mentioned previously, they would not last long.

If the world hates you, you know that it hated me (Christ) before it hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world (which is primarily self-serving), therefore the world hates you (Jn. 15:18-19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

.... If they persecuted me (Christ), they will also persecute you (Jn. 15:20b; Ed. note in parenthesis).

God's true servants have always hoped and waited for Christ's return, from generation to generation, because they would be canceled, locked up, or killed if they tried to change the current systems of governance into one that upholds God's law and commandments. This is why Christ encouraged true servants of his heavenly Father to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" while they patiently wait for the return of the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:16; cf. 1Cor. 15:24-28; see article entitled: *New World Leaders "In Waiting"*)

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