



## **The Ultimate Sacrificial First Fruit**

### **Scriptural Base:**

Rom 12:2  
Rom 8:23  
Rom 11:16  
James 1:18

### **Introduction**

1. Those who are deeply concerned about the salvation of souls and the progress of the church often face discouragement.
  - a. Discouragements can include unconcern on the part of the lost or opposition from the lack of the great commission being fulfilled.
  - b. The greatest discouragement: the lack of involvement on the part of so many Christians.
  
2. It is spiritually impossible to give the first fruit of the monetary with gladness and glee with dissention in your heart.

### **I. A lack of Conversion**

- a. The Basic idea of conversion is change: There must be a change of:
  - i. Heart: Intellect, will, emotions
  - ii. Conduct (1 Cor 6:9-11; Rom. 6:1-4)
  - iii. Relationship. As servants (Rom. 6:17-18; Col 1:13, Gal 3:26-27); as citizens (Col. 1:13); and as children (Gal 3:26-27)
  
- b. If one has not made these changes, is he really converted?
- c. Some have only been “churched.”



## **II. An Mistaken View of the Local Church**

- a. Some view the church as an agency that will have an impact on the world simply because of numerical strength, size of building, wealth, etc.
  - i. Such think, “If I join up, support expansion, increase wealth, I am a Christian.”
  - ii. This outlook destroys involvement because it makes the church an agency.
  
- b. The church becomes an agency that:
  - i. Allows one to hire another to do his work.
    1. The preacher does the teaching, deacons handle benevolence, and the leaders maintain.
    2. My responsibility: attending worship and paying tithes or tipping.
  - ii. Exist for the sole purpose of serving its members
    1. These are the people who demand attention.
    2. These must be catered to, visited, called on, patted on the back constantly, etc.
  - iii. Exist only when it assembles.
    1. This makes collective responsibilities only such things as ushering, leading, singing, making announcements, you know doing business as usual.
    2. These complain when they aren’t used enough or no one called their name to be in the limelight.



### **III. A lack of Understanding Individual Responsibility**

- a. A common expression often heard, “I don’t want to get involved.”
  - i. Being a Christian means getting involved) Josh. 24:15; Rom. 6:16-18).
  - ii. Involvement in the local body is a must (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- b. There is no avoiding individual involvement by being a part of a group.
  - i. On a sports team, each player must be involved in the game, in a chorus you must sing your part, on a police force each officer must patrol his area, etc.
  - ii. When one is added to the church, he is not credited with the efforts of others.

### **IV. A Failure to Understand that the Success of the church demands individual Involvement.**

- a. Consider the collective expressions of worship: individual involvement is demanded for success.
- b. Church discipline, though a collective action, involves each individual.
- c. If the local church is to fulfill its mission of work, it not only needs money but also individuals who are willing to do what they are able to do (Mark 14:8).

### **V. Lack of Sincere Dedication and Commitment**

- a. The history of the first century church is a record of people who were willing to get involved.



## Conclusion

“A king placed a large stone in the middle of a heavily traveled highway. Shortly thereafter, a farmer drove by in his wagon, looked at the stone, wondered how it got there and why someone hadn’t moved it, and then drove around it. Later, a company of soldiers marched by. The commanding officer cursed the unknown party who put the stone there, and then ordered his soldiers to break rank and March around the stone. The stones stayed in the road several days until finally an old man took time to painfully reach down and move the stone from the highway, and when he did, he found a bag of money with a note attached: ‘To the one who removes the stone.’ Sometimes getting involved can be a painful experience. It may mean ridicule, financial loss, persecution but always there in that bag of gold: Rev. 22:14- ‘Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city.’” (Anonymous)