

Spiritual Sacrifices: What Should We Offer To God?

Use with the full teaching and a Bible. Watch or read first, complete the questions, then discuss and apply. For family or homeschool use, an adult may choose a shorter section and accept spoken answers.

The summary is a reading aid. Test the teaching's explanations against the cited passages. Keep the answer key and facilitator notes separate when distributing learner pages.

[Open the teaching](#)

Teaching summary

This teaching examines what the apostles mean by spiritual sacrifices and what makes an offering acceptable to YHWH. It begins with 1 Peter 2:5, where believers are described as a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Messiah Yeshua, and Romans 12:1, where Paul appeals to God's mercies as he calls believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. The teaching then looks back to the Torah for insight. The Hebrew word korban means an offering; the teaching connects its root with drawing near. Physical sacrifices were brought to the tabernacle, the place where YHWH dwelt, so coming with an offering was connected with drawing near to him.

The teaching next connects the location of the physical sacrifices with the spiritual temple described in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Because the word "you" is plural, Paul addresses the congregation as God's temple. The teaching applies this picture to spiritual sacrifices expressed within the life of that community. This is an analogy developed by the teaching, rather than a new rule about where every act of worship must occur. It then considers another feature of the Torah sacrifices: their pleasing aroma. It explains this as a Hebrew idiom in which a good smell represents favor and a bad smell represents wrath, drawing on examples from Exodus 5, Genesis 34, and Noah's offering in Genesis 8.

From there, the teaching asks what kinds of spiritual things are a pleasing aroma to God. Ephesians 5:1-6 calls Yeshua's loving self-sacrifice a fragrant offering, while sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness are connected with God's wrath. Matthew 7:21-23 gives another warning: people may prophesy, cast out demons, and do mighty works, yet still be rejected as workers of lawlessness. The words "Depart from me" are presented as the opposite of drawing near. The point is that impressive activity does not automatically become an acceptable spiritual sacrifice merely because it is offered in God's name.

The teaching then emphasizes that God is specific about what he wants from his people. Micah 6:6-8 contrasts enormous quantities of sacrifices with the things YHWH actually requires: doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with him. Psalm 51:16-17 likewise identifies a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart as acceptable to God. Isaiah 1:11-17 shows that even sacrifices, incense, Sabbaths, festivals, assemblies, and prayers do not replace the more fundamental call to cease doing evil, learn to do good, seek justice, and care for those in need. The problem is not that the commanded practices are wrong, but that they cannot compensate for iniquity or for failing to love one's neighbor.

The teaching then extends its temple analogy to the inner life of believers. Love for YHWH and for other people is expressed outwardly, but it begins in the heart. Matthew 15:16-20 shows that evil actions and words come from the heart, Romans 10:10 connects belief with the heart and confession with the mouth, and Deuteronomy 6:5 commands love for YHWH with all the heart, soul, and might. This heart application develops the earlier picture of the congregation as God's temple; it should not be confused with the plural meaning of "you" in 1 Corinthians 3. Acceptable spiritual sacrifices therefore cannot be reduced to outward religious activity while the heart remains unchanged.

Finally, the teaching gives two practical responses for anyone asking what kind of offering God wants. First, examine and humble yourself before God; if attitudes or habits are displeasing to him, repent and stop doing those things. Second, look around and find ways to be just, kind, and helpful to the people around you. The size of the offering is not what makes it acceptable; becoming a humble, just, and kind person is presented as the kind of offering God is seeking. James 4:8-10 closes the teaching with the call to draw near to God, cleanse our hands, purify our hearts, mourn over sin, and humble ourselves before the Lord.

Summary points

- The apostles describe believers as offering spiritual sacrifices and presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice to God.
- The Hebrew word Korban is connected with the idea of drawing near to God.
- Physical sacrifices were brought where God dwelt, and the teaching applies that pattern to the congregation as God's spiritual temple.
- A pleasing aroma is explained as a Hebrew idiom for favor, while a bad smell represents wrath.
- Yeshua's love is described as a fragrant offering, while immorality, impurity, and covetousness do not produce an acceptable offering.
- Prophesying, casting out demons, and doing mighty works do not replace doing the Father's will when a person practices lawlessness.
- Justice, kindness, and humility cannot be replaced by larger quantities of other offerings.
- Religious observances and sacrifices do not compensate for iniquity or for failing to love one's neighbor.
- Spiritual sacrifices begin in the heart and are then expressed through words, choices, and actions.
- The teaching calls believers to repent, humble themselves, practice justice and kindness, meet needs, and draw near to God.

Fill in the blank

Use the teaching and the cited Bible passages. Equivalent wording is welcome when it expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. The Hebrew word for a sacrificial offering is _____.
2. Korban comes from a word that means to _____ near.
3. According to the teaching's analogy from 1 Corinthians 3, God's spiritual temple is the _____.
4. Micah 6:8 says YHWH requires us to do justice, love kindness, and walk _____ with God.
5. Psalm 51:16-17 says the sacrifice acceptable to God includes a broken and contrite _____.
6. The teaching concludes that becoming a humble, just, and _____ person is the kind of spiritual offering God is looking for.

Challenging

1. Leviticus 17:8-9 says sacrifices were to be brought to the entrance of the tent of _____.
2. In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, the word "you" is _____, showing that Paul refers to multiple people.
3. The teaching explains that a "pleasing aroma" is a Hebrew _____.
4. Ephesians 5 identifies the covetous person as an _____.
5. In Matthew 7:23, Yeshua calls the rejected people workers of _____.
6. James 4:8-10 tells sinners to cleanse their hands and purify their _____.

Group discussion

Discuss with respect, support answers from the passages, and allow time to think. Use the lines for brief notes or a notebook for longer responses.

1. How does the teaching connect korban, an offering, with the idea of drawing near to YHWH? How does 1 Peter 2:5 keep Messiah Yeshua central to acceptable spiritual sacrifices?

2. Why does the teaching connect the Torah requirement to offer sacrifices where God dwelt with Paul's description of the congregation as God's spiritual temple?

3. What does the image of a pleasing aroma help explain about the difference between acceptable and unacceptable spiritual sacrifices in Ephesians 5 and Matthew 7?

4. Why do Micah 6, Psalm 51, and Isaiah 1 show that greater quantities of religious offerings cannot replace justice, kindness, humility, repentance, and care for others?

5. How do Matthew 15, Romans 10, and Deuteronomy 6 support the teaching's conclusion that spiritual sacrifices begin in the heart before they are expressed outwardly?

6. What two practical responses does the teaching recommend when a person asks what God wants from them, and how does James 4:8-10 reinforce those responses?

Answer key

For the leader or parent. Answers follow the teaching; references help you check the wording and context. Accept equivalent wording where appropriate.

Basic

1. Korban (also: qorban)

Teaching opening: the offering and drawing near

2. draw

Teaching opening: the offering and drawing near

3. congregation (also: community of believers, assembly)

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

4. humbly

Micah 6:8

5. heart

Psalms 51:16-17

6. kind

Teaching conclusion: two practical responses

Challenging

1. meeting

Leviticus 17:8-9

2. plural

1 Corinthians 3:16-17; teaching explanation

3. idiom

Teaching section on a pleasing aroma

4. idolater

Ephesians 5:5

5. lawlessness (also: iniquity)

Matthew 7:23

6. hearts

James 4:8-10

Facilitator notes

These are suggested directions for discussion, not a required script or a test of identical wording. Invite participants to explain the passage and consider a faithful practical response.

1. The teaching links the offering's Hebrew root with drawing near to YHWH. That image introduces worship as a response of the whole person. Peter identifies Messiah Yeshua as the one through whom spiritual sacrifices are acceptable.

1 Peter 2:5; teaching opening

2. The tabernacle was YHWH's dwelling place, and Paul calls the congregation his temple. The teaching uses this analogy to connect spiritual offerings with the community's life, then applies it to the heart from which love and obedience grow.

Exodus 25:8; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

3. The aroma imagery contrasts favor with wrath. Yeshua's self-giving love is a fragrant offering, while immorality and covetousness oppose it. Matthew 7 warns that impressive religious activity cannot compensate for lawlessness or disregard for the Father's will.

Ephesians 5:1-6; Matthew 7:21-23

4. These passages expose offerings that coexist with injustice or an unrepentant heart. YHWH calls for justice, kindness, humility, repentance, and care for vulnerable people. The teaching preserves commanded observances while rejecting their use as compensation for disobedience.

Micah 6:6-8; Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 1:11-17

5. Matthew locates defiling actions in the heart; Romans connects heartfelt belief with confession; Deuteronomy commands wholehearted love for YHWH. Together, these texts support the teaching's point that outward offerings should express sincere inward faith, love, and repentance.

Matthew 15:16-20; Romans 10:10; Deuteronomy 6:5

6. First, examine yourself, humble yourself, and repent of sinful attitudes or habits. Second, notice others' needs and practice justice and kindness. James reinforces this movement toward YHWH through cleansed hands, purified hearts, and humility rather than impressive outward display.

James 4:8-10; teaching conclusion

Put it into practice

Choose one response to the passages you studied. What will you do, and when will you revisit it? Share only what you are comfortable sharing.
