

Do Something Great With Your Life

The Biggest Loser

Edited Transcript

Brett Clemmer

So, let's go ahead, and let's turn to our bible study this morning, **Do Something Great With Your Life**. This is session 11 in our bible study. We've talked about a lot of great stuff, what does it take to do something great with your life. Our theme throughout the underlying theme of what it takes to do something great with your life is to be a servant, to be a servant leader. We've talked about lots of different ways that you can be a servant leader in your home with your kids, with your wife. So, we're going to talk this morning about being a servant leader, and we're going to talk about this in the context of sacrifice, sacrifice.

So, before we do that, let's give out shout outs this morning. We've got a group of guys in Baguio City, Philippines. You're supposed to be impressed that I could pronounce that. Baguio City, Philippines, Ed Palaganas has a group of 20 men who meet 20 at the Family Independent Baptist Church that use the video bible study. This is a group that's being assisted by our guys in Malaysia. We have a group of men in Malaysia that are affiliated with us, and they call themselves Man in the Mirror Asia. All right.

It's a bunch of businessmen, very successful businessmen, and they have businesses all over Southeast Asia. I can't even tell you some of the countries that they're in. They are starting Man in the Mirror bible studies all over Southeast Asia. Is that cool? Is that cool? Yeah. So, these guys are in the Philippines, and Robert Lim is the guy on the far left of the picture. I'm sure you can see him very clearly there. So, Robert is the guy from Malaysia that's the executive director, for lack of a better word. That's how we would understand it. He's got a great group of guys, fellow leaders that are really making an impact throughout Southeast Asia.

Then here's our area director, Mike Heller. He's up in Tallahassee. Mike is a fantastic guy, former park ranger, and trainer for the state of Florida. Now, he's an area director for Man in the Mirror. He says, "Men literally hold the keys to the kingdom. Man in the Mirror fights the good fight by coming alongside pastors and leaders offering them effective tools that effectively equip them to be and lead disciple-makers. It's an honor to battle alongside the best." Yes, Mike. It is an honor to battle alongside the best. You're one of the best. So, we love you, man. So, let's give these two groups a round of applause here. All right. Way to go, guys.

So, sacrifice is what we're talking about. So, the title this morning is the Biggest Loser, the Biggest Loser. There's that TV show, right? That was the Biggest Loser. So, they took this negative sounding phrase, the biggest loser, and they made it a good thing, right? So, what were they losing? They were losing weight, right? So, they had to do all these crazy stuff. I was reading about the guy that lost the most weight, and he lost 290 pounds in six and a half months.

The way that he did that was that he went away to be on the show and worked out seven to eight hours a day, seven to eight hours a day, and then ate like a bird. So, this weight lost thing is actually a great metaphor for the theme this morning because we're talking about sacrifice. So, what did he have to do

to get that reward of weight loss. Well, he had to make huge sacrifices. He sacrificed time with his family. He sacrificed getting to eat what he wanted to eat, getting to use his time the way he wanted to use his time. Instead, he had to focus his mind, and his heart, and his soul, basically, on losing weight, on following the regimen. I don't know if you guys have ever watched it, but they seem to like to yell at the contestants on the show. So, that's what he had to do.

Sacrifice is not exactly a feel-good, "Yay! Let's go sacrifice." That's not how we think about sacrifice, right. It's tough. Nobody wants to sacrifice, but the bible calls us to very, very clearly. So, if you look around in our culture, you can see the fact that people don't like to sacrifice. Obesity is an epidemic. There's medical issues all around that are, basically, because people aren't willing to sacrifice things that they like for things that are good for them.

You see people who spend too much. They're not willing to sacrifice the getting what they want when they want it, the instant gratification. So, the consequences of that are what? Credit card debt, clutter, TV shows like Hoarders, bankruptcy. These are the consequences of not being willing to sacrifice lesser things for greater things. People that won't sacrifice comfort, and so they want to just be comfortable all the time.

What happens to a guy that just wants to be comfortable all the time? Well, he ends up not in relationships, isolated. His growth is stunted, and he becomes apathetic because his own pleasure, his own comfort becomes his greatest good. So, the bible makes it clear, if you're going to do something great with your life, you're going to have to make sacrifices. If you're going to do something great, you're going to have to make sacrifices.

So, what do you think of when you think about sacrifice? Well, one of the things you might think about is a war hero. So, I want to read you the story of First Lieutenant John R. Fox. So, John Fox, First Lieutenant John Fox was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on May 18th 1915, and attended Wilberforce University, was in ROTC, and then graduated with that commission as a Second Lieutenant in 1940. He was 29 years old when he called artillery fire on his own position the day after Christmas in 1944.

The 92nd infantry division was also known as the Buffalo Soldiers. So, this is a segregated division. Only African-Americans served in this division, and they fought on the Italian front during World War II. Lieutenant Fox was assigned to the 366th infantry regiment. So, on this day in December 1944, American troops have been forced to withdraw from the Italian village of Sommocolonia when the Germans overran them. Fox volunteered to stay behind as part of a small forward observer party. It was him and seven or eight Italian resistance fighters.

So, he was even the only American that stayed, and everybody else evacuated. So, they hold up in the second floor of the house, and they called in artillery on the town to try to slow the Germans down to keep them from taking the town over. They were in the open in the streets. They were attacking in strength. They vastly outnumbered the small group of American soldiers, and Lieutenant Fox radioed in to have the artillery fire adjusted closer and closer and closer to his position.

The soldier receiving the messages was stunned at the last request for artillery fire to be placed because he said that would bring the deadly artillery fire right on top of Lieutenant Fox's position. When Fox was told this, he said, "Fire it. That last round was just where I wanted it. Bring it in 60 yards more." The receiving operator thought Fox was mistaken. The order would train the full fire of 75 heavy caliber

artillery guns directly on Fox's position. Fox confirmed the order, and he said, "There's more of them than there are of us. You'll kill more of them than you'll kill of us. We're willing to make the sacrifice."

Seconds later, the bombardment began. Within minutes, hundreds of shells had hit the target, each one powerful enough to blast the house and its occupants into oblivion. In the end, the artillery strikes forced the Germans to delay their advance through the town, giving the American soldiers enough time to reorganize and launch a counterattack, which allowed them to retake the town from German control.

When the soldiers went to recover the body of Lieutenant Fox, and the eight Italian soldiers who've been killed as well, they found the bodies of about 100 German soldiers around the wreckage. There really were more of them than there were of us.

So, as you know, our country has a poor history in the area of race relations. So, after World War II, there were many African-American, Black soldiers who were not awarded the kinds of medals and honors that White soldiers were given. So, over the years, there were many people who have tried to rectify this. So, he was given the distinguished service cross in 1982, but that's really way beneath the amount of valor and honor that the man had.

So, in 1987, President Bill Clinton awarded him, posthumously, the medal of honor, and this is what it said on his medal or on the proclamation that they gave him, "For extraordinary heroism against an armed enemy in the vicinity of Sommocolonia, Italy on 26 December 1944, while serving as a member of Cannon Company, 366th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Infantry Division. During the preceding few weeks, Lieutenant Fox served with the 598th Field Artillery Battalion as a forward observer. On Christmas night, enemy soldiers gradually infiltrated the town of Sommocolonia in civilian clothes, and by early morning, the town was largely in hostile hands. Commencing with a heavy barrage of enemy artillery at 0400 hours on 26 December 1944, an organized attack by uniformed German units began.

Greatly outnumbered, most of the United States Infantry forces were forced to withdraw from the town, but Lieutenant Fox and some other members of his observer party voluntarily remained on the second floor of a house to direct artillery fire. At 0800 hours, Lieutenant Fox reported that the Germans were in the streets and attacking in strength. He then called for defensive artillery fire to slow the enemy advance. As the Germans continued to press the attack towards the area that Lieutenant Fox occupied, he adjusted the artillery fire closer to his position.

Finally, he was warned that the next adjustment would bring the deadly artillery right on top of his position. After acknowledging the danger, Lieutenant Fox insisted that the last adjustment be fired as this was the only way to defeat the attacking soldiers. His extraordinary valorous actions were in keeping with the most cherished traditions of military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army."

Lieutenant Fox understood sacrifice. He understood the cost that it was going to incur on him and on the men around him, but he had an expectation of a greater result that the loss of his life would lead to something even greater than the keeping of his life. He probably made a little bit of a calculation in his head even, "If I don't do this, maybe they'll capture me. Maybe they'll put me in a prison camp or maybe they'll torture me or maybe they'll just shoot me on the spot."

So, making that calculation, he thought, "You know what? If I'm going down, I'm taking as many of them with me as I can." Whatever the calculation or whatever the reason that he did what he did, he

understood the cost of it, and he moved forward anyway because he reckoned that the cost of it was worth the reward that would come. So, Lieutenant Fox is a hero, and he's an inspiration for us, and he's what we think of, those kinds of acts of valor are what we think of.

You never hear people talk about acts of valor that don't include sacrifice, right? I was wracking my brains this week. I was like, "Can I think of an act of valor that didn't include sacrifice?" I can't think of one. That's how we define it. So, as we as Christian men, we're following Christ. We're living this great adventure of following Christ. If you're going to do something great with your life in your following of Christ, you're probably going to have to make, no, you are going to have to make sacrifices. That's just the way it is.

So, what I want to do, we're going to use a little theme verse this morning. So, you know what? This is God's word. Let's stand up. Let's read this together. So, everybody, stand up. We're going to read Romans 12:1 together. This is the New Living Translation. So, read it with me. "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him." Romans 12:1. Great, guys. Thanks. Have a seat.

So, let's look at our outline this morning. We're talking about being the biggest loser sacrifice. We're going to talk about the motivation for sacrifice. Then we're going to talk about the obstacles to sacrifice. Finally, we're going to talk about the rewards of sacrifice.

THE MOTIVATION FOR SACRIFICE

So, the motivation for sacrifice. A holy sacrifice is always motivated by a greater good. In the Romans 12:1, it says you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, so a holy and acceptable sacrifice. So, a holy sacrifice is always motivated by a greater good. When that greater good is for someone else outside of ourselves, that's called love. When you will make a sacrifice for someone else, that is an act of love.

When you make a sacrifice for God, it's love, too, but we even have another word for that, and that word is worship. So, when you're willing to make a sacrifice for God, that is worship. Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no man than he will lay down his life for his brother." This is love. This is a sacrifice, laying down your life for your brother.

Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives," and then Paul gives the example that we are to follow, "As Christ love the church, and gave himself up for her." So, just as Jesus died on the cross gave himself up, we are as men, that's how we can show love to our wives. We can die for our wives, and for our kids, too. The interesting thing is when we say ... I mean, dying, physically dying for your wife, physically dying for your kids is actually, in a sense, easier than some of the sacrifices that we might need to make that is dying in a different way. It's not physically dying, but it's putting aside the things that maybe we want, the things that we desire for the greater good of our families.

So, why do we do that? Because we're motivated by love. We love our wives, we love our kids, we love our brothers. So, we're willing to lay down our lives or lay down our own desires and wishes on their behalf. So, the question is, what or who do you love more than yourself? That's your motivation for sacrifice. What or who do you love more than you love yourself?

THE OBSTACLES TO SACRIFICE

So, this is the motivation for sacrifice. What are the obstacles to sacrifice? Well, we looked at Romans 12:1 in this passage, and the real question is, what have you got to lose? What have you got to lose? Well, if you look at Romans 12, I'm going to read through it really quickly, not the whole chapter, but some verses. We read the first verse. I'm going to move to the ESV here.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is," what? "... your spiritual worship," or an act of worship. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Well, I want to be conformed to the world. I want to get a promotion. I want to have a new boat. I want to be successful by the standards of the world. I want to look good in the eyes of the world. I want to have the value system of the world. Frankly, it's easier that way or at least it seems easier that way, but Paul says, "Don't be conformed to the world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

So, one of the things we have to sacrifice is our reputation, in a sense, our standing in the world or at least our desire to pursue that standing at the expense of everything else. All around us, men are pursuing their standing in the world, how they appear, what their status is in the world. They're pursuing that, so that they can look good, and that's conforming to the world. Paul says, "Don't do that. That's your living sacrifice is to leave that behind."

"By the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment." What? I mean, I don't think of myself more highly than I ought. I just think of myself as highly as I ought. I'm pretty good, pretty smart, pretty good-looking, pretty ..." Whatever, right? Think about this. What if the world's view of self-esteem was wrong? What if all this effort that we do is to make people feel better about themselves? Talk about human potential. Human potential? I'll tell you what human potential is. Sin. That's human potential.

In our own strength, in our own efforts, our human efforts will always lead to sin. We live in a fallen world. We have fallen spirits. We have fallen souls. Only through the redemption of Jesus Christ ... It's not human potential, it's believer potential. It's follower of Christ potential. That's what we have. So, we have to sacrifice, sacrifice thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought. That does not mean you walk around like a Debbie Downer all the time and say, "Oh, I'm so dumb. I'm so ..." Don't do that. That's annoying.

It's also the flip side. It's a corrupt view of that. That's not what God says about you because you're his friend, and his brother, your child of the king. All of those things that we do think highly of ourselves, they don't come from anything we've done. They come from our belief in what Christ has done on our behalf, and his adoption of us into his family. So, don't think of yourself more highly than you ought.

One more. "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." In other words, as brothers in Christ, we belong to each other. We have gifts, and talents, and resources, each of us, but they're not our own. What we're supposed to do is we're supposed to use those gifts. You'll list some gifts after this, not exhaustive, just an example. We're supposed to use those gifts. We're supposed to use those resources, those talents in service of each other, in service of the body. You are

not your own. You're not only Christ, but you are the churches. We are the church. So, we belong to each other. So, that's a sacrifice.

So, ultimately, I think one of the things that we're called to sacrifice is our autonomy. We want to be in control. I want to do what I want to do. If I don't get to do what I want to do, I turn into a petulant child. I get frustrated that I can't do the things I want to go, go to the places I want to go, and I become a frustrated, annoying, anxious person. Do you know guys like this? I know a guy like this. It's me, more often than I'd like to admit. I want to be in control. What we're really called to sacrifice is autonomy.

So, this is ultimately our biggest obstacle is our own desire for control. So, here's the Big Idea. It's a reassurance. **God only calls us to sacrifice lesser things for greater things.** If you are in a situation, and you feel like, "Man, I feel like I'm supposed to sacrifice this thing, and I really don't want to." It might even scare you to sacrifice it. It might be something that's so fundamental to the core of who you are, and what you think you're supposed to do or be, that you just can't imagine sacrificing it. When you get to that point, remember this. God only calls us to sacrifice lesser things for greater things.

So, that thing that you're clinging on to, that in your heart of hearts you know you're supposed to sacrifice, and you just can't do it because you think the consequences are going to be too great, this is the consequence. God has something greater.

J. Hudson Taylor was a missionary in China. He has this great quote that I didn't write down. So, I'm going to butcher it, but he said, "When I'm too tired to think, when I'm too tired to pray, I can trust. I can trust." God only calls us to sacrifice lesser things for greater things.

THE REWARDS OF SACRIFICE

So, let's talk about then the rewards of sacrifice. In Romans 12:2, Paul says ... Let me just read it to you. Paul says, "Don't be conformed to this world. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

So, one of the things that you get when you sacrifice is you actually get wisdom because a lot of times, I think what God calls us to sacrifice are those things that are scales on our eyes, and we don't realize it, but when we're willing to let go of the lesser things, our vision gets clear, our thinking get clear. We get discernment and wisdom.

In Ephesians 5:25, we talked about, "Husbands, love your wives like Christ love the church," but then he goes on to say, "...and gave himself up for her," and then he goes on to say, "... so that he may present it as holy and blameless to his father." So, our families benefit when we sacrifice because there's a sanctification that comes by our willingness to sacrifice what we need for the betterment of our family, for what's best for our family. Our family gets what's best. That's a benefit to them when we're willing to make a sacrifice.

Robert Lewis, who wrote *Raising A Modern-Day Knight*, talks about four attributes of men. The one that applies to us this morning is that real men expect the greater reward. There's a reward to sacrifice. Paul says in Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." To live is Christ. Not to live is me, not to live is Brett or Paul. Not to live is great or at least success, not to live is enhanced reputation. To live is Christ. So, I live in Christ, and that's a pretty good thing to get, but to die is gain. It's even better. It's even better.

Colossians 3:5 talks about put away these things, sexual immorality, adultery, anger, rage, malice, all these things, but sometimes we just focus on those things, all these things we're supposed to put away. You could say, "Put away these things, and they're all worldly things that from the world's perspective may not even be that bad." Well, I'm allowed to ... If somebody cuts me off in traffic, I'm allowed to have rage. It's an appropriate response. Thank you very much. Tell them they're number one. I'll explain that to the rest of you later.

No. We have to put those things away, but not for a legalistic reason. You have to go back to the first four verses, where Paul says, "Set your minds on things above. Set your hearts on things above, where your eternal reward comes from." So, the life we live now, the life we live now, it has eternal ramifications. Those are the rewards for sacrifice.

So, our Big Idea, **God only calls us to sacrifice lesser things for greater things.** You can trust him. You can trust in his goodness that when you're called to sacrifice, it's going to be for your best, for the kingdom's best, for the church's best, and most of all, for God's glory.

Let's pray, and then we'll break to the tables. Father, thank you so much for your promises, for your mercy, your grace. Lord, thank you that you don't shine us down a bright and easy, simple path to following you because there's no such thing. There's no bright, simple, easy path to anything, Lord, but you show us the best path. You show us the path that leads to eternal security, not just temporary security, to eternal pleasure by living in your presence, and beholding your glory, not by temporary pleasure of some fleeting instance in the grand scheme of things.

Lord, we're scared to sacrifice. It's scary to call artillery in on your own position, but, Lord, you are greater than all of the things that we could sacrifice. Your rewards are greater than anything that we could give up. Your calling on your life, the gifts that you give us to use, to build your kingdom, and bring you glory, they're better than anything that we could hold on to in our own strength, to keep it under our own control, our own autonomy.

So, Lord, would you help us to surrender to your will, so that we can experience this great reward that you have for us, Lord, and eventually, that we will be with you in glory? In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.