

## **Obligated to Take It**

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2 Samuel 24:10-25

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Does anyone else remember the Smothers Brothers? Tom and Dick Smothers were Folk singers from the 60's that presented music with a slight twist. You can watch clips of their television performances on YouTube, but I thought I would share one particular video recording from 1964 that has always been quite unique.

### **(Watch Video Clip)**

According to the Folk Singer's Manual (which I've not been able to find), a musician is obligated to "Take It" when told to do so. If you've committed yourself to the performance, if you are a member of the band, you are obligated to take an active role in what's happening on the stage. You will eventually have to step out of your comfort zone. You will need to make sacrifices at some point in your life. You will not get away with telling someone "No". This is a lesson that King David learns late in his life. And a lesson most of us need to learn as well.

Near the end of his life, and after several victories over those pesky Philistines, David takes a census. He sends Joab and the other commanders throughout the land to find out how many warriors there were. But listen to what happens once David is given the results.

### **(Read 2 Samuel 24:10-17)**

For punishment, David is given three choices. But what he decides is actually very respectable. Notice that he doesn't beg for God to relent. He doesn't complain that life isn't fair. David simply places his trust in God. He says, "God's mercy is great". In effect David lets God choose which is best. So the plague spreads throughout the land. 70,000 people die. But I think there was more than punishment in God's mind. I think He was trying to teach a valuable lesson.

I believe through David, God was trying to teach everyone what it means to be a humble servant in His kingdom. I mean, why else would He have had the angel stop just as it was about to enter Jerusalem. Why permit David to see this angel? I think it was because who was watching these events unfold. Think about who might have been hanging around with David. Sure, it would have been his body guard but possibly young Solomon as well. Solomon would have learned that this is the way a

man of God acts as king when David interceded on behalf of all the people (“What have they done”). Solomon would have learned that this is the attitude a person must have regardless of their power or position in life as David, the great warrior king, is humble before God (“I am the one who has sinned”). But what I find the most interesting is that God did not stop there. Oh, He could have. He could have looked at David’s humble and broken heart and ended the whole thing right there on Mt. Moriah (the same mountain where Abraham was asked to offer Isaac as the sacrifice<sup>1</sup>). Instead, God makes David take a giant leap out of his comfort zone.

(Read 2 Samuel 24:18–25)

Do you hear these words? *But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing.” So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen.*<sup>2</sup> (Verse 24) Can you imagine what impact this must have had on young Solomon? “Run back to town and get my wallet” says the King. “But why father? Once again God has provided the sacrifice on this mountain.” “No my son”, says the King. “Not this time”. In effect King David says that he will not take the easy way out of this. This problem will not be resolved by letting someone else do the work or by someone else making the real sacrifice. It is here I see the godly trait of obligation demonstrated by David. I wish I would see it more often.

In John 15:2 Jesus says that God, *“cuts off every branch of Mine that doesn’t produce fruit.”*<sup>3</sup> And in reality Jesus says point blank, “If you are a Christian just tagging along for the ride, you don’t belong here”. To the person who comes to church and says “What’s the least amount I can give and still be on God’s good side”, Jesus says they will be cut off. They will be let go. And God will be the one to do it. And I can understand His frustration. Those of us who have been redeemed have an obligation to “Take It”; to take the message we received and pass it along to others. But instead, most of the time God gets our bare minimum.

I meet far too many Christians who, right after singing “You are my all in all”, add the tag, “Offer valid on Sunday mornings between 9 and 11 am, except during

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<sup>1</sup>Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary* T. Nelson Publishers.

<sup>2</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

holidays, vacations, family reunions, and soccer practice. Days of the week and hours of commitment are subject to change without prior notice". Where did the idea come from that says God is pleased with our minimum effort? How have we lost the concept of obligation?

Most of the Christians I meet now days are asking God to make the sacrifice. They ask Him to take a back seat to all the demands of this world. Our schedules have become Lord and Master of our lives. I think most of us would have jumped at the chance when Araunah offered to give us all that we needed for the sacrifice. Most of us would have looked upon this as God's rich blessing. That's because we've lost the whole concept of obligation.

A Christian is obligated to "Take It" when told do so. If you've committed yourself to Jesus, if you are a Christian, you are obligated to take an active role in God's Kingdom. You will eventually have to step out of your comfort zone. You will need to make sacrifices at some point in your life. You will not get away with telling Him "No". Jesus has given us a command to be working in this kingdom (Matthew 28:19). He said that we will be held accountable for refusing to use the gifts He has given us (Luke 19:23). We are to be Salt and Light in this world so that people may see our good works and glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16). And the list goes on. So it seems to me that we have an obligation to humble ourselves and surrender to what the Lord asks. And yes, doing these things will involve a sacrifice; a sacrifice of our time, energy, and resources.

There are sacrifices we must make if we want to call Jesus Lord. And I understand how difficult some of them can be. But what is your commitment saying about you? What are your children learning from you about the obligation we have to "Bear Fruit" in the name of our Lord?