Dear Open Door Family,

I am excited that we are going to have a **Missions CHALLENGE** coming in around 4 weeks. Two speakers will be with us. Frank Drown, whom we all know, and Woody Roland. Woody and his wife Susan were co-workers with Carol and me in La Paz, Bolivia many years ago. Woody and Sue now serve as directors of International Teams South America operating out of Costa Rica. Woody and Sue have served in many countries of the world and have a lifetime of experience in Missions. They are both excellent writers and many times have challenged me to think more clearly about the things of God. These are some thoughts of Sue's on the idea of Sacrifice.

"SACRIFICE is not a popular word in today's world. When David sinned by taking a census, his disobedience resulted in a terrible plague, killing thousands. Araunuah, fearing for his own life, was more than happy to give David all he had in order to stop the angel of death. But, David insisted on paying. ***2 Samuel 24:24*** *I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."*

Too often I am more than happy to serve God... as long as it doesn't cost me much! Time and again we see biblical examples of faith being what one is willing to give up, not what one is able to coax God into! Abraham was seen as a great man of faith, not because of his comfort and affluence, but because he was willing to obey God at a great cost. These thoughts have profoundly impacted me this week. Though truly I suffer so little and my sacrifices are minute, I struggle with feeling that I'm giving beyond what I am able. As an introvert, I sometimes want to hide until I can refill my emotional tank. With health issues, sometimes I feel I deserve a day off. Yet I know that what matters most to us is what we've paid for with a high price.

I ask you to join me this week in two things:

1- Redefine "blessing" - not as God allowing the least discomfort and greatest physical benefit, but as the privilege of obedience.

2- Choose this week to truly be a living sacrifice - willing to give of yourself, even when it hurts.**"**

(Based on *Authentic Faith* by Gary Thomas, chpt. 10)

Pastor Mark Kieft

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