

"A Love Letter"  
Pastor Wally Contreras  
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"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, "When you come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving you, and you offer to the LORD from the herd or from the flock a food offering or a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or at your appointed feasts, to make a pleasing aroma to the LORD, then he who brings his offering shall offer to the LORD a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil; and you shall offer with the burnt offering, or for the sacrifice, a quarter of a hin of wine for the drink offering for each lamb. Or for a ram, you shall offer for a grain offering two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil. And for the drink offering you shall offer a third of a hin of wine, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. And when you offer a bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or for peace offerings to the LORD, then one shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three tenths of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with half a hin of oil. And you shall offer for the drink offering half a hin of wine, as a food offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. "Thus it shall be done for each bull or ram, or for each lamb or young goat. As many as you offer, so shall you do with each one, as many as there are. Every native Israelite shall do these things in this way, in offering a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. And if a stranger is sojourning with you, or anyone is living permanently among you, and he wishes to offer a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD, he shall do as you do. For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the LORD. One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you." The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, "When you come into the land to which I bring you and when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall present a contribution to the LORD. Of the first of your dough you shall present a loaf as a contribution; like a contribution from the threshing floor, so shall you present it. Some of the first of your dough you shall give to the LORD as a contribution throughout your generations. "But if you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments that the LORD has spoken to Moses, all that the LORD has commanded you by Moses, from the day that the LORD gave commandment, and onward throughout your generations, then if it was done unintentionally without the knowledge of the congregation, all the congregation shall offer one bull from the herd for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the rule, and one male goat for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the people of Israel, and they shall be forgiven, because it was a mistake, and they have brought their offering, a food offering to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD for their mistake. And all the congregation of the people of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who sojourns among them, because the whole population was involved in the mistake. "If one person sins unintentionally, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who makes a mistake, when he sins unintentionally, to make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven. You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the people of Israel and for the stranger who sojourns among them. But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him. While the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. They put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him. And the LORD said to Moses, "The man

shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as the LORD commanded Moses. The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after. So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the LORD your God.” (Numbers 15)

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Pastor Wally said that the Old Testament provides us “guardrails” by which to live either as examples of faithful living or as warnings. Two such warnings: “It shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish.” (Deuteronomy 8:19) “Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them.” (Deuteronomy 11:16) Do I truly heed His warnings or do I believe that such warnings do not apply to New Testament Christians? Explain.

Pastor Wally spoke of the “pleasing aroma to the LORD” and that God wants us to “smell good” which is my obedience and devotion to God. Ephesians 5:1-2 tells me that “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, **a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**” (Emphasis added) Spurgeon once commented that “Be ye imitators’— that is, do not only meditate upon God and think that you have done enough, but go on to copy what you study. Meditation is a happy, holy, profitable engagement, and it will instruct you, strengthen you, comfort you, inspire your heart, and make your soul steadfast; but you may not stop at meditation, you must go on to imitation of the character of God. Let your spiritual life not only bud and blossom in devout thought, but let it bring forth fruit in holy act. Be not satisfied with feeding the soul by meditation, but rise up from the banquet and use the strength which you have gained. Sitting at the feet of Jesus must be succeeded by following in the footsteps of Jesus.” Jesus’ footsteps led to a cross on Calvary where He “gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”. MacArthur’s Study Bible points out that “Christ’s offering of Himself for fallen man pleased and glorified His heavenly Father, because it demonstrated in the most complete and perfect way God’s sovereign, perfect, unconditional, and divine kind of love.” To what extreme, if any, am I willing to go to “be imitators of God” to please and glorify my heavenly Father and why?

In Jeremiah 6:19 (ESV), God is telling me: “Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it.” In verse 28 God calls the people of Judah “stubbornly rebellious”. In what way(s), if any, am I being “stubbornly rebellious” to God’s directions and commands in my life?

If I were to get home and discover that a clerk had given me too much change back, would I consider that my good fortune or an unintentional sin and why?

If I decide to keep the extra change I received because it's just too much of a hassle to drive back to the store, is it still an "unintentional" sin and why?

God lays out what and how an offering is to be made so that it may be "a pleasing aroma to the LORD" to Yahweh, Jehovah, the eternal "I AM". Do I believe that the people of Israel saw their offerings as something they wanted to do or something they had to do? Explain.

2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV) tells me that: "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" someone who is "happily committed to generous giving", someone who is "enthusiastically thrilled with the pleasure of giving." (MacArthur Study Bible) How much "pleasure" do I have when it comes to the offerings I give to God?

When it comes to my giving:

Am I giving to the church or to God and does it matter? Explain.

Is it from "the first of [my] dough" or is it more from my "leftovers" and does it matter? Explain.

Is it given because I am "enthusiastically thrilled with the pleasure of giving" or is it being given reluctantly or because someone told me I had to/need to give (compulsion) and does it matter? Explain.

Will God say that my giving was "generous" or not and does it matter? Explain.

Isaiah 56:6-7 (ESV) tells me: "And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Webster's 1828 dictionary defines "profane" to mean: "To violate any thing sacred, or treat it with abuse,

irreverence, obloquy [reproachful language or contempt]; as, to profane the name of God; to profane the sabbath; to profane the Scriptures or the ordinances of God.” Does it really matter if and how I keep the Sabbath to God?

Psalms 62:8 (ESV) “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge [that which shelters or protects from danger, distress or calamity; a strong hold which protects by its strength, or a sanctuary which secures safety by its sacredness] for us. Selah” Pastor Wally says that “God desires our lives to be daily evidence of trust in Him.” Which do I need today? A stronghold or a sanctuary, and why?

Pastor Wally also said that “God desires our lives to be a pleasing aroma.” Spurgeon said in a sermon he preached on December 14, 1856: “He that pleases God is, through Divine grace, journeying onward to the ultimate reward of all those that love and fear God; but he who is ill-pleasing to God, must, for Scripture has declared it, be banished from the presence of God, and consequently from the enjoyment of happiness. If then, we be right in saying that to please God is to be happy, the one important question is, how can I please God? And there is something very solemn in the utterance of our text: “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” [Hebrews 11:6] That is to say, do what you may, strive as earnestly as you can, live as excellently as you please, make what sacrifices you choose, be as eminent as you can for everything that is lovely and of good repute, yet none of these things can be pleasing to God unless they be mixed with faith...” God desires that my life be a pleasing aroma...do I truly desire that my life be a pleasing aroma to Him? If so, how so? If not, why not?

God ends Numbers 15...He signs His love letter to us by declaring once again that: “I am the LORD your God.” Oswald Chambers (My Utmost for His Highest) once asked the question “Is He really my Lord”? To answer that question, Chambers said: “Joy comes from seeing the complete fulfillment of the specific purpose for which I was created and born again, not from successfully doing something of my own choosing. The joy our Lord experienced came from doing what the Father sent Him to do. And He says to us, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). Have you received a ministry from the Lord? If so, you must be faithful to it— to consider your life valuable only for the purpose of fulfilling that ministry. Knowing that you have done what Jesus sent you to do, think how satisfying it will be to hear Him say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). We each have to find a niche in life, and spiritually we find it when we receive a ministry from the Lord. To do this we must have close fellowship with Jesus and must know Him as more than our personal Savior. And we must be willing to experience the full impact of Acts 9:16 — “I will show him how many things he must suffer *for My name’s sake*.” Wait a minute! To be found faithful, I must “consider [my] life valuable only for the purpose of fulfilling that ministry” which God gave me to do. Where does my “joy” come from and how do I measure the value of my life?

Will people around me see evidences of my trust in Him? If so, how so? If not, why not?