

The Sacrifice Behind Desires

October 26, 2016

In my last two years of college (I graduated in 2000), I truly had no idea where I wanted to go in my life. Going to college was a no-brainer because it was embedded in me that I was going since a very young age. I also always knew I wanted to go somewhere in North Carolina. Once I came to the age where I had to make decisions for myself, I did not know how to respond.

My college advisor was not any help in guiding me. I came to realize it was not his fault in his lack of advising me. Someone can only help you if they have a starting point. I had so many things I wanted to do but lacked focus. I remember one meeting he asked me what I wanted to do. My answer was, "There are fifty million things I want to do." He had a look of shock on his face when I said that and replied with, "Only fifty million?". It was also no secret around campus that I rarely went to classes because my focus was on other things (use your imagination for a non-Christian who verbally persecuted Christians and was truly living the "college experience").

My desire in my youth was to become a doctor. That was not going to work because I did not want to sacrifice more time in school learning things I already knew just so I could be qualified to spend long hours at a job watching people suffer everyday. I respect everyone who pursues that field but it wasn't for me. While in college I desired to be a geneticist. I also desired to be a marine biologist, a forensic scientist with the FBI, and an archaeologist. Yes, these fields are diverse from one another but they all have a scientific base. My advisor gave me one other option. He suggested I study anthropology. At the time I did not even know what that was. The point is I had the desire for all these fields but lacked the discipline to pursue them. I was not in a mental space to even consider sacrificing myself, my life, or my time for anymore schooling. I even lacked the discipline to fully research these fields to see what they involved. The one thing I knew and was willing to sacrifice was to find a way to help people. This desire has grown over the years.

At some point after graduating college I had to move back to North Carolina. I decided to pursue working in a genetics lab. Well, when you are an African-American female with blue hair interviewing for a position in a big time genetic laboratory, it does not really go well (I don't have blue hair anymore). It

really doesn't go well when your personality goes against "the establishment" and any form of authority. Eventually, I came back to Virginia and worked in various healthcare fields. All of which were satisfying to a degree but none like the job I have now in raising my children.

I wanted to share this to bring our minds into focus. With every desire there is a sacrifice. The sacrifices are many things but the main one is sacrificing yourself. Jesus sacrificed Himself for our lives and our joy so we could have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

I did not know the Lord in college. I did not know the Lord when I moved back to North Carolina to try to figure out my path. I know the Lord now and my greatest desire has remained in tact which is to help others. I said earlier in this that I did not want to see people suffer on a daily basis. I came to realize that is an impossibility. People suffer every single day to varying degrees. Since Jesus lives in me, He desires that none would suffer or perish but come to Him (2 Peter 3:9). My desire is to be and love like Him. The sacrifice is to give up every part of myself that is not of Him: fear, worry, anxiety, depression, pride/false humility, and control. I could and would have been great in every field I listed but I did not choose to sacrifice anything at that time. God has worked everything out for His good because I am now able to help others by using my God-given talent and passion of writing. Through every season and every day I surrender a little more of my flesh to Him for His purposes to be fulfilled through me.

Whatever your desire is, there is a sacrifice. The ultimate sacrifice is trusting that God has you exactly where He needs you for the season. Trusting Him above everything else IS the ultimate sacrifice (Psalm 37:3-4).

Alicia R. Shipe