Heart (Entertaining Sacrifices)

Hosea 6:6 (NKJV)

6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

1 Samuel 15:22 (NKJV)

22 So Samuel said:
"Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.

Mercy: loyal love n. — an unfailing kind of love, kindness, or goodness; often used of God's love that is related to faithfulness to his covenant.

"Not sacrifice" / "Rather than burnt offerings"

- God is not abolishing the sacrificial system (which He Himself commanded in the Law).
- He is saying that rituals without the corresponding heart attitude are worthless — even offensive.
- Israel was performing all the right ceremonies while living in idolatry, injustice, violence, and unfaithfulness (see Hosea 4:1–2; 5:6–7).
- External acts of worship mean nothing when the inner life is corrupt.

"Knowledge of God" knowledge n. — the psychological result of perception and learning and reasoning; sometimes simply endowed by God (often with focus on application of the knowledge).

- This is not mere intellectual information. In Hebrew thought, to "know" God means intimate, relational, experiential knowing — like a husband knows his wife.
- It involves trust, obedience, and walking closely with Him.
- Israel "lacked knowledge" (Hosea 4:6), leading to destruction. God wants a deep, living relationship, not distant religious performance.

Scripture is revealing God's heart for authentic relationship over empty ritual or disobedience.

Micah 6:6–8 (NKJV)

6 With what shall I come before the LORD,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
Ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression,
The fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?
8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Matthew 9:13 (NKJV)

13 But go and learn what *this* means: *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'* For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Matthew 12:7 (NKJV)

7 But if you had known what *this* means, *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,'* you would not have condemned the guiltless.

Luke 21:1–4 (NKJV)

Christ Teaches on the Widow's Mites

21 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2 and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. 3 So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; 4 for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

Malachi 1:8 (NKJV)

8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, *Is it* not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, *Is it* not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.

Colossians 2:23 (NKJV)

23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

Living Sacrifices to God

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

Hebrews 13:16 (NKJV)

16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The question isn't "Am I sacrificing?" but "Am I offering God my whole heart, my best, and my obedience — or just the scraps?"