

DEVELOPING A SERVANT HEART

Topical Study | Pastor Mark Bofill | Date: 01/06/19

I. *Definition of a Servant*

II. *Directions for Servants*

III. *Dedication of Servants*

INTRO: A man went to the doctor after weeks of symptoms. The doctor examined him carefully, then called the patient's wife into his office. **"Your husband is suffering from a rare form of anemia. Without treatment, he'll be dead in a few weeks. The good news is, it can be treated with proper nutrition.** To help him, you will need to get up early EVERY MORNING and fix your husband a hot breakfast – pancakes, bacon and eggs, the works. He'll also need a home-cooked lunch EVERY DAY, and then an old-fashioned meat-and-potato dinner EVERY EVENING. It would be especially helpful if you could bake frequently. Cakes, pies, homemade bread; **these are the things that will allow your husband to live.** OH, One more thing...**His immune system is extremely weak**, so it's important that your home be kept spotless at all times. Do you have any questions?" The wife had none. The doctor then asked, "Do you want to break the news to him or shall I?" **"I will,"** the wife replied. She then walked into the exam room. The husband...sensing the seriousness of his illness, asked her, **"It's bad, isn't it?"** She nodded... and tears began to well up in her eyes. **"What's going to happen to me?"** he asked. With a sob, the wife blurted out, **"The doctor says you're gonna die!"** *Wow-Ha!*

In a very real sense, I am sad to mention that so many people suffer from a "Spiritual form of Anemia!" Even worse, it's hard to find "SERVANTS" in the Church who will take the time to nurse others to health (Discipleship) and serve.

- Perhaps we have forgotten **Jesus' blessing on faithful servants**; that they will inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the earth...why? **(Matthew 25:35-40)** tells us: ***'For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*** – ³⁷ ***"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, YOU DID IT TO ME.'*** – The topic of my sermon today is **DEVELOPING A SERVANT HEART** *(Intro points)*

I. DEFINITION OF A SERVANT – The word **serve** is mentioned (211 times) in the KJV, **served** (77 times), and **serving** (7 times). In the Strong's Concordance, **several words exist to describe a servant:**

- **Latreuo** (Strong's # 3000) – *Service in a religious sense; to pay homage or worship*
- **Diakoneo** (Strong's # 1247) – *Deacon, to wait upon, to be an attendant; to serve generally*
- **Huperetes** (Strong's # 5257) – *Under-oarsman, subordinate minister, or officer. One who serves w/hands*
- **Doulos** (Strong's # 1401) – *To be a slave, bond slave (subservience)*

- **Therapon** (Strong's # 2324) – *Servant or faithful friend to a superior.*

A. "**Servant**" – In defining a servant, it is important to understand that **a Christian servant is first of all one who is under submission to God.** – *God is looking for people whose hearts are fully His, who will obey Him no matter the cost!* – (2 Chronicles 16:9) says, *"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."* (Loyalty and Servanthood often go hand in hand)

B. "**Servanthood**" then is the state, condition, or quality of one who **lives as a servant.** One who makes it a practice to **willingly give of oneself to minister for and to others** and to do whatever it takes to accomplish what is best for another (e.g., Good Samaritan).

C. "**Servant Hearts**" – ...are correctly formed when we follow Jesus's example of **Servant-Leadership.** Jesus said, *"If anyone SERVES Me, let him FOLLOW ME; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor (John 12:26)."*

- I have heard it said that when it comes to serving there are **Two kinds of hearts: a SERVING HEART and SELF-SERVING HEART.** – In my ministry experiences I have seen **people who claim to have a servant-heart,** but in the long-run their true colors reveal that they had self-serving hearts all along.

Closing Thoughts: As you kick off the New Year, **seek to know what servanthood is** and determine if you truly have a **Servant Heart** or not. I would also challenge you to ask yourself what is important to you this year? **Where does service for God land on your priority scale?** – *"If I am not a Servant to others, by process of elimination I am then a servant to myself. And that serves no one."* – C. Lounsborough

II. **DIRECTIONS FOR SERVANTS** – If you aren't serving in ministry yet, then **"Step-Up"** and **Step-Out in Faith...Get Involved!** **The greatest ability of a servant begins with AVAILABILITY!** Growth as a disciple is stunted if we fail to avail ourselves in serving God and others. In fact, **serving in ministry is the very TRAINING GROUND that produces greater maturity in your life as a disciple!** Do you want proof? Check this out...

Pastor Eric Swanson surveyed his church *to see if people saw a relationship between ministering to others and spiritual growth.* When asked, *"To what extent has your ministry or service to others affected your spiritual growth?"* – **92% answered positively.** *None responded that ministry had a negative effect on their spiritual growth. 63% indicated that service was equally significant in their spiritual growth compared to other spiritual disciplines, such as Bible study and prayer. 24% responded that ministry or service to others had been "a more significant factor" to their spiritual growth than Bible study or prayer. Over half (58 %) of those who were not actively ministering to others felt either "not satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their level of spiritual growth.* [Eric Swanson What You

Get from Giving (Leadership Journal, Spring 2003), p. 37] **Do you desire Spiritual Growth in 2019?**

Then **“Step-Up” and Step-Out in Faith... Get Involved!**

Learn how to ...

A. Become a Servant-LEADER (tt. Phil 2:6-8) Of all of the Servant-Leaders mentioned in scripture, there is no example greater than that of our Lord Jesus Christ *“who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”* **Jesus demonstrates two important things here...**

1. **Voluntary Selflessness** – i.e., the personal choice to put **OTHERS FIRST** before self!
Read (Phil 2:5,4, then 3, in that order)

2. **Maximum Submission** – This concept goes even further than putting others first, because Maximum Submission has **NO REGARD FOR PERSONAL COST!** (John 15:13) *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”* (Notice that Jesus did not just teach this, but **practiced it!** It was not **Selective-Submission** as so many of us offer.)

B. Be a Servant-OF ALL! – If you are a follower of Jesus...**Servant Leadership is not an option** it is a **MANDATE!** – In (Mark 9:35b) Jesus says, *“If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of ALL.”*

C. Be a Servant-NOT LORD or KING over others. In (Luke 22:27) Jesus said: *“For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? **Yet I am among you AS THE ONE WHO SERVES.**”* (He is the perfect example!)

D. Beware of Selfish Ambitions – When the disciples James and John requested special seating in heaven, Jesus questioned their motives and corrected them by explaining that **the only way to greatness was through servanthood.** – (Mark 10:42-43) *“You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 **Yet it shall NOT BE SO among you; whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.**”* (Worldly methods...Not so among you!)

- **Being a servant is not glamorous in a worldly sense.** Few people want to do simple and mundane things for God. The fact is, servants are often called to the mundane – boring work that nobody wants to do. (This is the testing ground! Jesus sees what we do, how we do it, and who we do it for! Are you a servant?)

- Many people have a desire to do great things for God, but **it has to be done His way!**

Closing Thoughts: **GREATNESS** comes through **Servanthood**, and **LEADERSHIP** comes through becoming a **Servant of All.** **3 Hard Questions:** Can you serve someone that you do

not get along with? Do you serve only when Pastor Al can see you? How do you serve in your own home? *“If it doesn’t work at home, then don’t bring it into the ministry!”*

I. DEDICATION OF SERVANTS – When I first started ministry as an usher, the greatest lesson that I was taught was: *You know that you are NOT A SERVANT when people treat you like one and you don’t like it!* (Treatment not just from unbelievers, but also people in the church!)

As I mentioned earlier, **it’s all training ground** which prepares you for great things in God’s Kingdom. Jesus had something to say about this in **(Matthew 5:40-42)**, *If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.* (Don’t retaliate, don’t complain, just SERVE them!)

A. Be a Servant Wherever You Go! – Don’t worry about your reputation while serving tables! In **(Acts 6)** Stephen did not, but served with a fervent and faithful spirit, resulting in being greatly used by God! – J.O. Sanders said; *“If you want to maintain an IMAGE of infallibility, find something else to do besides leading people.”*

B. Seek to Glorify God in Whatever You Do! – **(Col 3:23)** Says, *“And whatever you do, do it HEARTILY, as to the Lord and NOT TO MEN.”* (Don’t just offer lip-service or eye-service, but do it with all sincerity, and your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you openly!)

C. Keep the Right Perspective while Serving – **(Luke 17:10)** *So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS. We have done what was our duty to do.’*

D. Seek to Remain in the Spirit - Mere acts of service could be performed with motives that are far from spiritual. (*Flesh begets flesh, and spirit begets spirit!*)

Closing Thoughts: Servant Leadership is first the matter of the heart (Heart-issue). The end result is that our heartfelt servanthood and stewardship would be pleasing to our Father, as we would long to hear the His words, *“Well done my good and Faithful Servant...enter into the joy of the Lord!”* **(Matt 25:21)** Oh the joy of pleasing our Heavenly Father!

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11:23-27

POEM: SEARCHING FOR A VESSEL —Author Unknown

The Master was searching for a vessel to use;
On the shelf there were many—which one would He choose?

Take me, cried the GOLD one, I'm shiny and bright,
I'm of great value and I do things just right.
My beauty and luster will outshine the rest
And for someone like You, Master, GOLD would be the best!

Unheeding, the Master passed on to the BRASS,
It was wide mouthed and shallow, and polished like glass.
Here! Here! cried the vessel, I know I will do,
Place me on Your table for all men to view.

Look at me, called the goblet of CRYSTAL so clear,
My transparency shows my contents so dear,
Though fragile am I, I will serve You with pride,
I'm sure I'll be happy, in Your house to abide.

The Master came next to a vessel of WOOD,
Polished and carved, it solidly stood.
You may use me, dear Master, the wooden bowl said,
But I'd rather You used me for fruit, not for bread!

Then the Master looked down and saw a vessel of CLAY.
Empty and broken it helplessly lay.
No hope had the vessel that the Master might choose,
To cleanse and make whole, to fill and to use.

Ah! This is the vessel I've been hoping to find,
I will mend and use it and make it all Mine.
I need not the vessel with pride of itself;
Nor the one who is narrow to sit on the shelf;
Nor the one who is big-mouthed and shallow and loud;
Nor one who displays his contents so proud;
Not the one who thinks he can do all things just right;
But this plain earthy vessel filled with My power and might.

Then gently He lifted the vessel of clay.

Mended and cleansed it and filled it that day.
Spoke to it kindly. "There's work you must do,
Just pour out to others as I pour into you."