

SERVANTHOOD

the calling of every christian

darrow l. miller



Servanthood: The Calling of Every Christian
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DEDICATION

To those who have gone to the hard places
and have learned the joy of service
among the poorest of the poor—
our partners in experiencing the coming of the Kingdom.

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FOREWORD

God has a definite purpose for your life, and that purpose is to transform you into a servant.

More generally, God's ambition is to reform your character so that it perfectly reflects the character of His Son. Since the day you were born into His eternal Kingdom, He has been working in you. Through every event and circumstance, His Spirit has been at work refining, purifying and developing Christ's character in you.

He does this because He has a larger mission in view. A mission to bless, heal and redeem all nations—to advance His Kingdom here on earth as it exists in heaven. How does He go about accomplishing His mission? He starts with people like you—broken, needy, and imperfect. He draws you to Himself, cancels your sins, puts His Holy Spirit within you and begins a process of total transformation. A process to form within you Christ's very character.

But this is only the beginning. As your life is changed, transformation ripples through your family, friends, co-workers, even your unborn children and grandchildren. Through this Divine process, entire nations are impacted. You begin to love as Christ loves. Those who intersect your life begin to experience something of God's Divine love, which, in turn, leads them to its source—Christ Himself. The purpose of your life is wrapped up within this unwavering zeal of God to bless all nations. You have been blessed to be a blessing. God is literally using you to change the world.

The key to this entire process, however, is becoming like Christ, and becoming like Christ means, first and foremost, becoming a servant. A servant is one who is on the lookout for the needs of others—particularly the marginalized and neglected—and then takes proactive steps to meet those needs. Being a servant means working for the good of people you may not particularly like, and of people who may not particularly like you.

You see, Christ is the perfect reflection of God's character in human flesh, and God's character is defined by the word "compassion." When Moses encountered God on Mount Sinai, He had a request. "Lord, show me your glory" (Ex. 33:18). To this bold appeal God responded, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence" (Ex. 33:19). God's glory is reflected in His Name, and His Name describes His character. This is the same character that Christ perfectly incarnated while on earth. It is the same character His Spirit is forming in you. Let's look at it:

"And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation'" (Ex. 34:6-7).

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There is much that can be said about this Name, but for our purposes, let me draw your attention to the first word God uses to describe His character and reveal His glory. He could have chosen any number of words, but He chose this particular one, so we would do well to pay close attention to it. This word is “compassion.”

Compassion is a word that has been used and misused a great deal in our times. Many understand it as a synonym for pity or sympathy. It is commonly thought of as a feeling or emotion. Some modern dictionaries even define it this way. But what does it really mean? Compassion is a compound word whose meaning becomes clear as the meaning of each part is examined. The Latin prefix “com” means “with.” The word “passion” literally means “to suffer.” We typically come across this usage on Good Friday when we focus on the passion (or suffering) of Christ. So compassion literally means “to suffer with.” True compassion connotes action, not emotion. It involves coming alongside one who is needy in order to share their burden. In short, it means serving others.

Because God’s character is defined by compassion, He sent His Son to suffer with us—fallen, weak, broken and lost people. It was He who was “made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Phil. 2:7-8)

God’s agenda is to form within you this same compassion—this same willingness to serve others, even to the point of suffering. Because this kind of behavior is so unnatural, so unexpected in a self-absorbed, self-centered world, it is incredibly powerful. It stands out and causes people to notice. It shines like a bright light on the darkest of nights. Such compassion has no earthly explanation. It is quite literally a miracle.

Such compassion does not come naturally. It must be learned. To be sure, the Holy Spirit works in us to give us the desire and the power to serve, but we have a part to play, and this part must not be minimized. What is our role in becoming Christ-like? How can we work together with God’s Spirit? 2 Corinthians 3:16 gives us a clue.

“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.”

The word “behold” means to look, to contemplate, to ponder, to reflect on. We are to give our undivided attention to God’s glory (His Name, His character, His compassion), and as we do, we are transformed into this same glory from one degree to another. As we behold Christ, we behold the One who “came not to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:43).

This study is designed to help you do just this. To study, behold, and contemplate God’s compassion and Christ’s sacrificial service, towards the end that this central virtue will be formed in your life. [Servanthood: The Calling of Every Christian](#) was written by my friend and co-worker Darrow Miller many years ago to help prepare short-term mission teams and cross-cultural missionaries for service abroad. I have studied these lessons many times and have taught them all over the world. I can personally testify to their power. This study has truly changed my life, as it has so many others. I am confident that as you allow these thirteen lessons to guide you deeply into scripture, you will see God and His Son Jesus in a new way—as the compassionate Servants that they are. And as you follow their example, you will be changed—and God will use you to change your world.

Scott D. Allen
Disciple Nations Alliance
May 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My good friend, Bob Moffitt, prompted me to develop this series in 1979.
Since then, many people have used it, passed it on to others
and contributed to its improvements.
Thanks to you all!

To Marilyn, the bride of my youth,
who has demonstrated a servant's heart in the creation of our home,
her care for our family and the hosting of our friends—
I give my love and thankfulness.

To the One who has served me by His death, I owe my utmost gratitude.

INTRODUCTION

The Church in the West has often been neutralized by the world's agenda and value system. We look for self-fulfillment, not realizing the power of Christ's words that we must die to live and give to gain. Instead, the good life—the life of comfort and personal peace—is our goal. We mimic, rather than challenge the world. Because the end of this pursuit is shallow and unsatisfying, we race on, hoping that if we move faster, happiness will come.

In contrast to our natural tendency to self-serve, God has called us to “other-serve.” The authority given to Christ in Matthew 28:18, which He has in turn passed on to his disciples, is the authority to serve (2 Cor. 10:8). The early church understood this and left us a legacy of service as she built inns for travelers, hospitals for the sick, almshouses for the poor and orphanages for the fatherless. Our service stands as a dynamic testimony that we believe the biblical message is true.

In other words, the fulfillment we long for will never be found in the world's agenda but only in Christ's plans. In Luke 19:12-27, Jesus tells the parable of a nobleman (who represents Jesus Himself) who has gone to a far country to receive his kingdom. He gives his faithful servants authority over cities in that land, commanding them, in the wording of the King James Version, to “occupy” it until he comes. This is the Church's mission--“to occupy the land” for the coming King. We are to be God's people. Dr. Tetsunao Yamamori, former President of Food for the Hungry, has expressed that we are to be involved in “Symbiotic Ministry”--that is, proclaiming the Good News of God's salvation in Jesus Christ (evangelism) and liberating men in social, political and economic shackles in order to establish peace, order and harmony in all human relationships (social action).¹

The key to this “occupation” is you. As the parable in Luke teaches, God has given life, talents, abilities and gifts to you; and He wants you to use them. Your life makes a difference! It is wonderful; it is grand. Francis Schaeffer was fond of saying, “Like a pebble thrown into a still pond, your life makes ripples that continue...forever.”²

Christ will return, just as surely as He rose from the dead. As Luke 19:12 describes, He is in Heaven now, receiving His Kingdom. We, His servants, have been given our task of occupying the land for His return. Each place that you stand as a Christian becomes occupied territory. When you stand and occupy territory, you create a place for others to stand with you.

BACKGROUND

This series of Bible studies is a rallying cry for the Church to awaken and to fulfill her mission.

Originally, I wrote this series to encourage a group of Christian high school students from Ohio as they prepared to spend two weeks on a work project in the Dominican Republic. I remembered that a similar experience had shaken me from my slumber. As a nineteen-year-old college student, I traveled with ten students, a pastor and his wife to Mexico City, where we lived and

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worked at an orphanage for six weeks. We were fed on \$1.25 per week--we ate the same food that the orphans ate. This period of short-term missions altered the entire course of my life. Of the thirteen that went that summer, eight of us have become more extensively involved in missions.

I desired a vision-expanding, life-changing encounter for the Ohio work team; and that is my prayer, also, for all of you who participate in this study. My hope is that it will not merely be a Bible study but a celebration of our high calling; not merely more information, but a trumpet call to action. As we await the King, let's make the most of our time. Let's hasten His coming by serving Him well.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this series is:

1. To help you understand that the mission of the Church is to occupy this world for Christ.
2. To encourage you to see that *you* are the key; your life counts.
3. To guide you in fulfilling your vocational calling--that of being a servant.

THE BASIS

This study is based upon these five profound truths:

1. We live in a fallen world. Sin has affected all of our lives and all of our relationships. God hates sin and weeps over the brokenness in the world.
2. Christ has come to serve us in His death, providing for our salvation. With His life, Christ shows us how to serve and how to begin the process of bringing restoration to a fallen world and hope to broken lives.
3. Christ will return to establish His Kingdom, fully restoring all that is shattered.
4. He has established His Church to fight the forces of darkness and to occupy the hard places for His coming.
5. Individual Christians and our communal expression in the local church are the key. He has called us to a basic task--service.

THE FORMAT

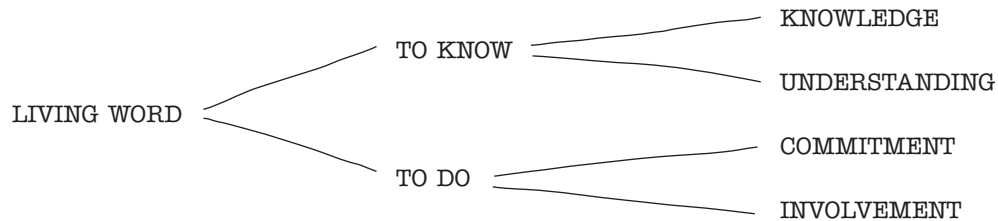
These will be the six elements in the format of each lesson:

1. Last Chapter... This will provide a summary of what has been covered in previous lessons, giving a context for the current lesson.
2. Sneak Peak... This section summarizes the direction of the present study and includes a short outline of the lesson.

Introduction

3. Know and Do... Christ always stressed the importance of both KNOWING and DOING the will of God. In our case, this applies to knowing and doing the Word of God. We must both meditate or reflect on God's Word and act upon it. To place a higher value upon either knowing or doing is to strip the Word of its power. "TO KNOW" means to have both knowledge and understanding. "TO DO" requires commitment and involvement based upon our knowledge.

It may be pictured like this:



To merely "KNOW" His Word is verbalism; to merely "DO" His Word is activism.

The KNOW AND DO emphasis sets the "KNOWING" and "DOING" goals for each chapter.

4. Study... The study is the body of the work. To be done properly, it requires three to five hours of study. People who put the most into the lessons will also grow the most as result of the study. The focus in this part is the "KNOWING" emphasis. Unless otherwise noted, the scripture references used in the study are from the New American Standard Version of the Bible.
5. Time Out... This section challenges the reader to take 15-30 minutes either to meditate on or memorize the theme passage.
6. Your Part... The focus of this section is the doing emphasis--the application of knowledge learned. This section offers a relevant, practical exercise, designed to fit individual growth needs.

CHAPTER ONE

THE AMBITION OF MAN

Sneak Peak...

The words we use define our value system. What words do we use to describe our ambitions? Do they reflect Christ's ambition for us? We will first examine the vocabulary of Western culture as it relates to ambition and then we will examine Christ's ambition for us.

Know and Do...

In this chapter we desire to know that our vocational calling is that of being servants. We begin, consciously, to practice serving those closest to us.

Study...

As we have come to Christ, we have been given new names--"Sons of God", "Children of Light", "Christians", "The Redeemed", "New Creations" and many others. These titles bring identity and joy. As we are adopted into God's family, we receive His name. I am "Darrow Ben (Son of) Jehovah"!

There are, however, many titles that do not automatically bring equal joy. Because of the negative understanding we have of these names, we tend to draw away from them. We are "Prisoners" (Ephesians 4:1), "Bond slaves" (Philippians 1:1), "Workmen" (II Timothy 2:15) and "Servants" (I Timothy 4:6). Being a "Prisoner" of Jesus Christ is greater than being a free man of the world. Being a "Servant" of Jesus Christ is actually a greater privilege than being the master of millions.

God's will for our lives can be thought of in terms of His general will and His particular will. His general will (that we be godly men and women) is detailed in the scriptures. His particular will ("Whom do I marry?" "Where should I live?" "What should be my major in school?") is revealed as we pursue His general will. Matthew 6:33 states, "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness [His general will] and all these things [different aspects of His particular will] shall be added to you."

Likewise, we find similar counsel given in Isaiah 58:10-11: "...if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted [God's general will], then...the Lord will continually guide you [His particular will]..."

We ask, "What am I to do with my life; what is to be my vocation?" God responds, "Focus on the Christian's vocation; be a servant." What am I to do? I am to serve!

But, is this our natural ambition?

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THE IMPORTANCE OF WORDS

Any society's vocabulary can tell us much about the values of that society's people. In C.S. Lewis' *Out of the Silent Planet*, the hero, Ransom, is stranded on a planet where the inhabitants have no words for "war" or "hatred." This reflects the absence of hatred or war in the society.

The vocabulary of a society both establishes and exposes its value system. For example, what do we call that which a woman carries in her womb--a "baby" or a "fetus"? The word we choose affects our attitude and behavior toward that child. Do we talk about the "sacredness of life" or the "quality of life"? Do we "kill" or "terminate"? The loss of common usage of such words as "chastity", "truth", "justice" and "guilt" from our culture reflect a profound shift in our worldviews, value systems and lifestyles.

To begin our study on Servanthood, we want to examine words used in our culture and discover how these words shape our ambitions.

1. In the list below, mark with an "x" those words that you believe best describe the values of our culture--the highest goals for which many people in our society strive:

assistant	last	ruler
bond-slave	leader	secondary
boss	lord	servant
blue collar	manager	self-sufficient
chief	master	slave
director	menial	small
employee	minor	subordinate
employer	owner	success
first	poor	superior
helper	prestigious	supportive
inferior	primary	underling
influential	principal	upwardly mobile
insignificant	proprietor	white collar
large	rich	winner

2. What does this tell you about the ambition of our own culture?
3. Pick five words from the list that you use most often to describe your personal goals.

Do your own goals differ from our society's?

If so, how?

If not, what does this tell you about yourself?

4. Most of the words in the list are synonymous with one of two words--"master" or "servant."

Chapter One - The Ambition of Man

5. Use a dictionary to study the words “master” and “servant.” Write a definition of each in your own words.

Master -

Servant -

6. We have looked at these contrasting words and can see that our society defines success in terms of authority, power and winning. Our society equates failure with laboring, serving and being subordinate.

However, these words do not necessarily conflict. Jesus, the God-Man, was both Lord and Servant. In fact, good leadership is servant-leadership.

KINGDOM VALUES ARE “RIGHT-SIDE UP”

1. In Luke 3:4-6 John the Baptist preaches Isaiah’s message concerning the coming Kingdom of Christ. In the Kingdom, everything is turned upside-down. (More accurately, everything is restored to its right-side-up position.) Describe what is to happen to these areas:

Ravines

Mountains

Crooked Places

Rough Roads

2. In Luke 6:20-26, commonly called the Beatitudes, Jesus describes those who are blessed and those who are cursed. Notice again, how the value system of the Kingdom is so different from the value system of the world. Compare and list the circumstances of the blessed and of the cursed. Think about which you identify with most.

Blessed

“Blessed are you who,
for my sake, are ...”

Cursed

“Woe to you who are...”

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3. In Luke 6:27-29, the strangeness of the Kingdom continues as Christ teaches His followers a “right-side-up” value system. Describe how we, as Christians, are to treat the following:

Our enemies

- Those who hate us
- Those who curse us
- Those who mistreat us
- Those who hit us on one cheek
- Those who take away our coats

If these values sound foreign to our ears, they are. Yet, they are the values of the Kingdom.

4. Study Matthew 10:39. In this “right-side-up” Kingdom, how does one find life?
5. The value system of the Kingdom stands in contrast to the values of the world. Therefore, the ambition of the Christian is also different from the ambition of the world. The ambition of the Christian is--to be a servant.
6. There are three main Greek words used in the New Testament for “servant.”

“Doulos” - slave, subject, bond-servant

“Diakonos” (from “diako,” to run errands) - an attendant, waiter on tables, servant

“Therapon” - a menial attendant, servant

The New Testament use of the word “servant” is similar to the contemporary use of the word. It is the person who performs the menial tasks.

CHRIST TEACHES ABOUT AMBITION

1. Read Mark 10:32-45.

What is the setting of this discussion? What is about to take place? (vs. 32-34)

What do James and John want Christ to do for them? (vs. 35-37)

Why couldn't Christ grant their request? (vs. 38-40)

How did the other disciples react? (vs. 41)

Chapter One - The Ambition of Man

What is the world's standard of greatness? (vs. 42)

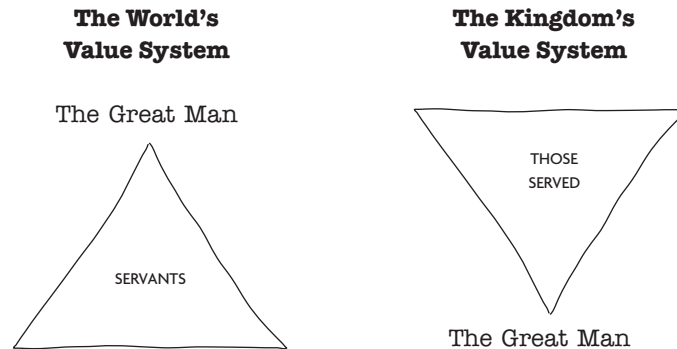
What is the significance of the word "but"? (vs. 43-44)

What is Christ's standard of greatness? (vs. 43-44)

What is one thing Christ did not come to do? (vs. 45)

What two things did He come to do? (vs. 45)

2. The world describes the great man as one who has the most servants, whereas Christ describes the great man as the one who serves the most people.



In the Kingdom, service is not the prerequisite for greatness. It is the standard for greatness. We are to "bend the knee" to glory! Christ restores the true concept of greatness.

3. In the Kingdom value system, the Father receives the credit for service done by man. When he serves, "the great man" calls attention not to himself, but to God.

According to Matthew 5:16, what does seeing a Christian's good deeds cause people to do?

How does this benefit the Kingdom?

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Finish this sentence: Christ has changed my understanding of the word “servant”

from:

to:

TIME OUT...

Take time this week to meditate on and/or memorize the following:

But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become
great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be
first among you shall be slave of all.

Mark 10:43-44

YOUR PART...

Pray and ask God to direct you to serve someone. Pray that this would be a person whom you normally expect or demand to serve you. Be specific.

For example, this person might be your mom, who always does your laundry... it might be your employee, who works for you... it might be your friend, who is always available for you... or it might be the waitress or grocery clerk, who usually serves you.

1. Who is this person?
2. What does this person normally do for you?
3. What do you expect or demand of this person?
4. What will you do for them?
5. When will you do it?

Share this with your study group or a close friend. Ask them to pray for you. Report the results to them.

CHAPTER TWO

EXAMPLES OF SERVANTHOOD

Last Chapter...

In our first chapter we saw that the ambition of the natural man is to be served; that is, to be MASTER. By contrast, the ambition of Christ is to serve. He has given us the perfect example of a servant; in fact, He is THE SERVANT.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter, we want to look at examples of servants. For us to learn to serve, we need to see others serving. We will see these examples of service in God's character; in His incarnation as Jesus Christ, The Servant; and in the lives of Biblical and contemporary personalities.

Know and Do...

In this chapter, we desire to understand that God is a serving God; this knowledge should draw us to worship Him.

Study...

One distinction must be made as we begin--the difference between the "archetype" and "anthropomorphism." An archetype is an ideal model, based upon eternal principles, after which earthly activities are patterned. Anthropomorphism, however, is the attribution of human characteristics or behavior to non-human entities.

As we speak of God being a servant, we are speaking archetypically, not anthropomorphically. In other words, God is a serving God and His character is a pattern for our own activity. We are not taking a human activity and ascribing it to God. Instead, we are seeing--in God--a pattern for human activity.

GOD THE SERVANT

We are told in scripture that love existed before the world was created. This love is self-sacrificial, "servant-love" (See John 17:24). This love is expressed in both God's character and His incarnation.

1. God's Character

- A. Both the Old and New Testaments describe God as a serving God. The word "lovingkindness" (Hebrew: "HESED") is found over 250 times in the Old Testament. It refers to God's loyal and steadfast love. It describes His kindness and mercy towards us

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in practical, everyday terms. In the New Testament the Greek word “AGAPE” is used to describe God’s self-sacrificing love, His serving love. This serving love is found expressed everywhere God touches a life. It is found there because it is inherent in His character.

- B. In the harsh environs of the Middle East, the Hebrew people understood this characteristic of God and, thus, made hosting (or serving) a virtue of desert life. The guest was honored.

The early church, also, was aware of the serving nature of God and imitated Him by their hosting lifestyles. They opened their homes to strangers and built structures to serve the sick, the dying and the travelers. We use a number of words in the English language that are related to this hosting (serving) characteristic:

hospital-----serving the sick
hostel-----serving the traveler
hospice-----serving the dying
hospitality-----serving the stranger
host-----serving the guest

- C. God is our Host. We find this illustrated in two ways in Psalm 23. Read this Psalm and list the ways in which God serves.

As Shepherd (vs. 1-4)

As Host (vs. 5-6)

- D. Read John 14:2. Contemplate what this means in the light of God being a host. Briefly describe your reaction or insight.

2. God’s Incarnation--Jesus Christ

Colossians 2:9 states that “... in Him [the man Jesus] all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.” What a wonderful mystery--God became a man! But what kind of a man?

If you were God and could choose to come to earth at any moment in history, at any place, or in any form, how would you come? Wouldn’t contemporary human reason say that God should come to earth as a world leader in a powerful country, to a media city like New York, London, or Tokyo?

But what did God choose? Two thousand years ago, God chose to come to a small town, Nazareth, in a nation that was not a nation, Palestine. He chose to become incarnate--not as a world leader, but as a servant. The Divine identified with the poor, the nameless and the insignificant.

- A. Read Isaiah 42:1-4. What are some of the characteristics of The Servant in this passage?

Chapter Two - Examples of Servanthood

- B. John 1:14 reveals that when God identified with men, He "... dwelt (pitched his tent) among us." He moved into the apartment complex, the refugee camp, the suburb, the ghetto.
- C. Hebrews 4:15 describes this thorough identification of God with man, for Christ "... has been tempted in ALL things as we are, yet without sin."
- D. Read Matthew 11:29. Jesus describes Himself as "_____ and _____."
- E. Read Philippians 2:1-11. In verses 5-8, Paul traces the seven steps Christ took from His glorious throne to a humiliating death. Fill in the remaining steps.

Existed in the form of God

Taking on the form of a bond servant

Death on a cross

- F. In these things, what was the extent of His service? How far was He willing to go?
- G. Whom was Christ serving? To whom did He submit Himself?
- H. Why do you think that God chose to come to earth as a servant, rather than as a world-renowned political figure?

MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED

1. Biblical Personalities

Read each of the following passages and describe how each of these persons served or hosted. What did they do? Do they contain a common thread?

A. Genesis 24:10-27 (Rebecca)

B. Ruth 2:8-17 (Boaz)

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C. Acts 9:36-43 (Dorcas)

D. Luke 7:36-39 (“a sinner”)

2. Contemporary Personalities

A. As a young man, C.S. Lewis moved into a one-room apartment at the home of a friend’s widowed mother. Without pay, he cared for her as a son for more than 20 years. When he became well known and she was senile, he continued his care for her until she died. Later in Lewis’ life, a close friend of his, who had two teenage sons, contracted cancer. Because of his love for this woman and his desire to care for her and her sons, he married her. This servant shared much joy and grief.

At a graduate school in Israel, the 30-year-old septic system broke down. A volunteer was needed to enter the system with a bucket, to remove many gallons of “sludge.” Dr. W., a professor at a Midwestern seminary, volunteered for this dirty work.

Colleen looked out of her kitchen window to find two old men rummaging through her garbage can looking for food. She invited them into her home and served them a warm meal.

B. What do these people have in common? What virtue governed their actions?

C. Describe a person you know who is a servant.

Name:

Description:

D. What characteristics in his/her life would you like to see in your own life?

TIME OUT...

Take time this week to meditate on and/or memorize:

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. I Peter 2:21

Chapter Two - Examples of Servanthood

YOUR PART...

1. Refer to Question 2.c. under "Contemporary Personalities" above. For one week pray and work to implement those character qualities that you want for your own life. Keep a "Servanthood Journal" to record your successes and failures in this endeavor. Ask God for help and encouragement. Share this with your study group or a close friend. Ask them to pray for you and report your results to them. (Keep the "Servanthood Journal" where it is easily accessible, as you will be using it again in Chapter 8.)

OR

2. By yourself or with a few close friends, plan a worship service that focuses--with thanksgiving and praise--on God's being a serving God. Lead a group in such worship.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SERVANT KING

Last Chapter...

In our first chapter we saw that natural man places a high value upon having power--being in authority and in control. Our society defines greatness in terms of authority, power and winning. In contrast, our culture holds the position of servant in disrespect. And yet, that is our vocational calling as Christians.

Our second chapter pointed out that God is a serving God and that service--contrary to popular opinion--is a sacred trust. When God was incarnate in Christ, He took on the form of a bond servant (Philippians 2:7). In Christ we find the epitome of the Servant-King.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter, we will see that "Servant-King" is not a contradiction in terms. Jesus Christ embodied all that was royal and all that was menial. Leadership and service are not contradictory. In fact, to be a good leader, one must be a good servant.

To put it another way, Christ has created a new order of servant-kings, an order in which kings are to serve and servants are praise-worthy. As we are called to stand in the place where Christ stood, we are called to be servant-leaders. This is not a place of raw power, but a place of responsibility.

Know and Do...

In this chapter we will seek to understand that leadership and followership are complementary. This knowledge should lead to a practice of followership in at least one area of life.

THE PRINCIPLE - THE SERVANT KING

1. While it is obvious that the servant is to be a servant, we do not often think that the king is to be a servant. The one under authority is to serve, but what about the person in authority? Does having a position of authority and leadership excuse a person from serving?
2. Read I Kings 12:1-11. King Rehoboam, Solomon's son, is seeking advice.
 - A. What did the people want to do? (v. 4b)

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- B. What was it that hindered them? (v. 4)

 - C. What two things did the elders recommend? (v. 7)

 - D. Does one's position of authority and leadership negate the need to serve others?
3. As Francis Schaeffer often said, "In God's sight there are no little people and no little places."⁵ The question is not one of size or rank, but of consecration. Is the servant consecrated? If so, he is a "king." Is the king consecrated? If so, he is a "servant."

AUTHORITY OR RESPONSIBILITY

- 1. Refer back to Mark 10:32-45. Jesus describes the contrast between worldly ambition and godly ambition.
 - A. How does "the world" define leadership? (vs. 37, 42)

 - B. How does Christ define leadership? (vs. 43, 44)

- 2. The following chart compares the "world's leadership" with "servant leadership":

	<u>The World</u>	<u>The Servant</u>
Identifying with:	the powerful	the people
Defining success as:	having servants	servicing people
Focusing interest:	inward (self)	outward (others)
Using symbol of a:	chairman's chair	towel

- 3. Richard Foster, in Celebration of Discipline, established a very subtle distinction:

"We must see the difference between choosing to serve (an activity) and choosing to be a servant (a person/a lifestyle). When we choose to serve, we are still in charge... when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge... we become available and vulnerable."⁴In the area of management principles, Myron Rush makes the distinction between secular management and Biblical management. Secular management is defined as "getting things done through others." Biblical management, however, is defined as "meeting the needs of people as they work at accomplishing their jobs."⁵

- 4. In summary, the world's leadership desires authority; the servant-leadership of the Kingdom seeks and accepts responsibility.

Chapter Three - The Servant King

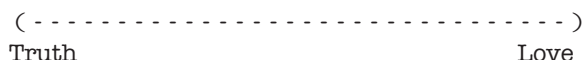
BIBLICAL BALANCE

1. There is a four-fold picture of Christ painted in the Gospels. Four Old Testament Messianic passages correspond with the four Gospel pictures of Christ.

<u>Gospel</u>	<u>O.T.</u>	<u>The Picture of Christ</u>
John	Isaiah 40:9	“Here is your _____!”
Luke	Zechariah 6:12	“Behold, a _____...”
Mark	Isaiah 52:13	“Behold, my _____...”
Matthew	Zechariah 9:9	“Behold, your _____...”

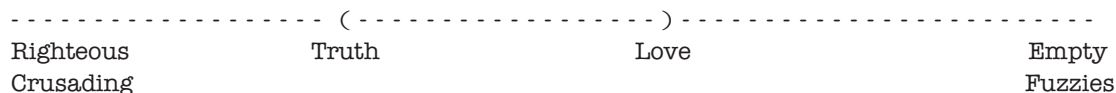
Each of these describes one aspect of our Lord’s character. They are not contradictory. Instead, they form the dynamics of Christ’s life. In the case of the God-Man, we find mystery; in the case of the Servant-King, there is no mystery--only balance.

2. Truth is finely balanced, as in the above examples of the character of Christ. Like a child’s mobile, with all the parts in place, it moves with beauty and symmetry. If one piece is removed, the whole mobile collapses. The issue might be law/grace, free will/predestination, evangelism/social ministry, or the present/future of the Kingdom of God. Rather than represent uncompromising opposites, these apparent contrasts define the boundaries--the parameters--for the Christian’s life and belief. When Christians stress one viewpoint at the expense of the other, the Church is divided and becomes anemic. Our human tendency of dividing and polarizing robs the Church of her dynamic and also robs the world of its hope.
3. For an example of living by Christian principles which might appear contradictory at first glance, read Ephesians 4:15. From this passage, we see that we are to speak the “_____ in _____.” Our lives are to be marked by the parameters of these two words. They are not the same thing, but they can never be separated.



We have all been in situations where one side of the truth/love equation is stressed more heavily than the other. In fact, we often live completely outside the parameters on one side or the other.

- A. What is the result of speaking the truth without love?
- B. What is the result of giving love without speaking truth?
- C. We often live off-balance, outside the **parameters** of these balanced pairs, as the following picture demonstrates:



- D. Whenever we operate outside of the parameters set by finely balanced pairs, we not only lose the principle we are avoiding, but we also lose the principle we are stressing!

Chapter Three - The Servant King

B. In I Corinthians 11:3, note the distinctive role of...

i. Woman

ii. Man

iii. Christ

THE ART OF LEADING AND FOLLOWING

1. Both leading and following are "arts."
2. The art of following may be seen in the example of a certain married couple. The wife was six years older than the man--and ten years older in the Lord. When they married, the woman looked to her younger husband for leadership. She did not demand his leadership, but affirmed it by placing herself under him and looking up to him. She practiced the art of following and allowed him to develop the art of leadership.
3. All of us are both leaders and followers, depending upon the situation. I am a leader-follower to my wife and family and a follower-leader to my pastor and employer. Examine your own life and identify three ways you are a...

leader-follower

follower-leader

4. An imbalance occurs when we see ourselves in only one role. If I see myself only as a leader, I think too highly of myself. If I see myself only as a follower, I think too little of myself and neglect to appreciate God's workmanship in my life.
5. Our lives are to be lived within the framework and art of leading and following.

----- (-----) -----
Arrogance Leading Following Self-Depreciation

6. A good follower will use discernment in knowing whom to serve and how to serve. A good follower is not to fall into the begrudging attitude of servitude but needs to know when to say "no", either for the long-range benefit of the person he is serving or because he has surpassed his own capacity to meet that individual's need.

A good leader will use compassion in his leadership, knowing when and how he is to serve. A good leader is not to be a tyrant but needs to know when to say "yes"--that is, when to serve one of his followers.

To be good leaders, we must be good followers, first of Christ and then of one another.

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CHOOSING THE QUIET PALCE

1. Jesus' Teaching

- A. Read Luke 14:7-11. What place does man normally tend to choose? (vs. 7)
- B. What is, actually, the best place to choose? (vs. 10)
- C. Write Christ's principle in your own words. (vs. 11)

2. Paul's Example

- A. Following Paul's conversion, he did not return to the limelight in Jerusalem. Read Galatians 1:1, 11-24.
 - i. Where did he go? (vs. 17)
 - ii. How long was it before he went to Jerusalem? (vs. 18)
 - iii. What was he doing during this period? (vs. 1, 11, 12, 16)
- B. When Paul finally went to Jerusalem, it was only for a short time (Galatians 1:18, Acts 9:26-31). He left Jerusalem for Tarsus where, for the next nine years, he lived quietly. Barnabas, in the Lord's timing, brought Paul away from the quiet place (Acts 11:22-26).

3. Again, Francis Schaeffer summarized the mentality so well:

Jesus commands Christians to seek consciously the lowest room. All of us--pastors, teachers, professional religious workers and non-professionals included--are tempted to say, "I will take the larger place because it will give me more influence for Jesus Christ." Both individual Christians and Christian organizations fall prey to the temptation of rationalizing this way as we build bigger and bigger empires. But according to the scripture, this is backwards: "we should consciously take the lowest place unless the Lord himself EXTRUDES [emphasis added] us into a greater one."⁷

CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVANT-LEADERS

1. Read Ezekiel 34:1-6.

- A. What have these "shepherds" been doing? (vs. 2-3, 4b)
- B. How did they not care for the flock? (vs. 4)

Chapter Three - The Servant King

2. Read I Peter 5:1-5.
 - A. Note the contrast between this and Ezekiel 34:1-6. What are the good shepherds to do? (vs. 2a)
 - B. How are they to do it? (vs. 2b, 3)
 - C. What is the key to good leading and following as described by Peter? (vs. 5)
3. A Servant-Leader is...
 - A. A person of vision and creativity, whose sights are fixed on Christ and who will follow Christ to the heights;
 - B. A person of humility, an enabler of others, a catalyst, one who seeks the quiet place, one who leads by serving and one who seeks to glorify Christ;
 - C. A person who is impulsive to move at the Holy Spirit's promptings, sensitive and volunteering to meet the needs of others.

DAVID, THE SERVANT-KING

1. Read I Samuel 16:1-13.
 - A. What was God's attitude toward Saul? (vs. 1)
 - B. What was God going to do? (vs. 1b, 3b)
 - C. What is the distinction between man's and God's assessment of leadership (vs. 7)?

Note: Although David was anointed and recognized by God as King at that time, he didn't serve as King until later.

2. Read I Samuel 16:14-23. How did God's Servant-King minister to King Saul?
3. Read I Samuel 18:5-16.
 - A. Note in I Samuel 18:5 that David followed Saul's orders.
 - B. How did Saul react to David's growing reputation? (vs. 9, 12, 15)
 - C. What did Saul try to do while David was serving him?

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4. Read I Samuel 24:1-12. Summarize, in your own words, those things that characterized David as a Servant-King.
5. Christ is the ultimate Servant-King. In this passage we see many parallels between David's character and behavior and Christ's. List 3 or 4 similarities you see between David and Christ.

TIME OUT...

This week, take time to meditate on and/or memorize this verse:

Then they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today, will serve them, grant them their petition and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." I Kings 12:7

YOUR PART...

Consider leading and following in light of this diagram:

----- (-----) -----
Arrogance Leading Following Self-Depreciation

Mark an "X" at the point between arrogance and self-depreciation that best reflects your own position. Describe ways you can move to a more balanced position. If you fall outside of leading on the side of arrogance, how can you move toward following? If you fall outside of following on the side of self-depreciation, how can you move toward leading? Think of three specific things you can do this week. Share these with your group or with other people who will hold you accountable; report your results to them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MOTIVATION FOR SERVICE

Last Chapter...

In our first chapter we saw that Christ turned the world's value system upside-down. Man's normal goal is to be master, but Christ says that we should aspire to be servants. In our second chapter we saw examples of servants--God, Jesus and our fellow man. This was followed by a chapter on Servant-Leadership.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter we want to deal with our motivation for service--“Why am I to serve?” This is an age-old question. How it is answered is dependent upon our view of the world, as well as our understanding of the relationship between faith and works.

There are three major divisions in this chapter. In the first division, we will look at the seeming paradox between faith and works. Secondly, we will examine the humanist's response to the question, “Why am I to serve?” Thirdly, we will study the biblical response to this question of motivation.

Study...

FAITH AND WORKS

For years the Church has been divided over the issue of “faith and works,” or “law and grace.” Are we saved by our works or by our faith? Do we serve (work) in order to be saved? Are we saved by faith? If so, are we free from needing to serve or keep the law? The Bible seems to teach two very contradictory things at the same time.

1. Read Romans 4:1-8. Paul implies, “We are saved by _____.” (vs. 5)
2. Read James 2:18-26. James seems to say, “We are saved by _____.” (vs. 24)
3. The key to answering the question of motivation for service is found in resolving the age-old question of the relationship between law and grace. To resolve this seeming paradox, we must understand what Christ has done for us. However, let us first see how humanism answers the question “Why am I to serve?”

HUMANIST RESPONSE TO “WHY AM I TO SERVE?”

Humanism--being man-centered--invades the Christian's thinking in one of two ways, giving two different answers to the question “Why am I to serve?” We find these two mentalities expressed in the Church of the first century, as well as in the Church of today.

1. Answer #1--Legalism (taught by the Judaizers of the early Church). This answer says:

“I serve (do good works/keep the law), in order to receive a reward (be saved/go to heaven).”

A. Read Matt. 6:1-8, 16-18. Record the reward being sought.

B. List several ways you act to receive this type of reward.

2. Answer #2--Antinomianism (taught by the Libertines of the early Church). This answer says:

“I am saved by faith/grace; therefore, there is no need to serve/work/keep the law. Because I am free (saved already), I can do anything I want.”

A. In Romans 6:1, 15, Paul addresses the Libertines. Likewise, Peter addresses them in I Peter 2:16.

B. List several ways you might use grace as a license in your own life.

In either case the “man-centered” position leaves the Christian in a trap. On the one side is the assumption “I can be good enough” and the result will be the guilt of continued failure. On the other side, the Christian will be imprisoned in the trap of self-service, never knowing the joy of serving others.

THE BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO “WHY AM I TO SERVE?”

The biblical response is in contrast to humanism's response. Humanism tends to imprison us in legalism or free us from all responsibility. But God's message to us is that we are free to serve. The Christian's response to the question “Why am I to serve?” is three-fold. However, each response is rooted in the finished work of Christ.

Let's first look at the foundation for our motivation--the finished work of Christ--and then at the three-fold motivation for Christian service.

1. The Work of Christ--The Foundation for Wanting to Serve
 - A. Read Romans 5:6-11. This passage describes the work of the servant.
 - i. For whom would some dare to die? (vs. 7)

 - ii. How did God demonstrate His serving love? (vs. 8)

Chapter Four - The Motivation for Service

- iii. How did Christ demonstrate His serving love? (vs. 8)

- iv. What are the “titles” given to those who receive Christ’s serving love? (vs. 6, 8, 10)

- B. Read Romans 11:30-32.
 - i. What word does God use to describe “sinners” in this passage?

 - ii. Though we are all sinners, what does God “give” us?

- C. Read Ephesians 2:1-7.
 - i. What words does God use to describe us? (vs. 1-3)

 - ii. What three things did God do for us “when we were dead”? (vs. 5-6)

 - iii. Why did He do these things? (vs. 4)

 - iv. How does this understanding of who we are affect our ability to serve?

WHILE WE WERE SINNERS, CHRIST SERVED US.
HE GAVE US THE GIFT OF HIS LIFE!

- D. Think about the word “THEREFORE.” What does it mean? How is it normally used?
 - i. Read I Corinthians 6:19-20. According to this passage, what has God done?

THEREFORE, on the basis of what God has done for you, what are you supposed to do?

 - ii. Read Ephesians 4:1. The word “THEREFORE” in this case refers back to the grace of God found throughout Studies I-III. An example is found in Ephesians 2:5-9 above. On the basis of what God has done for you, what does Ephesians 4:1 say that you are supposed to do?

 - iii. Read Romans 12:1-2. The word “THEREFORE” refers back to the “mercies of God” in Romans 11:30-32. On the basis of what God has done, what are you supposed to do?

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- iv. Throughout the Bible, we find this concept of “THEREFORE.” Because of the work of Jesus Christ--and because of the gifts of grace and faith--THEREFORE we are to work and to keep the law. Luke 1:74 indicates that we have been redeemed, so that we might serve. Because Christ served--THEREFORE--we are to serve.

 - v. The question “Why do I serve?” is tied in with the relationship between faith/works and law/grace. Service does not win our salvation, nor are we free from service because of grace. Faith and works are symbiotic in their relationship--they are different, but they mutually respond to and benefit each other. God’s gift of salvation through faith (Romans 4:1-8) and the outflow of our salvation in works (James 2:18-26), while not the same, are functionally inseparable. WE ARE SAVED TO SERVE.
2. Building on This Foundation--There are three answers that we, as Christians, can give to the question “WHY AM I TO SERVE?”
- A. Answer #1--Thankfulness: I serve because I am grateful.
 - i. Read I John 4:9-11. God has given His love to us. God’s desire is that we respond in love. If we were as we should be, our thankfulness would be poured back to God by loving Him and one another. Notice verse 11: “If God so loved _____, we also ought to _____.”
 - ii. God’s serving love is meant to be passed on. Read John 21:15-17. As Kefa Sempangi writes in A Distant Grief:

“Perhaps you are thinking now that giving is a two-way street, but to tell you the truth, it is a flowing river. It does not stop or return, but only passes on ... but it will not be an opportunity to repay those from whom you received, it will be a time to pass your gift on to someone else.”⁸
 - iii. Using your own name, write the first reason for service:

I, (name) _____, am to serve because_____.
 - B. Answer #2--Pragmatism: I serve because it is God’s design and I expect His blessings in response to my obedience.
 - i. Read Isaiah 58:6-12. How does the true fast in verses 6 and 7 relate to service?

Isaiah 58:8-12 is a conditional promise. Identify the conditions:

 - a.

 - b.

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And the promises:

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

ii. In summary, God has designed us to function best, to be all that He wants us to be and to receive His blessings when we are serving others.

iii. Using your own name, write the second reason for service:

I, (name) _____, am to serve because _____.

C. Answer #3--Obedience: I serve because I am told to do so.

i. Read Galatians 5:13-14. God has given His serving love to us and He desires for us to respond with love. We are not always as we should be, but that does not mean that we are free from the command to serve. The bottom line is obedience and we are commanded to serve.

ii. Read Luke 17:7-10. What things are demanded of the slave? (vs. 7-8)

a. On the basis of this passage, does the servant need to be thanked?

Yes _____ No _____ Why or why not?

b. What two things mark the servant's attitude? (vs. 10)

iii. Using your own name, write the third reason for service:

I, (name) _____, am to serve because _____.

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TIME OUT...

Spend adequate time meditating on and/or memorizing:

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude,
by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.

Hebrews 12:28

YOUR PART...

A. When you have served people in applying these lessons, what rewards did you receive?

List five acts of service that you have performed and evaluate them on the basis of these three motivations for service:

Act of Service	Thankfulness	Pragmatism	Obedience
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

B. Do some form of service anonymously this week, so that only you and God will know what you have done. ("Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."--Matthew 6:3)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Last Chapter...

In our previous chapters we have observed that God is a serving God and, therefore, there is no conflict between the concept of leadership and service. In fact, a good leader will be a good follower. In the last chapter, we examined the three motives a Christian has for service: (1) love and thankfulness for the Father; (2) pragmatism (i.e., service is the task that God has intended for us and is, therefore, the best for us); and (3) obedience to God and His commands.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter, we want to examine the context of our service. We will look at those elements that give definition to our service. As runway lights delineate the proper place for an airplane to land, so the points of context provide a guide for our service. While there may be many such points, we want to examine five in this lesson.

Know and Do...

Our goal in this chapter is to come to know more fully the richness of our inheritance and to allow this new understanding to draw us into serving people whom we may naturally tend to avoid.

Study...

FIRST POINT OF CONTEXT: A SERVANT BELONGS TO SOMEONE ELSE

To whom do we belong--to ourselves or to Christ?

To understand this first point of context--that a servant doesn't belong to himself--let's first look at its opposite, which was expressed by Scottish writer George MacDonald as "the first principle of Hell ... that I am my own."

1. Belonging to Ourselves

A pastor once illustrated the differences between Heaven and Hell. Both have beautiful banquet tables filled to overflowing with food. All the inhabitants of each place are seated at the tables, but they all have stiff arms that cannot bring food to their own mouths. The ones in Heaven are well fed, but those in Hell are starving. In Heaven each person serves another; in Hell each person is waiting to be served.

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In Hell, each person's world centers around himself and his own needs. We express that, too, by our actions and thoughts--"I am the most important thing in the universe, the world, my country, my school, my family, my office, my life." To maintain this preoccupation with self, men create their own gods.

- A. Read Galatians 4:8. Before a person comes to be a servant of the living God, he is a slave of those things that are "no gods." These things may have the appearance of gods in that they are the focus of our time, attention and affection. In reality, they are "no gods."
- B. Read Hosea 8:6 and Jeremiah 16:20. What does God call these creations?
- C. Read Psalms 135:15-18. What is the meaning of the phrase "Those who make them will be like them"?
- D. Read II Timothy 3:1-5. This passage lists some false gods. In this space record these substitute gods and/or their attributes. Circle those that cause problems in your own life.
- E. The English word "idolater" comes from the Greek "ELDOLATRES," meaning an "image-servant." We either serve God, or we serve images.
- F. Read Romans 6:16, 18. If we serve these false gods, are we enslaved by them?
_____ Are we owned by them? _____
- G. Read Philippians 2:19-22. What does Paul say about the condition of many of the Christians who surround him? (vs. 21)

2. Belonging to Jesus Christ

"We belong to another, to Jesus Christ"--in understanding this first point of context, we see that a servant's focus, or preoccupation, is on Christ.

- A. In Philippians 2:20-22, what four things set Timothy apart from the others?
- B. Read I Corinthians 6:19-20.
 - i. According to this verse, to whom do we belong?
 - ii. Why do we belong to Him?
 - iii. What is our responsibility to our owner?
- C. Read Galatians 6:14. According to this verse, what is to be the focus of our lives, the focus of our boasting?

Chapter Five - The Context of Service

Practically speaking, list some things about which you boast. You may not boast about these things aloud, but they may give you a sense of pride, confidence and superiority. Possible answers include good looks, job, athletic ability, wealth, accomplishments, talents, education, family heritage, character qualities, etc.

D. Read Philippians 3:4-9.

i. List the seven things about which Paul could boast. (vs. 5-6)

ii. What does Paul “count” these things as? (vs. 7-8)

iii. In this “accounting ledger” of Paul’s, he lists all his “human assets” on the liability side of the ledger. What ONE thing does he list as a true asset? (vs. 8)

E. Read Galatians 2:20.

i. Whom is this verse about? Why do you say that?

ii. List those things that the verse states that Christ has done for you.

iii. How many times do the personal pronouns “I” and “me” occur in this verse?

Christ is to be our focus, yet we do not cease to exist or be important. We are to live fully and abundantly in Christ, but we are not to serve or belong to false gods.

F. Read Hebrews 12:1-3. In our race of life, what is our focus? How do we keep it?

**Summary of our first point of context:
We belong to another – To Christ, therefore we serve**

SECOND POINT OF CONTEXT: A SERVANT IS A WORSHIPPER

1. Read Matthew 4:10. What two things are we to do for God?

2. More than half of the times that the word “worship” is found in scripture, it is associated with the word or concept of service. What is the significance of this association? Write a statement describing the principle of the relationship between worship and service.

3. A woman had a wooden plaque made for her kitchen. It read, “Worship services held here three times a day.” What did she understand about her meal preparation?

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4. Read Romans 12:1, What is to be our “logical” response to God’s mercy?

**Summary of our second point of context:
Because we are worshippers of God, we serve.**

THIRD POINT OF CONTEXT: A SERVANT IS A CHILD OF GOD

1. Read Ephesians 1:3-6, which shows God’s kindness to us.

A. He has chosen us in Him that we should be... (vs. 4)

B. He predestined us to... (vs. 5)

In Ephesians 2:2-3, we were called, by nature, “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath.” But Ephesians 1:5 assures us that we are ADOPTED into the family of God.

C. According to Ephesians 1:3, what has God given His children?

D. What does this mean for you?

2. Read Ephesians 2:4-6.

A. List the three things that these verses say God has done for His children.

B. What does this mean in terms of the way we live?

3. Read Romans 8:14-17. The relationship our Heavenly Father wants with us is an intimate one. We are to approach Him as “Abba” or “Daddy.” Ponder on that thought for a moment ... the Creator of the Universe wants us to call Him “Daddy”!

A. What does it mean to be an heir? (vs. 17)

B. Of what are we heirs? (vs. 17)

C. What does it mean if we are fellow heirs with Christ? (vs. 17)

4. Read Matthew 7:7-11.

A. List the three things a child of God is to do in approaching the Father. (vs. 7)

Chapter Five - The Context of Service

- B. What does the Father give the child? (vs. 11)
- C. Do you think that the thing given is always the thing requested?

Yes _____ No _____ Why or why not?

**Summary of our third point of context:
Because we are children of God, we serve.**

FOURTH POINT OF CONTEXT: A SERVANT IS A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Because we are children of God, we are part of the same family.

Read Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:4-5; and I Corinthians 12:12-14. What is the analogy that Paul uses to describe the intimacy of our relationship with one another and with Christ?

The little phrase “one another” is used 48 times in the New Testament to describe how we, as Christians, are to relate within the Body of Christ. We are told, for example, to love one another, serve one another and pray for one another.

Because of this:

The servant is never alone. He or she should have close companionships, committed relationships and fellowship throughout life. There should be no “Lone Ranger Christians.”

**Summary of our fourth point of context:
We are part of the Family of God – The Body of Christ –
Therefore we serve on another.**

FIFTH POINT OF CONTEXT: A SERVANT IS UNDER AUTHORITY

1. Read John 6:38.
 - A. Whose will did Christ come to do?
 - B. Ultimately, what did this mean for His own life?
 - C. What does this obedience give to God?
2. Read each of the following verses and list some of the ways that we, as servants, are under authority.
 - A. Ephesians 5:21
 - B. Ephesians 6:1

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C. I Peter 2:13-14

D. I Peter 2:18

E. I John 2:3-6

F. I Corinthians 11:3

**Summary of our fifth point of context:
Because we are under authority, we serve.**

TIME OUT...

Take time this week to meditate on and/or memorize:

I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance... but I have
this against you, that you have left your first love.
Revelation 2:2a,4

YOUR PART...

Refer to our fifth point of context to answer these questions.

1. Are there people, institutions, or positions to which you have difficulty submitting?
(Examples: parent, spouse, teacher, school, supervisor, employer, pastor, friend, government, fellow-believer, a certain law, etc.)
2. Describe the way(s) you are to submit to them.
3. This week, how can you demonstrate submission to them?
4. Ask God to change your attitude and heart about submitting to this person, institution, position, or law. Please share this with a friend and ask for encouragement and prayer.

The Master Weaver weaves the threads of our lives together in a beautiful fabric. As He calls us to serve those whom our lives touch, let us remember our first love. Our service must remain forever within the context of His life and work. Let us not serve other gods, including the god of service or good works.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SERVANT'S LIBERTY

Last Chapter...

Reflecting on our previous chapters, we see that we may have discovered some new themes. We have discovered that the omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal God is a serving God. We have seen, because Christ is servant and King, that godly leadership is servant-leadership.

Sneak Peak...

Very often, the concepts we consider conflicting are, instead, complementary. We will find this true again in our present chapter. We think of servants and slaves as being in bondage. So they are. Yet, we find that, in Christ, servants and slaves are free.

We will examine three major areas: (1) the nature of slavery or bondage, (2) the nature of freedom and (3) the practice of freedom. Let's pray together that the One who has come to set us free will help us understand our liberty and enable us to live as free men.

Know and Do...

Our goal in this chapter is to learn more of our freedom in Christ, to translate that into an atmosphere within our churches where we, as Christians, can grow into all that God has for us.

Study...

THE NATURE OF BONDAGE OR SLAVERY

1. Use a dictionary to study the words "bondage", "slavery" and "slave." Write your own two-sentence definition of slavery.

People enslaving people ... we are a race of slavers. We enslave others institutionally and we enslave ourselves by our lifestyles.

2. Institutional Slavery
 - A. Consider these advertisements from two U.S. newspapers; one from Charleston, South Carolina, in 1796 and the other from The New Orleans Bee in 1830. This mentality considers people as property.

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- i. "... they are not negroes selected out of a larger gang for the purpose of a sale, but are prime. Their present owner, with great trouble and expense, selected them out of many for several years past. They were purchased for stock and breeding negroes,..."
 - ii. "A negro woman, 24 years of age, and her two children, (one eight and the other three years old) said negroes will be sold separately or together, as desired."
- B. We see institutional slavery today in the apartheid of South Africa and the "white slave trade in the Muslim world."
- C. In both the Old and New Testaments, institutional slavery is acknowledged as a reality. Mosaic Law prohibited the abuse of slaves and Christ's life and teachings set the standards for ending slavery. However, slavery remained a reality in the cultures of biblical times.
- D. Read the following passages and describe how slaves were acquired among the Hebrew people.
- i. Leviticus 25:44-46
 - ii. Leviticus 25:39-43
 - iii. Exodus 21:2-4
 - iv. Exodus 21:5-6
- E. We must remember that, in the Roman world of the first century, 80 percent of the entire population was enslaved. Slavery cut across vocational lines. Professionals such as artists and doctors were slaves, as were "menials," such as cooks and grounds keepers. Read I Peter 2:18-19.
- i. What is assumed by Peter?
 - ii. What is his counsel to the Christians who are slaves? (vs. 18)
 - iii. Why does he counsel in this way? (vs. 19)
2. Other Definitions of Bondage
- In the modern world bondage is not only experienced in institutional slavery. People may be in bondage for other reasons, such as:
- A. Socio-political structures that limit freedom of speech, press, religion, education, etc.
 - B. Lack of the basic needs of life--jobs, housing, medical care, food, etc.

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- C. The world's lifestyles, values and "pecking order"--the bondage of having one's own way.
 - D. Spiritual bondage--being bound in sin and death.
3. What areas of bondage have you personally observed?
- A. In others?

 - B. In yourself?

THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

1. The Work of Christ for our Freedom
- A. Read II Corinthians 3:17. What do we find when we find the Spirit of the Lord?

 - B. Read Galatians 5:1, 13.
 - i. To what has Christ called us?

 - ii. What is the warning? Of what must we be aware?

 - C. "ELEUTHERIA" is the Greek word for "liberty" or freedom" found in the three previous passages. The method of freeing a slave was explained in this way by W.E. Vine in The Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words:

"... among the Greeks [it] was effected by a legal fiction, according to which the manumitted (freed) slave was purchased by a god; as the slave could not provide the money, the master paid it into the temple treasury in the presence of the slave, a document being drawn up containing the words "for freedom." ("ELEUTHERIA"). No one could enslave him again, as he was the property of the god."⁹

Here is one of the wonders of what God has done. The myth of the Greek society--that a slave was purchased by a god--is fulfilled in history by Christ.

 - D. The thought of freedom is also developed in another Greek word, "AGORAZO," which means "to buy." The "AGORA" was the marketplace of ancient cities, where people came to buy and sell their wares. (Slaves, also, were bought and sold in the marketplace, at the slave market.) The word "AGORAZO" means "to purchase or buy in the marketplace for the full price." A sister word, "EXAGORAZO," is translated "redeemed" and is used, especially, in the case of purchasing slaves to set them free.¹⁰ "EXAGORAZO" is used in the following scriptures.
 - i. Read I Corinthians 7:23. How did Christ free us?

 - ii. Read I Peter 1:18-19 and Revelation 5:9. What was the payment used to free us?

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E. Read I Corinthians 7:20-24. Remember that legalized slavery was a way of life and that most Christians were slaves.

i. When a slave became a Christian, what happened? (vs. 22a)

ii. When a freedman became a Christian, what happened? (vs. 22b)

Notice that the institution of slavery is secondary to true freedom.

iii. Write the principle established in these verses in your own words.

2. Our Freedom is in Christ.

Read Galatians 2:4. Notice that our freedom is in CHRIST. Acts 17:28 and Ephesians 1:3-14 affirm that all that we are and have is in Christ.

3. Three Major Elements to our Freedom

A. Legal liberty: Freedom from the penalty of sin and freedom with God. Read Romans 8:1 and complete the following: "In Christ I am free because _____."

B. Personal liberty: Freedom from the propensity to sin and freedom to live righteously. Read Romans 6:2-7, 18, 22. Complete the following: "In Christ I am free because _____."

C. Social liberty: Freedom from greed and freedom to love and serve others. Read Galatians 5:13-15. This social liberty makes Christians "love-slaves." Complete the following: "In Christ I am free because _____."

THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM

1. Freedom of the Heart

Refer to I Peter 2:18-19 and Colossians 3:22.

A. Who is being addressed?

B. What are they told to do?

C. What is their attitude to be?

D. Richard Foster, in Celebration of Discipline, has summarized the biblical attitude:

"The revolutionary thing about this teaching is that these people, to whom first-century culture afforded no choice at all, are addressed as free moral agents. Paul gave personal moral responsibility to those who had no legal or moral status in their culture. He made decision-makers of people who were forbidden to make decisions."¹¹

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Bondage to Christ means freedom; freedom from Christ means bondage to the world.

2. Form and Freedom

- A. In our modern, secular society, freedom is defined as the absence of restraint. Absolute freedom is the ideal, the goal--to do whatever I want, whenever I want. This concept of freedom is not freedom at all; it is anarchy. True freedom always has limits. When is a train most "free"? On or off the tracks?
- B. Francis Schaeffer, of L'Abri Fellowship, described the balance in which we live as free men. He explained that people normally see truth or doctrinal orthodoxy in rigid terms, a pinpoint on a line:

----- X -----

Everything to the right of the point is RIGHT; anything to the left is WRONG. However, Schaeffer said, Christ describes truth in a dynamic fashion; He establishes principles--not do's and don'ts--that are to guide our lives:

(-----)

A Christian's faith can be in danger outside of either point, but there is freedom between the points. Such guides as the Ten Commandments and Christ's words and life become the directing principles--the forms--the boundaries of our freedom. The ministry of the Holy Spirit and the mind of Christ become the guiding principles of our lives, pointing where we should be, at any moment, within those established boundaries.

In matters of certainty in scripture let there be unity among all Christians. In matters of opinion let there be freedom for each Christian to stand at a different place. In all matters let charity reign.

3. Three Principles for Daily Life¹²

A. The Principle of Liberty

- i. Read Galatians 5:1, 13a again.
- ii. Read John 10:7-10.
- iii. Complete the following statement: "In Christ I am free to _____."
- iv. While the Principle of Liberty sets freedom and life before us, it is not without boundaries. The Principle of Liberty is restricted by the next two principles. The Principle of Love takes precedence over our liberty as we relate to other Christians and the Principle of Expediency overrides our liberty as we relate to non-Christians.

B. The Principle of Love (applied towards Christians)

Refer again to Galatians 5:13b, Philippians 2:2-4 and I Corinthians 8:9-13.

- i. According to Philippians 2:3, what should be my attitude towards other Christians?

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- ii. Complete the following statement: As I relate **to fellow Christians**, my freedom is limited because _____.”

C. The Principle of Expediency (applied towards non-Christians)

- i. Read I Corinthians 9:19-23 and I Corinthians 10:23-24. What has Paul become? (vs. 22)

Why has Paul limited his freedom? (I Corinthians 9:22-23)

- ii. Complete the following statement: As I relate **to my fellow human beings**, my freedom is limited because _____.”

We have been made free to serve. Martin Luther said it very well: “A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all and subject to everyone.”¹⁵

TIME OUT...

Take time this week to meditate on and/or memorize:

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
Galatians 5:13

YOUR PART...

Read the following three application exercises:

1. Read back to section 3.b. (pg. 48). Think of an area of bondage in your own lifestyle (for example, needing to have your own way, an insatiable dependence upon another person, etc.).
2. Find an area where you bind people when the scripture allows freedom (e.g. “never drink,” “don’t go to movies,” “don’t... “).
3. Identify an area in your life where you exercised your liberty and it hurt somebody (e.g. drinking, going to movies...).

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Now, select one of the above areas.

1. Identify the area of need in your own life.
2. Prayerfully draw up a plan for bringing this area under God's control.

Share your plan with a friend or your group. Pray, begin to use the plan and report back.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SERVANT'S SUFFERING

Last Chapter...

In the last two chapters, we have dealt with the context of our service and the Christian's freedom to serve.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter, we will examine the suffering found in the Christian life.

1. At issue is not the suffering we bring upon ourselves by our own sinful choices or by self-imposed martyrdom.
2. Likewise, we are not going to deal with the issue of evil in the world. (Evil is responsible for much suffering, but our focus is Christ's suffering and its counterpart in the lives of His followers.)
3. We will be looking at the entry of suffering into the world as a consequence of the Fall.
4. We will examine how God can use even the calamities that befall us for good.
5. We will examine Christ's suffering and the nature and "goal" of suffering for Christians.

Know and Do...

We seek to understand that the suffering we encounter in the Christian life can be used of God to mold us and mature us in Christ. We will look for concrete ways to help minister to someone who is suffering.

Study...

Comfort, personal peace and affluence stand out as some of the most sacred and desired values of Western society. We sacrifice almost anything, including Christ, for this "good life."

We act as if we believe that if something is comfortable and feels good, then it is good. Conversely, we seem to believe that if something hurts, is difficult and requires work, then it is bad. Personal peace--the avoidance of struggles and trials--is a high priority. Affluence--having what we want, when we want it--is another of our goals. Unfortunately, these goals of the secular society often become the goals of the Church.

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Therefore, prosperity and affluence have become embedded in our theology--“God wants the best for His people and the best is the good life.” There is no place in this theology for the poor, for the Third World, or for the Beatitudes. If you don’t have the best, it is because you lack faith--you have failed to “name it and claim it.”

How sad and silly this must appear to the Somali refugee who has come to know Christ. How profane it must seem to the church inside Communist Vietnam or North Korea. How this must make our Father weep.

Having said this, however, we must also avoid glorifying poverty, suffering and conflict. We must take care not to react to the “theology of comfort” by making suffering our goal and source of pride.

It is God’s ideal that His people have the best, but the best must never be defined solely in material terms. Realistically, a fallen world is marked by suffering. That suffering, however, is not without purpose or benefit.

THE FALL - THE ENTRY OF SUFFERING INTO THE WORLD

1. Before the Fall all that God made was in harmony with Him. In fact, in Genesis 1:3-31, He judged each act of creation by one of two phrases--“It is good” or “It was so.”
2. Read Genesis 3:1-7. This records the beginning of man’s rebellion against God.
3. Read Genesis 3:8-19. We begin to see the consequences of the Fall. The Fall brought pain and suffering into the world.
 - A. How did it affect the woman in childbirth? (vs. 16)
 - B. How did it affect the man in his work? (vs. 17-19)
4. Read Romans 8:18-23.
 - A. What words are used to describe the suffering in the created order? (vs. 20-22)
 - B. What words describe our suffering? (vs. 23)
 - C. For what are we waiting? (vs. 23b)
 - D. For what is the rest of creation waiting? (vs. 19, 21)
5. As we saw in Romans 8:20-21, suffering is normal in the fallen world. As Christians we accept its reality and work and pray against it. We are not to seek it, nor are we to pretend it doesn’t exist. As Ephesians 6:10-18 teaches, we are in a battle against the forces of evil; and we need to be equipped for that battle.

Chapter Seven - The Servant's Suffering

6. Because the Fall has made suffering normal, everyone will suffer. The questions exist: "Do we suffer because of our own folly or because of someone else's? Does suffering produce bitterness or faith, degeneration or growth?"

In My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers said:

"We say that there ought to be no sorrow, but there is sorrow, and we have to receive ourselves in its fires. If we try and evade sorrow, refuse to lay our account with it, we are foolish. Sorrow is one of the biggest facts in life; it is no use saying sorrow ought not to be. Sin, sorrow and suffering are, and it is not for us to say that God has made a mistake in allowing them.

"Sorrow burns up a great amount of shallowness, but it does not always make a man better. Suffering either gives me my self, or it destroys my self."¹⁴

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

1. As we have discovered in previous studies, Christ is The Servant.
2. Mark's Gospel is often called the Gospel of the Servant. In Mark 10:45, Jesus established the theme of the Gospel when He said, "The Son of Man... [came] to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." Up to this point in the narrative, Christ's service has been described; after this point in the narrative, His suffering is described.
3. The passage of scripture that describes the Suffering Servant, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, is often called the "Fifth Gospel." Read the passage and list the ways in which the Messiah served in His suffering.
4. In addition to suffering physically on the cross, Christ also underwent great rejection throughout His life. Read the following passages and list those persons who rejected Christ.
 - A. Mark 3:21
 - B. John 5:16-18
 - C. Matthew 26:56b
 - D. Matthew 26:47-50
 - E. Matthew 27:20-23
 - F. Luke 22:54-62
 - G. Matthew 27:45-46

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5. Christ suffered for two primary reasons. It is imperative for our life in Christ that we understand both reasons. Read the following passages. Identify the two reasons and describe what each means for your own life.

A. Reason #1: _____ (John 1:29 and I John 2:2)

B. Reason #2: _____ (I Peter 2:20b-21)

THE NATURE OF OUR SUFFERING AS CHRISTIANS

1. Suffering is a part of our calling.

A. Read I Peter 2:20-21 and I Peter 3:14, 17.

i. How does Peter describe this part of our calling? For what do we suffer?

ii. What are some examples of “suffering for doing what is good” in our day?

iii. How does this differ from the suffering which the world experiences as a result of the Fall and sin (the suffering “for doing evil” mentioned in I Peter 3:17)?

B. Read Philippians 1:29. Of what two things does our calling consist, according to this passage of scripture?

C. We are grateful for the first aspect of our calling--believing in Him. What is your reaction to the second aspect of our calling? What do you think or feel about it?

2. Suffering is a part of our glory.

A. Read I Peter 4:12-16, 19.

i. What is to be our response to sharing the sufferings of Christ?

ii. In a country where freedom to worship is in our heritage and law, how do we suffer? How are we insulted for the Name of Christ? Does part of our suffering include that people “take advantage” of our willingness to serve?

B. Read Romans 8:17-18. What will follow the servant’s suffering?

As Bible commentator William Barkley has stated, “To suffer with Christ is not a penalty, it is our glory.”

THE GOAL OF SUFFERING

1. C.S. Lewis said: "The tortures occur. If they are unnecessary, then there is no God or a bad one. If there is a good God, then these tortures are necessary."¹⁵
2. Read Hebrews 2:9-10, 17-18.
 - A. What was God the Father doing to Christ ("the author of their salvation")? (vs.10b)
 - B. What means did the Father use? (Hebrews 2:10b, 18a)
 - C. What was the result of this process for Christ? (Hebrews 2:17, 18b)

3. Read Hebrews 5:8.
 - A. What did Christ learn?
 - B. How did He learn it?

Notice that suffering can be used as a tool for learning. It can produce growth. Even Christ was "qualified" for leading us because of His suffering.

4. Read II Corinthians 11:23-33. In this passage, Paul recited the areas of suffering which he had endured.
 - A. List those of Paul's sufferings that you imagine were the most difficult for him.
 - B. How do you respond to Paul's suffering? Have you considered suffering to be an expected part of the Christian's life or something that comes only to the "unfaithful"?

5. Read James 1:2-4.
 - A. As Christians we don't seek suffering, but what is our attitude to be when we are faced with trials? (vs. 2)

The J.B. Phillips paraphrase of this verse tells us that we are not to resent the trials as intruders but to welcome them as friends!

- B. Why are we to have this attitude? Are we trying to be martyrs? No! We are to have this attitude because we realize that God is making us, like Christ, "Perfect (holy) and complete (whole), lacking in nothing." (vs. 4)

Testing -----> Endurance -----> Perfection/completion

Servanthood

C. We pray to have the love of Christ, but the only way to have that love produced and exhibited in our lives is to be faced with someone unlovely. Similarly, we pray for patience, but the only way to learn patience is in the classroom of tension. We pray for hope, but the only place to learn hope is in a hopeless situation. We pray for humility, but the only time to learn humility is when our lives fall apart. Do not pray to be like Christ and then look for ways to remove your suffering, for the trials and suffering may be an answer to your prayer.

6. Streams in the Desert, a daily devotional book, teaches about the Christian's response to trials in its September 7th lesson:

"God uses trouble to teach His children precious lessons. They are intended to educate us. When their good work is done, a glorious recompense will come to us through them. There is a sweet joy and a real value in them. He does not regard them as difficulties but as opportunities." (Selected)¹⁶

and

"There are two ways of getting out of a trial. One is to simply try to get rid of the trial and be thankful when it is over. The other is to recognize the trial as a challenge from God to claim a larger blessing than we have ever had and to hail it with delight as an opportunity of obtaining a larger measure of Divine grace. Thus, even the adversary becomes an auxiliary and the things that seem to be against us turn out to be for the furtherance of our way. Surely, this is to be more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (A.B. Simpson)¹⁷

7. Likewise, the January 9th reading of Streams in the Desert provides a beautiful illustration of God's hand in the difficult times of our lives:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

"Kept for nearly a year is the flask-shaped cocoon of an emperor moth. It is very peculiar in its construction. A narrow opening is left in the neck of the flask, through which the perfect insect forces its way, so that a forsaken cocoon is as entire as one still tenanted, no rupture of the interlacing fibers having taken place. The great disproportion between the means of egress and the size of the imprisoned insect makes one wonder how the exit is ever accomplished at all--and it never is without great labor and difficulty. It is supposed that the pressure to which the moth's body is subjected in passing through such a narrow opening is a provision of nature for forcing the juices into the vessels of the wings, these being less developed at the period of emerging from the chrysalis than they are in other insects.

"I happened to witness the first efforts of my imprisoned moth to escape from its long confinement. During a whole forenoon, from time to time, I watched it patiently striving and struggling to get out. It never seemed able to get beyond a certain point and, at last, my patience was exhausted. Very probably the confining fibers were drier and less elastic than if the cocoon had been left all winter on its native heather, as nature meant it to be. At all event, I thought I was wiser and more compassionate than its Maker and I resolved to give it a helping hand. With the point of my scissors, I snipped the confining threads to make the exit just a very little easier and, lo! immediately and with perfect ease, out crawled my moth dragging a huge swollen body and little shriveled wings. In vain, I watched to see

Chapter Seven - The Servant's Suffering

that marvelous process of expansion in which these silently and swiftly develop before one's eyes; and as I traced the exquisite spots and markings of diverse colors which were all there in miniature, I longed to see these assume their due proportions and the creature to appear in all its beauty, as it is, in truth, one of the loveliest of its kind. But I looked in vain. My false tenderness had proved its ruin. It never was anything but a stunted abortion, crawling painfully through that brief life which it should have spent flying through the air on rainbow wings. I have thought of it often, often, when watching with pitiful eyes those who were struggling with sorrow, suffering and distress; and I would fain cut short the discipline and give deliverance. Short-sighted man! How know I that one of these pangs or groans could be spared? The far-sighted, perfect love that seeks the perfection of its object does not weakly shrink from present, transient suffering. Our Father's love is too true to be weak. Because He loves His children, He chastises them that they may be partakers of His holiness. With this glorious end in view, He spares not for their crying. Made perfect through sufferings, as the Elder Brother was, the sons of God are trained up to obedience and brought to glory through much tribulation."¹⁸

THE VICTORY THROUGH SUFFERING

1. As servants, we will be insufficient for the task that God has given us. But God is sufficient for the task to which He has called us.
2. Read II Corinthians 12:7-10. Paul had been given a "thorn in the flesh." This thorn is something that caused him great difficulty and suffering.
 - A. According to II Corinthians 12:8, how many times did he pray for it to be taken away? Did God take it away?
 - B. What two related promises did God make? (vs. 9)
 - C. What two reasons does Paul give as to why he is contented with weakness? (vs. 9-10)
 - D. How can this understanding affect your life?
 - E. God manifests His strength through our weaknesses. Give an example of this in your own life.
3. Read Philippians 4:13. Can you think of three other passages of scripture that promise God's help for us in times of trial?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

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4. We need to allow God to work with us in times of suffering. We block His work when we refuse to forgive our enemies and allow bitterness to take root and grow. We will not benefit from suffering unless we forgive. What do the following three passages teach us?
 - A. Matthew 18:21-22
 - B. Matthew 6:14-15
 - C. Hebrews 12:14-15

THE SERVANT'S SUFFERING - A REVIEW

Suffering... it is common to man, because of the Fall. Christ, the Servant, suffered, so that mankind could overcome the effects of the Fall. We are to follow His example and to suffer for His sake. Suffering is a part of our calling and it is a part of our glory. As we allow Him, God will use our trials for our growth and completeness. We must recognize that, through the suffering, the victory comes. We must recognize, too, in times of suffering, that God the Father has us in the palm of His hand.

TIME OUT...

Take time this week to meditate on and/or memorize:

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4

YOUR PART...

1. Look for an event of suffering in your life that resulted in bitterness.
 - A. What was the event?
 - B. How did you respond?
 - C. What do you think God wanted to teach you through this suffering?
 - D. How could you have responded in a way that would have produced faith and growth?
 - E. Take time to ask God to forgive and remove any bitterness that may still remain and could hinder your walk with God.

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2. Identify someone who is suffering this week. Find a way to serve that person.

3. Think of a current cause of suffering in your life. How can you allow God to use it for your growth?

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SERVANT

Last Chapter...

In the previous lessons, we have seen that our ambition in life is to serve people in the name of Christ. We have seen examples of servants, our motivation for service and the context of our service, discovering that we are not our own but that we belong to another--to Christ.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter, we will focus on the attitude we are to have as servants. It is, of course, possible to serve in a wooden, mechanical fashion ("This is my duty--I do it only because it is right"). It is also possible to serve with a grudging spirit. But God has made it possible for us to serve with joyful, willing hearts.

As we consider the love that God has shown us in His Son, Jesus Christ, we see that we are free to give of ourselves in love. What, therefore, is to be the attitude of our heart and the posture of our lives? Let us pray that God will create in us the mind and attitude of Christ as we serve.

Know and Do...

The goal of this chapter is to learn that attitudes have consequences in our lifestyles, to identify an attitude we need to change and to begin to seek this change in a concrete way.

Study...

HUMILITY OF MIND

1. In Chapter 2, we examined Philippians 2:1-11 and looked at the seven steps of Christ's humiliation. This attitude of humiliation--this mind and heart set--is to be ours as followers of Jesus Christ. List the contrasts of attitudes found in Philippians 2:3-5:

THE WORLDLY MASTER

A.

B.

C.

THE GODLY SERVANT

A.

B.

C.

Servanthood

The contrasting attitudes shown above can be summarized by the words “pride” and “humility.” Pride is the curse of man in his natural state, while humility is a gift given by God.

2. Using a dictionary, write down the definition of each word.
 - A. Pride

 - B. Humility

3. Use a concordance or Bible dictionary to find the scripture’s usage of each word.
 - A. Pride

 - B. Humility

4. What are some other words that mean the same thing?
 - A. Pride

 - B. Humility

5. Humility comes from having a correct perspective of God and ourselves, while pride comes from having an improper view of ourselves and God. What do the following verses suggest about this?
 - A. Jeremiah 9:23-24

 - B. II Corinthians 10:17-18

6. What does God think of a humble person? Why do you think God places such a high value on humility? Read I Peter 5:5-7.

7. How does one become humble?
 - A. Check one:
 - i. By concentrating on being humble. _____ Why or why not?

 - ii. By concentrating on the person of Jesus. _____ Why or why not?

Chapter Eight - The Attitude of the Servant

- B. Whose job is it to make us humble? See James 4:10 and Luke 14:11.
 - C. If 7.a.2. doesn't happen, what will? See Luke 14:11 again and Proverbs 16:18.
8. Read Luke 14:7-15, Christ's Parable of the Guests and instructions on dining etiquette.
- A. How did the proud person act in each illustration?
 - B. How did the humble person act in each illustration?
9. Humility comes to a Christian out of a preoccupation with One who is greater than himself--a preoccupation with Jesus Christ. Pride comes out of preoccupation with ourselves. Pride can come in two forms:
- A. Thinking too highly of ourselves--"God can't get along without us"
 - B. Thinking too lowly of ourselves--"God can't do anything through us"
- Both attitudes have a wrong focus on self.**
10. What do the following verses illustrate?
- A. I Corinthians 12:15-17
 - B. I Corinthians 12:21
11. Which form of this pride (preoccupation with self) do you struggle with?
12. What are some of the ways pride is revealed in your own life?
13. Read Romans 12:1-3. How can these verses help us counter the tendency to pride?

THE HEART ATTITUDE OF THE SERVANT

1. The Servant's Heart Attitude towards God
- A. What attitude is expressed in the following verses?
 - i. I Corinthians 16:13-14
 - ii. Hebrews 11:8

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B. In each of the illustrative passages below, put yourself in the place of the person being addressed. Describe what each person would have to fear and explain the response of each person to the call of God.

i. Luke 1:26-38 (Mary)

a. Fear

b. Response

ii. I Samuel 3:1-18 (Samuel)

a. Fear

b. Response

iii. Acts 9:10-19 (Ananias)

a. Fear

b. Response

The servant has a great love for God and a deep trust in uncertain circumstances.

2. The Servant's Heart Attitude towards his Ministry

A. Read John 8:50, 54. To whom did Christ draw attention?

B. Read John 16:13-14. To whom did the Holy Spirit draw attention?

Notice that both Christ and the Holy Spirit are "other-centered". Their lights do not illuminate themselves--they each pointed to another.

C. In your own words, summarize what is taught in Matthew 6:1-2, 5, and 16.

A Kenyan pastor once said that a good servant manifests himself by his work not by his presence; you see the service, not the servant.

"The late Indira Gandhi once stated, 'My grandfather once told me that there are two kinds of people--those who take the work and those who take the credit. He told me to try to be in the first group for there is much less competition there.'... The servant of the Lord may not care which other people get the credit, but he cares greatly that his Lord gets the credit."

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“A large group of European pastors came to one of D.L. Moody’s Northfield Bible Conferences in Massachusetts in the late 1800’s. Following the European custom of the time, each guest put his shoes outside his room to be cleaned by the hall servants overnight. But, of course, this was America and there were no hall servants.

“Walking the dormitory halls that night, Moody saw the shoes and determined not to embarrass his brothers. He mentioned the need to some ministerial students who were there, but met with only silence or pious excuses. Moody returned to the dorm, gathered up the shoes and, alone in his room, the world’s most famous evangelist began to clean and polish the shoes. Only the unexpected arrival of a friend in the midst of the work revealed the secret.

“When the foreign visitors opened their doors the next morning, their shoes were shined. They never knew by whom... Perhaps the episode is a vital insight into why God used D.L. Moody as He did. He was a man with a servant’s heart.”
(Gary Inrig, Career Life Times, April 1989)

**The servant’s ministry is to be so conducted
that it draws attention to God and glorifies God.**

3. The Servant’s Heart Attitude towards Other People
 - A. Read Hebrews 5:1-2. Consider that each believer now participates in the priesthood (I Peter 2:5, 9) and has been given a “priestly” method of dealing with people.
 - i. Refer to Hebrews 5:2. What is the servant’s priestly attitude to be?
 - ii. Towards what types of persons is this attitude directed?
 - a.
 - b.
 - iii. What is your natural attitude towards these types of people?
 - iv. What must we realize to have a more godly attitude?
 - a. Read Luke 13:10-16 and Mark 6:31-34, 46. What attitude does Jesus exhibit in each of these situations?

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- b. Read Luke 10:30-37. List how the self-centered religious people and the other-centered Samaritan responded to a need.

SELF-CENTERED

1.

OTHER-CENTERED

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

- B. The two words used to describe the Samaritan's responses are "compassion" and "mercy." Use a dictionary, concordance, or Bible dictionary to discover the rich meaning of these words.

Compassion

Mercy

The servant is to have an attitude of compassion for those he is serving.

4. The Servant's Heart Attitude towards Possessions

- A. Read Acts 20:33-35. What describes Paul's attitude towards:

- i. Other people's possessions? (vs. 33)
- ii. The use of his own possessions? (vs. 34, 35)

a.

b.

c.

- iii. Why is it more blessed to give than to receive?

J.R.R. Tolkien, in his series of fantasies, took this biblical teaching seriously when he discussed the Hobbits' custom at a birthday celebration. In the book, the person who is

Chapter Eight - The Attitude of the Servant

celebrating his birthday gains great pleasure in having a party in which he gives gifts to all his friends.

4. Read Hebrews 10:32-36. This is a most remarkable passage.
 - A. What is to be a servant's attitude when his possessions are stolen?
 - B. Why is he to have this attitude?
 - C. Too often, we are possessed by our possessions. God intends us to "keep the flow going." We are to be channels of His blessings, rather than reservoirs

**The servant is to have an attitude of
sharing his resources.**

5. The Servant's Heart Attitude towards Circumstances
 - A. Read Philippians 1:12-14. Paul has been imprisoned for approximately five years, the last two in Rome. Yet, he stands above his circumstances. List the positive things that Paul sees in his imprisonment.
 - B. Read I Thessalonians 5:18 and Ephesians 5:20. Which of the following is to be our understanding of these verses? (Circle one.)
 - i. We are to give thanks only sometimes.
 - ii. We are to give thanks only when things are fun and easy.
 - iii. We are to give thanks only when things are going our way.
 - iv. We are to give thanks most of the time.
 - v. We are to give thanks when we feel like it.
 - vi. We are to give thanks only when we know that our circumstances are sent by God.
 - vii. We are to give thanks always and in everything.

**The servant is to give thanks
in all circumstances.**

6. The Servant's Attitude towards Fellow-Workers
 - A. Read Acts 19:18 and James 5:16. What do these passages indicate is to be a practice among Christians?
 - B. Let us not be romantic and think that Christians don't sin. "For all have sinned [in the past] and fall short [continuing in the present] of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Your friends will fail you. Expect it. Forbear with them.
 - C. List those attitudes we are to have towards other servants.
 - i. Ephesians 4:1-3

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ii. Ephesians 5:21

iii. Romans 14:3-4

The attitude of the servant towards fellow workers is to be one of confession, mutual submission, acceptance and seeking unity.

TIME OUT...

Take time this week to meditate on and/or memorize:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:3-5

YOUR PART...

“Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

1. Identify those areas in your pride (focusing on yourself) that prevent you from being more like Christ.
2. If you study this with a group, pray that God will give each one of you the heart attitude and physical posturing of a servant.
3. Be especially sensitive to people this week. Seek someone in need and pray that, like the Good Samaritan, you will have compassion and show mercy.
4. Make note of your heart attitude, compassion, mercy, posture and service in the Servanthood Journal that you used in the Your Part section of Chapter two.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CONDUCT OF THE SERVANT

Last Chapter...

In our chapter on motivation for service, we saw that our lives as servants stem from the grace of God--we have been saved so that we can serve. In our chapter on the context for service, we learned that we are children of God, children who not only are to live in the power of that relationship but are also to imitate the Father. In our last chapter, we saw that we are to have the same attitude as "The Servant", Jesus Christ.

Sneak Peak...

All of these chapters lead us to our present subject--that of the conduct of the servant. What is our behavior to be like? What is to be our moral character?

Know and Do...

We will know that we are to affirm a godly lifestyle before a watching world. We will identify one area in our own lives in which we will begin a new habit.

Study...

These are important questions for servants living, as we do, in a particularly amoral society. Our "moral" slogans abound--"Do your own thing" "If it feels good, do it" "Do whatever works" "Have it your way" and "Look out for Number One!"

Are we, as Christians, free to live by these philosophies? Can a person have the vocational calling of a servant and, at the same time, morally resemble the world?

This man-centered (humanistic) attitude of moral relativism (morality based on personal opinion rather than divine revelation) has, unfortunately, pervaded the Church. Our lives as Christians have been affected in at least two ways:

We often (consciously or unconsciously) accept the world's standards of behavior as our own.

and/or

We often overreact to the world's moral relativism by creating our own moral relativism. If we do this, our Christianity becomes a series of "do's" and "don'ts" which are not established by scripture.

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Servants of Christ must not mimic the world in moral conduct, but they also must not overreact by creating their own rules of conduct. Servants of Christ must seek to imitate the conduct of Christ, the Godly Man.

CONTRASTS OF THE SERVANT'S CONDUCT

To see what the servant's conduct is to be, let us look at what it is not to be.

1. The Servant's Conduct vs. the Natural Man's Conduct

Read Titus 3:1-5 and contrast the conduct of the godly man with that of the natural, ungodly man.

<u>Godly</u>	<u>Natural</u>
A.	A.
B.	B.
C.	C.
D.	D.
E.	E.
F.	F.
G.	G.

Notice in verse 5 that we are saved by His mercy, not by our conduct. Notice, too, that the ungodly man is humanistic in his approach to life. He says there is no God... and then he acts as if there is no God.

2. The Servant's Conduct vs. the Hypocrite's Conduct

The hypocrite's conduct is radically different from that of the servant. His conduct differs, too, from that of the ungodly man, in that the hypocrite says that there is a God... but he doesn't act like it.

A. The following excerpt is from Shadow of the Almighty, by Elisabeth Elliot. She first quotes the Apostle John and then writes about the godly principle of obedience exemplified by her husband, Jim Elliot, a martyred missionary.

"It is only when we obey God's laws that we can be quite sure that we really know him. The man who claims to know God but does not obey His laws is not only a liar, he lives in self-delusion. In practice, the more a man learns to obey God's laws, the more truly and fully does he express his love for Him. Obedience

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is the test of whether we really live 'in God' or not. The life of a man who professes to be living in God must bear the stamp of Christ.

"These words, written about A.D. 90 in the First Epistle of John, embody the radicals of Jim Elliot's life. Obedience leads to knowledge. Obedience is the expression of love to God. Obedience means that we live in God. And if we live in Him, our lives bear the stamp of Christ."¹⁹

- B. The hypocrite is self-deluded; he claims to know God but is not obedient. Real hypocrisy is saying that something is true and then acting as if it were not true. To "bear the stamp of Christ," there must be a relationship between what we profess to be true and how we live.
- C. If we are honest with ourselves, we find that we are often in the category of the hypocrite. Read Luke 18:9-14. We must cry out, with the tax collector:

"_____."

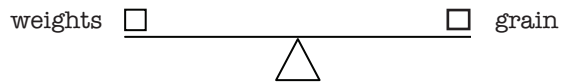
THE SERVANT'S CALLING - TO WALK WORTHY

- 1. The Bible uses the phrases, "walk in a manner worthy" and "conduct yourself in a manner worthy."

"Walk," or "conduct" refers to a lifestyle. Our lifestyle, or conduct, is to be worthy of something.

What does the word "worthy" mean?

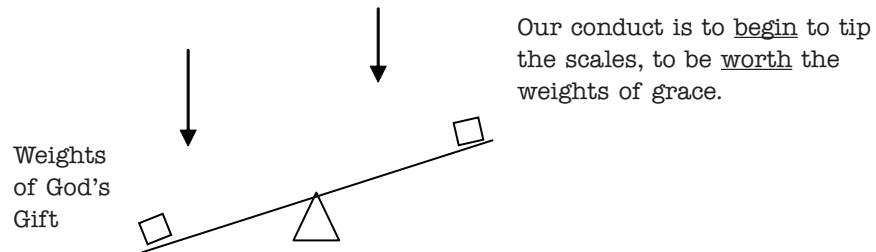
- A. The word is "AXIOS" in the Greek.
- B. We get our English word "axis" directly from the Greek. "Axis" means the point of balance.
- C. "AXIOS" literally means "deserving", "comparable" or "worthy."
- D. The word picture painted by "AXIOS" is that of a scale in the marketplace. The merchant establishes the worth of a market item by the scale. One side of the scale holds the market item (grain, for example). The other side holds the weights.



Both the merchant and the buyer want to make sure of the "worth," or the value, of the market item.

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2. As we progress in this chapter, we will see that God has given us something and that He calls us to “walk worthy” of His gift--to have conduct that is comparable to the worth of His gift.



3. Read Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:10; and I Thessalonians 2:10-12. List the gifts of which we are to walk worthy.

A. Gifts from God:

B. How would walking worthy of them affect our lifestyle and conduct?

4. Is it possible to completely achieve the balance on the scale and become worthy of God's gift? Why or why not?

If you don't believe that it is possible to become completely worthy of His gift, do you think we should even attempt to “walk worthy”? Why or why not?

5. Another way of seeing this relationship between God's calling and our lifestyles--our “worthy walk”--can be seen in the following pairs of verses. Read the passages and fill in the answers.

A. Ephesians 1:4 - God has chosen us to be...

Ephesians 4:24 - ... and put on the new self of...

B. Ephesians 1:5 - God has predestined us to...

Ephesians 5:1 - Therefore,...

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6. In His mercy, God has declared certain things to be true for the believer in Christ. We are to live-to “walk worthy”--in the reality of those truths. Complete the following lists:

GOD DECLARES:

I am His son.

I am just in His sight.

I am _____ by Him.

I have hope in Him.

I have forgiveness.

I am _____.

THEREFORE, I AM TO LIVE:

a godly life.

_____.

lovingly.

_____.

_____.

righteously.

Summary: God’s conduct is in harmony with His own character. If we are in harmony with God through Jesus Christ, it will be reflected in our conduct. The servant is free, through Christ, to “walk worthy.”

THE NATURE OF THE SERVANT’S CONDUCT - GODLINESS

Paul’s first letter to Timothy is a letter from a father to a son, from a mature Christian to a young Christian, from an old servant to a young servant. In this letter, God is showing us the nature of the conduct of the servant’s life through the lives of Paul and Timothy.

1. Read I Timothy 3:14-15. Why is Paul writing this letter to Timothy, the young servant?
2. Read I Timothy 4:12. Even though Timothy is a young man, there is every reason for people to look up to him. Paul encourages Timothy to be an example of a godly person. In what areas does Paul call Timothy to be an example?
3. In terms of godly conduct, the discussion in this letter takes place in two areas--general character and relationships.
 - A. General Character: Paul has instructed Timothy to find godly men to be leaders of the church in Ephesus. In these instructions, he lists those moral-spiritual qualifications of godliness. Because Paul uses these character qualities as standards for godliness, they may be considered desirable characteristics for all servants, not only church leaders.

Read I Timothy 3:1-7. List these Godly character qualities in your own words.

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B. Relationships:

- i. Read I Timothy 5:1-2. In your own words, describe the Christian's conduct in these four basic relationships:
 - a. Older men
 - b. Younger men
 - c. Older women
 - d. Younger women
- ii. Use a concordance or Bible dictionary to study the word "purity." Write a definition.

Considering the moral climate in our own day, what are the implications of I Timothy 5:2 concerning treatment of younger women?

DEVELOPING THE SERVANT'S CONDUCT

Godliness is not something that happens automatically. It is like learning to walk or drive a car; it takes time, effort and practice. God's Holy Spirit is present, within the believer, providing the power, the motive and the example. But the believer's responsibility is to cooperate with God and develop the conduct of a servant.

1. The "Method"

- A. Use a dictionary to study the words "disciple" and "discipline." Write a definition of these words:
 - i. Disciple
 - ii. Discipline
- B. Use a concordance or Bible dictionary to study the word "exercise" or "train" found in I Timothy 4:7-8. What is the meaning of this word?

Note that the basic concept of the word is discipline.

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C. What is the relationship between the following?

i. Discipleship and discipline

ii. Discipline and godliness

2. The "Practice"

God has given us a threefold principle for practicing godly conduct. Read Romans 12:1-2 and Ephesians 4:22-24.

In each of these passages, Paul describes a threefold process for changing conduct from that, which is ungodly to that which is godly. If necessary, outline each passage to help you understand what God is saying.

In your own words, write the threefold relationship found in both passages.

TIME OUT...

Take time to meditate on and memorize the following passage:

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called. Ephesians 4:1

YOUR PART...

1. The Personal Evaluation provided in Appendix 1 at the end of the book is a composite of the relational characteristics which are mentioned in I Timothy 5:1-2 and the characteristics of godliness which are mentioned in I Timothy 3:1-9 and Titus 1:5-11. It is to be used for an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in your own life. Five identical copies are included. Fill out one copy for yourself. Give a copy to your best friend, another to a family member and the fourth to your pastor or leader. Ask each of them to be candid and to return their form to you as quickly as possible.
2. Using the forms, pick one area of weakness in your conduct and apply the threefold principle that you discovered in Section 2 of Godliness above.
 - A. Name the ungodly practice that is to be PUT OFF:
 - B. Write down several passages of scripture that deal with having the MIND OF CHRIST on this issue.
 - C. Name the godly practice that is to be PUT ON:

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3. Pray for God's help and ask a friend to encourage you!
4. What does the form tell you about your greatest strength? How should you use it to help others with whom you serve?
5. What does the form tell you about your greatest weakness? How can other people help you in this area?

Important Note: Please tear out the Personal Evaluation forms from the back of this manual. Make copies and distribute them according to the directions in the Your Part section on the top of this page.

CHAPTER TEN

THE PERSONS WE SERVE

Last Chapter...

In the previous chapter, we have examined what our lifestyle is to be as servants of Christ and how we can begin to walk in a manner worthy of our calling.

Sneak Peak...

As we approach the end of this series, we begin to focus on the two big questions--“Whom do we serve?” and “How do we serve?” In this chapter, we will deal with the first question--“Whom do we serve?”

Know and Do...

We will come to understand that we are to serve every kind of person. We will identify someone outside our normal circle of friends whom we can serve in a practical way.

Study...

In Bob Dylan’s song “Slow Train Coming,” he observed the spectrum of mankind and concludes that, no matter who you are, “You gotta serve somebody. It may be the devil, or it may be the Lord; but you’re gonna serve somebody.”

The Apostle Paul made the same assessment 2,000 years before. Read I Thessalonians 1:9.

We are, by nature, a self-serving race. In Christ, however, we find a Man who came to serve others. As His followers, our service is to be other-centered. We are to first serve our Creator and Redeemer; secondly, we are to serve our fellow men.

PRIORITY #1 - SERVING GOD

1. Read Psalm 100.
 - A. Whom are we to serve? (vs. 2)
 - B. How are we to serve Him? (vs. 2)
 - C. Why are we to serve Him? (vs. 5)

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2. Read Colossians 3:23.
 - A. In what manner are we to perform our services?
 - B. For whom are we to do it?
 - C. For whom are we not to do it?
3. As we learned in the lesson on motivation for service, our highest motive for serving should be thankfulness to God for His love.
 - A. Read I John 4:19. "We love, because _____."
 - B. Read Colossians 3:17. "WHATEVER you do, in _____ or _____, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to _____."

The center of our first, primary circle of service is God.



We worship God as we serve Him and others; we also serve Him as we worship Him. Sometimes, the busyness of service can take our eyes off the center of the circle--God. We must remember that God desires our times of prayer, praise and reading His Word as our service to Him, also. Read Psalm 119:15-16. What does this mean for your life?

PRIORITY #2 - SERVING THE FAMILY

In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) the Lord says that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." This authority, which he passes on to his fellows, quite literally means "freedom to serve." We normally think of authority as power to rule. Christ has set us "free to serve."

1. The Family of God:

God establishes a priority in our service to fellow Christians. Read I Thessalonians 5:14- 15 and Galatians 6:10. What is that priority?

2. Our "Human" Family:

- A. Read Ephesians 5:22, 25 and Ephesians 6:1-4. Which immediate family members serve? Whom do they serve?

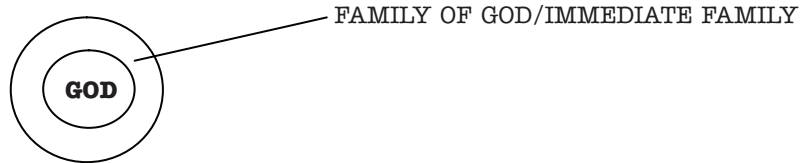
_____ serves _____ & _____ serves _____ serves _____ & _____ serves _____

This is summarized in Ephesians 5:21, which says: "_____."

Chapter Ten - The Persons We Serve

- B. Read I Timothy 5:4, 8, 16. How important is it to God that we take care of our families? If we don't, what does He say about us?

While our initial focus of service is on God, our second circle of service is the family--the family of God and our "human" family:



PRIORITY #3 - SERVING OUR FELLOWMAN

Our third priority of service is to our fellow men--to those outside the family of faith. How large is that circle to be? What are its boundaries?

1. Read Romans 1:14.
 - A. To whom is Paul under obligation?
 - B. In your opinion, why is he under obligation?
2. Read I Corinthians 9:19-23. How has this truth affected Paul's lifestyle?
3. Read Genesis 1:27. Notice that the scriptures teach us that all men are made in God's image. We are to treat them all as having the worth of an image-bearer. Is that thought a powerful motivation for us to serve our fellowman?
4. Read Galatians 5:13-14. We are free in Christ. We are not to _____ but we are to _____.
5. Read Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan.
 - A. In verses 25-26, an expert in the Jewish law tries to trap Christ. He asks, "What shall I do to have _____?" This is an academic question. Considering the original language and cultural mentality, the question is better phrased, "What one thing must I do to have eternal life?" Christ, as was His frequent response, did not answer directly but returned with a question, "What is written in the Law?" The lawyer responded from Deuteronomy 6:5 ("Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.") and Leviticus 19:18 ("Love your neighbor as yourself.") Notice the connection between the manifestation of love to God and to neighbor.

Servanthood

- B. Christ acknowledged that the lawyer knows the correct answer to the academic question (Luke 10:28). But Christ does not leave it at that. A mere intellectual understanding was not sufficient for the lawyer, nor is it for us today. We may not assume that all is well if we have the correct academic answer.
- C. Read Leviticus 18:5, to which Jesus refers in His conversation with the lawyer, when He says, “Do this and you shall live,” His response is not academic, but practical. In the Greek text, this reply had more force, meaning “I command you to love God and your neighbor continually--every moment of every day--and you shall have eternal life.”

- i. Is this possible?
- ii. In what position did this leave the lawyer?
- iii. Read Luke 10:29. What did the lawyer try to do?

To do this, the lawyer posed a second academic question—“Who is my neighbor?” If Jesus defined “neighbor” as “my best friend” or “the guy next door,” then the lawyer thought he might be able to meet the requirements. He thought, “With enough limits, I may qualify for Heaven.”

- D. Read Luke 10:30-35. To answer the lawyer, Christ told the parable of the Good Samaritan.

- i. Picture the two “good” Jewish religious leaders as they approach this broken and ceremonially unclean Jew. They are in a hurry to conduct their religious duties. Thinking of themselves, they are probably trying to justify their lack of response by applying this rule: “Is this my _____? ___!”
- ii. On the other hand, the Samaritan sees the injured Jew, his natural enemy, and has compassion on him. His question must have been: “What if this man is my _____?”
- iii. Which question do you tend to ask when you see or hear of a person in need?
- iv. Do you have another way of phrasing the above question to yourself, if you are trying to justify not helping a person in need?

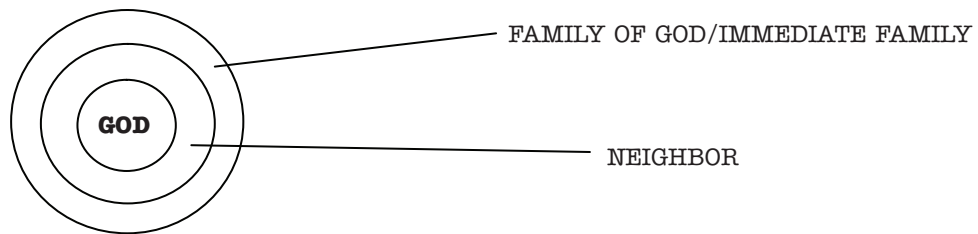
- E. Read Luke 10:36-37. Jesus answered the lawyer’s question with another. Notice the two questions:

- i. Lawyer’s question: “_____ IS my neighbor?”
- ii. Christ’s question: “_____of these PROVED TO BE a neighbor?”

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- F. Christ changed “neighbor” from a passive person to an activity. He changed it from an academic question to a practical operation:
- i. “To neighbor”
 - ii. “Neighboring”
 - iii. “Being neighborly”
- G. In Luke 10:36-37, Jesus implies that the “neighbor” is not the wounded Jew but the kindly Samaritan, because the Samaritan was “neighboring.” The answer to Christ’s question as to which of the three men was a neighbor to the injured man described the activity of the Samaritan. What did the Samaritan do?
- H. This activity was directed toward a Jew, the natural enemy of the Samaritan. Theologian John Stott said, “The attempt to restrict those to whom we have to love and serve is a posture of Pharisees, not Christians.”²⁰
- I. “Who is our neighbor?”--the needy person whom God brings across our path! “Who is the needy person’s neighbor?”--we are, as we serve him and help him with his need. We are not to have “savior complexes,” thinking that we are to deliver all the people in the world from all their problems; but we are to obey God in responding appropriately to the genuine needs and opportunities for service that He gives us.

Our circle of service now looks like this:



FURTHER UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE NEIGHBORS WE SERVE

We have seen that we are to serve God, our Christian and immediate families and our “neighbors.” Within the circle of service to our neighbors, we are specifically commanded to serve the stranger, the outcast, our enemies and the poor and needy.

1. The Stranger

Another word that helps define whom we serve is the word “hospitality.”

- A. Use a dictionary. Define “hospitality” and find synonyms.

Servanthood

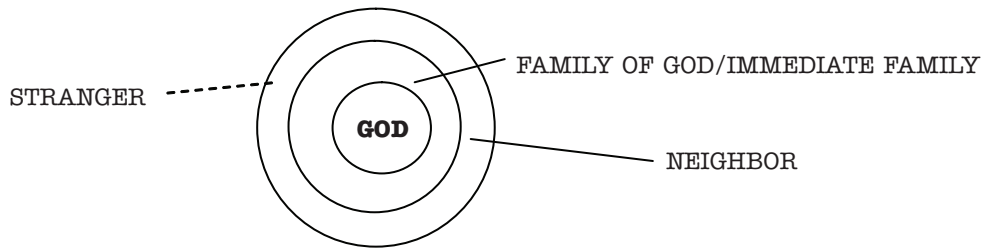
B. The Greek word for “hospitality” is “PHILOXENOS.” What can we learn about the meaning of “hospitality” in the day in which the New Testament was written? Here are the meanings of the two Greek root words:

- i. PHILO - lover of; fond of; friend of; one who has affection for
- ii. XENOS - foreigner, alien, stranger

“PHILADELPHIA” means “lover of brother,” “PHILANTHROPIA” means “lover of mankind,” and “PHILOSOPHIA” means “lover of wisdom.” Give the precise meaning of “PHILOXENOS”, the Greek word translated “hospitality.”

C. What, then, is the difference between our concept of hospitality and the Biblical concept?

D. Service to our neighbors includes service to the stranger:



2. The Outcast

A. Read Acts 10:1-48.

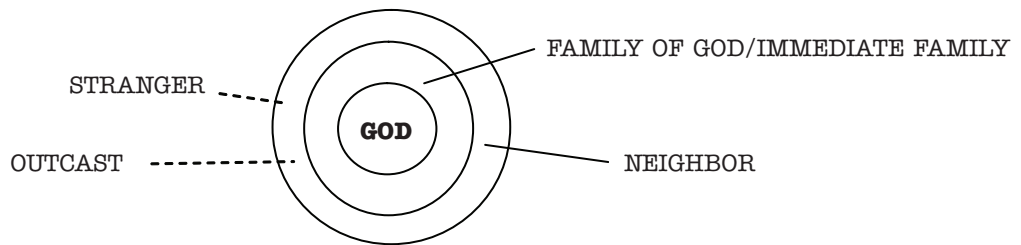
- i. As a good Jew, what was Peter’s attitude towards a Gentile? (vs. 14, 28)
- ii. Do you think that Peter ever heard Christ tell about the “Good Samaritan”?
- iii. If so, what should he have learned from that illustration?
- iv. Does Acts 10:9-17 indicate that Peter learned that lesson?
- v. Are we, also, sometimes slow to comprehend the truths of God?
- vi. How many times did Peter see this vision?
- vii. What was Peter’s response? (vs. 17a)
- viii. What circumstances did God arrange to teach Peter this practical lesson? (vs. 17b-22)

Chapter Ten - The Persons We Serve

- B. Can you identify some of the people you consider “unclean”? (Examples: people with particular lifestyles or beliefs; people from certain ethnic, social, or racial backgrounds; people with certain illnesses, problems, or limitations; or people of specific age groups.)

Are you able to pray that God would give you a willing heart to serve the “outcasts” in your life?

The Outcast, the “unclean” person, is within our third circle of service:



3. Our Enemies

The servant’s call goes beyond serving those he hasn’t met (strangers) and those with whom he may not relate well (outcasts). Christ calls us to a lifestyle that the world terms ridiculous-He calls us to love our enemies! It is one thing to love our friends, but it is quite another to serve those who hate us. It is worse, yet, to discover that God wants us to serve and love people we don’t even think we like!

Our Lord describes the servant’s mentality in the Sermon on the Mount. Read this description in Matthew 5:3-48 and Luke 6:20-49. The servant is to go beyond reciprocity.

- A. “Reciprocity” happens when two people have a mutual, similar exchange of emotion and action with one another.
- i. “Reciprocity” was the teaching of the humanistic Jew of Christ’s day. Two forms of reciprocity are mentioned in Matthew 5:43:
 - a. Recompense: “_____ your neighbor.”
 - b. Revenge: “Hate your _____.”
 - ii. Samuel Johnson said, “Kindness is generally reciprocal; we are desiring to please others because we receive pleasure from them.” Is this true in your life?
 - iii. What two examples of reciprocity does Christ give in Matthew 5:46-47?
 - a.
 - b.

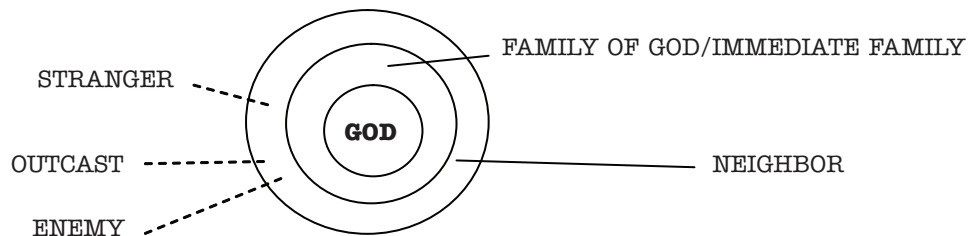
Servanthood

- B. Christ's call is beyond reciprocity to "AGAPE," which is a giving, one-way love. AGAPE" love requires us to serve people unilaterally, whether or not they serve or love us. Christ wants His followers to be initiators of love and service, not retaliators. In Matthew 5:44 Christ uses the little-big word "BUT" to introduce His teaching. What does He teach about our relationship to our enemies?
- C. Look at Luke 6:27-31. In these verses we find seven possible adversaries. Contrast man's natural response--retaliation--with the godly response--initiation of love and service:

<u>Type of Persons</u>	Man's Response: <u>Retaliation</u>	Godly Response: <u>Initiation</u>
Enemies	loathe	_____
Haters	_____	do good
Cursers	_____	_____
Abusers	take advantage	_____
Beggars	avoid	_____
Thieves	_____	do not ask for the return of your goods.

Whenever we suffer an injury or imposition we should base our response on "what is best for the person who injured us" and not on what best satisfies our natural inclination for retaliation.

Within the third circle of service to our neighbors is service to our enemy:



4. The Poor and Needy

Many times, the Bible teaches about our responsibility to the poor and needy. God has deep love for the poor and needy and we have a well-defined call.

- A. Read James 2:15-18. How are we to deal with a physically needy person?

Chapter Ten - The Persons We Serve

B. Read James 1:27. What are two of the categories of people who need the help of the Body of Christ?

i.

ii.

Does God expect us to serve them?

C. Read Isaiah 58:6-7. What other needy people is God concerned about? God accepts this, also, as service to Him. In fact, He calls this the kind of _____ He has chosen (vs. 6).

D. Read Matthew 25:31-46. What categories of poor and needy people does the King mention?

As we serve the needy, are we doing something necessary in the eyes of God? Are we doing something more than what it appears? If so, what? Does Jesus do more than love the needy? Does He identify with them? What does that mean?

Sister Mary Theresa of the Sisters of Charity describes the persons they serve:

“The poor, the unwanted, the dying--for us they are Jesus. Because God cannot tell us a lie--and Jesus said: ‘This is my Body. Whatever you do to these least of my brethren, you do to Me.’ So we touch Him twenty-four hours a day in His broken Body, in His often terrible disguise... we touch Him with our compassion.”²¹

We have learned that we have been called to serve the poor and needy and that this is (a) faith-in-action, (b) pure and undefiled religion, (c) the fast He has chosen and (d) a service to none other than the King Himself.

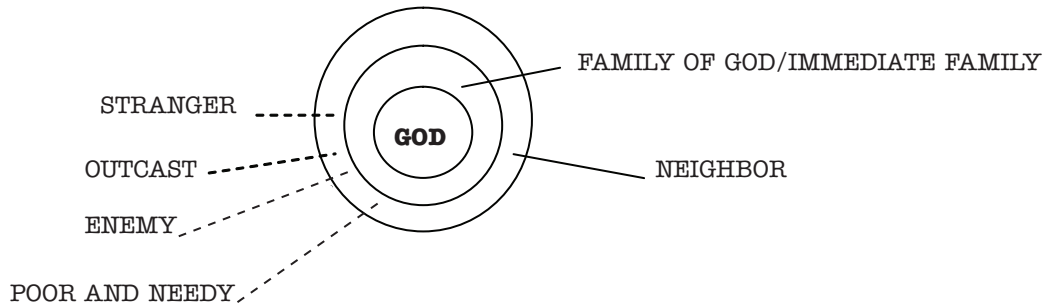
E. What are the effects of not serving the poor and needy? (Refer to Matthew 25:45-46a)

F. What are the benefits of serving the poor and needy?

- i. We have been obedient to God and have served Him.
- ii. The people we serve are not as needy as they were.
- iii. The needy may understand new ways to help themselves and others.
- iv. They may become Christians.
- v. We may learn much from them.
- vi. From the benefits mentioned in Isaiah 58:8-14
- vii. From the benefits mentioned in Matthew 25:46b

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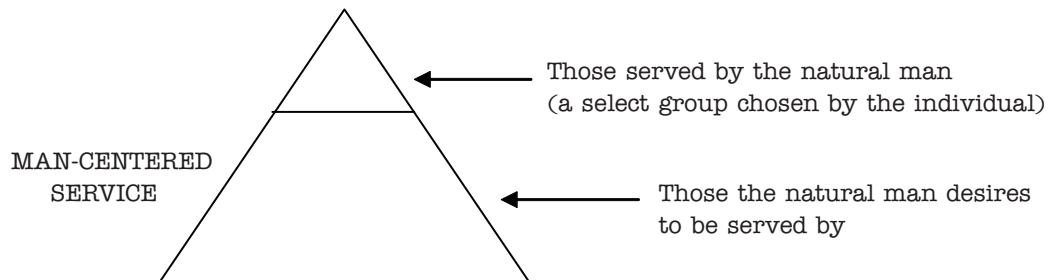
THE STRANGER, THE OUTCAST, OUR ENEMIES and THE POOR AND NEEDY--ALL ARE MADE LIKE GOD... THEY ARE THE VERY IMAGE OF GOD HIMSELF. They are all to be encompassed by the outer circle of those who have need--our neighbors.



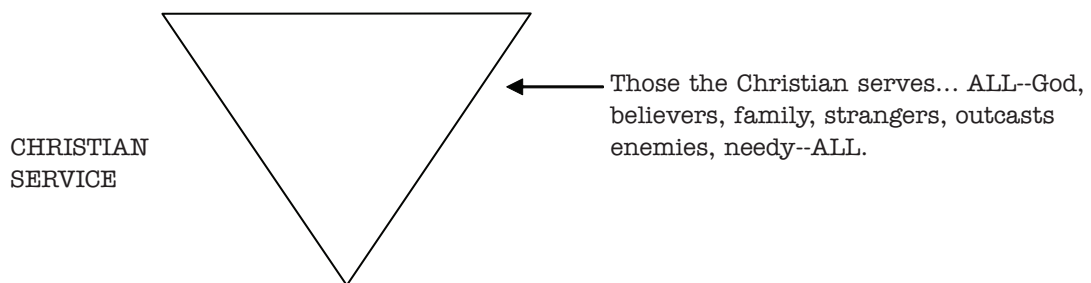
SUMMARY: WHOM DO WE SERVE?

We have seen that we serve God, our families and fellow believers, as well as others in need.

1. Our service to man is simply a manifestation of our love for the Father and our gratitude to the Son.
2. The natural man seeks to restrict the boundaries of service. (“What is the very least amount of service required here?” and “What acclaim will I receive for doing it?”)



3. Christ, however, turned things upside-down and taught that service knows no boundaries. (“How much service may I do?” “Whom may I serve?”)



Chapter Ten - The Persons We Serve

TIME OUT...

Take time to meditate on and/or memorize the following passage:

We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God" and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

1 John 4:19 - 21

SNEAK PEAK...

Would a watching world know that you serve Christ by the way you relate to God, your family, believers, strangers, outcasts, the needy and the people who seek you harm? How would you like to communicate your faith to a watching world?

Pray and ask God to direct you. Ask His Holy Spirit to show you the people He wants you to serve.

1. Think of someone who is outside your circle of friends:
 - A. A Stranger (someone you don't know)
 - B. An Outcast (a person or group against whom you are prejudiced)
 - C. An Enemy (someone with whom you have a broken relationship, tension, bitterness, or ill feelings--perhaps a family member, friend, team member, or authority figure)
 - D. A Needy Individual
2. Pray for this person or group of people. Ask God to help you serve them this week. If you have broken relationships with them, be willing to ask forgiveness from them and from God. Follow through with forgiveness and service. You may want to ask others to support you in prayer or service.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE WORK OF THE SERVANT

Last Chapter...

As we approach the end of this study on servanthood, let's pray that God, the Holy Spirit, has used these chapters to make each one of us more like our Lord and Servant, Jesus Christ. We have seen that there are to be no limits to the people whom we serve. All men bear the image of God and our Lord has stated that "whatever you do to the least of my brethren you do to me"; therefore, when we minister, we are ministering to Christ and giving thanks to the father for his salvation.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter, we want to look at the work of the servant. What is it that we are to do? Christ has called us to be servants, but how are we to serve?

Know and Do...

We will come to see that there are many common elements in our service, but there are also unique types of service based upon the gifts and abilities of the serving individual. We will begin to identify those areas in which we are specially gifted to serve.

Study...

Being a servant is primarily a matter of lifestyle. It is the functioning of our lives. We are not voted upon to become a servant. Service is not elective. In this, each of us is the same. Service is our common vocation.

There is a second element, however, and that is that we are each unique persons with individual gifts, interests and abilities. We are to function as servants within our own personalities. We will examine the work of the servant from these two perspectives:

1. serving is an assignment common to believers.
2. serving is carried out within the framework of each believer's individuality.

Servanthood

THE COMMONNESS OF SERVICE

1. Serving is common to all Christians

The work of the servant is an assignment that all Christians hold in common. As we have seen, “Christian” and “servant” are synonymous. Psalm 100 says:

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness;
Come before Him with joyful songs.”

This vocation is the common call of Christians; yes, even of all creation.

2. Service is common in all relationships

The work of the servant is common. It must occur in all our relationships.

A. In the very basic relationships of life, the servanthood of Christ is manifested in the way we relate to those around us. In Chapter 10 we saw that each family member is to serve the other. Now, read Colossians 3:17-22 and see how each serves:

vs. 18—wives

vs. 19—husbands

vs. 20—children

vs. 21—fathers

vs. 22--slaves/employees

B. The Christian is to serve any person, in any situation. No situation is too insignificant or too grand and no person is too high or too low.

3. Serving is common in its work

The servant’s work is common--it is work anyone could do.

A. I Corinthians 10:31 we are called to do all to the glory of God, even the mundane.

i. What things are then listed as examples of things to do?

ii. Why do you think Paul chose common examples rather than unusual examples?

B. The Christian is called to give dignity to what the world calls menial.

One time, on a cross-country trip a family stopped at a 1930’s vintage gas station high in the Rocky Mountains. Bracing for the worst odor and foulness, the father entered the men’s room. What greeted him was a spotlessly clean restroom with a vase of fresh cut flowers on the back of the toilet. The attendant at this station demonstrated that they knew something of God’s character.

Chapter Eleven - The Work of the Servant

C. Refer to Chapter one. Notice the three main words used in the New Testament for “servant.” Review, write down and meditate on their meaning.

i. doulos

ii. diakonos

iii. therapon

Notice that these words are describing menial or common tasks. When we serve in the way described by these words, we are both imitating Christ and serving him.

D. “The things that Jesus did were of the most menial and commonplace order and this is an indication that it takes all God’s power in me to do the most commonplace things in His way. Can I use a towel as He did? Towels and dishes and sandals, reveal more quickly than anything what we are made of. It takes God Almighty incarnate in us to do the meanest duty as it ought to be done.”²²

E. Make a list of those tasks that you consider menial--doing dishes, digging ditches, cleaning toilets, etc.

F. God calls us to serve in ways in which we are able. Read Mark 14:3-9.

i. What did the woman do? (vs. 3)

ii. How did Christ label her action? (vs. 6)

iii. What did Christ say this simple action would bring this woman? (vs. 9)

iv. How does Christ describe what she did? (vs. 8a)

v. If an act of service seems beyond us and we are unable to do it, it should be because we lack the ability. However, if we have the ability but do not serve, it is because of ...

G. Nadia Boulanger, pianist and teacher:

“There is nothing boring in life except ourselves. The most humble work does not have to be boring. I remember Madame Duvall, the old woman who cleaned the floor in my place in Gargenville. I think of her with profound respect and reverence. She was 80 years old. One day she knocked at my door and said, ‘Mademoiselle, I know you don’t like to be disturbed, but the floor, come and see it; it shines!’

“In my mind, Stravinsky and Madame Duval will appear before the Lord for the same reason. Each had done what he does with all his consciousness. When I said this to Stravinsky, who knew Madame Duvall, he said, ‘How you flatter me, for when I do something, I have something to gain. But **she**, she has only the work to be well done.’”²³

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H. Sometimes, our education and training do not equip us for service, but our willingness, humility and teachability do. In this task, our availability is more important than our ability. There is another dynamic element--we are not alone!

i. Read Acts 4:13. What was realized about Peter and John?

ii. Read Hebrews 13:20-21. With what will God equip us?

(Notice that it's God's same power to raise Christ from the dead that he uses to equip us!)

iii. Read John 14:26. How does the Holy Spirit equip us?

I. God's "chosen fast" (acceptable service) is servant's work. Refer, again, to Isaiah 58:1-7. In this passage, Isaiah is condemning the rebellion and sinfulness of God's people. They repent and seek God by fasting and "humbling" themselves. God then condemns their fasting and tells them what his chosen fast entails. List the characteristics of each fast:

man's chosen fast (vs. 3-5)

God's chosen fast (vs. 6-7)

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

v. _____

J. In both the Old and New Testaments, we see that God will judge His people by whether or not they have done their appointed work of service. Take another look at Matthew 25:34-40 and notice Jesus judging all the people of the earth according to how well they served Him.

i. In what ways does Jesus say that the righteous people served Him? (Matthew 25:35-36)

ii. In which of these ways have you served in the last month? You may answer in either a literal or a figurative sense. For example, you might have visited someone in prison--imprisoned either by jail bars or by depression.

iii. If you haven't served in these ways, what have been the barriers for such service?

4. Serving has a common basis--love.

A. Read I John 3:16-18.

i. How do we know what love is? (vs. 16a)

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- ii. What, therefore, should we do? (vs. 16b)
- iii. How are we not to love? (vs. 18)
- iv. How are we to serve/love? (vs. 18)
- v. What are the implications for the man who has the world's goods, sees his brother in need, but does not have pity? (vs. 17)
- vi. What are some of the things we have to share?

We have...

Our brother has...

a. Medical knowledge/aid

Sickness

b. Knowledge

Ignorance

c. _____

d. _____

- vii. Does having these resources give responsibility to the servant? (refer to Matthew 25:21)

B. Read I Corinthians 13:4-8a.

This passage describes the lifestyle of the servant in relationship with other people.

On the following chart list each of the characteristics of love and give a practical example.

Characteristic:

Practical Example:

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

v. _____

vi. _____

vii. _____

viii. _____

Servanthood

5. The Christian is to be a servant in all situations, with all that he is and has. Servanthood is a common task of great worth in the eyes of God.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S SERVICE

Each of us has the same vocation--service. We differ, however, in the individual gifts, interests and abilities with which we serve. God has given each of us spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6; I Corinthians 12:4, 11; and Ephesians 4:8). He has also given us certain "natural" interests and abilities--things that are part of our own personality and character that are not common to all Christians. These interests, talents and spiritual gifts point us in the direction of our "unique service." Considering this, how are we to do the work of service?

1. Unity and diversity within the body of Christ
 - A. Read I Corinthians 12:4-6. The church--the body of Christ (unity)--is made up of many parts (diversity).
 - B. According to this passage, there are ...

Different kinds of

But the same

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

The Trinity is an example of unity-diversity. In each verse Paul refers to a different person of the Trinity.

- C. I Corinthians 12:4-6 implies an infinite variety of combinations of gifts, services and effects. Each Christian has been given at least one gift. Many different ministries or services may flow from that one gift and each one of those particular ministries can have a myriad of effects in other people's lives.
- D. Read I Corinthians 12:7 and Ephesians 4:11-13. What is the purpose of the variety of gifts?

We should complement others in the body of Christ. At the same time, we should affirm our own unique gifts and styles of service. We are free in Christ. We don't need to copy anybody else's gift. Each of us is unique, one of a kind. God doesn't make any "clones."

2. Your unique gifts

What are your unique gifts and abilities? What makes your service special? What type of work does the father have for you to do?

- A. Read John 17:4. God had a specific work for Christ. Read Galatians 1:15-16. What did Paul say about his calling?

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- B. In addition to God's general will for us (our common service), He also has a specific will for each of us (our special service). Read Romans 12:3-8.

This passage gives us some guidelines for discovering our special area of service.

- i. Evaluation (Romans 12:3)--"think of yourself with _____." As we studied earlier, we are to have an accurate self-assessment. We are to see ourselves as God sees us... Not thinking too highly or too poorly of ourselves.
- ii. Coordination (Romans 12:4-5)--"we who are many form _____." We are to realize that our special service finds its full potential as it complements and works together with the service of others. We are to cooperate, integrate and coordinate.
- iii. Participation (Romans 12:6-8)--"let him use it in proportion to _____." Our special gift is to be used, to be shared in ministry to other Christians and to our neighbors. There is a direct tie between the measure of our faith and the use of our gifts. Participation in ministry requires that we use the gifts we have been given--the more faith that we have, the more usable our gifts will be.

- C. God has made each of us special for a reason. He has a place for each one of us to minister. Thank Him for His creativity!

There is a simple exercise in the application section of this lesson helping you discover the special service that God has for you.

MANIFESTING SERVICE

1. God, manifesting service to us
 - A. Read John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that... "
 - i. How different it would be if the verse ended with a period after the word "world"!
 - ii. What is the difference? It is the word "that"! God loved so much that he did something about it. "That" refers to the manifestation or demonstration of His love.
 - B. Manifestation is simply taking something that is true in a non-material sense and demonstrating that truth in a physical way.
 - C. In Michelangelo's painting of creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, God has just created Adam. Eve, though, is in God's mind and not yet created. If God had said, "I have a wife in mind for you," how different would it have been for Adam? What do you think Adam's reaction would have been if God had left her in His mind?
 - D. If God had said, "I have a plan of salvation in mind", what good would that have done? If God had merely said, "I have a great idea", where would we be today?
 - E. Read the following verses:
 - i. I John 4:9. How did God manifest His love?
 - ii. John 5:17, 14:8-10. How did Christ manifest the Father?

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2. The servant's manifesting service
 - A. In the past God manifested Himself through the prophets and then through His Son Jesus. Now, He has chosen to manifest Himself--make Himself known--through the church, the body of Christ.
 - B. In Hebrews 11:1 we find this statement: "now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Watchman Nee has explained that faith is giving substance to the things we say are true. We say that Christ is Lord and faith gives substance to that by the way we live.
 - C. Read I John 2:4-6. How do we manifest (give substance to the fact) that we serve God?
 - D. Read Matthew 25:31-40. How do we manifest (give substance to the fact) that we serve God?
 - E. God manifests His love towards us. We may manifest our love to Him through our service, both in our common tasks and in our unique ministries.

TIME OUT...

Take time to meditate on and/or memorize the following verse:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:1-2

YOUR PART...

1. Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you guidance and wisdom.
2. On a separate sheet of paper, make a list of all the things you enjoy doing. (Include the things for which you have an interest but no particular ability. Include all you can think of--cooking, reading, speaking, carpentry, hiking, etc.)
3. On another sheet of paper, make a second list of all the things you do well. (Here, include the things for which you may have an ability but no particular interest. Include all you can think of--accounting, housekeeping, learning languages, counseling, etc.)
4. Ask people who are close to you (friends, relatives, pastor, etc.) to evaluate what they see as your spiritual gifts. Include, too, what friends have told you in the past.
5. These three evaluations--interests, abilities and spiritual gifts--should give some direction to your area of unique service. Be sure that you coordinate them within the Body of Christ and seek opportunities to participate--to use them--daily.

Chapter Eleven - The Work of the Servant

6. Begin to be more aware of your responsibility to use your gifts. Do those things that you do well; share them with others. If you enjoy baking, bake bread and give it to someone. If you have the gift of teaching the word, begin to disciple someone or lead a bible study. Select a special area of service for which you are gifted--and then use your gift!
7. Have someone pray for you and agree with you about your area of service. Use your gift this week. Be accountable to your prayer partner in that area.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WHERE DO WE SERVE?

Time out...

There is a theme in this series of lessons that should be self evident by now. In the first session on ambition, we saw that our calling is that of a servant. Since then, we have seen that serving is to be a lifestyle. Thus, we are not to ask, "Who is my neighbor?" but "What is the need?" We have recently seen that service is the common assignment of all Christians, common to all our relationships and common in its task.

Sneak Peak...

The question we will deal with in this chapter is "Where do I serve?" In light of all that we have been learning, the answer is "Wherever I am!" We will examine the following:

1. The Issue of Deployment: Not Who?--But Where?
2. The Issue of Attachment: Not Of--But In
3. The Issue of Involvement: Not When?--But Now!

Know and Do...

We will come to understand that we do not have to go overseas to be a servant. We will practice being consecrated where we are.

Study...

PEOPLE'S AGENDAS

What are some of people's objections to missions involvement? What questions would we have to answer for them to become committed to and involved in service/missions?

1. List five typical questions.
 - A.
 - B.

Servanthood

C.

D.

E.

2. Which of these are your own questions? What hinders you from service/missions?

THE ISSUE OF DEPLOYMENT

Often, an unbiblical division is created between the physical and spiritual realms. In this dichotomy the spiritual is viewed as high, good and sacred, while the physical is viewed as low, bad and profane. This is Greek--not Biblical--thinking.

This is currently expressed in the idea of “full-time Christian service.” Someone who is going into missions, the pastorate, or church work is a “full-time Christian.” This unbiblical thought leads to the conclusion that all other Christians are “part-time.”

This is not a difference in principle, since all Christians are to be “full time” for the Lord. It is a difference in deployment. Each of us is sent out and placed in a different strategic position of service. We are to be servants wherever we are deployed.

1. Read Ephesians 6:5-8.

A. Is Paul addressing pastors and missionaries?

B. Whom is he addressing?

C. How is this person to do his “secular work”?

D. How many times in these four verses does Paul give the same instruction?

E. Why do you think Paul said this so many times?

2. An excellent observation was made by Jeremy Jackson, in No Other Foundation. He stated:

“... the most basic preparation for full-time service in the usual sense is the recognition that it represents NO HIGHER CALLING THAN ONE'S PRESENT OCCUPATION [emphasis added]. In other words, if one is not totally dedicated to God right now, there is no reason whatever to suppose that by putting on the mantle of a pastor, missionary, or whatever, one will be miraculously transformed into a dedicated servant.”²⁴

3. What does this mean for you as a student, carpenter, parent, engineer, trainee, doctor, missionary, bus driver, etc.?

THE ISSUE OF ATTACHMENT: NOT OF - BUT IN

1. Hebrews 11 gives a description of faith, using examples of the Old Testament faithful. It is clear that they were pilgrims. Read Hebrews 11:13-16.
 - A. What was their confession? (vs. 13)
 - B. What were they looking for? (vs. 14)
 - C. What was the tension for them and how does this same tension apply to us today?
 - D. What is God's wonderful response to the pilgrims? (vs. 16)
2. Read Colossians 3:1-4.
 - A. What are we to have our eyes focused on? (vs. 1-2)
 - B. Why is this our focus? (vs. 3)
3. Our Relationship to the World
 - A. The word "world" appears 110 times in the Gospels--77 times in the gospel of John. With one exception, John uses the Greek word "KOSMOS," from which we get the English word "cosmos," or "universe." This word has both a broad sense (all creation) and a narrow sense (an individual person). Read John 8:12 and 9:5. What did Christ claim to be and to do for the world?
 - B. Read John 12:35-36. What did Christ intend for His followers to be and do?
 - C. Read John 3:16-17. Often, we will personalize this passage by asking an individual to place his name in the place of "the world," stating that "God so loved _____ that He sent His only begotten Son, that _____ should not perish but have eternal life." Please write in your name and thank the Father for His gift of deep love for you.

Now, we will take the liberty to personalize this verse in a different way: "for God so loved the world that He sent _____ into the world..." Please write in your name.
 - D. We are to be in the world but not of the world. Read John 17:13-23.
 - i. Where has Christ sent us? (vs. 18)
 - ii. Why has He sent us into the world? (vs. 20, 23)

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- iii. In order for this to occur, for what does Christ pray? (vs. 15)
- iv. While Christ wants us in the world, what statement does He make about us?
- v. As always, the Bible sets forth a balance--"in" but not "of." Our lifestyles are to be defined by that balance. Too often, we move off-balance to one side or the other.

The danger on one side is that we become so much "in" the world that we become "of" it. This is the process of secularization. The Christian and the Church become indistinguishable from the world.

The danger on the other side is that, in fleeing from being "of" the world, we leave the world. This is the state of separatism or monasticism. Here, the Christian and the Church leave the marketplace and protect themselves within their programs and the walls of their buildings.

4. As Christians, we must focus on our heavenly residence and realize that we are pilgrims here. Our attachment to Christ frees us to be in the world, but not of it.

THE ISSUE OF INVOLVEMENT: NOT WHEN? - BUT NOW!

Christ's last commandment to His disciples before his death was that they should serve. His last instruction before His ascension was that they should occupy and spread out for the King (See Acts 1:8). They were to await the Holy Spirit; after that, though, they were not to wait further for some future "when." They were told, as we are today, to serve "now."

1. Read Luke 19:11-27. In this parable, Christ lays the groundwork for His pre-ascension message and for His assignment to His servants until He comes again.
 - A. What were the disciples expecting? (vs. 11)
 - B. Christ's public ministry was begun with John the Baptist's proclamation that the King was coming and that the Kingdom was imminent. Before His death the disciples were expecting Christ to reveal himself as King, believing that all they needed to do was wait for their share of authority (Luke 19:12).
 - C. In Luke 19:13 what did the nobleman tell his servants to do?

Christ's message is clear. The disciples are not to **wait passively**, asking when He would return. They are to **act responsibly**. They are to do business "until I come." (Luke 19:13). The King James version uses more vivid wording--"Occupy until I come."

The Greek word for "occupy" or "do business" is "PRAGMATEUOMAI." It means "to trade, to occupy, to do business." It is derived from the primary verb "PRASSO" which means "to practice, to perform repeatedly or habitually, to execute, to accomplish, to commit."

The picture that Christ presents is of the King going to receive His Kingdom. And His servants are to take the resources He has given them and put them to use in the land in preparation for the King's return. Both the King and His servants have tasks to do in order to bring in the Kingdom.

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- D. It is clear that Christ's servants have the responsibility of establishing the beachhead--of occupying the land and pushing back the enemies of the King.

2. Jesus' Last Message to His Disciples

- A. Read Matthew 28:18-20, "the Great Commission." Notice the relationship between the reality of Christ's authority (vs. 18) and the servant's responsibility (vs. 19-20).
- B. Where has Christ been given authority? (vs. 18)
- C. Therefore, what does Christ ask His servants to do? (vs. 19-20)
- D. Think of the farthest place from your home that you can imagine being. Where is it?

Now, if you were to go "farther" than that to a place that would frighten you (it may be as close as the core area of your large city), where would that be?

Go beyond that to the place where Christ would not be with you. Where would that be?

- E. How long will Christ be with us? (vs. 20)
- F. There is no place or time--no matter how far (a dark jungle or a city ghetto) or how near (a neighbor's house)--where Christ will not be present with us and seek to be present through us.
- G. We are to be looking for Christ's presence in every moment of our lives. Like Jonah, we may be called by God to our "Ninevah", yet He wants us to "be" _____ wherever we are.
- H. Jim Elliot, a martyred young missionary to Ecuador, was asked why he was going to Ecuador when there were such needs in the United States. He responded, "How can I not go? I have been commissioned to go (Matthew 28:19-20) and I have no calling to stay." What do you think he meant?

3. Jesus' Pre-Ascension Message

- A. Read Acts 1:6-9. Here are the words of the Resurrected Christ just before He ascended to Heaven.
- B. What did the disciples want to know? (vs. 6)
- C. What did Christ say we did not need to know? (vs. 7)
- D. What did Christ say the disciples would receive? (vs. 8)

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- E. What did He want His disciples to do? (vs. 8)
- F. What is the relationship between Acts 1:7 and Acts 1:8? Why did Christ shift the disciples' focus?
- G. The Greek word for "witness" is "MARTUS". It is used in a judicial sense as a witness in a court of law.
- i. Think of a trial setting. What is the witness called to do?
 - ii. What determines whether the witness is a good witness or a bad witness?
 - iii. What English word do you think we have derived from the Greek word "MARTUS"?
 - iv. How do you think the word came to have that meaning?
 - v. In Acts 1:8 notice the places where Christians can witness. Notice that there is an outward progression of witnessing from where we are to reaching out to all of the world.
5. The issue for us is involvement, not at some future time or place, but now. Jim Elliot used to say, "Wherever you are, be all there!" Francis Schaeffer, of L'Abri Fellowship, used to say, "How you treat a person in the brief moment when you pass together through a revolving door tells the world what you believe about them."²⁵ What were these men saying to us?

Summary: We are each deployed to serve; we are not to be attached to the world; and we are to be involved in occupying territory for our King wherever we are. With these job descriptions, our Savior commissions us to represent Him in a hurting world.

TIME OUT...

Take time to meditate on and/or memorize the following passage:

And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20

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YOUR PART...

Take an hour's quiet away from the cell phone, TV and people. Meditate and pray. Do one and/or both of the following exercises:

1. Close your eyes and use your imagination.
 - A. Imagine John 3:16-17. Visualize God the Father sending His Son into the world. Imagine Christ walking, talking and ministering to people.
 - B. Bring Christ into your world, into the "marketplaces" of life. Follow Him as He ministers to the people you know.
 - C. Now, visualize Christ touching those same people through your life.
2. In this quiet time, ask:
 - A. Am I where God wants me to be?
 - i. Does He want me overseas or in the Third World? Have I followed His command to go?
 - ii. Has He called me to "stay"? Am I being "all there"? Am I fulfilling His adventure for me in occupying the land where I am?
 - iii. Am I a "sender"?
 - iv. Am I actively supporting those who have gone?
 - B. Am I willing to go? Am I willing to be "all there"?
 - C. Am I committed to Christ? Am I committed to being involved in bringing in His Kingdom?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE COMMITMENT OF THE SERVANT

Last Chapter...

In the most recent chapters, we have looked at how, whom and where we are to serve. We have seen that our task is to serve everywhere, beginning with our daily locale and encounters and continuing on even to the hardest places of the world.

Sneak Peak...

In this chapter we will look, again, at examples of apathy and lack of involvement on the part of our society and the Church. We will examine our own willingness to be involved. We will see that faith requires our action and commitment--not apathy--as we occupy the land for the coming King.

Know and Do...

We will come to understand that each of our lives makes a difference in bringing in the Kingdom. Let us celebrate His return together!

Study...

THE CRISIS OF COMMITMENT

We live in times of tremendous human suffering and need.

On March 18, 2005, a young Florida woman named Terri Schiavo had her feeding tube removed by court order. Thirteen days later, on March 31, she died of dehydration. With this court-order, America took another step in her dance with death. The decision to kill Terri is merely the next step that follows the legalized convenience killing of pre-born babies authorized by the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision in January 1973—a decision that has led to the legalized murder of more than 49 million children in America.

Beginning in February 2003, the government of Sudan through a proxy militia began a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Arabic nomads in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Over the next three years an estimated 450,000 people were killed, often brutally. Thousands of children died as a result of war-caused famine and starvation. And all of this comes only a decade after the 1997 Rwandan genocide with its hundreds of thousands of victims—a genocide of which leaders around the world pledged “never again!”

In 2007, the world produced over 2,000 million metric tons of food, of which 1,700 million metric tons were grain. The grain alone would produce enough bread to provide two one-pound loaves

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of bread per day to each man, woman and child on this planet. Yet in this same year (2007) approximately 3,000,000 children died because of undernourishment. What is wrong?

We may be horrified by these events; but we ask, “What could I do? What could I do against a ruthless dictator? What could I do for three million children every year?”

Usually, the answer is “nothing.” This question leads to paralysis, to inactivity and to being disengaged from life, effectively insulated from responsibility.

The trouble is with the question. “What could I do?” is the wrong thing to ask. Before we ask what we, as individuals, could do, we need to ask the personal question of commitment--“Am I willing to serve?”

A person can be shown a thousand needs and be given ten thousand opportunities for service; but if there is no commitment to serve, the question will always be “What could I do?” If a person has a commitment to act and to serve, then God will indicate the appropriate service.

For example, the case for hunger is clear. Last year we produced enough food to feed more than twice the world’s population. With existing arable lands and current technology, we can produce enough food to feed ten times the present world population. The problem is not that of too many people or too little food. The problem is lack of will. There is a crisis of commitment.

God weeps at the brokenness in the world. Christ has died to set us free from bondage. Christ has lived to give us an example of how to care, how to serve. The Father has promised Christ’s return to establish His Kingdom. Christ has commanded His servants to occupy the land until He comes.

We need to pray “Lord, help us to be willing to serve.”

APATHY IN THE CHURCH

The world suffers from a crisis of commitment. The Church, too, is afflicted with apathy.

1. A Christian friend attended a Bible conference with 2,000 other church leaders. He chose an elective workshop on “The Bible and World Missions”, taught by a leading missiologist. A handful of people attended. Following his workshop, he passed the door of a room with another workshop, filled with hundreds of people. Amazed at what topic could have drawn such a crowd, he consulted his program. The subject?--“The Victorious Christian Life”.
 - A. What was the difference in the focus of the two workshops?
 - B. Of what is this indicative?
3. Defining Apathy
 - A. What is apathy? (Use a dictionary.)
 - B. Our English word is derived from the Greek word “APATHEIA.”
 - i. The Greek word “Apatheia” is formed by the negative prefix “A-” and the Greek word PATHOS. The Greek prefix “A-” is translated “un,” “non” or “dis” in English. Read the

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following verses and see how the related words METRIOPATHEO, SUMPATHEO and SUMPATHESES are translated.

- a. Hebrews 5:2 “He (Jesus) is able to (_____) with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.” (New International Version)
 - b. Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to (_____) with our weaknesses...” (NIV)
 - c. Hebrews 10:34 “For you had (_____) on the prisoners...” (Revised Standard Version)
 - d. I Peter 3:8 “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having (_____), love as brethren...” (King James Version)
- ii. “APATHEIA”, therefore, means the opposite of compassion, sympathy and gentle treatment. It could even be said that it is the opposite of agape love.
- C. To summarize, we normally think of apathy as laziness, indifference, or lethargy. However, it is not a neutral word but an active word. It is the opposite of compassion. Apathy is being unfeeling, failing to identify with and failing to act. It is failing to put love into action.

Apathy reinforces The Fall. It accepts it fatalistically. Apathy creates space for the inevitability of Nancy Cruzan’s death and the starvation of 35,000 human beings everyday.

4. Secularization

The corporate flavor of apathy is secularization, or conformity to the world. The modern Western Church has become so entwined with materialism that it fails to be involved prophetically in our culture--in thought, moral fiber or action. To paraphrase; often we have offered the “American dream” with church on Sunday tacked on rather than the biblical Kingdom of God.

Secularization is a process that disengages the Church from her mission of advancing the Kingdom. Secularization is corporate apathy... it leaves the Church uncommitted to the Lord and His Kingdom, uninvolved and unresponsive to human need.

As Os Guinness states in The Gravedigger’s File, this corporate apathy causes a “crisis of plausibility.” The credibility of the Church (whether Christianity **is** true) is established in history, but the plausibility (whether Christianity seems true) is established by the action of the Church in ministry. Guinness writes that there is a gap between our “spiritual rhetoric” and our “social reality.” The world does not believe our message, not because we do not say it enough, but because we do not live it enough.²⁶

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LOVE IN ACTION - KNOWING AND DOING

Love is a natural consequence of our faith and our experience of God's love toward us.

1. Read I John 3:16-18.
 - A. How do we know that God loves us? (vs. 16)
 - B. What conclusion is reached concerning the man who has resources but does not respond to his brother's need? (vs. 17)
 - C. Verse 18 states the principle of "knowing and doing." Write it in your own words.
 - D. Is it clear that we are to put our resources where our commitment is?
2. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, described the relationship between knowing and doing by using the Greek word "PRAXIS." He stated that a word that is alive is "both reflected upon and acted upon. A word that is reflected upon and spoken without action is mere verbalism. A word that is acted upon without reflection is mere activism."²⁷

Reflection + Action = PRAXIS
Reflection - Action = VERBALISM
Action - Reflection = ACTIVISM

3. C. S. Lewis, in The Screwtape Letters, described the incapacitation that befalls a Christian who fails to act on what he knows to be true. Screwtape is teaching Wormwood how to undermine a Christian's effectiveness:

"The great thing is to prevent his doing anything. As long as he does not convert it into action, it does not matter how much he thinks about this new repentance. Let the little brute wallow in it. Let him, if he has any bent that way, write a book about it. That is often an excellent way of sterilizing the seeds that the Enemy plants in a human soul. Let him do anything but act. NO amount of piety in his imagination and affections will harm us if we can keep it out of his will. As one of the humans has said, 'ACTIVE HABITS ARE STRENGTHENED BY REPETITION, BUT PASSIVE ONES ARE WEAKENED. THE MORE OFTEN HE FEELS WITHOUT ACTING, THE LESS HE WILL BE ABLE EVER TO ACT; AND, IN THE LONG RUN, THE LESS HE WILL BE ABLE TO FEEL'" (emphasis added).²⁸
4. Love, then, is doing for another what we know to be best. It is the opposite of apathy-- knowing, not doing.
5. We must remember that the work of the servant is our responsibility. However, we cannot fulfill our responsibility without His empowerment. Read John 15:5. Notice that we must abide in Christ to be instruments of His service.

THY KINGDOM COME

1. Read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. Notice in verse 10 that both the present and future aspects of the Kingdom identify what Christ taught us to pray about.

A. What future aspects are we to pray about?

B. What present aspects are we to pray about?

2. Christ is responsible for the future Kingdom. We, equipped with His indwelling and enabling Spirit, are responsible for the present Kingdom. As we saw in the last chapter, Christ has gone to receive His Kingdom. We are to occupy it until He returns. His servants are His foot soldiers, the advance party of His return. Our commitment to serve is not merely for the future but for the now.

Every action we take creates hope for people in seemingly hopeless situations. Every stand we make creates more opportunity for others to be involved. Every step we advance occupies more territory for Christ.

3. Our commitment to Christ and His Kingdom must always outweigh our distractions. We often think and act like our finiteness and sin were bigger than Christ and thus allow them to dominate our lives. Christ is grander than all! His infiniteness overcomes our limitations; His holiness covers our sin.

What fears, frustrations, or forms of pride hinder your growth and involvement?

We think that the advancement of the Kingdom is someone else's responsibility--Christ's, our pastors', etc. We say, "Call the other guy!" or "Here am I, Lord; send my brother." No!--it is our own responsibility.

4. We are to be at risk with our lives and resources. We are to be "fools for Christ," radicals, revolutionaries. The status quo is safe, but it leads to the persistence of sin and inhumanity. However, being committed to act on behalf of Christ forces our lives to conform to the King's principles; and healing is the result.
5. As we work for the King, the Kingdom's ends become our means. Christ will bring justice in His Kingdom and we are to live just lives. Christ will bring holiness in His Kingdom and we are to live holy lives. Christ will wipe away all tears and we are to be comforters. He will illuminate all truth and we are to pursue truth. He will bring new and abundant life to His creatures and we are to create life, laughter, art and music.

Dr. Larry Ward, founder of Food for the Hungry, has said, "It is our responsibility to plant flower seeds in the refugee camp."²⁹ Why? Because God has told us the future! And by telling us the future He has told us our present.

6. It is clear! God has declared it! His Kingdom is coming!

"Nancy, we are coming to help... we don't know how... we are scared, but we are coming!"

To the Dinkas we say, "It will not go unchallenged! We will work to stop the holocaust in the future. We will shout it from the housetops... we will expose the wickedness!"

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“Little one, we hear your cry for food. Your brother may have died yesterday, but we are outraged... we will help you to live!”

INVOLVEMENT

Now what? If you have chosen to stand as a humble servant of Christ, now is the time to act!

1. Tell God that you have heard His call and have chosen to follow Him. Then “nail it down”, for your own benefit, with a physical reminder of your commitment--tell a friend, write your commitment in your Bible or “build an altar” (Joshua 4:1-7).
2. Join with others at church, work or school who may want to be at risk, as well.
3. Identify your areas of strong interest, burden, giftedness and calling. Declare your intention and begin to act.
4. Identify an existing church, organization or group of believers that is involved in advancing Christ's Kingdom. Join with them in their service.
5. Read John 13:1-17. In your own words write the last object lesson that the Servant-King gave His disciples.

Remember that the **towel** is the symbol of your calling.

TIME OUT...

You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and called you from its remotest parts and said to you, you are my servant. I have chosen you and not rejected you Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be anxiously looking about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with my right hand.

Isaiah 41:9-10

YOUR PART...

Love, laugh, enjoy, risk and walk with God...

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Equipping the Church to Transform the World

The Disciple Nations Alliance is part of a global movement of individuals, churches, and organizations with a common vision: to see the global Church rise to her full potential as God's instrument for the healing, blessing and transformation of the nations.

The Disciple Nations Alliance was founded in 1997 through a partnership between Food for the Hungry (www.fh.org) and Harvest (www.harvestfoundation.org). Our mission is to influence the paradigm and practice of local churches around the world, helping them recognize and abandon false beliefs, and embrace a robust biblical worldview—bringing truth, justice and beauty into every sphere of society, and to demonstrate Christ's love in practical ways, addressing the brokenness in their communities and nations beginning with their own resources.

For further information about the Disciple Nations Alliance as well as access to a host of resources, curricula, books, study materials and application tools, please visit our website.

www.disciplenations.org

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Appendix 1 - Personal Evaluation

PERSON BEING EVALUATED: _____

GENERAL CHARACTER	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER	
PATIENT						(IMPATIENT)
PRUDENT						(UNWISE)
VIRTUOUS						(IMPURE)
TEMPERATE						(INTEMPERATE)
REPUTABLE						(UNTRUSTWORTHY)
APT TO TEACH						(UNSKILLFUL IN THE WORD)
VIGILANT						(NEGLIGENT)
HOSPITABLE						(INHOSPITABLE)
BLAMELESS						(TAINTED)
ORDERED HOUSEHOLD						(REBELLIOUS)
JUST						(UNJUST)
SELF-CONTROLLER						(UNDISCIPLINED)
HOLY						(UNRIGHTEOUS)
RESPECTABLE						(DISRESPECTABLE)
PEACEFUL						(VIOLENT)
SLOW-TEMPERED						(QUICK-TEMPERED)
OTHER-CENTERED						(SELF-CENTERED)
FILLED WITH SPIRIT						(DRUNKARD/UNDER OTHER INFLUENCE)
SEEKER OF THE KINGDOM						(LOVER OF MONEY)
HARMONIOUS						(CONTENTIOUS)
GENEROUS						(COVETOUS)
RELATIONSHIPS						
OLDER MEN AS FATHERS/RESPECT						(REBUKE)
YOUNGER MEN AS BROTHERS/ RESPECT						(REBUKE)
OLDER WOMAN AS MOTHERS/ RESPECT						(REBUKE)
YOUNGER WOMEN AS SISTERS/ PURITY						(IMPURITY)

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