

God's Family

LESSON 5: SERVE ONE ANOTHER

Followers of Jesus must love and view others as more significant than themselves. This, however, must result in sacrificial action and not just empty sentiments. The nature of one's service will be the true measure of love and honor possessed for other members of God's family. Each member of God's family must be seeking to serve the others.

GALATIANS 5:13-15

Under both the Old Law and the New Law, God's requirement toward others is fulfilled in the command to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36-40). Too often, though, people misuse the blessings and freedom God has provided under the New Law (e.g. from sin) to pursue selfish ambitions. This often results in fighting with other followers of Christ that can result in both being destroyed (like two animals fighting to the death). Rather than such destructive infighting, disciples of Christ must serve one another through love. Therefore, love acts selflessly in the best interests of others, even when it requires making personal sacrifices (e.g. time, money, personal freedoms/opinions, etc.; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

MARK 10:35-45

There has often been a temptation for competition and rivalry among God's family. People often like to be in high positions over others, like James and John desired to have in God's kingdom. The other disciples also became angry with them (perhaps having the same ambitions, as they would debate which of them was the greatest, Matthew 18:1; Luke 9:46). Yet, Jesus demonstrated that greatness in His kingdom does not work the way greatness in human kingdoms work (i.e. a race/fight to the top for the best and most prominent positions). Instead, greatness in Jesus's kingdom is the exact

opposite (i.e. a race/fight to the bottom for the privilege of serving)! After all, think of all the ways Jesus found to demonstrate His love by lowering Himself rather than demanding others serve Him while He was on earth. This is ultimately what led Him (the sinless Son of God and Creator of the world) to die a terrible death on the cross to provide salvation for sinners!

JOHN 13:1-17

Even in the hours leading up to Jesus's death, Jesus did not put the focus on Himself. Instead, Jesus was a true servant all the way to the cross! On this occasion, Jesus taught several important lessons concerning service. First, serving others requires a willingness to do the jobs that are reserved for the lowest servants that no one else wants to do (e.g. washing the dirty and smelly feet of grown men). Second, serving others requires that you be watching for opportunities to serve rather than waiting for someone to ask you to do something. Third, serving others requires that you be willing to serve anyone you have the opportunity to demonstrate love toward (e.g. Jesus washed Judas's feet, even though Jesus knew Judas was about to betray Him). Fourth, serving others requires that you never think you are too important to do whatever is needed in service (as you will never become more important than Jesus was, and Jesus was willing to serve). Still, just knowing all the important points about serving others is not enough. Jesus said the disciples would only be blessed (favored in God's sight) if they would do what He had taught. Therefore, being a disciple who is unwilling or selective concerning your service demonstrates that you are not truly a disciple of Jesus!

MATTHEW 25:31-46

Understanding what we have just witnessed about Jesus's heart as a Servant should help us appreciate why the way you have served others will be so important on Judgment Day. Although there will be other things considered about your life (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 4:13; Ecclesiastes 12:14), how you have served others is brought to

the forefront in this passage. On this Day, Jesus will care how well you had followed His example of serving – by feeding the hungry, giving the thirsty something to drink, taking in the stranger, taking care of the sick, visiting those in prison, etc. In fact, such things that you either do or don't do are either done or not done to Jesus. So, serving another should never be based on who the other person is. Rather, the way you serve another should be determined based on who Jesus is and how worthy He is to be served (Colossians 3:22-25)! This mentality should certainly impact your willingness to give of your time, energy, money, resources, freedoms, etc. to do good for others.

1 PETER 4:10

Every person can serve God and others in some way. If you have armed yourself with the heart of a servant, you will then be looking for whatever way(s) you can serve using the abilities, opportunities, resources, possessions, skills, relationships, etc. God has given you. You must come to view yourself as a steward (manager) over all that God has blessed you with. This means that you should not think of these things from a selfish perspective but from the perspective of using what God has blessed you with in the way that will best honor Him (Matthew 25:14-30). For, you should view all your blessings as gifts from God that you simply get to use in whatever way will bring Him the most glory and honor and do whatever you can to please Him by serving others with them (like Dorcas, Acts 9:36, 39). Your acts of service toward your brothers and sisters should be focused in both physical and spiritual directions.

CONCLUSION

Those who are part of God's family must serve one another. The disciples of Jesus Christ cannot sit back and expect others to cater to and serve them but must be actively looking for opportunities to serve others. When this attitude and the corresponding actions are present, there will not be any time or energy left to fight over matters of no importance because each one will be too busy and focused on serving each other!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

How does serving others help fulfill Christ's law and avoid harming one another?

How is greatness achieved in God's kingdom?

What can you learn from Jesus demonstrating His love through service?

What can you learn from Jesus washing His disciples' feet?

What must you do after learning from Jesus's examples of service?

How will your service matter on Judgment Day?

How should you determine who you will or will not serve?

How will viewing yourself as a steward/manager for Christ impact the way you serve others?

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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