

SERVING LIKE JESUS

Those who desire to be Jesus's disciples must endeavor to learn Jesus's teachings and ways and imitate Him by walking as He walked (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:1). One aspect of Jesus's life that must be imitated is the way Jesus served. Therefore, we must consider Scriptures that give us insight into the way Jesus served God and people around Him so we can learn how to walk in His footsteps in the way that we serve.

HEBREWS 10:1-12

When Jesus came to this earth, He came to serve by doing the will of God rather than focus on His earthly pleasures and desires (Hebrews 4:14-16). The writer of Hebrews demonstrated how the sacrifices required by the Law of Moses were ultimately insufficient to take away sins and were only a shadow of what was to come. Still, notice there were priests who ministered (served) day after day to offer these sacrifices. Both the plan of God (Ephesians 3:8-11) and all mankind were dependent on Jesus's willingness to be a servant. Therefore, if Jesus had chosen to serve Himself above the will of the Father or the needs of people, we would have no hope! Consequently, since Jesus made such a great sacrifice to present Himself as a servant in this way (Philippians 2:5-11), certainly His disciples must serve God and others through our lives.

LUKE 4:38-44

Jesus served in at least three ways in this text. First, Jesus served the needs of Peter's mother-in-law by healing her. In doing so, He made a difference in her life and in the lives of Peter, Peter's wife, and any other people impacted by her being made well. Second, Jesus served the needs of many in Capernaum by healing the various types of sicknesses, diseases, and afflictions that were brought to Him. In this, you should notice Jesus's heart that was willing to do what He could for others, even potentially late into the night (as these events began in the evening and the whole town had come out to Him, Mark 1:32-34). Note that in doing this, Jesus also served God by fulfilling prophecy concerning the Messiah healing (Matthew 8:16-17). Third, Jesus served the spiritual needs of people

through preaching the good news about God's kingdom. But, notice that Jesus did not just serve in this place where many had come to Him. Instead, He served the needs of people in various places by traveling to them! Although no one today can serve others by taking away their diseases and afflictions, we can imitate Jesus's service by identifying whatever we can do for people and doing the best we can in that (e.g. praying, visiting, helping) – and by preaching the same message about God's kingdom!

LUKE 8:40-56

Jesus did not just serve the needs of crowds and masses of people. Rather, each act of service focused on the individual who was being served. Notice how He was willing to go away from the crowd to serve Jairus. Similarly, we must be able to see the individual needs of people around us. Then, during Jesus's journey, notice how He was willing to interrupt what He was doing to address the needs of the woman with the bleeding issue who had touched Him. So, we must also be willing to interrupt our plans and activities to sacrificially serve others we encounter. Also, notice that Jesus went all the way with Jairus to do whatever He could, despite being given the opportunity to stop short (when it was announced the girl had died). Likewise, we should not be quick to give up in our service when greater challenges strike, but must be willing to go to the end of what we can do for others. Through all these things, notice that service requires effort, sacrifice, and action – and not just words that express affection or care.

MARK 10:13-16

As certain people were bringing their children to Jesus so He could touch and bless them, Jesus's disciples rebuked them. Perhaps these disciples saw Jesus's work as not having time for little children (infants, Luke 18:15). Although these were insignificant in the eyes of most people, Jesus took time for them. In fact, He saw the kingdom of God as belonging to little children and urged people to become like little children (Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 9:33-37). Therefore, the true heart of a servant does not just serve those who are seen as important in society, but even those who are insignificant or despised in society!

MARK 10:35-45

Jesus's disciples often misunderstood greatness in God's kingdom (Mark 9:33-37). Specifically, James and John (with the encouragement of their mother, Matthew 20:20-21) requested that they be given prominent places in the kingdom. Jesus, however, demonstrated that true greatness in His kingdom is achieved through serving. For, this is the way of the Master, Jesus. He did not come to this earth for people to serve Him. Rather, Jesus (who had no place to lay His head at times, Luke 9:58) came to serve God and others. Although He did this in many ways, His willingness to serve others was sacrificial to the point of laying His life down to ransom us from sin! In the same way, the heart of a servant does not seek self-exaltation or others to serve us, but is sacrificially willing to do what is in the best interest of others!

JOHN 13:1-17

At some point surrounding the Passover meal Jesus shared with His disciples prior to His crucifixion, Jesus's disciples started arguing again about which of them should be considered the greatest (Luke 22:24-30). It is perhaps after this that these events of Jesus's service occur. Though His disciples argued for prestige, Jesus (the Master) took a servant's job by washing His disciples' feet. Jesus demonstrated through this that if He (their Master) was willing to do the lowly job of washing feet, they should also do this for one another! Therefore, Jesus did not consider Himself as being too great to serve anyone (including Judas, who would soon betray Him, John 13:18-30). Furthermore, Jesus taught that knowing about the need to serve others is not enough to bring true blessings. Instead, the actual serving is required! Therefore, there is no one we should be unwilling to serve and no good thing we should be unwilling to do for others!

CONCLUSION

Imitating Jesus requires that you serve like Jesus served. Although there is much more that could be discussed, we have seen Jesus's service in different contexts throughout His earthly life. Ultimately, Jesus served the Father by doing His will and then served others in many ways during His time on earth. Therefore, disciples of Jesus must learn to humbly and sacrificially serve God in every possible way and then serve the needs of others in this world!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

How did Jesus serve the will of the Father?

How did Jesus serve in Capernaum?

How did Jesus serve people individually rather than just in masses?

Who was Jesus willing to serve?

How is service connected with being great in the kingdom of Heaven?

How did Jesus sacrifice Himself to serve?

What does Jesus's example teach you about serving God?

What does Jesus's example teach you about serving others?

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