

Servanthood – The Servant as a Giver – Lesson Five

Philippians 2:3-5

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Let nothing mean just that. NOTHING!

We need to stop letting the two strong tendencies of selfishness and conceit control our actions and us.

Turn the statement around; “if we do it through strife or vainglory, then it is NOTHING.” We must replace them with “humility of mind.” How?

By regarding others as more important than ourselves and looking for ways to encourage, support, build up, and stimulate others.

This requires an attitude that would rather give than receive.

It is that attitude, that frame of mind that determines ahead of time to give rather than receive.

First, let’s look to see if this unselfish lifestyle is Biblical.

Romans 12:10-13

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Philippians 2:3-4

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

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Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Unselfishness is that authentic humility that accepts who and what we are and allows God to do all the rest.

How should servants give?

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

In this account, Paul is collecting money for a hurting congregation in Jerusalem. Specifically, he is in the region of Macedonia. What is significant is that Macedonia was a very poor region to begin with, yet the Macedonians were so concerned over their brethren in Jerusalem being in need that they truly gave.

Let's look at the characteristics of their giving that demonstrated authentic servanthood.

A great proof of true servanthood is anonymity (not giving to make a name for yourself). No one individual is highlighted, no names mentioned. No one specific church is mentioned, simply "the churches."

When we practice the art of unselfish living, we prefer to remain anonymous. A second part of giving is expressed in "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

When they gave, they overflowed in the process. They gave liberally and sacrificially; beyond their ability. They gave with sacrificial generosity. This giving involves more than money. It includes us; our time, energy, compassion, strength, love, hopes, and even at times our possessions. The second aspect of unselfish living is a willingness to give generously and sacrificially.

They gave voluntarily, without prompting and pushing. A true giving servant reaches out without having to be invited. They sense deep hurts without being told and reach out to help. They sense hidden needs and respond without being told. A true servant looks for ways to give without being asked.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

The fourth characteristic of a true servant is personal involvement. It is impossible to give ourselves to others at arms' length. Personal involvement is essential, not optional. It usually involves adapting ourselves, schedules and ways to fit into the needs of others. Personal involvement is the proof of our authentic desire to serve and to give. **Talk Is Cheap, Actions Cost!** How much does giving cost?

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Following Jesus Christ is a costly, unselfish decision. It calls for a radical examination of our self-centered lifestyle.

First, those who desire to follow MUST come to terms with self-denial.

1 Corinthians 9:22-27

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Second, this decision to give ourselves must be a daily matter.

1 Corinthians 15:31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

Third, it means we must walk the path He walked and live the life He lived. It calls for a commitment.

2 Corinthians 8:9-11

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

Once begun, we MUST finish...we MUST obtain.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

Is It Worth It?

2 Corinthians 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

God's promise to those who give bountifully:

Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

We are never more like god than when we give.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.