

"Make Me a Servant"

If you could be anything you wanted, would you choose to be a servant? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're examining what it means to be a servant of God. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We love the Lord, we want to hear everything He has to say about our lives and our salvation, and we love what He has done to redeem and save us. We don't want to miss what He says and fail to please Him. We want Him to know that we're grateful for His sacrifice for our sins on the cross. Jesus did so much. We want you to love and serve Him too. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

When God looks into the hearts of men, His blessing goes out with grace and favor to those who love and serve Him. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:19 to 21, "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.' Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." How does God see you?

Now in ancient times, there were three kinds of servants. Some served out of fear, some served for money, but some served like sons because they loved their master. Christians fit into this third category. They serve the Lord and serve others because of their gratitude for what God has done for them. They serve with joy and the promise of eternal life; they serve because they know the Master keeps His word. They know the promises of God are true, and they want to glorify God forever.

We offer this study, Make Me a Servant, free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website at, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song. We'll read from Matthew 20:25 to 28, and examine what we can do to become faithful servants of the Lord.

Our reading today comes from Matthew chapter 20 verses 25 to 28. The apostle had been kind of arguing among themselves about being great. And Jesus had something to say. Verse 25,

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Yes Jesus served us. And loves us and asks us to be servants too. Let's pray together. Father help us to be good servants. To love You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. And to do Your will always. And also to serve others. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

The New Testament speaks both of the slaves of Christ and the servants of Christ. Now the word "slave" describes a person who is the property of an owner. They're in a state of being controlled by someone else. In the eyes of the law in the ancient world a slave was not a person but a thing. And a master could do absolutely as he liked; a slave had no rights at all. The master could beat him, sell him,

abuse him or her, throw him out, and even kill him. Slaves had no time which they could call their own; every moment belonged to the master.

The New Testament characterizes Christians as “slaves of God” or “slaves of Christ.” We shouldn’t think, however, that service to God is filled with chains and misery.¹ Peter 2 and verse 16 urges Christians to, “Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants (slaves) of God.” Christ set us free from slavery to sin and slavery to false religion so that we might become slaves of righteousness. We are freed to make this world a better place. A place filled with love and kindness. We’re the people of the good news, good news of love, forgiveness, joy, and peace.

In the New Testament, another word for “servant” is also translated as minister or deacon. Now this is one who renders personal service. He isn’t afraid to do the lowly things but is willing to do the necessary tasks. I think of Jesus who washed the feet of His disciples. He was a servant. Sometimes people get “too big” for God to use; they’re so full of themselves. You know, God cannot use arrogant elites; because they have no room in their hearts for God. Paul wrote in Romans 12 and verse 3, “For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Now a servant is someone who is in some way is bound to serve and perform duties for, another person. The word “slave” conjures up for us many things: slavery, labor, pain and misery. Not very pretty or desirable. But in spite of this, many of the people who served God were called servants and wanted to be. They were not ashamed to be called servants.

Abraham is referred to by God as “My servant” in Genesis 26:24. God asked in Job 1 verse 8, “Have you considered my servant Job?” God called Moses, “My servant Moses” in Numbers 12:7. Joshua 24:29 calls Joshua, “the servant of the Lord.” David is called “His servant” in Psalm 144 verse 10. Isaiah could say, “Here I am! Send me” in Isaiah 6 and verse 8 and God calls him “My servant” in Isaiah 20 and verse 3.

Mary, the mother of Jesus said in Luke 1:38, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” Paul describes himself as “a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle” in Romans 1 verse 1. James, the brother of Jesus, describes himself as “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” in James 1 verse 1. Simon Peter declares himself as “a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ” in 2 Peter 1 verse 1. Jude, another brother of Jesus, also said he was “a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James” in Jude 1 and verse 1. John, who was an apostle, said in Revelation 1 and verse 1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ to his servant John.”

Now serving out of love and loyalty is very different from the temptations of pride. The Lord Jesus called the scribes and the Pharisees hypocrites. And He described them in Matthew 23:5 to 7, “But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.” Well, these men displayed their religion to be noticed rather than humbled themselves as servants.

The New Testament text never uses or endorses religious titles for Christians, titles like St. Paul or Pope Peter. Such titles as that are forbidden. You remember the Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 23:9 to 12, “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven (the one who is in heaven, yes) Do not be called leaders (or masters); for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the

greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”

We choose to serve out of faith and love. And our service flows from gratitude for God’s grace. We aren’t servants out of fear or because we are made to serve. 2 Corinthians 5:14 to 15 reveals why we serve: “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” I know the Lord paid a great price to redeem and forgive us, and Christians want to show love and gratitude for what God has done. Oh they can’t earn their salvation, but they want to show their gratitude by giving themselves to the Lord’s service.

Exodus 21:2 to 6 provides an example of a person who chose to be a slave. The bible says there, “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. “If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. “If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone. “But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,’ then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.”

You see, choosing to be a servant arises from the heart and the will. When we love God more than we love ourselves or anything else, we seek to please Him in every way. And choosing to serve transforms us. We have a purpose and we serve the One who made us and gave us life eternal. Serving is how we show our love and loyalty to Jesus Christ. And anyone and everyone can serve the Lord when they deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him.

Just as Jesus met our needs for love, forgiveness, and a purpose, so the Lord gives us opportunity to show love, and to forgive others, and to serve their needs. You see servants do the unseen work, acts of kindness that never get acknowledged but still make a difference. They don’t serve to receive the praise of men but to please and show their love for God.

Servants put the Lord first, others second, and themselves last. Paul wrote in Philippians 2 verses 1 to 4, “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” You see servants realize that serving others is one of the ways that we serve the Lord.

The Lord Jesus himself speaks of how serving others will be viewed in the judgment. In Matthew 25:31 to 40 Jesus explains: “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked,

and clothe You? 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'" When we serve others, meeting their needs, we're serving the Lord!

Now good servants listen to what they are asked to do and they want to please the Master in heaven. They don't act on their own authority or change what the Lord said to suit themselves or to please people. They have a zeal for their work and a hunger for righteousness. Romans 12:11 urges us, "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

A good servant is faithful and reliable. He shows up even when serving is hard or inconvenient. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 16:10, "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much." When people are faithful to serve in small things, they will also serve in things that are more demanding. The Lord expects His people to be present when He needs and calls them. Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 4 verses 1 and 2, "This is how one should regard us, (Paul speaking about himself) as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." Now faithfulness means doing the work that God asks us to do. And it also means doing it the way God asks it to be done. The value of a messenger comes from his ability to transfer the message accurately. Proverbs 25:13 says, "Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters."

A good servant produces fruit. You see he is love in action. 1 John 3:16 to 18 says, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." A good servant shows compassion that makes a difference. He doesn't merely talk about doing good; he does it. The Lord Jesus said in John 15 and verse 8 that, "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

Oh if you wish to be a good servant, then "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts." Set Him apart as the holy one in your heart and soul. Your master. And let nothing come before Him as Lord or separate you from Him. Make yourself His servant. Deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Him. If you lose your life for His sake, you will save it. Love and Obey the Lord.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we exalt You as our God our creator and our Lord. Father help us to be good servants who love You. Who will be trustworthy in site. And who will do Your will as we live our lives for Your sake. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Can the Lord Jesus trust you to be His servant? The Lord sacrificed His body and blood on the cross to redeem you. Titus 2:14 says that Jesus "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." The Lord wants you to be faithful, humble, morally pure, and active in His service. Christians who do nothing are like the fearful slave who buried his talent in the ground. When the Lord called him to account for the talent entrusted to him, the slave could only give back the talent he was given.

Well in response, the Lord said in Matthew 25:26 to 27, "You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest." Ultimately, the Lord said, "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What are you doing with what the Lord has entrusted to you? Will you hear "Well done, good and faithful servant"; or will you be thrown out?

To begin a life of service you must be born again, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and forgiven of your sins. And this happens when you hear the gospel, believe the gospel, and out of love obey the gospel. You obey the gospel by repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Jesus, and by being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Through baptism we are baptized into the death of Christ and contact His blood, where God washes away our sins. This is the teaching of Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:3 to 7. Why not be saved today?

We hope our study, Make Me a Servant, has caused you to want to be a servant of the Lord Jesus. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. SEARCH is on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week. So keep searching God's Word with us, tell a friend. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.