

On serving others (a pride killer).

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July 2019

Basics

This article covers:

- Basics: how the early church embodied a servant mind-set ;
- Next generation: Examples from the bible (and science) on how to serve others and the benefits for our generation; and
- Your turn: Next steps to help you start on your service journey for the Lord.



Basics

You cannot objectively read the New Testament and miss the references to words like: “slave”, “servant”, bond servant or “serve”.

Infact the writers of 22 of the 27 books of the New Testament, which is 81% of the foundation of the present day age church referred to themselves as: “slaves”, “servants” or “bond servants” of Jesus.

What is it that they saw that perhaps many in our generation are missing?

When I first recommitted my life as a slave of Christ, I took up volunteer work with a Jersey Charity, I felt this would help me overcome pride and learn to become like Christ – a servant.

This message therefore helps you and I to re – visit:

- what the saints of old learnt - which the Holy Spirit was whispering to them when they were writing the bible;
- What the Spirit of Christ revealed to me as I was preparing this message; and
- what the Lord, who is the Spirit is perhaps tagging at your heart – to light up a new flame in you that like me – you will start seeing yourself as that Great Cloud of Witnesses did – We are slaves of the Lord our Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and Wonderful Counsellor.

Lessons from the bible

First a testimony from personal experience.

One of the earliest lessons after I came to Christ and got baptised in May 2017 was that I felt Jesus wanted me to learn to serve others to help me overcome the dangerous sin of pride.

I therefore decided to become a volunteer in a Jersey charity shop for [Oxfam](#) which fights poverty. As a shop assistant (to be honest, I was more comfortable in the back), I handled regular menial tasks (lifting boxes, cleaning shoes, ironing clothes, vacuuming et al). I was there for about 1 year until unfortunately owing to my frequent travels I had to give up this amazing role.

What was Jesus teaching me when he placed volunteering on my heart?

It was to learn what it means to become a servant to others.

It was a lesson he taught all his early disciples - the ones who went on to write the New Testament. It something even a casual new believer to Christianity can see – it is all about serving others. This is how Jesus demonstrates his love and how we are to do it. Have we in our generation forgotten this basic?

To give a background understanding the importance of serving, first here are the authors of the 27 books of the New Testament:

Paul – Apostle (13)	Peter – Apostle (2)	John – Apostle (5)	Brothers of Jesus – James and Jude (2)	Other authors (5)	Total (27)
<i>Romans, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phill, Col, 1 Thes, 2 Thes, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Tit, Phi</i>	<i>1 Pet, 2 Pet</i>	<i>Gospel of John 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Revelation</i>	<i>James, Jude</i>	<i>Gospel of Matthew (Apostle), Mark, Luke, Acts and Hebrews</i>	
48%	7%	19%	7%	19%	100%

As can be seen above, the majority of the writing was done by apostles and 2 brothers of Jesus. Here are some examples from the above men on how they referred to themselves:

1. **Paul – Apostle.** *Romans 1 (NIV):* Paul, **a servant of Christ Jesus**, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.
2. **Paul – Apostle.** *Philippians 1(NLT):* [Greetings from Paul] This letter is from Paul and Timothy, **slaves of Christ Jesus.**
3. **Jesus’ brother James 1 (NLT).** [Greetings from **James**] This letter is from **James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.**
4. **Peter – Apostle.** *2 Peter 1:* This letter is from Simon Peter, **a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.**
5. **Jesus’ brother.** *Jude 1:* This letter is from Jude, **a slave of Jesus Christ** and a brother of James.
6. **John – Apostle.** *Revelation 1-2:* This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his **servants** the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to **his servant John**, who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In our generation’s church these MEN OF GOD would probably be getting DOUBLE HONOUR and living in Mansions but in fact the Christian message is about service. Our generation struggles with pride - which God Hates, I repeat GOD HATES. Have we missed this central part of the call of Christ?

We take dominion of the world and the gates of hell and conquer – not as Kings, the Chosen new Israel, remnants, or Royals but as slaves, serving one another, being Weak and Foolish – not arrogant and pompous. It is only then – that God will exalt us (in Christ) and we will truly become MORE THAN CONQUERERS – as the bible shows, this is how Jesus became the Conqueror and it is the pattern he gave us. The bible shows it as follows with the following examples:

Example 1: Jesus tells us about his character

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matthew 11: 29 – 30 (NIV)

Example 2: Jesus tells us who the greatest in his kingdom is

The greatest among you will be your servant. Matthew 23: 11 (NIV)

Example 3: Jesus gives us a model of washing his disciples' feet

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. **Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.** Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. John 13: 1- 5, 12 - 17 (NIV)

The above passage shows that:

1. Jesus knew the Father had been given him all the power in the universe;
2. Knowing this – he took the form of a servant – washing feet of his disciples
3. He told us, this is an example for us to follow – as HIS SERVANTS.

Example 4: Paul the Apostle explains why Jesus was exalted by God

Example 3 above is probably what inspired Paul to write the following beautiful passage:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. **Rather, in humility value others above yourselves**, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature^[a] God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2: 3 – 11 (NIV)

The above passage shows that:

1. We are to value others above ourselves – serving them in humility;
2. This was the same MINDSET Jesus had;
3. Knowing he was God (the Highest) did not make him PROUD – But he became a servant (The lowest); and
4. Because he humbled himself and Served Others – God exalted him (back) to his Place – and gave him the excellent name of Jesus – which causes EVERYTHING TO BOW down to him.

Let he who has ears Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches – We are not to speak only about being conquerors, Kings BUT we are to teach others that the way to become a King, is by imitating Christ – who humbled himself, to Serve Others. We cannot be Greater than our Master.

The connection between pride and serving others

One of the ways to overcome pride is to serve others. ⁱ

A Pastor I like said something like this: *“If you ever start feeling proud, go and volunteer and serve others, go wash some dishes”*. ⁱⁱHe seemed to know from reading the bible that God gave us serving others as one of the ways in which we can overcome pride, the root of all sin. Another way of overcoming pride is by praising God (but that is [another day’s message which you can see here](#)).

In other words, when you take on a servant mind-set, even if you know who you are in Christ (a conqueror), God will continue to lift you up – BUT when you become arrogant, saying:

‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” ⁱⁱⁱ - God the Just Judge who sees everything will bring you down, unless you repent, because God hates the proud, but is with the humble. The bible shows this to us follows:

- *To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech.* Proverbs 8: 13 (NIV)
- *He mocks proud mockers but shows favour to the humble and oppressed.* Proverbs 3: 34 (NIV)
- *I the High and Mighty God reside with the lowly. Though the LORD is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud.* Psalm 138: 6
- *“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honour the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”* Daniel 4: 37
- *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.* 1 Peter 4: 10 (NIV)

Our generation: The science of volunteering to serve others

I believe our generation correctly understands the value of volunteering and for you parents of teens, having them serve others can benefit them immensely – they can gain a sense of purpose, build their own resilience and further their own success. ^{iv}

Common wisdom in the world today supports serving others as a great good and says for example:^v

- *The secret of happiness is serving others. A Chinese saying goes: If you want happiness for a lifetime, help others.*
- *For it is in giving that we receive — Saint Francis of Assisi, Founder of Order of Franciscans and a venerated saint in the Catholic Church.*
- *The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity — Leo Tolstoy (Author of “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenina”)*
- *We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give — Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister*
- *Making money is a happiness; making other people happy is a super happiness — Nobel Peace Prize recipient Muhammad Yunus*
- *Giving back is as good for you as it is for those you are helping, because giving gives you purpose. When you have a purpose-driven life, you’re a happier person — Goldie Hawn, Hollywood Actress.*

Here is what a good article says on this topic as some of the benefits of volunteering^{vi}.

1. **You experience more happiness.** A part of our brain lights up when we help others – releasing “feel good hormones” like dopamine.
2. **You reduce your stress.** When we help others our bodies release a hormone called oxytocin, which buffers stress and helps us maintain social trust and tranquillity.
3. **Relief from pain.** A study on pain showed people’s pain ratings dropped from 6 to below 4 after attending a volunteer training programme.
4. **Longer life span.** 40 international studies confirm that volunteering adds to your life. Some recent studies estimate a reduction in mortality rates by 22%.
5. **Reducing depression.** A study of alcoholics in an AA programme showed those who volunteered were twice as likely to stay clean a year later and their depression rates were lower.

Next steps: suggested ways on how you could do it

You cannot serve others until you hold them in esteem – see them as made in God’s image, are tolerant with them and forgive their faults – remembering that just as Christ forgave you, you forgive others. This is one of the ways you esteem others above yourself and start serving them in humility.

You realise that serving others is one of the ways we fight pride, the silent killer of our generation and the root of all sin and so you see serving others as a great way to enable you overcome pride.

You follow the model Jesus gave us his SERVANTS, we should do it this way as Jesus showed us:

1. Know who you are in Christ – a King, a Conqueror;

2. BUT You do not take this Equality with Christ to be a thing to use for your own advantage.

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. Galatians 5: 13 (NIV)

3. You know like he did, that because God has put all things are under you (in Christ), Love dictates that you serve others.
4. So you wash others' feet. A reference to:

- i. **You do the tasks that no one wants to do.** The lowly tasks, even when it is not convenient, when it is difficult. I don't believe Jesus enjoyed the thought of going to the Cross to die. It was so difficult he asked God if there was a way out. But knowing there was no way out, he then humbled himself and obeyed unto death. That is the way of love and is the mindset of service.
- ii. You do the tasks **but don't call attention to yourself but for God.** As Christ said, "Let your right hand not know what your left hand is doing."
- iii. You fulfil **Christ's call to those in the world and his people:**

"And the King will say, "I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me." Matt 25:40

iv. **So:**

1. You **take care of those on the fringes of society** – Those in prison, those who are hungry, and those who are sick.
2. You **fight for the vulnerable** – the old, the orphans, those in slavery, those who are oppressed.
3. **You Serve in Christ's church** – in administration, in hospitality to others, in helping others. This is a particularly important qualification for those who are elders (Titus 1) or seek to be in positions of leadership (1 Timothy 3).

v. **Finally, you take comfort from this verse in your service.**

For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. Hebrews 6: 10 (NLT)

Your turn

1. How has your understanding of the mind-set of Christ been wrong? What do you need to repent about so you can become a "good and faithful servant"?
2. What acts of service **will you take up in your church** – as your due duty to the MASTER?
3. What acts of service will you take up in humility – esteeming others above you, **including the vulnerable and those on the fringes of society?**

Notes

ⁱ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/greatness-humility-servanthood/excerpts/six-ways-to-put-away-pride>

ⁱⁱ Attributed to Rick Warren

ⁱⁱⁱ Adopted from Revelation 3: 17 (NIV)

^{iv} <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/raising-resilient-children-and-teens/201112/serving-others-will-help-your-teen-thrive>

^v <https://time.com/collection/guide-to-happiness/4070299/secret-to-happiness/>

^{vi} https://www.huffpost.com/entry/volunteering7-reasons-why_b_6302770