

Anybody Want to Serve?

At your favorite breakfast diner, an overworked waitress brings you a cup of coffee and your entrée. Without looking up you grunt, "It's about time." She apologizes, but you murmur under your breath.

In the checkout line at the grocery store, the scenario is the same. The teen-age clerk-in-training struggles in vain to calculate your items correctly. But instead of being patient, you sigh in frustration, snatch your bags and storm off.

If this sort of behavior sounds like something an unchurched person would do, think again. Some people today, even Christians, have developed an attitude that we are here to be served.

We have the mind-set that we deserve it. Unfortunately, we believe that job titles, income or family pedigree entitle us to get what we want, when we want it.

Have we forgotten what God said in His Word? We were born to serve Him. Matthew 16:24 makes this clear: "'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me'" (NKJV).

After years of hugging the front pew and shouting hallelujah, most of us have failed to understand the qualities that make a good servant. We have systematically blocked out a primary

call that Christians have on their lives: to love and serve God as we love and serve one another.

God has some very definitive views on servanthood, and the Bible shows us steps we must take to walk in obedience to Him. John 15:13 says, “‘Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.’” A servant will lay down his life.

A servant is also humble. John 13:14 reminds us of this: “‘If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.’” Jesus took the position of a servant when He washed His disciples’ feet.

This reveals another quality of servanthood: obedience. The mark of a true servant is following God’s instructions.

And what kind of servants would we be without faithfulness? Be responsible and faithful with little things at home, on your job and in your church. Before David was worthy of slaying Goliath, he was first tested with slaying lions. Before he could protect the people of God from Goliath, he first had to protect his sheep from bears.

Two important characteristics of servanthood that seem to escape a lot of people are character and integrity. Proverbs 22:1 says, “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.” A good servant does not steal, deflect accountability or lie to others.

Why did Jesus humble Himself and take on the nature of a servant? Did He come to build His own kingdom, or did He come

to do the Father's will?

Jesus had a purpose, which was to redeem mankind back to God. So why are we commanded to serve? Because we have a purpose, too—and that purpose is found in our sacrifice.

God has not limited His call of servanthood to the uneducated. Instead, He calls the pure in heart. When we have learned to serve others, heaven seems more significant than life here on earth.

Through service, we understand better what Jesus meant when He said, "'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'" (Matt. 6:21). Through service, our hearts will persistently be drawn to heaven.

In order to enter eternity, we must be born to Him and be dead to ourselves, our needs and our desires. The process is the same for each of us. When we give of our time to help feed homeless people, it serves as physical proof of how much God has given us and how little we had before we met Him.

By mentoring a young person in the community, we see how blessed our own children are and how much we really have to offer. When we give a single mother a shoulder to cry on, we discover we are not alone when we seek to please Him. And as we keep devoting ourselves in service to one another, we will continue to grow in love for God—who is our true reward.

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