

True Success

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. —1 Corinthians 9:19

To quote my friend Joseph Ton, “Success in the eyes of the world is how many servants you have. Success in the eyes of Jesus is how many people you serve.”

God is looking for people who are willing to become servants, and we can expect that, like Jesus, we will be tested in that role to the extreme. Yet it is a great faith-builder, for one who is willing to be subordinate, and all that that means, must rely increasingly on God’s faithfulness. So we must ask ourselves how willing are we to go in pursuit of God’s standards rather than the world’s, which will always be the reverse.

Too often when we first come to God we are under the impression that God owes us something. We think we have bargaining power with God to ask Him questions and make Him answer us. Yet suddenly we begin to realize that we are nothing and that God owes us nothing. He owes us, if anything, a place in hell. It is at this point that we begin to say, “I subordinate myself to you.”

Everybody you meet thereafter will be your superior in some sense. And this is why Paul said in Philippians 2, “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (v. 4). How humbling it is to accept authority from and be subordinate to one whom you think is less capable or qualified than you! How humiliating!

Yet the beginning of greatness is accepting authority. When the disciples asked for preferment, Jesus did not rebuke them. He just reversed the roles: let the greatest among you be the servant of the rest. This is just what Jesus did in His own life: He “emptied himself” and became a servant.

What we must ask ourselves, therefore, is to what extent will the marks of the bond servant, which characterized Jesus' life, be ours?

Excerpted from *Meekness and Majesty* (Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1992, 2000).