

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Ministry and Service.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Ministry and Service.

Topics.

- Service ability and talents.
- Measuring ourselves against others.
- Ministry service and criticism.
- Primary and secondary ministries.
- Servants sacrifice and time.
- Ministry, service and excellence.
- Servants and fame.
- Manipulation and ministry.
- Servants and materialism.
- Kingdom builders or wealth and fame builders.
- Long term Christians.
- Witnessing and testimony.
- Worldly Christians and heavenly Christians.

INTRODUCTION: prior to reading the following, it needs to be understood that the principals about to be mentioned do not only apply to ministry and service that is within the established walls of a local church or a religious institution. Serving Christ and being in ministry for him is not limited to those involved in an established church or a religious institution. Certainly it is true that for many this is Gods will and a very important part of His plan for the extension of His Kingdom, but this study is not focused on those who are called to serve in this way, but upon those who are called to service and ministry outside of the established church system.

In this age it is important to remember that the body of Christ is global and that service and ministry is not confined to an established church building or to those with theological religious certificates, because the body of Christ is worldwide. Ministry and service overflows outside the walls of the established church and meets the needs of many who for various reasons do not attend a traditional established church building.

The body of Christ can be found amongst multitudes of different denominations inside and outside the visible Christian church buildings or established religious institutions, because world-wide multitudes of faithful brothers and sisters in Christ are serving God on the streets, in prisons, in hospitals, at their place of work or in their neighborhood. There are worldwide thousands of small groups serving the Lord from their homes and ministering amongst their local communities.

Service for God is not limited, it can be found within the local church and established religious institution or a person's daily life and place of work, therefore the following principals apply to every Christian who wants to serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ no matter what their vocation in life maybe.

Service Ability and Talents: if God has not given a person the ability to carry a tune, He isn't going to expect them to be an opera singer. It is most unlikely that God will ask a person to dedicate their life to a task they have no talent for. On the other hand the abilities a person does have are a strong indication of what God wants them to do with their life they are clues to knowing God's will for them.

If a person is good at singing, music, teaching, designing, recruiting, accounting, business or organizing, hospitality, encouraging, counseling or evangelism and public speaking, it is a safe to suppose that God's plan for their life will somehow include these skills since God does not waste abilities, He matches a person's calling to their capabilities.

Servants' Talents and Personality: God loves variety (just look at creation) he created each of us with a unique combination of personality and traits. He made introverts and extroverts, people who love routine and those who love variety, thinkers and emotional feelers. Some people work best when given an individual assignment while others work better with a team there are those who love being on their own and those who thrive on company.

Because of this vast variety of personality and character in the body of Christ there is a danger in the Christian community for one group to judge the other. An example of this danger is tendency for those who love company to judge (unconsciously or consciously) those who are happy to be on their own as a lesser Christian, when in fact God may have called that person to do a particular work that requires a great deal of alone time, to achieve what God has called them for.

Consider those who originally interpreted the first Bibles into the English language and the author of the first Bible Concordance that Christian men and woman still use today. These men did not have high tech computers to help them as we do today, but only a pen and an ink bottle. Added to these are the many faithful authors who write biblical books we all enjoy and learn from. It would be quite easy for those who are about the business of church ministry to view these kind of Christians as being lesser since their ministry is not seen because it involves a great deal of alone time to accomplish what they are doing for the Lord.

Ministry, Service and Encouragement: There is a tendency within many local churches and even some home groups to encourage only those members who are doing a work that is part of their fellowship or adding to their own group, but the body of Christ is global. The Lord's body covers the entire earth. All Christians need to be encouraged in whatever they are faithfully doing for the extension of the Lord's Kingdom whether it is adding to the local church or to a home group or not, because we are all branches of the same vine and all have the same goal (i.e., to save the lost, to encourage and help those in the body of Christ and to glorify Christ).

It should not matter how a faithful brother or sister is serving the Lord or whether they are adding to our particular church or home group if they are being faithful with what they have and doing what they are able they belong to the family of Christ whether they attend our local home group or church or not.

Measuring Ourselves against Others: following are two reasons why a brother or sister in Christ should never measure their ministry or the results of their service against the ministry and service of others: -

1. They will always be able to find another brother or sister who seems to be more gifted, more skilled and more talented than they are and they will become discouraged in what they are doing.
2. They will always be able to find someone who does not seem as gifted, skilled and talented as they are and then there is a danger they will become puffed up in pride.

Either of these two attitudes not only have the power to rob a person from ministry and their service toward the Lord, but also the power to rob them of the joy of serving God. Paul said, "We dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding (2 Cor. 10:12).

Paul who had a personal revelation of Christ and who wrote the majority of the New Testament not only considered it foolish for brothers and sisters to compare themselves with others, but states that those who do are without understanding, meaning they do not understand spiritual things or the Spirit of Christ.

Ministry Service and Criticism: a faithful brother or sister in Christ may at times encounter others in ministry who will not understand their style or their ministry and will not only criticize them, but also try to get them to conform to what they think they should be doing. Paul often had to deal with critics who misunderstood and maligned his service. The answer to this type of criticism is to ignore it and seek only God's commendation.

How Servants Should Act: the world defines greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige, position and fame, if you have others serving you; you have arrived in the eyes of the world. In our self-serving culture with its me-first mentality, acting like a servant is not a popular concept. In contrast to this worldly attitude Jesus never measured greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige, and position. His idea of greatness is not based on status.

This is because his heavenly Father determines greatness by how many people we serve and not by how many people serve us this is so contrary to the world's idea of greatness that we have a hard time understanding it, much less doing it. Even the Lords own disciples argued about who deserved the most prominent position and thousands of books worldwide have been written on leadership, but very few on servant-hood this is because everyone wants to lead, but very few want to be a servant.

Primary and Secondary Ministries: a faithful brother or sister's primary ministry should be in the area of their talents, skill, abilities and gifts, but their secondary service is wherever they are needed at the moment. A person's shape, talents and gifts reveals their ministry, but their servant's heart will reveal their maturity and understanding of the Spirit of Christ. Christians should desire to be servant-leaders not just leaders, God often tests our hearts by asking us to serve in ways that do not fit the gift or ministry we are specifically called to or are shaped for. A leader may not be gifted for a particular task, but they may be called to do it if no one else is around.

No special talent, skill or gift is required to: -

- Stay after a meeting to tidy up and stack chairs.
- Mow a sick person's lawn or drive a poor person home.
- Send a card of encouragement or phone a lonely person.

Anyone can be a servant, all it requires is humbleness and character, sadly the world we live in does not give awards to people who do the mundane things of life, but God does, our world exalts the rich and famous simply because they are rich and famous, but God does not. Jesus said whoever gives a glass of water to a thirsty person will be rewarded. God's reward system works on us doing-good to other humans, no matter how small or mundane. When a Christian does a kind act to another human the Bible calls that act treasure in heaven

The key to being a servant of Christ is to care about the well-being of others in contrast to looking to peers for a pat on the back. When we are seeking strokes of approval from others it shows that we are only in the ministry to feed our pride and ego and not to serve the Lord.

Servants Sacrifice and Time: if we only serve when it's convenient for us, we are not a real servant, a true servant does what's needed, even when it's inconvenient, they are available anytime, if we want to serve God we need to ask ourselves, am I available to God anytime, can God mess up my plans without me becoming resentful? Servants don't get to pick and choose when or where they will serve, being a servant means giving up the right to control our schedule and allowing God to interrupt it whenever he needs to.

If servants remind themselves at the start of every day that they are God's servant unforeseen and unexpected interruptions won't be as frustrating because their agenda will be whatever God wants to bring into their life. Servants see interruptions as divine appointments for ministry and are happy for the opportunity to practice serving.

Servants of Christ do not moonlight for themselves, all their time belongs to God they gladly give Christ exclusive allegiance, not part time faithfulness. This does not mean that they never enjoy life or the good things in this world, but that when God does bring someone into their path of life that they have the ability to help they are willing to help even though it may interrupt their own life and may mean they will have to sacrifice something they might like to have done.

Ministry, Service and Excellence: real servants pay attention to needs they are always on the lookout for ways to help others and always do the best with what they have, because less than perfect service is always better than the best intention, it is often said, "If it can't be done with excellence, don't do it," but Jesus never said this, the truth is that almost everything we do is done poorly when we first start doing it this is how we learn. We all need to learn to use the good enough principal, (i.e., it doesn't have to be perfect for God to use and bless it), better to involve a lot of regular folks in ministry than have a church run by a few elites.

Servants and Fame: generally (there are always exceptions to every rule of life) real servants of Christ are not found in the spotlight they are quietly content with serving the Lord in the shadows. No servant of Christ should be discouraged when their service goes unnoticed or is taken for granted, rather they should keep on serving because the servants the Lord truly delights in is those servants who think more about others than they do about themselves.

God, Jesus and all the angels in heaven rejoice when they look upon servants who forget themselves long enough to think about others, this is what it means to lose your life, servants do not only focus on their own needs they are also aware of the needs of others around them.

Manipulation and Ministry: sadly there are a certain few in Christian service who are serving not for the Lord, but for self, they are serving to get others to admire them or to achieve their own selfish goals, but that is manipulation, not ministry, because the whole time they are ministering they are really thinking about themselves and how noble and wonderful they are. Others try to use service as a bargaining tool with God their attitude is, "I'll do this for you God, if you'll do something for me," but God cannot be bargained with. Every servant of the Lord should have the glorious faith of Habakkuk who said: -

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Habakkuk's faith was not dependent upon worldly circumstances good or bad, but upon the faithfulness and love of God.

Servants and Materialism: more people are sidetracked away from serving by worldly materialism than by anything else. This is because they think, "After I achieve my financial goals I'm going to serve God," but most of us can spend a life time achieving our financial goals and then still never achieve them since life very rarely follows our youthful expectations and dreams.

Kingdom Builders or Wealth and Fame Builders: there are two kinds of Christians, Kingdom builders and wealth and fame builders, both are gifted at making whatever they do grow. Wealth and fame builders continue to amass wealth for themselves no matter how much money they make. Kingdom builders change the rules of the game, no matter how much money may come into their ministry they give it away to benefit the lives of others and not themselves. This does not mean they themselves have to live their life in poverty, but it does mean that they do not live a life of excess and indulgent luxury.

The Mission Field: servants look around their neighborhood and workplace and see them as their personal mission field, they pray, "God, who have you put in my life today that I can shine a light for you." The light God calls them to shine may not be telling them about Jesus or even their faith, it maybe that God simply wants them to show someone they have contact with friendliness, kindness acceptance or help them in some way.

Sacrifice Service and Ministry: for a servant to fulfill their mission it will require that they abandon their agenda and accept God's agenda for his or her life we can't just tack it on to all the other things we might like to do with our life. A true servant has the same attitude that Jesus had when he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane (fully aware of the brutal, bloody and cruel horror that was facing him), "Father, not my will, but yours be done," a servant yields their rights, expectations, dreams, plans, and ambitions to the LORD. Servants pray, "God help me to do what you are blessing," in contrast to praying "God bless what I want to do." Servants hand God a blank sheet of paper with their name signed at the bottom and tell him to fill in the details.

NOTE.

This does not mean that every servant of the Lord should be surrendered to serving the Lord in full time ministry God's calling for most will be simply to live a life that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith in whatever vocation of life they are in.

God's calling for most faithful brothers and sisters in the global body of Christ is to be a faithful worker in whatever place of work or vocation they maybe in and to be a faithful wife and mother or a faithful husband and father sharing their faith when the opportunities present themselves and doing-good and what is right. Serving Christ is not only about being in church ministry, serving the Lord is about being a good and faithful servant to him no matter what situation, circumstance or vocation we are in.

Different Gifts: though we have all been given different gifts, abilities, skills and talents we should always keep in mind that every faithful brother and sister in Christ is in the same family and all desire to exalt and make Christ look good and not themselves. If a person is going to be a servant, they must settle their identity in Christ, because only secure people can serve. This is because insecure people are always worrying about how they appear to others the more insecure a person is the more they will need the approval of others

Long Term Christians: there is a danger for long term Christians to forget how hopeless it felt to be without Christ. Those who have been in Christ for many years should always remember that no matter how contented or successful people appear to be, without Christ they are hopelessly lost and headed for eternal separation from God. Nothing will ever matter to a servant of the Lord as much as helping people establish an eternal relationship with God. When these opportunities arise they willing lay everything aside to share their faith and the message of the cross. For most in the global body of Christ their secular job and daily life is most likely the very place Christ has called them to be a servant for him.

Witnessing and Testimony: witnessing is not just about sharing Scriptures it involves sharing our personal testimony and the story of how Christ has made a difference in our life. The essence of witnessing is simply sharing the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and sharing our personal experiences regarding the Lord. In a courtroom a witness isn't expected to argue the case, prove the truth, or press for a verdict that is the job of the attorneys, witness's simply report what has happened to them and what they saw.

Jesus said, you will be my witness's not, you will be my attorneys, Jesus wants every Christian to share their story with others, sharing our story with others is an essential part of our mission on earth because it is unique. You may not be a Bible scholar, but you are an authority on your life and it's hard to argue with personal experience. Another value of every Christian's story is that it bypasses intellectual defenses, many people won't accept the authority of the Bible, but they will listen to a humble, personal story that is why on six different occasions Paul used his testimony to share the Gospel instead of quoting Scripture (Acts 22 to 26)

A testimony can be divided into the following four parts: -

1. What our life was like before we met Jesus.
2. How we realized that we needed what Jesus provided.

3. How we committed our life to Jesus.

4. The difference Jesus has made in our life.

Christian can choose to be a heavenly Christian or a worldly Christian.

Worldly Christians: look to God primarily for personal fulfillment, they are saved, but self-centered, they love to attend concerts and enrichment seminars, but they are never found at a mission conference because they aren't interested. Their prayers focus on their own needs, blessings and happiness. It is a me first faith, their primary focus is how can God make their life more comfortable? They want to use God for their purposes instead of being used for His purposes.

Heavenly Christians: know they were saved to serve and made for a mission; they are eager to serve God and others and are excited about the privilege of being used by God. They shift from self-centered thinking to others centered thinking. They live with the same attitude Paul expressed when he said, "I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:33).

Witnessing and Fear: there is no fear in love, perfect love drives out all fear, a good example of this is a parent who runs into a raging burning building to save their child, they have no fear, in fact they do not even consider their own life because their love for that child is greater than any fear they might have, if you have been afraid to share the Good News with those around you, ask God to fill your heart with His love for them.

The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness,
but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should
perish, but that all should reach repentance
(2 Peter 3:9).

End