



Becoming a Christ-like Servant

The greatest personal challenge a Christian will face is to become a Christ-like servant. It is the low road to a believer's high calling. It is a challenge because it goes against our natural desire for popularity, power, and prominence. Not surprisingly, Jesus was the perfect example of a servant when He lived on the earth. A believer, by staying fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2), can follow in His steps.

In the Old Testament, Jesus is described as a "servant" (Isaiah 42:1). The New Testament describes Him similarly (Acts 3:26, Philippians 2:5-8). As the Perfect Servant, Jesus taught His disciples that the pathway for greatness in God's kingdom was found by traveling the low road of a servant (Matthew 23:11). Jesus demonstrated the consistency of a true servant's heart by washing His disciples' feet just a few hours before He was crucified (John 13:3-5).

Believers are to become more and more like the Perfect Servant (2 Corinthians 3:18, Ephesians 4:15). In so doing, they will demonstrate love to others (Matthew 7:12) and not merely live to please themselves (2 Corinthians 5:15).

The example (Jesus) and the teaching (Scripture) clearly and perfectly present the characteristics of a Christ-like servant. The difficulty in becoming a servant is described by three words – dying to self – which presents a clear-cut choice for every believer (Luke 9:23-24; Romans 12:2).

Dying to self, however, cannot be accomplished by one's own power or insight. If dying to self depended solely on personal abilities, no one would become more like Christ, since natural wisdom and strength are woefully inadequate to accomplish that transformation. Thank God, through His mercy and abundant grace, He has provided divinely powerful and completely sufficient resources (Jesus, Holy Spirit, and Scripture) to enable a believer to mature spiritually. The issue is not God's supply, which is more than ample for a believer to mature spiritually. The issue is a believer's willingness to rely on God's plan and power to become a fruitful servant of Christ by leaving old patterns of life in order to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Dying to self, in spite of its importance for a believer to become a Christ-like servant, is not the primary focus of each day. A believer is to focus on Christ, the perfect servant. By maintaining this focus, a Christian realizes that Christ-centered servanthood comes from the inside out, accomplished by cooperating with God as He develops the character of Jesus within a follower of Christ. As that inward development progresses, a believer will respond more and more in a Christ-like manner to life's situations and, especially, in personal relationships.

Life's greatest challenge, being a Christ-like servant, can become life's greatest reward for a wholehearted disciple of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Hebrews 12:1-2, Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Isaiah 42:1, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

Acts 3:26, "God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Philippians 2:5-8, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Matthew 23:11, "The greatest among you shall be your servant."

John 13:3-5, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

2 Corinthians 3:18, And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:15, Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

Matthew 7:12, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

2 Corinthians 5:15, and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Luke 9:23-24, And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

Romans 12:2, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.