

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

SERVICE

A CALL TO SERVE GOD BY SERVING OTHERS

A. Introductory Quotes

1. Donald Bloesch, *...serving God is not a job for the casually interested. It's costly service. He asks for your life. He asks for service to Him to become a priority, not a pastime. He doesn't want servants who will give Him the leftovers of their life's commitments.*
2. Richard Foster, *Radical self-denial gives the feel of adventure. If we forsake all, we even have the chance of glorious martyrdom. But in service we are banished to the mundane, the ordinary, the trivial.*
3. Donald Bloesch, *The ministry of serving may be as public as preaching or teaching, but more often it will be as sequestered as nursery duty. It may be as visible as singing a solo, but usually it will be as unnoticed as operating the sound equipment to amplify the solo. Serving may be as appreciated as a good testimony in a worship service, but typically it's as thankless as washing dishes after a church social. Most service, even that which seems the most glamorous, is like an iceberg. Only the eye of God ever sees the larger, hidden part of it...If we don't discipline ourselves to serve for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom (and for the purpose of Godliness), we'll "serve" only occasionally or when it's convenient or self-serving.*
4. Dallas Willard, *Not every act that may be done as a discipline need be done as a discipline. I will often be able to serve another simply as an act of love and righteousness, without regard to how it may enhance my abilities to follow Christ. There certainly is nothing wrong with that, and it may, incidentally, strengthen me spiritually as well. But I may also serve another to train myself away from arrogance, possessiveness, envy, resentment, or covetousness. In that case, my service is undertaken as a discipline for the spiritual life.*
5. Author unknown, *The head grows by taking in but the heart grows by giving out.*
6. Henry Drummond, *You will find, as you look back upon your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others.*
7. T. W. Manson, *In the kingdom of God service is not a stepping-stone to nobility: it is nobility, the only kind of nobility that is recognized.*

B. Serving is for all Christians

1. 1 Peter 4:10, *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.*
2. Mark 10:45, *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

C. Motives for serving

1. Obedience
 - a. Matthew 4:10, *You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.*
 - b. John Newton, *If two angels were to receive at the same moment a commission from God, one to go down and rule earth's grandest empire, the other to go and sweep the streets of its meanest village, it would be a matter of entire indifference to each which service fell to his lot, the post of ruler or the post of scavenger; for the joy of the angels lies only in obedience to God's will.*
2. Gratitude
 - a. 1 Samuel 12:24, *Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.*
 - b. Donald Bloesch, *When the fire of service to God grows cold, consider what great things the Lord has done for you.*
 - c. Charles Spurgeon, *The heir of heaven serves his Lord simply out of gratitude; he has no salvation to gain, no heaven to lose; ... now, out of love to the God who chose him, and who gave so great a price for his redemption, he desires to lay out himself entirely to his Master's service. O you who are seeking salvation by the works of the law, what a miserable life yours must be! ... you have that if you diligently persevere in obedience, you may perhaps obtain eternal life, though, alas! none of you dare to pretend that you have attained it. You toil and toil and toil, but you never get that which you toil after, and you never will, for, "by the works of the law there shall no flesh living be justified." ... The child of God works not for life, but from life; he does not work to be saved, he works because he is saved.*

3. Gladness
 - a. Psalm 100:2, *Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!*
 - b. Donald Bloesch, *Something is wrong if you can't serve the Lord with gladness. I can understand why the person who serves God only out of obligation doesn't serve with gladness. I can understand why the person who serves God in an attempt to earn his way to Heaven doesn't serve with gladness. But the Christian who gratefully acknowledges what God has done for him for eternity should be able to serve God cheerfully and with joy.*
4. Humility
 - a. Philippians 2:3, *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*
 - b. John 13:12-16, *When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.*
 - c. Richard Foster, *Self-righteous service requires external rewards. It needs to know that people see and appreciate the effort. It seeks human applause—with proper religious modesty of course. ... Self-righteous service is highly concerned about results. It eagerly wants to see if the person served will reciprocate in kind. ... The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition. It will devise subtle, religiously acceptable means to call attention to the service rendered.*
5. Love
 - a. Galatians 5:13, *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*
 - b. Donald Bloesch, *I read of a missionary in Africa who was asked if he really liked what he was doing. His response was shocking. "Do I like this work?" he said. "No. My wife and I do not like dirt. We have reasonably refined sensibilities. We do not like crawling into vile huts through goat refuse. ... But is a man to do nothing for Christ he does not like? God pity him, if not. Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We have orders to 'Go,' and we go. Love constrains us."*
6. Reward
 - a. Hebrews 6:10, *For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:58, *Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*
 - c. Donald Bloesch, *Disciplined service to God is work, hard and costly labor sometimes, but it will endure for all eternity.*

CONCLUSION

- A. We are called to be others-centered not self-centered based on the life of our Savior.
- B. We are gifted by God to serve others as if we are serving Him - we are!
- C. Service is a life-long calling, John Wesley, *Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.*