

*“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Matthew 10:26,27*

## **THE CHARACTER OF A SERVANT**

**by Craig Marlatt**

Today in the Church there is a great need for men and women who will be servants. Servants not only to God, but also to their fellow man at large. Too much of today's preaching is focused upon what we can have and the great things which we can accomplish as Christians. Jesus was very clear in this area as He taught His disciple saying, “Whoever will be great must serve”.

The road to leadership is sometimes a downward walk toward the things that the world rejects: service, selflessness, humility, self-sacrifice, love and even death. Our Lord Himself was our Supreme Example in that He “Thought it not robbery (something to cling to) to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:6-8).

If we are indeed to be imitators of our Master, let us begin here where Christ Himself was; as humble servants seeking to do the will of our Father in every area of our lives.

Most people are looking for something real and tangible upon which they can place their hopes. Because of this many have sought peace through such things as eastern mysticism, yoga, drugs, money, sexual pleasures, occult religions, humanism and a list of other sources too numerous to mention; all of which promise peace, but cannot supply an eternal solution to man's great dilemma: sin.

Because of the sinless life of our Lord Jesus He was able to purchase eternal life for us through the value of His redemptive sacrifice. We too are to be a people who walk in the footsteps of our Lord, living a life of holiness, humility and service, that we might, “Make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ . . . according to the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 3: 9-11).

When I was a younger man, before I became a Christian, I would often try to make deals with God concerning my feelings of guilt about my manner of life. Sometimes I would tell God, “When I get my life cleaned up then I'll become a real Christian and live right”. The problem is that I never really got ‘good enough’ and I never got my life cleaned up enough to handle my part of the deal. It wasn't until later, after becoming a Christian, that I read the words in Ephesians 2:8 and realized the folly of my attempts to gain temporary appeasement. “For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

Although I had truly seen my unworthiness to be saved, I was approaching God with an improper response to what He had shown me about myself. Though trying to make self-improvements upon my own life, it was not until I threw myself at the foot of the cross in frustration and humiliation that I was able to receive the solution to my problem. And with it the peace of God and the assurance that comes when one finds His Solution.

As a servant of God I am constantly made aware of my own inability to fulfil even the smallest of duties without the grace of God for these things. If I am to receive from Him those things which I need to fulfil His calling I must humble myself before God. When we give ourselves to Jesus Christ we relinquish all rights to be our own masters. No longer can we do our own will, but we are to do His will. No longer can we live in the fashion of the world, but we are to live as He requires, not going our own way, but following His footsteps. "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6).

God will speak to us concerning His will for the everyday decisions of our lives if we seek those answers from His Word, prayer, and fellowship with other Christians. It is His responsibility to guide and direct us. If God gave us the command to follow Him and did not give us direction as to which way to go, then He would not be a merciful loving Father, but merely a cruel overlord. It is our duty to obey. God will direct us.

Sometimes we may seek God's will and yet it seems to escape us and there is no sense of His presence. We must learn to take God at His Word. We must learn to walk by faith. In order to teach us to walk by faith He sometimes withholds the awareness of His presence. It is at times like these when we find out whether we are a truly prisoner of the Lord or not. Whether or not we believe Him when He says "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."