

1. Servanthood

<https://www.acts17-11.com/servant.html>

Phil 2:1-4 (Phi) Now if you have known anything of Christ's encouragement and of his reassuring love; if you have known something of the fellowship of his Spirit, and of compassion and deep sympathy, do make my joy complete--live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of each other than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but consider other people's interests also.

Phil 2:3-4 (TEB) Don't do anything from selfish ambition, or from a cheap desire to boast; but be humble towards each other, never thinking you are better than others. And look out for each other's interests, not just for your own.

Phil 2:5-8 (Phi) Let your attitude to life be that of Christ Jesus himself. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his privileges as God's equal, but stripped himself of every advantage by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born a man. And, plainly seen as a human being, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, to the point of death, and the death he died was that of a common criminal. That is why God has lifted him to the heights, and has given him the name beyond all names.

(a) How To Get Ahead In The Kingdom Of God...

John 13:12-17 (NIV) When he [Jesus] had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Mat 20:27-28 (NEB) "...whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all--like the Son of Man; He did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give up his life as a ransom for many."

John 12:25-26 (NIV) "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."

- Richard Foster: "In some ways we would prefer to hear Jesus' call to deny father and mother, houses and land for the sake of the gospel than his word to wash feet. Radical self-denial gives the feel of adventure. If we forsake all, we even have the chance at glorious martyrdom. But in service we must experience the many little deaths of going beyond ourselves. Service banishes us to the mundane, the ordinary, the trivial.
- "In the Discipline of service there is also great liberty. Service allows us to say 'no!' to the world's games of promotion and authority. It abolishes our need and desire for a 'pecking

order'."

Eph 5:21 (Jer) Give way to one another in obedience to Christ.

- Oswald Chambers: "It is one thing to go on the lonely way with dignified heroism, but quite another thing if the line mapped out for you by God means being a door-mat under other people's feet."

(b) Free To Serve

Rom 6:20-22 (Jer) When you were slaves to sin, you felt no obligation to righteousness, and what did you get from this? Nothing but experiences that now make you blush, since that sort of behavior ends in death. Now, however, you have been set free from sin, you have been made slaves of God, and you get a reward leading to your sanctification and ending in eternal life.

Rom 6:23 (Phi) Sin PAYS its servants: the wage is death. But God GIVES to those who serve him: his free gift is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 7:6 (Jer) But now we are rid of the Law, freed by death from our imprisonment, free to serve in the new spiritual way and not the old way of a written law.

1 Pet 2:16 (NIV) Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

Gal 5:13 (Jer) My brothers, you were called, as you know, to liberty; but be careful, or this liberty will provide an opening for self-indulgence. Serve one another, rather, in works of love.

Mat 24:45-47 (NIV) "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions."

(c) Who's In Control

- Mother Teresa: "I belong to Jesus. He must have the right to use me without consulting me."

1 Cor 6:19-20 (NIV) ...You are not your own; you were bought with a price...

Rom 14:8 (Jer) If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord.

- Richard Foster: "A natural and understandable hesitancy accompanies any serious discussion of service. The hesitancy is prudent since it is wise to count the cost before plunging headlong into any Discipline. We experience a fear that comes out something like this: "If I do that, people will take advantage of me; they will walk all over me."
- "Right here we must see the difference between choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant. When we chose to serve, we are still in charge. We decide whom we will serve

and when we will serve. And if we are in charge, we will worry a great deal about anyone stepping on us, that is, taking charge over us. But when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge. There is great freedom in this. If we voluntarily choose to be taken advantage of, then we cannot be manipulated. When we choose to be a servant, we surrender the right to decide when we will serve. We become available and vulnerable.

- "Self-righteous service picks and chooses whom to serve. Sometimes the low and defenseless are served because that will ensure a humble image. True service is indiscriminate in its ministry. It has heard the command of Jesus...

Mark 9:35 (NIV) ..."If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

(d) Giving Up Your Rights

Luke 12:45-47 (NIV) "But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows."

- Oswald Chambers: "Obstinacy and self-will will always stab Jesus Christ. It may hurt no one else, but it wounds His Spirit... Every time we stand on our rights and insist that this is what we intend to do, we... vex and grieve His Spirit."

Rom 12:1 (KJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

(e) "Love Slaves"

- Richard Foster: "Consider the perspective of a slave. A slave sees all of life from the viewpoint of slavery. He does not see himself as possessing the same rights as free men and women. Please understand me, when this slavery is involuntary it is cruel and dehumanizing. When the slavery is freely chosen, however, everything is changed. Voluntary servitude is a great joy.

Phil 2:17 (NIV) But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

- "The image of slavery may be difficult for us, but it was not hard for the apostle Paul. He frequently boasted of his slavery to Christ, making lavish use of the first-century concept of the "love slave" (that is, the slave who, out of love, has freely chosen to remain a slave). We do our best to soften Paul's language by translating the word "slave" as "servant." But whatever word we decide to use, let us be certain that we understand that Paul meant he had freely given up his rights."

Acts 20:24 (NIV) ...I consider my life worth nothing to me...

- "Therefore, the fear that we will be taken advantage of and stepped on is justified. That is

exactly what may happen. But who can hurt someone who has freely chosen to be stepped on? Thomas A. Kempis instructs us to be 'so subject that all men may go over thee and tread upon thee as upon mire of the street.'

James 1:27 (Phi) Religion that is pure and genuine in the sight of God the Father will show itself by such things as visiting orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world.

(f) Flesh Test! How Hard Is It To...?

- Richard Foster: "Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. 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. If we stoutly refuse to give in to this lust of the flesh, we crucify it. Every time we crucify the flesh, we crucify pride and arrogance."

(g) Jesus, The Suffering Servant, Dives Into Humanity To Rescue A Few

Luke 4:18 (Jer) "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free..."

Luke 22:27 (NIV) "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

Luke 6:40 (NIV) "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."

Mark 10:42-45 (NIV) Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

John 15:20 (NIV) "Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also."

Rom 15:1-3 (Wey) As for us who are strong, our duty is to bear with the weaknesses of those who are not strong, and not seek our own pleasure. Let each of us endeavor to please his fellow Christian, aiming at a blessing calculated to build him up. For even the Christ did not seek His own pleasure...

Rom 15:1-3 (Mof) We who are strong ought to bear the burdens that the weak make for themselves and us. We are not to please ourselves; each of us must please his neighbor, doing him good by building up his faith. Christ certainly did not please himself...

1 Pet 4:10-11 (NIV) Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking

the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Cor 12:5 (NIV) There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

(h) Dive In

Rom 12:9-13 (TEB) Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly as brothers in Christ, and be eager to show respect for one another. Work hard, and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times. Share your belongings with your needy brothers, and open your homes to strangers.

Gal 5:13 (RSV) ...But through love be servants of one another.

Gal 6:9-10 (Phi) Let us not grow tired of doing good, for, unless we throw in our hand, the ultimate harvest is assured. Let us then do good to all men as opportunity offers, especially to those who belong to the Christian household.