

Serving God by Serving Others

Those who are obedient to the gospel become servants of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18). As servants, they are to serve. They are to be doing those good works for which they were created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10). In fact, they are to be "zealous" for those works (Titus 2:14).

Romans 12:1-2 encourages Christians to be "living sacrifices" for the Lord. That is accomplished when we start living for the Lord and doing those things His will would have him do. One of the things the Lord wants His disciples to do is to serve others. He illustrated and emphasized this in John 13.

At what many have come to call the "Last Supper," Jesus paused, girded Himself with a towel, took water, and washed His disciples' feet. He told them, "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (John 13:13-16). Jesus was not binding the rite of "foot-washing," rather, He was showing that those who would be His disciples were to be of a mind to serve others, regard their needs, and do what they could to help them.

James declares that if one is going to have a saving faith, that serving others is an essential aspect of that faith. In the second chapter he states, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14-17). One can profess again and again to be a Christian and to have great faith, but if he does not see to the needs of his brethren he, in reality, has no faith.

Serving others is an important matter to the Lord. When He depicted the judgment scene in Matthew 25, He stressed how important it is to Him and how it should be to us for He showed that it affects one's eternal destiny. To the righteous He said, "'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me.'" (Matt. 25:34-40). The unrighteous were told to depart because they had neglected to be of service to others (Matt. 25:41-46).

Opportunities abound for those who would be like Christ to demonstrate their love for Him by their service to their brethren. They can start by giving their brethren a friendly hello and a warm greeting. They can speak a kind word of encouragement; send a card to the sick or those absent from services; prepare a meal for the shut-ins; visit the sick, elderly, the weak, or discouraged; help the sick and/or elderly with chores; provide financial assistance when needed; and, of course, pray for their brethren.

It is vitally important for all Christians to actively serve their brethren for in so doing, they serve the Lord.

- by Gene Taylor

Concerning the Accomplishments of Spasmodic Attenders

The "lukewarm" Christian/'spasmodic attender' accomplishes these things:

1. He frustrates the elders in the obligation they have to feed the flock (Acts 20:28).
2. He sets a bad example for his children, neighbors, members of his family that are not Christians, etc.

3. He illustrates that the joy of service is not his.
4. He treats the building up of the church as though it is nothing at all.
5. He proves by action that he has not counted the cost of his discipleship.
6. He thinks that minimums constitute faithfulness disregarding the Lord's teachings on the subject (cf. Lk. 17: 10).
7. He shows his lack of concern for the faithful brethren who break their necks to be consistent and faithful in the matter.
8. He parades - for all to see - the price tag he puts on the church, the work of the church, and the overall influence of the church.

"And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand ... " (Romans 13. 11, 12).

- by Harold Turner

M-D-R: Would God Require Separation?

What should we say about a situation where a person desires to obey the gospel, but they have been divorced for an unscriptural reason (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) and are now remarried? There has been lots of controversy on this subject, but it is clear that the basic concept of repentance necessitates a severance of the unscriptural marriage. Without this, the adultery continues (Romans 7:2,3) and forgiveness is impossible.

Some brethren have gone to great lengths in attempts to justify the unscripturally divorced and remarried couple remaining together. Very often an emotional appeal of this nature is made:

"I just can't believe that God would require such a difficult thing." "How could a loving God demand it?" "What about the children?"

These questions can be easily answered by referring to an historical situation that developed in the days following the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity. They violated the law of God by inter-marrying with people from other nations (Ezra 9: 1-4; Deut. 7:3). What were they instructed to do to resolve this sinful situation? Separate from those mates! Note:

"And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives." (Ezra 10:10-11)

The difficulty of this action was compounded by the fact that children had been born to many of these unions (Ezra 10:44). But God's will was clear, and his faithful people saw that it was taught and obeyed. Will we do the same?