

Servanthood - the Badge of Belonging

Purpose: To help the student understand the principles of servanthood and create a desire in them to apply these principles to their lives.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson the students will:

1. Be able to explain why Jesus could willingly be a servant.
2. Be able to explain how we can apply these principles to our lives.
3. Be willing to act as a servant.

Key Verse: John 13:4-5

I. Introduction

This or another introduction could be used to capture the students' attention as to what we think of when we hear the word slave or servant.

What do the following words have in common?

- Doormat
- Bottom of the pile
- Last place
- Downtrodden
- No will of their own, etc.

They all describe words that we use to describe a slave or a servant. When you think of the word 'servant' or 'slave', what do you think about? No one naturally wants to serve others. It is seen as a sign of weakness. Basically we want to be in the position of power. We fear being seen as inferior.

II. The Biblical View of Servanthood

- A. The assessment of Jesus on serving: Interestingly enough, being a servant is not viewed in a negative way. Jesus said, "I came not to be served but to serve and give my life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)
- B. Even in the Old Testament there are passages that refer to Jesus as being a servant. Isaiah 52 and 53 are clearly talking about the Lord Jesus in His role as a servant.
- C. The main word that is used for servant or slave in the New Testament is "doulos." Its meaning is that of a bond slave. A bond slave was one who had voluntarily given his services to his master for life. He had the opportunity to go free but chose not to do so. He loved his master and wanted to serve him. When Jesus, Paul and others used that word, it meant a voluntary submission to God, who is the master.

- D. The example of servanthood: Only one time in the New Testament is it stated that Jesus was doing something as an example for His disciples. Please open your Bibles to John 13:1-17. As we see, this is the passage where Jesus washes the feet of His disciples. We need to understand why Jesus did such a lowly deed. Several statements in the text give us the answer. In verse three we see that Jesus knew three things.

First, He knew how great He was and understood His relationship with the Father. *“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power...”*

Second, He knew where He had come from. He was secure in His relationship with the Father. *“...He had come from God.”*

Third, He knew where He was going. *“...(He) was returning to God.”*

It is very interesting to note that the very next verse goes on to tell us that Jesus took on the role of a servant. It was a slave’s job to wash the feet of the guests who entered into a home. It is significant to note that none of the disciples took on that role. Just a few days before, the disciples had been discussing which of them was the greatest. In Mark 10:35-45 we even see that James and John petitioned Jesus to be numbers two and three in the Lord’s kingdom. None of the disciples would have even thought of washing the others’ feet. But, the Lord did that lowly job. Think of it, the God of the Universe served lowly human beings!

Now, toward the end of the passage, Jesus explains that he had done that as an example for us to follow. Here He was, the Lord and Master washing the disciples’ feet. If he could wash their feet, then they surely should be able to do the same.

What can we learn from this passage that can help us to have the servant’s heart that Jesus commanded us to have? How can we respond to servanthood as Jesus did and not like the disciples had responded to the idea previously in the passage?

III. Personal Application

Let’s look at verse three once again and think how this can apply to our lives also.

- A. Review

First, we need to understand that we have the same power living within us that the Lord had in Him when He lived here upon this earth. *Read Ephesians 1:18-20 and Romans 8:11.* We have the same resurrection power living within us. He gives us the power to obey His commands.

Second, just as Jesus knows where He came from and was secure in His relationship with the Father, so also can we be secure in our relationship with the Father. Remember, we are children of God and joint heirs with Christ. We are completely loved. No one can be loved

more than we can be loved. That makes us secure to serve others since we have nothing that we need to prove.

Third, just as Jesus knew that He was returning to God, we also know where we are going. Our eternal home is heaven. That is our inheritance. We will only have one chance to live the Christian life while we are here upon this earth. Let's do it serving others. What a wonderful place this will be when Christians are serving one another.

B. Leadership Training Center

You are now going through this training. How can you apply this passage to your lives? How can you help the team reach its goals of reaching your target area with the Gospel? Are there fears of being thought of as a lesser person if you serve others? The solution is to remember who we are as Christians. We really are special. We are loved. We are part of God's family. Never forget that fact. Let's learn to be God's servants. Let's serve one another. Let's even allow others to serve us.

(Close in prayer)