

# A Renewed Mind: Serving

Serving is not typically the most desired position. When you serve you tend to go unnoticed, you may be taken for granted, even feel unappreciated. Serving is an area where people can get discouraged even when you are a person who loves to serve!

Things like this happen - at a potluck your favorite dish is already gone.....when you clean the same mess is in the same spot again (guys didn't flush the urinal, used tissues left in the same pew, liquid in the trash bag).....at home as you are picking up you are putting away the same things your family always leaves out....you are washing dishes and chipping away at oatmeal concrete again!

It doesn't matter if you serve your family, serve the church, serve a friend, serve your employer. Sometimes serving just takes it's toll and wears you down.

Serving is a choice. We get to choose each and every day who or what we will serve, how we will serve, when we will serve. But just like worship is more than a song, serving is more than an action.

Serving is not really even about **what** we do. That is the world's definition of serving. The world's view of serving is performing actions, most often to be seen, to be recognized. "give credit where credit is due". Some even have the "I serve because I have to" mentality like they are being forced against their will...

Have you ever had a server at a restaurant who really left a bad impression on you? You had to flag them down so they would even know you were in the building, you feel like you are bothering them if you need anything.....they are just there, doing the minimum of what is expected of them (if that), mad at the world because they are doing what they have to do but don't want to do.

That's kind of like the worldview of serving!

As we seek to not be conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of our mind as Paul instructed, we need a renewing in our view of serving.

**Who do you serve?** Are you self serving, everything is about you? Do you serve money doing everything in life to earn more of it, enslaved by it's lure?

## **Joshua 24:15 (NKJV)**

15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side

of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Everyone has heard the last part of this verse. “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Many people have this verse somewhere in their home on display for people to see. This is a declaration, it’s something I urge you to claim for your household. But a sign in the living room is not enough.

First you have to choose whom you will serve. “That’s easy, I choose God”. Really? Do you?

We have a choice to make. Serve God or serve satan. Well obviously no one wants to serve satan. Listen closely, if you are not serving God, you are already serving satan. Choose this day whom you will serve.

A DAILY choice is required every single day. We know that God’s mercies are new every day, we get a fresh start every single day and even throughout the day. But we also get to make a choice every single day and even throughout the day.

You can’t play for both teams. A free agent in baseball has a decision to make. He has talent, knows how he is to use it but he has to make a decision “who do I want to play for”. Sometimes it comes down to where he feels more comfortable, sometimes it comes down to which team has the best benefits or compensation. He can play them back and forth but eventually he has to make a choice. And once he does, he’s locked in.....long term....committed.

We must do the same. You can’t play for both teams!

**Matthew 6:24 (NIV)**

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

You serve Jesus, everything else should be birthed out of serving Him. Do you claim that Jesus is your savior and your Lord? You can’t have Him as savior if He isn’t also Lord.

Lord means he to whom a person belongs, the possessor, owner, master. He is who we are to serve!

**Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)**

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

I think we hear a verse like this and it makes us think Jesus is like a genie in a bottle. “Oh, that’s right, He came to serve, not to be served.” Listen, that doesn’t let you off the hook, if anything, it puts you on the hook.

Yes He came to serve, to set that example for us, His disciples to follow and carry out. But look at the last part of that, He also came to give His life a ransom for many! When He paid the price on the cross, shedding His blood for you and me, He paid a ransom.

A ransom to free us from captivity. That captivity was us being bound by sin and serving satan. He said “It is finished” meaning the transaction was complete. He paid in full. And at this point, the serving that He came to carry out was also completed.

Now if we come under His authority, claim Jesus as Lord, master, ruler, then WE become the servant. So choose this day, whom you will serve!

**Why do you serve?** Consider this question for all areas that you serve in. Why do you do it? What is your motivation? What keeps you serving or what prevents you from serving?

Most serve because they love it or because it is a duty, something they “have to” do. But what does the Word say about why we should serve?

#### **1 Peter 4:10-11 (NIV)**

10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so 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.

Peter starts off telling us to use our gifts to serve others. What gifts is he referring to? Well....it’s not birthday or Christmas gifts. It doesn’t mean if you got new kitchenware you have to make me some food or if you got new tools you should fix something for me....however I’m open to both, especially the food.

Peter is talking about spiritual gifts, the same gifts that Paul tells us about in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. This is the text in Romans that immediately follows the instruction to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

#### **Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)**

6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

So we have been given gifts but why do we serve? That's found in 1 Peter. First, we have to be good stewards of what God has given us. We are spoiled.....Americans think that what they have is theirs, it's their right, they earned it, and even if they didn't they don't have to share if they don't want to. That is the "me first" day and age that we live in. The very day and age that we are NOT to conform to!

We should serve because not only is every day a gift from God, so are the blessings in our life and so are any giftings that we have.

Serving isn't always easy.....to serve is to work! Work isn't always easy....but it's necessary! So is serving. That's why Peter said "If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."

This is why we serve....to bring glory to God. Consider areas that you serve or work. Home, job, church, family, friends.....why do you serve, why do you work for these things or people? If the answer is anything other than to glorify God, you will burn out, it will grow old, it will seem like hard work!

Now consider when you serve those very same things or people with the mindset that you are going to use your gifts and talents to glorify God.....it is a game changer! This isn't a one time thought, you have to go there continuously for it to be effective.

I love preaching, while most would probably think I do this for you (the congregation), that's not really true.....I do it to glorify God. To use the gifts and talents He has given me. Maybe you are thinking right now "I don't think he is all that gifted or talented", maybe you are right! But I'm not doing this for you!

On the other hand preparing a message is often dreadful to me. I rarely look forward to it. It's hard, it's a lot of work. Yes, much of it is prayer and reading and studying the Word which is not dreadful but writing is. Sitting down and writing out a sermon, trying to figure out the different parts and how to tie things together and how to make smooth transitions. I never liked English class or Composition.

But the problem is not what I'm doing, it's why I'm doing it. My motivation and heart are the problem. For some reason I've always viewed preparing a message as serving the church but preaching as serving Jesus.

When I realize that all I do I am to do unto the Lord, it changes everything!

**Colossians 3:17 (NKJV)**

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

If you are serving the God who created you, saved you, and is coming back for you, that is when you serve in the strength that He provides. That is when you are no longer just getting through it but flourishing in it!

### ***How do you serve?***

With your life....

#### **Mark 9:35 (NKJV)**

35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

The worldview is to serve God you have to be in the spotlight or in full time ministry. Man I'm so tired of those lies. Yes they are lies! If you say anything like that to others or yourself....STOP IT!

We are ALL called to be servants. God blesses the servant. God's desire is that we do His work, that we are His hands and feet on the earth. He wants us all to do something! We are all called to make disciples, we are all called to share the gospel.

Consider again the gifts He has placed in us....

#### **Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)**

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Prophecy - declaring the word of the Lord

Serving - ministering, executing the commands of others

Teaching - instructing others

Encouraging - exhort, comfort, strengthen others

Giving - time, finances, knowledge

Leading - protecting, guarding, caring for, giving attention to

Mercy - helping the afflicted

But to get less technical. You serve God when you serve your house, cooking, cleaning, repairing, listening, loving, caring.

You serve God when you serve the church, cleaning, teaching adults or kids, nursery, worship team, sound, media, van and bus drivers, praying, in tithes and offerings, mentoring others, encouraging others.

HOW and WHY we serve is not as important as WHO we serve.

People spend lifetimes trying to become something or somebody, ultimately to be known for something, to make an impact....

**Matthew 20:26 (NKJV)**

26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

True greatness is measured in terms of service.

"Everyone can be great...because anybody can serve."

~ Martin Luther King

It's time to stop being selfish with the giftings that God has put in us and start using them for their true purpose....serving others.

Serving is a choice but to be a servant is a change in lifestyle....a renewing of the mind to put others first. It's modeling our lives after our Lord's, servant of all. Let's be wise with our lives!

**Ephesians 5:15-16 (NIV)**

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

We love God, because He first loved us. We should serve God, because He first served us. Sacrificial, selfless beings, that is what Jesus is showed us to be and it's how the love of God is shown through us...it's what should be different about us!

**Malachi 3:16-18 (NIV)**

16 Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name.

17 "On the day when I act," says the Lord Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. 18 And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

CONCLUSION

Maybe you have grown tired of serving, you've put in your time - your time is not up, keep serving, the Lord is not through with you yet, that's why you're still here

Maybe you don't like being unnoticed or taken for granted - know God sees you serving, He sees your heart, is it set on Him or someone else?

In everything you do....do it unto the Lord. All the areas you serve or work, do that work for God not for man, not even for self.

Use the giftings and talents that He has given you to, He gave them to you so that you would use them to serve and bring Him glory!

Choose this day whom you will serve. As for my house, and this church, we will serve the Lord!