



# Serving

## John 13

### **John 13 – What did Jesus demonstrate that He expects from us by washing the feet of His disciples?**

The lesson Jesus gave us by washing His disciples' feet in John 13 is that He expects us to serve each other. Jesus modeled the ultimate in serving us when He paid the price for our sin by dying in our place on the cross. Jesus was both our greatest leader and our greatest servant. Adopting an attitude of servant-leadership will serve us well whether we are a CEO or a new hire in an entry level position. People are leaders when they are in a position to encourage others to grow closer to God. When others know we're Christians, they'll be watching us to see if our response to different situations demonstrates any real value in following Christ.

### **13:1 – Why should we be quick to help others with their needs?**

The more love there is among our associates, the better life is. Jesus set the example in loving others. When we consider the sacrificial love He showed us, this should motivate us to go out of our way to act in the best interest of our associates. The evening Jesus established the Lord's Supper, He already knew that one of his disciples had already decided to betray Him, another would deny him and the rest would desert Him. John 13:1 says, "*Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love*" (NIV) by washing the feet of His disciples. If the Lord of the universe would humble Himself to wash the feet of His undeserving followers, we should be quicker to help others with their needs.

### **13:1-12 – How did Jesus demonstrate a cure for competitive contention and pride?**

Our society is a competitive environment where people try to outdo each other with status symbols. Competition is good when it motivates people to make an extra effort. But it can also be corrosive if it affects relationships. The cure for the contention and pride that often accompanies competition is humility. Jesus vividly illustrated humility in John 13:1-12 when He washed the feet of His disciples at His last supper with them after they had argued about whom would be greatest in His kingdom. Jesus' humble service to us by paying the penalty for our sin compels us to render whatever service we can to our associates. When being competitive tempts us to prideful expressions, the antidote is a healthy dose of service. A great place to start is to pray for the associates who most irritate us!

### **John 13 – What does Jesus' rebuke of Peter tell us the attitude we should have when we need help from others?**

When Jesus demonstrated how He wanted us to serve each other by washing His disciples' feet in John 13, Peter resisted not wanting the Lord to humble Himself in such a way. This sounds noble but pride is what makes it difficult to accept service from others. Being helped can make people feel inadequate or vulnerable by not being in control. As our motivation to serve associates is to obey and imitate Jesus Christ, accepting service from them should be seen as accepting Christ's service. People are blessed when they are able to help others so by allowing ourselves to be helped, we become a conduit for blessing. So look for ways your associates can help you!

### **13:11 – What kind of clean was Jesus referring to and why is this important?**

A prime reason that people dismiss Christianity as being no different from any other belief system is the failure of believers. Jesus said that not everyone who proclaims to be His follower really is as He spoke of Judas at the Last Supper saying, "*not every one was clean*" in John 13:11 (NIV). Since then many have betrayed Christ and His people harming the cause of Christ. This is why it is so critical for us as believers in our society to make sure our activities are above reproach. Some of our associates are making decisions with eternal ramifications based on what they see in us. So we need to make sure Christ has cleansed us with an irreversible belief in Him. We also must be committed to endure even when associates who have seemed like strong Christians fail.

### **13:15 – How may we demonstrate servant leadership in our lives?**

Jesus has called His followers to set the example as servants in our society. When Jesus explained the lesson His disciples should get when He washed their feet, He said in John 13:15, "*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you*" (NIV). Foot washing is not a service that is practiced in our culture today but the principle certainly applies. As Jesus served His disciples in a very common way during His day, we should do the same for our associates. We demonstrate the servant leadership of Jesus by: cheerfully doing work no one else will do, meeting others' needs before our own, accepting a lesser role, not insisting on our "rights" or "privileges" and focusing on the results being achieved, not who will get the credit.

### **13:17 – How may we appropriate God’s blessings?**

We have many opportunities to be blessed by God if we would just follow through on the promptings of the Holy Spirit. In John 13:17, Jesus said, “*Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them*” (NIV). When we know about a service that would help someone and neglect to do it, we forfeit Christ’s blessing. Do you have a associate who could benefit from a visit or a word of encouragement? Do you have something you no longer use that would help someone else? Is there a menial task or trying duties that needs to be done? Do you have an associate with whom you have never spoken about your faith? Jesus promised benefits now and in eternity when we act on the opportunities He presents to us.

### **13:18-30 – Why is it a problem not to have a correct view of who Jesus is?**

Jesus predicted Judas betraying Him in John 13:18-30. Judas had a fatal misconception of who the Messiah would be. Judas was like many other Jews who expected a political leader who would deliver Israel from their Roman oppressors as Moses had done in Egypt. Likewise, people today get comfortable with their own view of Christ and are not open to having this challenged. Indeed, most people don’t think that the Lord cares about their secular jobs so they separate the spiritual side of their life from their work life. But we do not love God with all of our heart, soul and mind as we are commanded to in Matthew 22:37 if we exclude Him from our work. We will be blessed when we adjust our view of Christ to match what the Scriptures actually say about Him.

### **13:27 – How was Judas a hypocrite and what should we do to purge hypocrisy from our own lives?**

Children of God are hypocrites if their relationship to Christ is secret. During the Last Supper, Jesus offered Judas bread which he received as a gesture of fellowship and love between them in John 13:27. While none of the other disciples knew of his thoughts of betrayal, Jesus did. Judas had completely concealed his hypocrisy from his peers. If we try to conceal our hypocrisy by professing to live for Christ but don’t have real commitment by representing Him, we may succeed in fooling some. But Christ knows each person’s inner thoughts and intentions. Judas’s life teaches us that hypocrisy can lead to satanic control. Judas’s betrayal should strengthen our resolve to follow Christ no matter what temptations or opposition we encounter.

### **13:34 – What can we do to love fellow Christians?**

Our relationship with the Lord may need a check-up if we are too busy to fellowship with Christians. Jesus said in John 13:34, “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another*” (NIV). If we really love someone, we want to be with them. Taking time to participate in a Bible study encourages our fellow

Christians and helps us keep an eternal perspective. God has arranged for us to be where we are to serve His purposes in bringing order to the world and building relationships between people. The Lord also expects us to help build up the body of Christ in all aspects of our life. Involvement with the Christian community even outside of church edifies us as well as our associates.

### **13:35 – How may we show others that we follow Jesus?**

Jesus said that our Christ-like love will show that we are his disciples. In John 13:35 Jesus said, “*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*” (NIV). Love is more than the world’s concept of a fleeting emotion; it is an attitude that reveals itself in action. Our associates need to see us taking loving actions toward other Christians by being active in church and fellowshiping with our Christian associates outside of church. We need to make an extra effort to help fellow Christians when it’s not convenient, by giving when it hurts, and by absorbing offences from our brethren without complaining or fighting back. This kind of loving is hard to do. But it is why our associates will notice and eventually have to conclude we’re empowered by a supernatural source.

### **John 13 – What was the difference between Judas and Peter in their response to God’s love?**

Knowing that God wants to forgive us frees us up for success. Judas betrayed Jesus and Peter denied Him. John 13 reveals that Jesus knew exactly what Judas and Peter would do, but He never stopped loving them. Likewise, Jesus knows exactly what we will do to grieve Him. Yet He still loves us unconditionally and will forgive us when we ask. Judas didn’t understand this, and his life ended tragically. Peter understood and his life ended triumphantly despite his shortcomings because he continued to trust in Jesus who loved him. If we have to be perfect to please God, we’ll avoid risks, a sure recipe for mediocrity. Knowing God’s forgiving love frees us up to take the steps of faith necessary for success.