



# Shaped for Serving God

## Chapters 33 & 34

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Notes: This Bible Study is intended to be a companion to “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren. The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New King James Version.

### Chapter 33: How Real Servants Act

#### **Why isn’t acting like a servant a popular concept in our society today?**

Our culture is a me-first society. It teaches that if you can demand service from others, then you’ve arrived.

#### **How is the world’s view of servant hood different from that of Jesus?**

God measures greatness by how many people you serve, not by how many people serve you.

#### **Which is more important, knowing your gifts that God has equipped you for ministry or having a servant’s heart?**

It is more important to have a desire to serve than to know every detail about how God has gifted you. Without a servant’s heart, a parson would be tempted to use their gifts for personal gain.

#### **Does God ask us to serve in ways He has not equipped us for?**

God tests our hearts for servant hood by giving us opportunities to serve in areas He has not gifted us. If you see someone fall in a ditch, you should help them rather than rationalize that you don’t have the gift of mercy or helps.

#### **How is demonstrating a servant’s heart a sign of spiritual maturity?**

No special gift is required for many areas of service, all that is required is character. The opportunity to serve is a much a gift from God as the special abilities He endows us with that should be applied in service.

#### **How can you know if you have the heart of a servant?**

Jesus said that you can tell where a person’s heart is by what they do...

Matthew 7:16 - You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?

#### **What does 2 Timothy 2:4 tell us about how we may be better servants?**

2 Timothy 2:4 - No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Real servants make themselves available to serve. They don’t allow their lives to be encumbered with pursuits that would impede their ability to respond to an opportunity to serve.

#### **Why is this soldier analogy a good one when it comes to servant hood?**

Good soldiers like servants expect hardships, they have to be flexible to respond to the unexpected, they are innovative, and they do what is needed even if it is inconvenient.

#### **How do genuine servants view interruptions?**

Servants see interruptions as divine appointments for ministry.

#### **What does Galatians 6:10 have to say about how we may be better servants?**

Galatians 6:10 - Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Real servants pay attention to the needs of others.

#### **What does it mean that we should we give preference “to those who are of the household of faith”?**

If you find yourself in a position of having to choose between serving a fellow believer or an unbeliever you should serve your fellow Christian first. This demonstration of love for one another may serve to attract the unbeliever to Jesus.

#### **What does Proverbs 3:28 have to say about when we should serve others?**

Proverbs 3:28 - Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you.

If you have the opportunity to serve you should do it immediately, and not put it off. Great opportunities to serve never last long, they pass quickly, sometimes never to return again.

### **What if there are no great opportunities to serve?**

Stop looking for great opportunities to serve and do the small tasks that no one else wants to do. Even if no one knows you've done them, God does and His measure of what is great is different from man's perspective.

### **What does Ecclesiastes 11:4 have to say about how we may be better servants?**

Ecclesiastes 11:4 - He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. Real servants do the best with what they have. If you wait for perfect conditions, you will get nothing done. Part of our spiritual growth is doing things in less than optimal conditions.

- I like a quote from the movie Patton (which by the way was just about required watching to officers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division), "a fair plan executed today is better than a perfect plan executed next week."
- In my business, we are always introducing IC's based on new technology that isn't quite ready for the mass market yet but there are early adopters that will pay the higher prices, struggle with incomplete documentation, and workaround bugs just so that they can be first to market. The rewards for those who are first to market are significant incentive to suffer through not just the leading edge but the "bleeding edge" of technology.

### **Why do many people fail to serve?**

They fear that they are not good enough to serve God. They have bought into the lie that only superstars should serve God.

### **How may excellence become an idol?**

Idols are trusting in the creation rather than the Creator. So people can trust in a gift instead of the Giver. People can elevate the pursuit of excellence to the point that it intimidates all but a few people. It does not have to be perfect for God to use and bless an act of service, it just needs to be good enough.

### **What does Colossians 3:23 have to say about how we may be better servants?**

Colossians 3:23 - And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, Real servants do every task with equal dedication. The size of the task is irrelevant... the only issues is, does it need to be done?

### **How should we regard the mundane, menial tasks?**

We should regard mundane, menial tasks the same way as the high visibility, high-impact tasks. We will never arrive at station in life where we are too important to help with the simplest of tasks...

Galatians 6:3 - For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

### **Why are the small tasks so important?**

- God uses these small tasks to develop our character to be more like Christ. Jesus did not avoid such tasks: washing feet, helping children, fixing breakfast, serving lepers...  
John 13:15 - For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
- The state of our heart is revealed in the small things that we do.
- Things that seem small to us may actually be a significant part of God's plan. The value God places on a task is usually many times more significant than how men would view it.
- God tries us out on the ordinary to see if we are ready for the extraordinary...  
Luke 16:10-12 - He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

### **Another characteristic of real servants is that they are faithful to their ministry. The Lord's parable of the talents tells us that there will be rewards for faithfulness:**

Matthew 25:23 - His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

### **What does it mean to be faithful?**

Servants finish their tasks, keep their promises, fulfill their commitments. They are trustworthy and dependable (sounds like a boy scout).

### **Is faithfulness a common thing in the world today?**

Faithfulness has always been a rare quality...

Proverbs 20:6 - Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?

Most people don't know the value of commitment.

### **How does God value our faithfulness to commitments?**

God sees our faithfulness to commitments as a test of our character and he bless those who have been faithful with eternal rewards.

### **What characteristic of servants does 1 Peter 5:5 address?**

1 Peter 5:5 - all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Real servants are humble, they maintain a low profile submitting to others.

**Does this mean we should let others walk all over us?**

No, it means we should not be boastful of our accomplishments, note that the opposite of humility is pride. The tension between humility and pride is addressed in this verse.

**Can you fake humility?**

People can try to fake any good character traits and can pull off a convincing performance to all the people some of the time of some of the people all the time. Paul called fake humility “*eyeservice*” in Ephesians 6:6, also:

Colossians 3:22 - Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

**What did Jesus have to say about false humility in Matthew 6:1?**

Matthew 6:1 - Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Doing good works to please men only has value in the world which is passing away. As Jesus said in the next verse, “*they have their reward.*” If you do good works in private, it demonstrates that you are doing it to please God and He will reward you for that correct attitude.

**Can you please both God and men?**

Sometimes you can please both God and men. We get into trouble when we give preference to pleasing men over God. It is better to seek to please God all the time and recognize that this will sometimes put you at odds with men. Paul recognized this:

Galatians 1:10 - if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

**Besides loss of reward, why shouldn't servants seek fame for their good works?**

The spotlight of popularity can blind you to only seeing what is illuminated by it. A person can become addicted to attention and make bad choices that are only motivated to continue their popularity among other people.

**If a person is not prominently recognized by society, does this mean they are not as significant as those who are?**

- Not in the eyes of God... Notoriety means nothing to real servants because they know the difference between prominence and true significance.
- You have several prominent parts of your body that you could live without but the hidden parts are indispensable. This is the same with the Body of Christ:

1 Corinthians 12:22-24 - those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,

**So, to sum up, this chapter addressed six characteristics of real servants:**

1. They are available to serve
2. They pay attention to needs
3. They do the best with what they have
4. They do every task with equal dedication
5. They are faithful to their ministry
6. They maintain a low profile

**Which of these characteristics presents the greatest challenge for you?**

For me, it is making myself available... I need to be better at setting aside my agenda to take advantage of spontaneous opportunities God gives me to serve.

**Do you have any suggestions for how I can be better at making myself available to serve?**

Some thoughts I had was that this is something I should pray for wisdom about. I can also put sufficient padding in my schedule so that I will be more open to doing “services of opportunity.” This is a principle of margin, don't allow myself to be committed to capacity. Commitment is a good thing but too much of a good thing becomes a bad thing.

## **Chapter 34: Thinking Like a Servant**

**Is attitude important?**

God is always more interested in why we do something rather than what it is that we do. King Amaziah lost God's favor because “*he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart*” (2 Chronicles 25:2).

Let's look at five attitudes that real servants have...

**What does Philippians 2:4 tell us what servants think about?**

Philippians 2:4 - Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Servants are motivated more by helping others than themselves. This is true humility.

**How did Jesus demonstrate the attitude of thinking about others more than Himself?**

When Jesus willingly left His heavenly abode and went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sin, He was in mind more than His own well being, comfort, and convenience...

Philippians 2:7 - but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

People often focus on the suffering of Christ on the cross but His suffering was not limited to the cross. Jesus limiting many of His prerogatives as Almighty God so that He could come into the world as a helpless baby and as Holy God mixing it up with sinful people was every bit part of His suffering for us as well.

### **How can our service to God really be self-serving if we have the wrong attitude?**

We can serve to get others to like us, to get admired, to achieve our own goals, or as a bargaining tool with God. This is manipulation, not ministry.

### **Is it easy to think like a servant? Why?**

No, it challenges the basic problem of my life... I am by nature a selfish person. I naturally think most about myself:

Philippians 2:21 - For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

Every day we are confronted with multiple opportunities to choose between serving yourself or others. Self-denial is the core of servanthood.

### **If we have the heart of a servant, how should we react when we are taken for granted, or bossed around, or treated as an inferior?**

See these occasions as opportunities to practice being a servant...

Matthew 5:41 - And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

### **What does 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 tell us goes hand-in-hand with being a servant?**

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 - Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Servants remember that God owns it all, they are God stewards of what God has entrusted them with.

### **What has God given us stewardship over?**

Everything that we have: our finances, family, property, reputation, ministry, time, etc...

### **How is the way we regard money a test of our stewardship?**

Everything we have is a gift from God but He still owns it. If we see money as a tool for serving God, we are a steward, if we consider it as an entitlement for us to use as we want, we have become a servant to money...

Luke 16:13 - "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

### **What does it mean to be a servant to money?**

The person who serves money sees money as their savior. But for money to be their savior, they need more of it because there is always some threat that demands more money than what you have. So you become consumed with having to make more money and so you get caught in an endless cycle.

### **How does God use money to test our faithfulness as a servant?**

What we do with our money says a lot about whether we believe God or not. Giving back to God is a test of our faithfulness to Him that will be rewarded both in this life and the next...

Luke 16:11 - Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

### **What characteristic of true servants does Galatians 5:26 give us?**

Galatians 5:26 - Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Servants do not compare, criticize or compete with other servants or their ministries. They are too busy doing the work God has given them to do to waste time on such idle pursuits.

### **What is the problem with criticism, aren't we to rebuke people those who so "that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13)?**

We should certainly rebuke those who are in error regarding the understanding of the fundamental truths of Scripture. But there are many things that the Bible does not speak directly to which human biases tend to cloud that we should stay away from.

Romans 14:4 - Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

### **How should we respond when others criticize us?**

We should not waste time defending ourselves, leave this to the Lord. When Nehemiah faced opposition, his response to the critics was simply, *"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"* (Nehemiah 6:3).

### **When Mary poured expensive perfume on Jesus, how did Jesus respond to her critics in Matthew 26:10?**

Matt 26:10 - He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me."

Jesus recognized her service as “a good work” and that is all the recognition we need. The world and much of the church is not going to understand God’s values so we can expect that our service to Him will not be recognized this side of the Lord’s return.

**What characteristic of a true servant did Jesus demonstrate in the washing of his disciple’s feet?**

John 13:3-4 - Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. Servants take their identity from God, they don’t have to prove their worth. So servants willingly accept jobs that insecure people would consider “beneath” them.

**Why can’t insecure people be servants?**

Insecure people are consumed with how they look to others so they do not pay any attention to fulfilling their purpose before God. Those who are insecure want others to serve them and do not see the value in being a servant themselves.

**Why shouldn’t we flaunt our titles, awards, and achievements?**

True servants do not need status symbols because they are secure in their relationship to the One who gives the only lasting rewards...

2 Corinthians 10:18 - For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

The closer you get to the Lord, the less you need to promote yourself.

**What proper servant’s attitude is represented by Psalm 100:2?**

Psalm 100:2 - Serve the LORD with gladness; Servants consider their ministry to be an opportunity instead of an obligation, they enjoy helping people.

**Why do real servants serve with gladness?**

- Because they love the Lord and they have an attitude of gratitude for the grace He has extended to them.
- Also, they know God will reward them for their labors...

John 12:26 - If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

Hebrews 6:10 - For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.