

October 25, 2020

## THE PRACTICE OF SERVANTHOOD



Luke 18:9-14

<sup>9</sup> To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: <sup>10</sup> “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>

The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

<sup>13</sup> “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

<sup>14</sup> “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Pride is a persistent problem for people who strive for spiritual growth. Here is the problem: When we try to do something good, we are intensely aware of it. And we tend to be aware of other people who aren’t putting forth the same effort. Then we tend to think they should: We start to compare our efforts with their laziness.

The result is pride, comparison, judgmentalism, and a lack of love. Richard Foster writes: “More than any other single way the grace of humility is worked into our lives through the Discipline of service.... Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like **servicing in hiddenness**. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.”

So how can humility be pursued? Follow Jesus. The Lord said that he had come “not to be served but to serve.” Many people think of this as a temporary interruption of Jesus’ normal experience, which would be to receive service. In fact, serving is God’s business.

In Philippians 2:6-11, it says we should have the same attitude, or mindset, as Christ, who “being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God to be grounds for grasping, but poured himself out, taking the very nature of a servant.”

Together, let us pursue the practice of servanthood!

### Discussion Guide:

1. How does our society affirm and even encourage a prideful spirit?
2. Read the quote by Richard Foster above. How can service—and specifically hidden service—act as a remedy for pride? What keeps us from offering more acts of secret service?
3. Read Mark 10:45 and Philippians 2:6-11. What are some of the acts of service Jesus offered when he walked on this earth? What was his heart and attitude when it came to serving?
4. What can you do to make yourself more available to others in how you do the following:
  - a. Schedule your day
  - b. Project approachability and availability
  - c. Set up your home, office, and other places people connect with you

### Prayer Time:

Pray for God to give each of your discipleship-group members a growing desire to serve in humble secrecy. Pray for the heart of Jesus when it comes to your acts of service.