

Discipleships and Servants

Keys for Disciples: Part One

Introduction:

- Illustration: The Story of Alexander the Great: During a battle, several young men deserted. They were caught. While they were being questioned in order to determine their fate, King Alexander discovered that one of the young deserters was also named Alexander. This angered the king. He picked up the young man and threw him down, saying to him, “Either change your character or change your name.”
 - Application: Christians are named after Christ. We should have the character that honors and represents the name of Christ.
- **Disciple:** (Greek) *mathetees* - a **learner** or pupil. The word *math* is related to the concept of “that which is learned”.
- The word *disciple* is related to the word *discipline* which has various meanings: (1) a field of study; (2) training that corrects, molds, or perfects; (3) punishment; or (4) a system of rules that governs one’s conduct.
- A student learns what his teacher knows, but a disciple **becomes** what his master is. He then passes it on to others.
- 2 Timothy 2:2 [Paul told Timothy] “The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to **faithful** men who will be able to **teach** others also.”

Discipleships and Servants

I. JESUS DID NOT SAY IT WAS EASY TO BE HIS DISCIPLE:

A. A disciple is expected to put Jesus first and love Him more than any other.

1. Luke 14:26-28 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."
2. "hate" is the Greek word *miseeseis* (Strong's Concordance - 3404) which means to detest; by extension to **love less** .

B. A disciple is expected to **forsake** and abandon all other things in exchange for what Jesus will give.

1. Luke 14:33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."
2. Matthew 10:38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his for My sake will find it."
3. John 12:25 "He who loves his life (Greek is *psucheen* – 5590) will lose it, and he who hates his life (*psucheen*) in this world will keep it for eternal life (*zooeen* - 2222).
4. Soul = **Mind, will, and emotions.**

Discipleships and Servants

C. A disciple is expected to confess Jesus before men.

1. Matt 10:32-33 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."

D. A disciple is **disciplined**.

1. Proverbs 3:11-12 "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction. For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights."
2. Job 36:10 "He [God] also opens the ear to instruction ("discipline" in the KJV), and commands that they turn from iniquity."
3. The word *instruction* means chastisement, reproof, or warning.

Questions:

With these strict standards, how is it possible to be a true disciple of Christ?

What are some specific areas of discipline in which the Lord has caused you to become more of a disciple of His?

Discipleships and Servants

II. JESUS SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EMPOWER DISCIPLES.

- A. The Holy Spirit is our **helper** and **comforter** (John 14:16).
- B. He **guides** us into all truth and He speaks to us, telling us many things, including those things which are to **come** (John 16:13).
- C. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and does so many things for us it would be impossible to list them all. However, a couple of other important things we do know are these: He sanctifies our offerings to God (Romans 15:16); He reveals to us the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-10); and He helps us intercedes for us when we do not know how we should pray (**Romans 8:26-27**).

IV. DISCIPLES NEED TO **LEARN** TO PRAY.

- A. Psalm 42:1-2 “As the deer pants for the water brooks, O God. So pants my soul for You, O God.”
- B. Psalm 63:1 “O God, You are my God, early will I seek You; my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.”
- C. Psalm 84:2 “My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”
- D. We must remember that the goal of prayer is the **ear** of God. Unless that is gained the prayer has utterly failed. The uttering of it may have kindled devotional feeling in our minds, the hearing of it may have comforted and strengthened the hearts of those with whom we have prayed,

Discipleships and Servants

but if the prayer has not gained the **heart** of God, it has **failed** in its essential purpose. – C. H. Spurgeon¹

E. God does not always say yes to prayers (James 4:3)

1. Illustration: A little girl prayed and asked God for a pony for Christmas. Her friend overheard her. When Christmas came, she did not receive a pony. Her friend said, “God did not answer your prayer.” To that, the little girl replied, “Yes He did. He did too answer my prayers. He said, ‘No.’”
2. “I do not mean that every prayer we offer is answered exactly as we desire it to be. Were this the case, it would mean that we would be dictating to God, and prayer would degenerate into a mere system of begging. Just as an earthly father knows what is best for his children’s welfare, so does God take into consideration the particular needs of His human family, and meets them out of His wonderful storehouse. If our petitions are in accordance with His will, and if we seek His glory in the asking, the answers will come in ways that will astonish us and fill our hearts with songs of thanksgiving. God is a rich and bountiful Father, and He does not forget His children, nor withhold from them anything which would be in their advantage to receive. – J. Kennedy Maclean² (Romans 8:26-27)

¹ C. H. Spurgeon as quoted in E. M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), 94.

² E. M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), 156.

Discipleships and Servants

F. Biblical concepts of when to pray:

1. Morning: Psalm 5 “my voice shall thou hear in the morning.”
2. Twice daily: Psalm 88:1 “day and night I cry out to you.”
3. Three times a day: Daniel.
4. Without ceasing: 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
5. Times of little need as over food: 1 Timothy 4:3-5.
6. Times of great need. Jesus in Gethsemane.

G. Biblical concepts of where to pray:

1. On your bed: Psalm 4:4 “commune with your own heart upon you bed.”
2. In private: Matthew 6:6 “pray to the father which is in secret.”
3. In public: Jesus prayed publicly in John 17.
4. Jonah prayed from a fishes belly.
5. Anytime, anywhere, anyway as long as it is reverent and to the Lord.

Question:

What are some of your testimonies about prayer?

Discipleships and Servants

V. DISCIPLES NEED TO LEARN TO STUDY THE BIBLE.

A. The importance of the Bible:

1. The Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.³ – Robert Morgan
2. If you carry a Bible when you are young, it will carry you when you are old.⁴
3. A well-known social critic, Dennis Prager, was debating the Oxford atheistic philosopher, Jonathan Glover. Prager asked, “If you, Professor Glover, were stranded at the midnight hour in a desolate Los Angeles street, and if, as you stepped out of your car with fear and trembling, you were suddenly to hear the weight of pounding footsteps behind you, and you saw ten burly young men who had just stepped out of a dwelling coming toward you, would it or would it not make a difference to you to know they were coming from a Bible study?”⁵
4. Psalm 68:11 “The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those who proclaimed it.”
5. To the disciple of Christ, this Bible must become the most important book in the world. He must be willing to live by it and to die for it. It should be his companion throughout life.

B. The Light of the Bible:

³ Robert Morgan, *Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers), 62.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God?* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1994), 41.

Discipleships and Servants

1. Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
2. Verse 130 “The **entrance** of your words gives light.”
3. 2 Peter 1:19 “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

C. A disciple is to learn to rightly **divide** the word:

1. 2 Timothy 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

D. A disciple must learn to let the Word **divide** his / her soul and spirit and discern his / her **heart**.

1. Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
2. Psalm 19:7 “The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.”

Question:

In what ways has the Lord used the Word of God to divide issues in your life?

Discipleships and Servants

E. The disciple must embrace the word to the point of being thoroughly **equipped**.

1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

F. The disciple must recognize the special relationship that the Word of God has with God Himself.

1. John 1:1,14

2. Revelation 19:13

G. The Testimony of the book of Isaiah. Isaiah is in two sections.

1. First section: Chapters 1 – 39 seem to represent the 39 books of the Old Testament. These chapters deal with God’s judgment on Israel. The word *gentile* is only mentioned once.

2. Second section: Chapters 40 – 66 seem to represent the 27 books of the New Testament. These chapters generally deal with the promise of a Savior and salvation to the gentiles. The word *gentile* is mentioned fourteen times. Isaiah 40:1-8 is a prophecy about the John the Baptist who is found in the New Testament and was a precursor to Jesus’ ministry. Verse 8 says, “the word of our God shall stand forever.”

Discipleships and Servants

Keys for Disciples: Part Two

Introduction:

- When I read the Bible, the parts that trouble me the most are not the ones I don't understand, but the ones I do understand.
– Mark Twain
- Matthew 4:19 “Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
- Luke 14:33 “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”
- **Disciple:** Greek = matheetes - a learner or pupil. The disciple is asked to **learn** of Jesus by **following** Him, and **forsaking** all that he currently holds precious.
- **Mark 10:17-22.**
- Who is the disciple of Jesus? “The disciple of Jesus is not the deluxe or heavy-duty model of the Christian – especially padded, textured, streamlined, and empowered for the fast lane on the straight and narrow way. He stands on the pages of the New Testament as the **first level** of basic transportation in the Kingdom of God.” – Dallas Willard
- Illustration: “It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining in the egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.” – C. S. Lewis.

Discipleships and Servants

I. DISCIPLES NEED TO LEARN TO BE SALT AND LIGHT:

E. Some Scriptures about salt:

1. Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its **flavor**, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."
 - i. Salt preserves from corruption and renders food palatable, and is therefore used figuratively for the true disciples of Jesus, who by their precepts and examples raise the moral tone of society.⁶
 - ii. People should be able to "Taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8) by tasting your life.
2. Colossians 4:6 "Let your speech always be with grace, **seasoned** with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."
3. Mark 9:49-50 "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every **sacrifice** will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have **peace** with one another."
 - i. Salt can also refer to speech and wholesome character.
 - ii. A **covenant** of salt: God asked for salt in the grain offerings and in the heave offerings (Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19). The grain may

⁶ Davis Dictionary of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), 704-705.

Discipleships and Servants

be symbolic of New Testament *bread* or relationships in the body of Christ. Heave offerings were specifically for the priests and may refer to relationships with the New Testament leaders.

4. Other aspects of salt: Newborn babies were bathed and rubbed with salt (Ezekiel 16:4). Yet, it is also used in way of punishment or judgment: Captured cities were sown with salt (Judges 9:45); Sodom and Gomorrah was barren with brimstone and salt (Deuteronomy 29:23); the man who trusts in men rather than God is said to be in a salt land – wilderness (Jeremiah 17:6); and James uses salt (bitter) water in contrast to fresh (James 3:11).⁷

F. Some Scriptures about Light:

1. Genesis 1:3 “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light.” John 3:19 “the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.” 1 John 1: 5 “God is **light** and in Him is no darkness at all.”
 - i. The creation and character of light find their explanation in the nature and intention of God Himself.
 - ii. The miraculous wonders of light are numerous. Without it, life as we know it could not exist. It makes sight possible. There are warmth, growing, and healing properties in light.⁸

⁷ Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 742-743.

⁸ Ibid., 487.

Discipleships and Servants

2. 2 Corinthians 4:6 “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of the darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the **knowledge** of the **glory** of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
3. Ephesians 5:8 “For you were once in **darkness**, but now are **light** in the world. Walk as children of light.”
1 Peter 2:9 “that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
 - i. Light is the symbol of spiritual **illumination** but darkness the symbol of **sin**.
4. Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light **so shine** before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.”
5. Some other aspects of light: The Word of God is symbolizes as light (Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 8:20); it is a figure for that which brings cheer and spiritual joy (Esther 8:16; Job 30:26); and for the heavenly state of bliss (Isaiah 60:19; Colossians 1:12; Revelation 21:23-24; 22:5).

G. A Reading from *Salt & Light*:

The “salt and light” lifestyle commanded by our Lord in Matthew 5:13-16, the verses immediately following the Beatitudes, is one of those classic good news / bad news paradoxes. As Christians engage in the challenging task of living in a fallen world, we are viewed by some as a

Discipleships and Servants

preserving chemical, essential not only to hindering decay but also to sustaining life and bringing accented flavors into a tasteless society. To others our saltiness awakens an awareness of thirst that can only be satisfied in the living waters of Christ. And for others we become the sting in the open wounds of those fearing or even despising the presence of such an aggravating and intrusive substance.

As revealers of the light, the followers of Christ illumine darkened pathways, helping to answer life's perplexing questions of meaning, purpose, and destiny. For others, we become the dawning of a new day that dispels paralyzing fears. But others, whose deeds are done in darkness, flee such exposure or seek to quench it through denial, disparagement, and outright persecution.

The saltiness of our savor and the brightness of our light is ultimately a character issue. We can know what is right and even be trained to do what is right, but in the kingdom of Christ that has never been sufficient. Our thoughts and work must issue from the pure motives of the "circumcised" heart.⁹

Questions:

What are specific ways of being salt and light in your culture?

How has your saltiness or light been an irritant to those who do not want it?

⁹ David J. Gyertson, *Salt & Light: A Christian Response to Current Issues* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1993), 12-13.

Discipleships and Servants

II. DISCIPLES NEED TO LEARN TO BE WITNESSES.

D. Someone said that witnessing is: One poor beggar telling another poor beggar where he can find bread.

E. Another said: The church today is raising a whole generation of mules. They know how to sweat and to work hard but they don't know how to reproduce themselves

F. Jesus said, "Follow Me, and **I will** make you fishers of men."

G. Proverbs 11:30 (AMP) "he who is wise captures human lives for God [as a fisher of men] – he gathers and receives them for eternity."

H. Acts 1:8 "You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

1. Witness: Greek = martures (3144) - martyr.

I. God's desire is for all to be saved.

1. 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is . . . longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

2. 1 Timothy 2:3-4 "God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

J. Witnessing can have many components in it: personal testimony, Scripture, tracts, openness of the individual, how we approach, timing, etc. But the critical component is **discernment** of the Spirit's leading because we are to first be followers of Christ and then He will make us fishers of men.

Discipleships and Servants

Question:

What is the most bizarre witnessing moment you can remember?

III. DISCIPLES NEED TO LEARN TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP.

- H. Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
- I. 1 John 1:6-7 “If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all unrighteousness.”
- J. Fellowship: Greek = koinoonia (2842) – partnership, i.e. **participation**, or (social) intercourse, or benefaction: to communicate, communion, distribution, fellowship.
- K. Fellowship is not a gathering for potluck; it is a time of edification and spiritual communion. People approach koinoonia differently based upon cultural background, family considerations, age group, and likeminded interests. Some people are more people-oriented and can simply sit and talk with other Christians. Other people are more task-oriented and want to be working on a project together while talking. Koinoonia occurs in the multitude of Christian gatherings as believers share testimonies, Scriptures, encouragement, etc. with each other.

Discipleships and Servants

IV. DISCIPLES NEED TO LEARN TO BE FAITHFUL.

- A. Luke 16:10 “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much.”
- B. Luke 19:17 “Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.”
- C. 1 Corinthians 1:9 “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of this Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- D. Christians are to learn to be faithful to the Lord in all realms of life: with possessions, resources, time, etc.
- E. Each morning is a new beginning for us to learn to take control and live for the Lord according to His Word. We must learn to submit all things to the Lord, including any doubts, fears, or worries that we carry inside.
- F. A reading from C. S. Lewis:

The real problem of the Christian life comes where people do not usually look for it. It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking the other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. Standing back from all your natural fussings and frettings; coming out of the wind.

We can only do it for moments at first. But from those moments the new sort of life will be spreading through our system: because now we are letting Him work at the right part of us. It is the difference between paint, which is merely laid on the surface, and a dye or stain which soaks right through.¹⁰

¹⁰ C. S. Lewis quoted in Richard Foster, *Devotional Classics* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), 9.

Discipleships and Servants

Keys for Servants: Part One

Introduction

- Humor: “I’m really worried,” said one little boy to a friend. “Dad slaves away at his job so I’ll never want for anything, so I’ll be able to go to university if I want to. Mom works hard every day washing and ironing, cleaning up after me, taking care of me when I get sick. They spend every day of their lives working just on my behalf. I’m worried.” His friend replied, “What have you got to be worried about?” He replied, “I’m afraid they might try to escape.”
- Most of us would have no objection being masters, but servanthood holds little attraction.¹¹ – J. Oswald Sanders
- Christians in China often called “servants of the Lord.”

I. DEFINITIONS AND BIBLICAL CONCEPTS:

A. Servant: Greek = *doulos* (1401) - slave; or *diakonoi* (1249) - an **attendant**, a waiter; the concept of a deacon. The *slave* is a **relational** word, but the *waiter* is a **functional** word.

B. Understanding Biblical concepts of the servant.

1. The most frequent usage is as the equivalent of "**slave**" with its various shades in position (Gen 9:25; 24:9; Ex 21:5; Matt 10:24; Luke 17:7, and often); but also a hired workman where "hired servant" translates Hebrew and Greek expressions which differ from the above.

¹¹ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 30.

Discipleships and Servants

- a. Genesis 9:25 “Cursed by Ham, a servant of servants.”
- b. Genesis 24:9 “So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.”
- c. Exodus 21:5 – 6: **Love Slave**.
- d. Matthew 10:24: “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.”
- e. Luke 17:7 – 10: Our duty as servants:
 1. Verse 10: The word '**unprofitable**' though in modern English denoting the opposite of profit, is here used in its proper negative sense, 'We have not profited' or 'benefited God at all by our services.' The connection of this with the subject discoursed of [Verses 1 – 6] may be thus expressed- 'But when your faith has been so increased as both to avoid and forgive offences, and do things impossible to all but **faith** - even then, be not puffed up as though you had laid the Lord under any obligations to you.'¹²
- f. Psalm 84:10 “For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a **doorkeeper** in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

Question:

What should our realistic expectation be for serving the Lord?

¹² Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft

Discipleships and Servants

2. An **attendant** in the service of someone, as Joshua was the "servant" of Moses (Num 11:28).
 - a. Numbers 11:28 “So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, one of his choice men . . .”
3. As a 'term of **respectful** self-depreciation referring to one's self, "thy servant." or "your servant" is used in place of the personal pronoun of the first person:
 - a. In the presence of **superiors** (Gen 19:2; 32:18, and often):
 1. Genesis 19:2 “And he [Abraham] said, ‘Here now my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night.’”
 2. Genesis 32:18 “Then you shall say [To Esau], ‘They are your servant Jacob’s. It is a present sent to my lord Esau.’”
 - b. In addressing the **Supreme Being** (1 Sam 3:9; Ps 19:11; 27:9; Luke 2:29, and often).
 1. 1 Samuel 3:9: God calling Samuel.
 2. Luke 2:29 “Lord, now You are letting your servant [Simeon] depart in peace.”
4. **Officials** of every grade are called the "servants" of kings, princes, etc. (1 Sam 29:3; 2 Sam 16:1; 1 Kings 11:26; Prov 14:35, and often).
 - a. Proverbs 14:35a “The king’s favor is toward a wise servant.”

Discipleships and Servants

5. The position of a king in relation to his people (1 Kings 12:7).
 - a. 1 Kings 12:7 “And they spoke to him [Rehoboam], saying, ‘If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.’”
 - b. Jesus is our **King**: Matthew 20:28 “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
 - c. We also see Jesus **servicing** His servants in the parable of the watching servants (Third Watch): Luke 12:37 “Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.”
6. Those who commit sin are enslaved by sin (John 8:34).
7. Those who are distinguished as obedient and **faithful** to God or Christ are called servants (Josh 1:2; 2 Kings 8:19; Dan 6:20; Col 4:12; 2 Tim 2:24).¹³
 - a. Daniel 6:20b “The king spoke, saying to Daniel, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, who you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?’”

¹³Many of the biblical applications came from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by BibleSoft.

Discipleships and Servants

- b. Colossians 4:12 “Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers.”

II. THE SERVANT IS CALLED TO SERVE.

A. Christians are called to serve Jesus:

1. It may seem obvious, but it must be stated that the role, the occupation, the business, or – can I say – the calling of these individuals . . . is to serve. The servants of a master have the sole purpose of serving that master. Those who call Jesus Master are called to serve Him. This is our role, our function, and our desire. We should diligently search our heart and ask Him to change anything that makes us an unfit servant.¹⁴ – S. F. Fleming
2. Jesus said, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master”

B. Christians are called to serve one another.

1. Galatians 5: 13 “Through love serve one another.”
2. 1 Corinthians 9:19 “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more.”
3. Matthew 23:11 “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.”

¹⁴ S. F. Fleming *Servants of the Third Watch* (Surprise, AZ: Selah Publishing, 2002), 71.

Discipleships and Servants

4. Christ's view of His kingdom was that of a community of members serving one another – mutual service . . . And of course our loving service is to spread to the needy world around us. But in the life of the church today, it is usually the **few** who serve the **many**.¹⁵ – J. Oswald Sanders

5. Luke 12:42 – 48 Ultimate Accountability

- i. Analysis on Page 120, *Servants of the Third Watch*.

Question:

Do you think there may be some kind of day of reckoning for Christians?

What do you think the punishment and reward might look like?

C. Servants of the Lord should **humbly correct** those who are in opposition to God.

1. 2 Timothy 2:23 – 26 “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them **repentance**, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

¹⁵ Sanders, *ibid*.

Discipleships and Servants

III. THE SERVANT'S HEART NEEDS SINCERITY AND TRUTH.

A. Joshua 24:14 “Serve Him in sincerity and truth.”

B. 1 Corinthians 5:7 – 8 “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

C. This is our occupation. This is our employment. We may have jobs where we work and make money to provide for families, but in our heart we must first be servants of the Lord. This is our humble office and station in life. When we have the sincere heart of a servant of the Lord, then we can perform the tasks that our Master requires in a manner that will please Him . . .

It can't be overemphasized in this day, when people's character demonstrates high levels of independence and rebellion to authority that the main role of the servant is to serve. Jesus is the Master and we are the servants. Our heart should be open to Him and soft to His ways. When it gets hard or calloused, we need to let the oil of the Holy Spirit soften it.

Sometimes people spend years running from the Master's call, in so doing; they get caught up in activities that do not edify them. When people want to be master of their own lives, do what they want to do, and go where they want to go, they often run up against a brick wall. Then they justify their actions by blaming their troubles on others. Eventually, they may realize their need to submit to the

Discipleships and Servants

Master and His plans for their lives. Christians are called to lay down their kingship and get off the **throne**.¹⁶

IV. JESUS HONORS **FAITHFUL** SERVANTS.

- A. John 12:26 “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”

- B. John 15:15 “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

- C. Matthew 25:21 “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of the lord.’”

¹⁶ Fleming, 77-78.

Discipleships and Servants

Keys for Servants: Part Two

Introduction

- To serve God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is expressive of that which is fitted to my nature: God's call is expressive of His nature; consequently when I receive His nature and hear His call, the voice of the Divine nature sounds in both and the two work together.¹⁷ – Oswald Chambers
- A sign in the window of a dry-cleaning and dyeing business read: We dye to live, we live to dye; the more we dye, the more we live; and the more we live, the more we dye.¹⁸

I. THE SERVANT'S ROLE IS ONE OF **HUMILITY**.

A. Statements from the Apostles:

1. Peter tells younger people to submit to elders and “be **clothed** with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). Paul instructed Titus to tell Christians in general to show “all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, **serv**ing various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared . . . He saved us, though the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:2b – 3). James says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will **lift** you up” (James 4:7).

¹⁷ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour and Company, Inc., 1963), 17.

¹⁸ Charles W. Colson, *Life Sentence* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1979), 154.

Discipleships and Servants

2. Anyone called to be a servant of God is to be about his heavenly Father's kingdom business. Sometimes that business might put an individual in the limelight of people's focus where he would rather not be. But, most of the time, the kingdom business is done behind the **scenes**, often immersed in humble, even menial, activity. When the Master calls you to speak a word to someone, send a letter, or visit a neighbor, you are the servant. Your place is not to say, "I don't feel like it. Could you get someone else? I have more important things to do."

The Lord Jesus gave us an illustration of a humble servant in John 13 when He washed the disciples' feet.¹⁹

B. John 13:3 – 17: Jesus washes the disciples' feet.

- He prepared Himself.
- He washed everyone's feet, including **Peter** and **Judas**, knowing what they would do.
- He commanded them to follow His example and learn to wash one another's feet.

C. Poem entitled: *I Wonder*

You know, Lord, how I serve You
With great emotional fervor
In the limelight.
You know how eagerly I speak for You
At the women's club.
You know how I effervesce when I promote
A fellowship group.

¹⁹ Fleming, *Servants of the Third Watch*, 73.

Discipleships and Servants

You know my genuine enthusiasm
At a Bible study.

But how would I react, I wonder
If You pointed to a basin of water
And asked me to wash the calloused feet
Of a bent and wrinkled old woman
Day after day
Month after month
In a room where nobody saw
And nobody knew.²⁰ – Ruth Harms Calkin

D. Some people talk about the need for Christians to have a **basin theology**. One man said, “Remember what Pilate did when he had the chance to acquit Jesus? He called for a basin and washed his hands of the whole thing. But Jesus, the night before His death, called for a basin and proceeded to wash the feet of the disciples. It all comes down to basin theology: which one will you use?²¹

Question:

How can we apply basin theology to our daily lives?

II. THE **TASKS** OF THE WATCHING SERVANTS

A. Luke 12:35-38: Servants of the Third Watch.

B. Four Tasks: Verses 35 – 36.

1. Watching servants have their **waists girded**.

²⁰ Ruth Harms Calkin, *Tell Me Again, Lord, I Forget* (David C. Cook Publishing, 1974).

²¹ Craig Larsen, *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching from Leadership Journal* (Baker Books, 1993).

Disciplines and Servants

a. Servants often tucked their long robes into their belts to be better able to move around freely and energetically. The expression “gird up your loins” is used in various places in Scripture to suggest the idea of tucking the tunic into the belt for flexibility in service. The idea of girding here speaks of two things: **preparation** for service, and the actual **act** of service.²²

b. Preparation: TRAINING

i. 1 Peter 1:13 “Therefore gird up the loins of your **mind**, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

ii. Ephesians 6:14 “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with **truth**.”

iii. The idea, then, of preparation for service, is the process through which the trainee must be taken by the trainer to that point in which he is fully developed and schooled. The trainee is now of age and understands his position as servant. He has gathered up any **hindering garments** that might adversely affect his walk or ability to freely move about, and is ready to engage in acts of service with the highest level of truthfulness and integrity.²³

²² Fleming 85-86.

²³ Fleming, 87.

Discipleships and Servants

- c. Act of Service: SERVING
 - i. Illustration of the preparation and serving of a meal.
 - ii. Prepared and mature servants may ultimately have different functions according to the Master's will, but meanwhile trainees should simply find ways to serve and do it. He that is faithful in a little grows in service and will become faithful in much.

2. Watching servants have their **lamps burning**.

- a. These were made clay, bronze, or gold and filled with oil. Some were small, fitting into the palm of a servant's hand.
- b. The lamp represents the **Word** of God burning in our lives. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Through God's Word we have light to see and serve as is our calling.
- c. Servants needed to keep the lamps replenished with oil and the wicks trimmed for immediate use. The oil is the **Holy Spirit** fresh and active in our lives, quickening the Word of God to our hearts.
- d. In the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, it was the wise ones who "took oil in their **vessels** with their lamps" when they went out to meet the Bridegroom (Matthew 25:4). The only

Discipleships and Servants

difference between those who were called wise or foolish was whether they took oil for their lamps or not.

3. Watching servants know how to **wait**.
 - a. One task that often baffles Christians is the notion that we are to be waiting for the Lord's return, but the Bible is very direct about it.
 - b. Servants can be of an opinion that they have enough to do just focusing on the girding of their waists and the burning of their lamps right now. However, the Master expects us to have an attitude of waiting for Him.
 - c. In the parable of the watching servants, they are not anxious or stressed out that the Master has not yet returned. They know He will and are patiently waiting for Him. They are occupying until He comes.
 - d. Some people anxiously await the Lord's return but should check their motives: Do they merely want to escape daily problems, responsibility and being a light to others or is it a desire to be with Him? There is nothing wrong with a desire in our hearts to be with the Master, but still we must wait.

Discipleships and Servants

Question:

Have you ever experienced Christians who don't plan for their future because they are convinced that Jesus is going to return so soon that preparation is futile?

4. Watching servants immediately **open** for the Master.
 - a. There is no waiting once the Master arrives and knocks; the door should open immediately.
 - b. Even though the parable directs us towards the Lord's return, there is application to our lives now, we don't want to ever lock God out of our hearts or minds. We don't want to have any rooms with signs saying "Not allowed."
 - c. The Bible teaches that we are the temples (houses) where God dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16). He comes to us, knocks on our door, and comes in and sups (Revelations 3:20).