

# Chapter 14

## ***DEVELOPING A SERVANT'S HEART***

- I. Both Jesus and Paul strongly emphasized the importance of developing a servant's heart and attitude. Jesus said in Mark 10:42-45, *"Whoever wants to be greatest among you must be servant of all,"* and in John 13:1-17, Jesus demonstrates the attitude of a servant by washing His disciples' feet. In Philippians 2:3-8, Paul writes, *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who...made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant..., He humbled Himself..."* (Mark 10:35-46; John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:3-8)
  - A. As maturing Christian believers, it is our desire and our destiny to develop the attitude, the mind, and the heart of Christ Jesus. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:16 that *"We have the mind of Christ."* He exhorts us in Romans 12:2 to be *"...transformed by the renewing of our minds..."* (Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:16)
    1. The purpose of the transformation that comes through the renewing of our minds in Christ is that we will begin to think and evaluate like Jesus does.
    2. Instead of thinking only of ourselves or only from a carnal viewpoint, we will learn to weigh the facts and come to the same conclusions as Jesus. True wisdom is to see things as God sees them.
    3. When we begin to see things as Jesus sees them, think with the "mind of Christ," and evaluate from Jesus' point of view, then we will begin to speak and act with the same attitude and motives as Jesus.
  - B. In the account of Jesus washing His disciples' feet in John 13:1-17, Jesus teaches some very important lessons about a servant's heart and attitude.
    1. Jesus is both God and man. As God, He is the Divine Creator (through Him were all things made). He knew His place and purpose. (Luke 2:49; John 1:3; John 13:3)
    3. He had the miracle power of God in His life; power over circumstances, power over nature, and power over people. He had demonstrated His power over Satan's temptations.
    4. As Jesus the man, He humbled Himself. Jesus washed Judas' feet even though He knew Judas had betrayed Him. He also washed the feet of Peter, who would deny Him, and the feet of those who would desert Him in His hour of greatest need.
    5. He willingly became a servant. In Mark 10:45 Jesus said of Himself, *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*
    6. He willingly endured suffering and persecution. In the final hours before His

betrayal and crucifixion, He prayed *"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."* (Matthew 26:39, 42)

- C. The servant's heart and the attitude or mind of Christ causes us to begin to think in terms of:
  - 1. Humility before others in every situation. Instead of seeking to exalt or draw attention to ourselves we humble ourselves.
  - 2. Service to others. US President John Kennedy expressed this attitude when he said, *"Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather what you can do for your country."*
  - 3. Giving of self. Instead of seeking to be served or to get something out of every situation or relationship, we seek to contribute something, to be a blessing. (Mark 10:45)
- II. The servant's heart is the Spirit of a Christian leader. Developing a servant's heart is not just for "beginner Christians." It is the heart and attitude of a servant that must motivate and guide us at all levels of maturity and service in the Body of Christ. Leaders don't lead to lead; they lead to serve. They serve by leading; they lead by serving.
  - A. The leader serves those he is leading; this is the pattern and example. (Mark 10:42-45; John 13:13-15)
  - B. We must recognize that in God's economy, the act and quality of serving is counted as greatness. It is not the recognition or reward that produces greatness, but the serving.
  - C. God's values must become our values. We must not be motivated by or set our hearts on: Recognition, Fame or attention, Power over others, Titles and positions, Material gain. These things are of value only as they enhance one's ability to serve or minister to others more effectively.
    - 1. God's purpose is fulfilled in serving, not recognition. Jesus taught that the greatest reward is in giving, not receiving. We are to help, guide, and influence others for their good, not because we value a title or position or power.
    - 2. The real value is in having the attitude of serving the Lord and the Body of Christ and not in the fact of getting the recognition. Position is of value to us and others as it gives us the opportunity to serve more effectively.
- III. There are a number of attitudes or qualities we are seeking to develop in our lives so that we can truly have a servant's heart or the nature of a servant.
  - A. We must have freedom in order to serve from the heart. We must be delivered from bondage to sin and self to be a willing servant of Christ and others. Jesus was free to wash the disciples' feet. (John 13:3; Galatians 5:13)

- B. We must view serving as an expression of God's love and heart. It is not merely an obligation or "doing the dirty work," but is God's love in action.
  - C. We must see serving as honorable. It is not embarrassing or "degrading" to be seen doing the most menial tasks if we truly see ourselves as servants.
  - D. We must not be too "spiritual" to start with small or natural areas of serving. Often we need to prove ourselves as gracious and responsible servants in little things before God can trust us with weightier matters. (Luke 16:10-12)
  - E. We must be willing to serve in fulfilling a larger or corporate vision. We are part of the team. We don't complain or quit when someone else gets the glory and recognition for what we do. "There's no limit to what a person can accomplish if he doesn't care who gets the credit!"
  - F. We must observe to serve. We must keep our eyes and ears open to what is going on around us. We must be alert; be attentive; and be concerned.
    - 1. See the needs; look beyond the faults and see what needs to be done. Anyone can spot problems, but the need is for those who can offer solutions.
    - 2. Be able to view a situation and think what needs to be done. How can I help? Is there something that I can do? See natural needs as well as spiritual needs.
  - G. We must not strain or strive. Developing a servant's heart allows the attitude and acts of serving to flow gracefully in our lives. (2 Timothy 2:24)
  - H. The true servant must be willing to serve anyone, anyplace, anytime. You start by serving those over you in the Lord. You start by offering to do what needs to be done. You start by being observant of the needs and offering practical service. (1 Corinthians 16:15; Galatians 6:6, 10)
- IV. There are a number of attitudes that can hinder us in serving and developing a servant's heart. Those attitudes need to be recognized and dealt with in our minds and hearts. Some of those hindrances are:
- A. Wrong values or motives. Serving for recognition, title, position, or power leads to competition and strife.
  - B. False concept of greatness. The wrong concept that the more recognition we receive, the greater we are.
  - C. Wrong ambition. Ambition is not wrong; selfish ambition is wrong! Good ambition advances God's Kingdom, wrong ambition advances oneself. (James 3:14-16)
  - D. Lack of commitment: to the Lord; to leadership; to the church. Lack of commitment can

often be traced to unsundered rights or even to previous hurts and bad experiences.

- E. Pride. Pride can cause a person to be embarrassed at being thought of as a servant because of a wrong perception that humility is the same as humiliation.
  - F. Insecurity. Insecurity is an identity problem. Know who you are in Christ. When we see ourselves as a servant, we are not afraid of others seeing us as a servant.
- V. The ability to serve from the heart is a sign of:
- A. Freedom. Only a person whose mind and heart are truly free can choose to serve anyone, anyplace, anytime.
  - B. Maturity. The immature must be told to serve. The mature see the need and go for it! Take the initiative.
  - C. Having the mind and attitude of Christ. If you are reaching for authority, look out. If you are reaching for responsibility, you will succeed.

### **QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION**

#### Chapter 14    Developing a Servant's Heart

1. What do you feel Jesus meant by the statement, "...Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." (Mark 10:43-44)
2. What do you find to be the greatest hindrance in developing a servant's heart? What have you found that helps you overcome that hindrance?