

# new wine

JANUARY 1979



## WHO IS THE GREATEST?

For the answer see page 16.



# Editorial

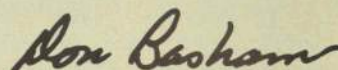
Have you noticed how much easier it is to describe the benefits of salvation than to describe the responsibilities that go with it? It's more exciting to emphasize blessings than to encourage obedience: to testify to miracles than to insist on selflessness.

Since salvation always begins at our point of need, it's understandable that we should begin by stressing the blessings God has for us. But we are not saved merely so God can bless us. Nor are we merely saved from something—we are also saved for something. The mature Christian life requires a balance between blessing and obedience, between being served serving.

That's why Jesus had to remind his disciples, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and that's why during one of their frequent arguments about which of them was the greatest, Jesus offered a profound and timeless truth: "But he that is greatest among

you shall be your servant." Yet so far as we can tell, not one of Jesus' disciples volunteered then and there to take that clearly prescribed route to greatness.

Now, two thousand years later, we're really little different from those first disciples. Position, prestige and reputation tends to mean as much to us as it did to them. But Jesus' answer to our problem is the same one that He gave to them. Conditioned as we are to expecting continual dramatic evidences of God's miraculous grace in our midst, our expectations of a more exciting route to spiritual maturity are understandable. However, our Lord's prerequisite for maturity remains basically unchanged: "Forget yourself and serve others."



Don Basham, Editor

## Letters to the Editor

The coverage of the movie *Born Again* was great! I didn't get to see the movie until yesterday, but I thought that it was well done.

Bill and Lisa Webber  
Salem, VA

Derek Prince's series on Prosperity has really helped me. I reacted against all the "Believe God and get rich" teaching of a few years ago and would not proclaim God's material blessings as part of our inheritance. I knew it was there, but I didn't know how to reach it without people thinking that God's middle name was "Money." Derek's article has opened my eyes and given me a balanced approach, and I've made it the topic for a series of meetings here in our church. I appreciate the Lord for bringing this to light at this time.

Dale Hill  
Harrisburg, PA

As a pro-life nurse, I was so pleased to see the article on prostaglandins in abortion and the Upjohn Company's role. Readers, please pray about purchasing products other than Upjohn's. Check labels; other companies make identical products, and you'll know you're not helping pay for a baby's death.

Mrs. Janet Lehman  
Albuquerque, NM

As the staff of *New Wine* searches for Christian norms of personal and social behavior, please do not neglect your essential witness. Often there is more than one authentically Christian response to a specific situation or circumstance. For example, in regard to finances, there is a good scriptural case to be made for Christian poverty as well as affluence. While wealth may be a sign of a right relationship with God, poverty is not necessarily the

sign of a wrong relationship. The lives of the poor as well as the rich can be a testimony to God's goodness and glory.

Bill Russell  
University City, MO

It is a genuine pleasure to be able to contribute to *New Wine*. The quality of the magazine is excellent, from the articles to the artwork. As an architect, I appreciate order and beauty, whether it be in a building or a magazine. *New Wine* exemplifies both.

Steve Vasilion  
Downers Grove, IL

The article in the October, 1978 issue of *New Wine* on "Spiritual Reproductivity" by Charles Simpson seemed to unlock the chains of misconception about true evangelism by which I was bound.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Rowe, Jr.  
N. Little Rock, AR



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# The Privilege of Serving

by Paul Petrie



The joy of giving yourself to that which will bless another.

**T**HERE ARE CERTAIN basic characteristics to the community of redeemed people which God is calling to be the sign of His life in the earth. These qualities are representative of the character of its Lord. Two of the foundational characteristics of both the King and His community are love and service.

We have had a necessary emphasis on authority the last several years because it's a "dropped stitch" in most of our lives. Authority has its roots in service. After all, providing leadership is a significant service, coming from a life laid down to bear responsibility for the people of God. The nature of a servant is at the heart of our being as the people of God. We are called to serve one another.

Let us look at Galatians 5:1, 13-14:

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh [self-gratifying action], but through love serve one another.

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (NAS).

Here Paul showed the relationship of love and

service in the context of liberty. Christ not only sets us free in our initial salvation experience, but also brings us into progressive liberty in every area of our lives so that we can practically walk under His Lordship. He is setting us free to obey. He is setting us free from debts, marital problems, character defects, fears, and all that binds us and keeps us from experiencing His abundant life.

Paul says Christ has set us free so that we could be at liberty. Then he goes on to say that the reason we have been called to liberty is not for self-gratifying activities. Rather he says, "Use your liberty as an opportunity to serve one another." When He sets us free from our debts, it's not so that we can spend all our income on self-gratification, although the Lord wants us to enjoy prosperity. Our freedom in finances is so we can serve one another with them. Our freedom from marital problems is not just so we can enjoy going home; it's so that as families we can serve one another. In Philippians 2:4, Paul says, "... do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (NAS). He speaks about Jesus, who laid aside His rights and privileges as God's equal and became a servant. He is a pattern for us. Paul exhorts us to have His mind, His attitudes, His motives, His actions within us.



In Jesus' commitment to serve He had guidelines and boundaries which made His service specific. Jesus Himself said, "I did not come to be served. I came to serve and give My life as a ransom for many." Most of us have interpreted that to mean that Jesus came to serve *us* by giving His life a ransom for many. However, if we look closely at Jesus' orientation, He didn't serve us. He served the *Father*. His whole life oriented around the Father's pleasure. "I've come to do the Father's will . . . I do that which I see Father doing . . . I say that which I hear Father saying . . . I'm oriented around pleasing My Father in all things."

He didn't serve His disciples. Rather, He taught His disciples to serve Him. "You go get the donkey. You go pay the tax. You get the upper room ready." He taught them to serve in practical ways. He was training them to serve Him while He served the Father.

There must be definition which clarifies who and when to serve if we are going to do it in a meaningful way that liberates others in the Body of Christ.

### SERVING THOSE IN AUTHORITY

Initially service should be directed toward those who have responsibility for us in the Body of Christ. In Galatians 6:6-8, Paul talks about this kind of serving.

And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life (NAS).

These verses are one concept. They describe the principle of sowing and reaping, which includes sowing to the one who is ministering life to us. If we



Paul Petrie majored in psychology at Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky and studied theology at Asbury Seminary. While at Asbury, Paul met his wife, Becky.

In 1971 they moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and Paul began his association with Bob Mumford. In 1974 the Petries returned to Lexington and founded Covenant Community. In 1977 they moved to Cupertino, California where Paul presently pastors the Community of Christian Concern.

sow service to our shepherd or teacher out of honor, whether in finances, material goods, or just doing things for him, it liberates him to do things for us that we can't do for ourselves.

There is purpose in it. When I first began hearing God speak of serving, I was training nine men. All of them needed their grass cut, so I tried to help them cut their grass, even though I didn't have time to cut mine. I was pressed with my own responsibilities to a point of frustration. One day one of the men asked if he could take responsibility for my yard. He found joy in his service, and I found greater opportunity to minister to him.

I began to see that service is initially towards those who are in spiritual authority, to release them to do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves. Service paves the way for ministry. Service is to those who are bearing the responsibility of sharing the life of the Lord with us. Ministry is to those who are being cared for and overseen.

Because nine men and their families were able to effectively serve my wife and me, we were released to give ourselves to care for and minister to them more effectively. As Becky's responsibilities increased, I saw her reach her capacity. She was caring for me and the children, keeping a large house with a continual flow of guests, as well as giving instruction to women who were looking to her to teach them how to love their husbands, care for their children, etc.

I saw her getting frustrated and frazzled. One day I said, "Beloved, you're going to have to change something. You have reached your capacity. There are things in you that those ladies need that they're not going to get any place else. That should be a priority. You will have to receive their service, or I will have to hire somebody to clean house for you. You need to be free to give yourself to the increased demands that are upon you." It's not an easy thing to be served. It puts us in a vulnerable position. But as the women she was sharing with began to shoulder some of the responsibility for the household, she was set free to care for them and speak into their lives in a way that she would not have been able to do otherwise.

That is part of God's plan to release those who have been matured by God to minister His life to others. Ministry is a form of service that is very costly. Anyone who is ministering life to us is doing so at a significant cost to their own lives. Anyone who is moving into maturity in God has come to that place through suffering and deep personal cost and pain in the processes that God puts him through. So when life is shared, it is out of a life laid down.



## THE NATURE OF SERVICE

In Luke 17:7–10 we read:

But which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat?'

But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat and drink.'

He does not thank the slave because he did the things that were commanded, does he?

So you too, when you do all things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done' (NAS).

These verses speak of the nature of service. Serving is not just doing something nice for somebody else. It is orienting yourself around another individual's good; it is giving yourself to that which will bless another. After the servant in the scripture had worked all day for his master, he didn't come home, pour himself a glass of iced tea, and relax in front of the TV. His orientation was not his own desire. His commitment was to his master's pleasure. It wasn't until the service was complete that he gave his attention to his own need.

That orientation to serve is basic to the nature of Christ. It's not extraordinary or unusual. It's a basic aspect of the nature that God has placed within us and that He wants us to express.

Another aspect of the nature of service is anticipation. The servant was able to anticipate the master's needs because he knew the master's pleasure. Meaningful service comes out of knowledge. We must know someone to really serve him effectively. If we do not know him, we are liable to serve him in ways that he does not want to be served. As we get to know one another, we are able to anticipate needs. We are able to see into situations where we can give ourselves at our expense to what blesses another.

## SERVICE IN THE HOME

Service starts in the home. If service and obedience are not established there, they cannot be established any place else, because the home is the prototype of the church. The home is where we first experience the life of the church. It grows from there into the Body of Christ at large. It is the wife's responsibility to serve her husband; it is the husband's responsibility

to lead his wife. It is the wife's responsibility to fit in with the husband's plans, not the husband's responsibility to fit in with the wife's plans. Ladies, it is a privilege, as well as a responsibility, to serve a man of God.

A couple weeks ago I had a particularly busy day. That evening I had been on the phone from 8:00 P.M. to nearly 11:00 P.M., and I was really tired. I knew tomorrow was garbage pick-up day; but I didn't feel I had energy to put the garbage out. While I was on the phone, I was trying to work up the inner discipline to drag the cans from the garage to the street. Then I heard the garbage cans scraping across the driveway. My wife, Becky, had seen that the phone call would not be over for a while, and had gone ahead with the job herself. It is my responsibility, so it never entered my mind that she would do that, nor would I have asked her. Out of her love and desire to serve me she did my job. It blessed and moved me very much.

Ladies, as you serve your husbands, you are setting an example for the church. You are freeing your husbands to minister to you and to serve the men that are caring for both of you. Your service is also important because it is an example for your children. Out of that example, you teach your children to serve in the home and then in the Body of Christ at large.

The other day I was taking an afternoon nap and our son, Matt, who is 5, was playing with some children on the patio outside the bedroom. He stuck his head in the sliding glass door and said, "Daddy, I'm going to close the door so the noise we're making won't keep you awake." I looked at him and thought, "I appreciate that. He's beginning to be concerned about what will please and bless another."

Service in the home lays a foundation for service in the church, especially service when it is not convenient. It's a curse to be oriented around our own personal convenience and comfort as our highest priority. Murmuring and discontent should not arise when something is inconvenient or uncomfortable for

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"We must know someone to really serve him effectively."

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us. The home is where we must first begin to give ourselves unselfishly in service.

If we do not learn this lesson, we breed families that are selfish and self-centered. They are too concerned about their own comfort and needs. And the Body of Christ at large will deteriorate to the level at which our families are. God wants to liberate us as a people, beginning in our families, to give ourselves unselfishly to service. If we do not have it together at home, we will not be able to effectively serve outside our home. A man can only serve his overseer and the Body of Christ to the extent that the members of his family are able to give themselves to serving him. Service needs to be something that grows out of our love for one another in the home.

## SERVICE FOR SINGLES

Service is also an important part of life for single people. If you are unmarried, you have a unique opportunity for service. If you can see your single life as preparation for what is ahead, you can embrace the opportunity for service. All mothers know that there is no position with fewer rights than that of a mother. Your sleep is not your own; your food is not your own; your time is not your own. When you bring a child into your home, the wife, particularly, gives herself to that child's needs.

Do you know where you as a single person can learn to give yourself unselfishly? Babysitting. It is a privilege to take care of people's children so that they can be about the business of the Kingdom. If you learn *now* to be unselfish in your time, to give yourself to serving, you will be better prepared to serve with love in a family situation.

Often we think of our unmarried days as a time when we can be footloose and fancy free and do whatever we want. Later we will be bound to a husband or wife and children. That is an unhealthy attitude. In fact, if you have that attitude now, when you find yourself married and with children, you will probably resent them.

The only way people can feel abused is if they feel that they have rights. We recognize that in the Kingdom of God we do not have any rights—what we have is privileges. We will not feel abused, but honored to have opportunities to serve. I do not mean that there is not room for fun and fellowship and personal time, for there is a balance in all that. What God is after is a healthy, selfless attitude.

For young ladies, it is an attitude of: "I'm being

prepared to serve a husband, to bear children, and care for them at a cost to myself. Let me learn everything I can through the opportunities I have now. Let me develop gratitude for a life laid down, so that when I have children, I will not resent them, but rather it will be a joy. I will already have had worked into my character whatever is necessary to be a joyful mother of children and a helpmate to my husband with gladness."

Single men have numerous opportunities to serve that will prepare them for the responsibilities they will have later on as responsible husbands, fathers, and home owners. Single men and women have a unique opportunity to serve financially because they do not have the same financial demands married people have.

Young couples without children can give themselves more easily to serving others. If a couple asks you to care for their children, they are committing into your hands the most precious thing they have.

## REALMS OF SERVICE

Let's go back again to Galatians 6:6–10.

And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.

Do not be deceived. God is not mocked . . . (and then he talks about sowing—sowing in finances, sowing in service, sowing in a life laid down to the one who's sharing the life of the Lord with you).

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith (NAS).

We have the progression of priorities for service: first, to those responsible for us in God; second, to the household of faith; and third, to those in the world—our neighbors. Serving provides the opportunity for a new kind of evangelism where we say, "Come and see. In our love and our service you will find what you are looking for."

Men are looking for that kind of life because the world today is a deeply self-centered and self-determining society. People are committed to their own good, their own interest. The world does not understand it when men prefer one another, honor one another, and serve one another. God is calling us to the place where the whole community of believers will be permeated with an atmosphere and an attitude

*(Continued on page 15)*



# The Birth Process

## by Charles Simpson

**I**N THIS LAST ARTICLE of our series on Spiritual Reproductivity, I want to share in a very practical way how to bring someone through the delivery process into the new birth.

First, let's review what we have covered up to this article. The Lord has commissioned us to reproduce. His command to "go into all the world and make disciples" parallels an earlier command in Genesis 1:28 to "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth." God has ordained that all of life reproduce itself "after its own kind," and that includes man. But the reproduction I am talking about is not going into the world and making converts as we have assumed in the past, but simply letting the life that Jesus Christ has put in us reproduce itself—to become spiritual parents in the family of God.

Reproduction is a very natural thing, but many times we have tried to make converts in a very unnatural way. Because we have approached people in an unnatural or religious way, the results in their lives are often unnatural.

Spiritual reproduction, as God has ordained it, is a very normal process. The seed of reproduction is the living word and the field is the human heart. The living word is planted in the human heart and when the seed grows up, it reproduces Christ's character in us.

Next, as the character of Christ begins to grow, the seed should reproduce Christ's works, both natural and spiritual. The natural good works—the things we do for each other—and then supernatural works—the things that only God can do—as He works with us performing signs and wonders.

As we grow in the character and works of Christ, we manifest a quality of life superior to what the world has, so that as the world beholds the character, the works, and the supernatural power, it causes them to ask, "What must we do to be saved?"

### A SECOND BIRTH

I want to begin our final section with the account

in John 3 of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; who came to Him by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is *born again* ["born from above," margin] he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:1–3, NAS).

There is a difference between seeing the Kingdom of God and merely going to heaven when you die. I believe in heaven, but it is not God's primary goal for us. Going to heaven is a by-product of living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The goal of God is "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

When Jesus said, "unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom," it threw Nicodemus into a quandary. "How can a man be born when he's old? How can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? . . . How can these things be?" (vss. 5–9, NAS).

I believe the institution we call the church is in a quandary similar to that of Nicodemus, for among the problems it faces is one very basic issue—many people have been incorrectly taught what it means to be a Christian—to be born again. We have said, "Just believe and you've got it." The expression "born again" is being reemphasized in our time, and for this reason, I want to examine this conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus.

Here is the context of this story from John 3. Jesus had come preaching and doing miracles, and the people and the religious leaders were asking, "How did this common carpenter from Nazareth learn all that?" Among those who were mystified and perplexed as they listened to Jesus was Nicodemus, a rabbi on the Sanhedrin, who from his youth had sat at the feet of Israel's greatest religious teachers.







Jesus' reply to Nicodemus' consternation was a gentle rebuke: "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?" What Jesus was saying was, "Nicodemus, you have come to Me saying, 'Teacher, You are doing miracles' and you see the 'rustling of the leaves' as the wind of the Spirit blows, but you really don't see what is going on. You don't know how God is operating."

He was a religious man who did not know how God was operating. It's possible to be very religious and yet not know what God is doing. Nicodemus knew all the laws and customs of his group, but he had to say, "I don't understand" when Jesus talked about being born again and seeing God's Kingdom.

Jesus said, "What I have told you is simple compared to what I could tell you, because nobody on earth knows exactly how the government of God operates except Me. I am the only one who has ever been there." *That is the context of John 3:16.*

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**"Spiritual reproduction,  
as God has ordained it,  
is a very normal process."**

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He was not just talking about a momentary religious experience or being a member of a church. He was talking about seeing the Kingdom of God and the King—the Lord of Hosts—not just having your sins forgiven, but having your eyes opened, and being placed under the Lordship of Almighty God. That is where we are to lead people: not just taking them through some steps to get them forgiven and into heaven when they die. We are commissioned to lead men into the Kingdom of God where there is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit for daily life. This is to be our goal in reproductivity.

Many of us have made "one-shot-efforts" at spiritual rebirth. But birth is a process and there is more to bringing someone into the Kingdom of God than just going through four or five steps. Even if your birth certificate says you arrived on April 6, 1937, the fact is your existence did not totally come into being on April 6. Rather, it was a long-term process that just incidentally culminated in birth on that day. Actually, it was the result of a covenant relationship, out of which came conception, gestation, labor and finally birth.

Likewise spiritual reproduction is a process in which there is conception, gestation, labor, birth. Each phase is necessary. Once the seed is sown, if everything else is normal, birth will just naturally come about in due time.

I want to stress this so that in trying to be spiritually reproductive, you won't attempt to make everything happen in one night. It just does not work that way.

## THE BIRTH PROCESS

I want us to look at the new birth in the context of the whole family. There is more to families than just having children. There is more to building the family of God than just making converts.

I say that because ideally children are born out of covenant love, not just out of a desire to have children. In the Spirit, it is much the same way. God does not want having children to be our only goal. He wants us to have a relationship with Him and with one another that will just naturally produce children. If we have covenant love and relationship, children are the natural by-product of it.

In the Spirit there is conception. The seed is sown and conviction takes place. If you see anybody under conviction, don't bother him. The seed is growing, getting bigger, and that person is having to make room for it. He may even be a little bit miserable, so don't add to his misery with "helpful advice."

If your husband is under conviction, be sweet and give him a lot of room. Don't say, "Aha! You are under conviction. God is dealing with you!" Your husband may deal with *you*. If your wife is under conviction, just pray, "Lord, bless her," but don't bother her. Don't agitate her because God is working in her by the seed He has planted.

I used to root azaleas and camellias as a kid. I would take about 5,000 cuttings and put them in boxes of vermiculite with plastic lids. It took them about eight weeks to root. I knew it took eight weeks, but I would get impatient after a week and wonder if anything was going on down there. You're not supposed to lift the lid except to water them because the temperature and the humidity is supposed to stay constant. Whatever is going on is taking place naturally. But being ten years old, I would lift the lid, thinking, "Well, I have 5,000. I'll just peep at one." And I would pull it up.

Naturally, there were no roots on it, and I ended whatever was going on by pulling it up. By the end of eight weeks, I had pulled up at least 2,000 of the



cuttings to see if they had any roots.

We are tempted to do that in the Spirit, too. But remember: the life is in the seed. If a person hears the word and the Spirit is moving, your job is done until birth draws near. The spiritual gestation period has begun, and the rest is the Holy Spirit's job until labor sets in. Then you can be of assistance.

Labor and birth is the time of decision. But a decision may take anywhere from a few days to several years. But if the Spirit of God is allowed to do His work, once the seed is sown, it will take root and bear fruit.

Though I have probably been less fruitful in my life than God wants me to be, I have seen some people come to the Lord, and I have found more success in just sowing the word and loving the people than in being aggressive. One of the biggest offences to really bringing people under the government of God is human zeal. Our goal should be to sow the word, love the people, and let the word do its work.

Peter, the great apostle, came through a process. One day Andrew, his brother, came to him and said, "We have found the Messiah." Knowing Peter, it is wise he didn't say any more. He didn't say, "We have found the Messiah. What are you going to do about it?" To witness to what you have seen is legal; to tell people what to do is illegal.

Scripture doesn't say how Peter responded, but he was not a religious man. We know that he cursed and lied after being with Jesus three and a half years, so who knows what he was capable of *before* he walked with Jesus? When Andrew said, "We've found the Messiah," Peter probably said, "Yeah, and I'm Teddy Roosevelt. I never believed nothing you ever said, Andrew."

Then one day, while this word Andrew had spoken was still working in him, Peter heard Jesus himself. Jesus was chastising the Pharisees and blistering the system, calling Israel to repentance, and speaking with real authority. Peter was impressed. That is step two in the process, and Jesus kept getting closer and closer.

Then one day Peter was washing his net, and he saw Jesus coming his way, followed by a large crowd. Andrew's word was still working in him, but Peter would never have gone to the meeting—so the meeting had come to him.

Peter was starting to perspire, and Jesus stopped right next to him. Jesus was saying, "Blessed are those who never lose their temper, for theirs is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are the peacemakers . . . blessed are the humble . . ." and Peter was thinking, "How can I get rid of this guy?"

When Jesus got through, He climbed into Peter's boat and said, "Let's go fishing." For Peter this was really too imminent. As long as the meeting was going on, it was an objective thing. Now Jesus was confronting him.

Peter said, "Look, You may be a great Bible teacher, but You don't understand about fishing. I'm here on shore because there are no fish out there. They're not running today."

Jesus said, "I insist."

By that time Peter was thinking, "Anything to get this guy out of my boat." He was perspiring. He was hearing Andrew's voice, "We found the Messiah. We found the Messiah." So he said, "All right. I don't want to, but at Your insistence . . ."

They took the boat out, and Jesus said, "Throw out the net."

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"If you are going to reach  
people, you can't be  
shocked at them."

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Peter said, "There's nothing down there. But I'll do it just to show You." To Peter's surprise, when he pulled on the net, it was full of big fish!

Right then, Peter fell on his knees and said, "Get out of my boat. Get away from me. Don't you understand? I'm a sinner, and You are a holy man." The world does not understand that holy men are *supposed* to be around sinners.

Jesus said, "You come with me, and I'll teach you to fish for men."

Notice that when Peter said, "Get out of my boat. I'm a sinner," Jesus did not say, "Shame on you, Peter!"

When a man tells you he is a sinner, your reaction is very important. If you are going to reach anybody, you cannot be shocked at people because that can break down all the bridges we have built to reach people. God hates sin, but He doesn't hate sinners.

Peter proceeded through hearing the word, conviction, decision. The moment he was under conviction, Jesus said, "Follow Me," and Peter made a decision by following Him to become one of His disciples.

The man who preached the Kingdom of God at Pentecost and saw thousands of people delivered from darkness to light was not the product of three



points and a poem. He was the product of a process of God's dealing, a decision, and being disciplined in the ways of God. His spiritual rebirth included conception, gestation, and some real labor—and that was only the beginning.

## PRACTICAL HELPS IN DELIVERY

I want to make seven practical suggestions for helping people who are approaching spiritual delivery, bringing them to the place where they are ready to be born again—born from above.

1. *Prepare, but do not preconceive.* Be ready for God to use you in leading people to Christ, but don't preconceive how He will do it. It is good to study soul-winning material and to read the scriptures on being born again and books on leading people to the Lord. But don't get a mental fix on how it has to happen every time.

In the natural realm, it is all right to buy a crib and a bassinet and some baby clothes before the birth, but do not buy them all one color. It may be a girl or a boy. Don't get your announcements printed before the birth. Prepare, but do not preconceive.

It's significant that Jesus only once used the approach we see in John 3. He didn't go through the same dialogue with everyone He met. He said what

the Spirit gave Him in each situation. In each situation His terminology changed. He was prepared, but He did not preconceive.

Avoid using a standard formula or method. People are not robots, and they don't fit the same pattern. They are unique creations, so do not lay the same method on everybody.

Approach every situation as a learner, not as a know-it-all. Be a listener. Most people need somebody to talk to. Don't be as busy telling them how to do it as you are listening to what their heart is saying. Then learn to respond. Prepare but do not preconceive.

2. *Be sensitive to the word.* Be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit says. When it comes time to move out into society, after studying and praying and preparing ourselves as best we know how, we are not going to grab the first guy who comes along and say, "Are you saved? Don't you know you are going to hell?"

That is not the approach to use. We are to move as God's Spirit leads us, remaining sensitive to the word God is giving us to say to an individual. Let the Lord take the initiative. He said, "Go and I am with you."

Jesus prayed to the Father on behalf of "those whom Thou gavest me" (Jn. 17). If you are reproductive, it is because He gave them to you. Jesus knew God gave them to Him because God had given Him a word for them. God supernaturally let Him see Nathaniel standing under a fig tree so that when He

# Spiritual Reproductivity Series

by Charles Simpson

For years evangelism has been plagued with an enormous mortality rate. Confessions of faith were made, but life-styles didn't change. How can we stop this from happening? What needs to change to cause new converts to stick? Charles Simpson gives answers.

Charles Simpson points out that with evangelism when all is said and done, there is more said than done. "Spiritual Reproductivity" shows us how we can have a lasting impact on the world as we go forth to fulfill our commission to preach the gospel.

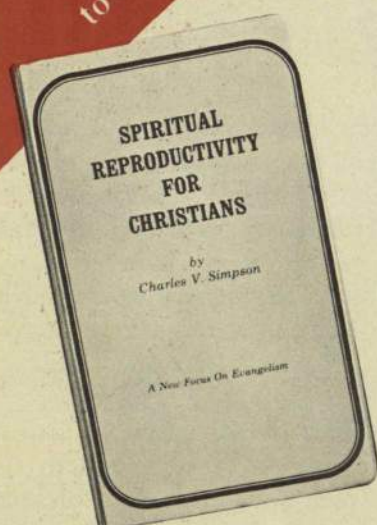
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met him He had a word for that man. He had a word for Matthew. He had a word for Thomas. So He could pray for "those whom Thou gavest me."

If you are not sensitive to His word and you create your own word, your punishment is that you have to live with those you get that God did not give you. The worst thing that can ever happen to you is to live with the product of your own zeal.

It is said that once D. L. Moody came out of a meeting and happened to meet a drunk on the sidewalk who said, "Hey, Mr. Moody, I'm one of your converts." Mr. Moody responded, "You must be one of mine, the Lord didn't have anything to do with you."

3. *Be flexible.* If you are going to be fruitful, you must be flexible. Most of the great evangelists were accused of being heretics or unorthodox because they did unusual things. We've got to be willing to do what nobody else will do. That's where the fruit is.

One day Jesus was walking with His disciples and said, "I must go through Samaria." That is flexibility because most Jews went way around Samaria. You have to be flexible to follow the Holy Spirit.

So Jesus went to Samaria, and stopped at the well at midday. Nobody drew water at that time of day except people that nobody else wanted to draw water with. Along came such a woman, an adulteress who had been married five times and was presently living with another man who was not her husband.

As she started to draw water, Jesus said, "Give me a drink."

Right away that threw all of her stereotypes into the well. She said, "How is it that You, being a Jew, are talking to me, a Samaritan woman?"

Instead of answering that question, He said, "If you knew who was talking to you, you would ask Me for a drink so you would never thirst anymore."

Jesus had captured her attention because He had approached her in an unorthodox way. The next thing the Spirit said to Jesus was, "Ask her about her husband."

Jesus did everything by the same Spirit that you and I listen to. Contrary to popular belief, Jesus had not been spouting platitudes from the time He was a baby. Let's not forget that He *emptied* Himself when He came. He did not know everything. The Spirit helped Him just like He helps us.

So Jesus said, "Go call your husband."

"I don't have a husband."

"That's right, you don't. You've had five, and the man you're living with now is not your husband."

At that point, she changed the subject and started talking about religion and where men should worship.

Finally she said, "Well, Messiah is coming one of these days, and when He comes, He will tell us all of this."

Jesus said, "I am He."

At that, she dropped her waterpot, ran into town, and brought all the townspeople to hear Jesus speak, and as a result many Samaritans came to believe in Him. Jesus was the most fruitful man who ever lived because rather than being inflexible, He moved as the Spirit moved Him.

4. *Keep a prayer list.* Write down the names of people that God gives to you. If there is someone you feel an affinity for, a man at work or a woman in the PTA or on the block, write down his or her name. Pray for the people on your list regularly and persistently. Keep track of the results.

However, don't impose your will on other people in Jesus' name. Don't pray, "Lord, make him do this," and "Lord, make him do that." Instead, pray, "Lord, have Your way in his life. Lord, bless that man. Lord, lead him to know You." Pray an open prayer, not a directive prayer.

One night back in the mid-1960's my wife and I were invited to a cook-out at the home of a man we had been praying for. I was sitting in a lounge chair in his yard, and he came out of the house with a bottle of barbeque sauce in his hand and said, "I've been thinking. I'd like to get with you and have prayer some time."

I said, "Would you like to do it tonight?" The man didn't know it, but I had a friend named Ralph who was my prayer partner and we had a standing agreement to get together for prayer at a moment's notice.

So I said to my host, "Just a minute, I have to make a phone call." So I called Ralph and set it up.

We met at my office and started praying, and I got up and started walking. I like to walk when I pray so that if the devil's going to harrass me, at least he'll have to get up and move around a little bit. Pretty soon Ralph started walking, too. This guy thought, "This must be a walking meeting," so he got up and started walking too. When he started walking, the power of God hit him, and he fell over in my office chair and stayed there for over an hour. He got so intoxicated in the Holy Spirit that he couldn't even talk right. It scared him. After he left, I didn't see him for several years.

But now he's a full-time pastor in our fellowship because God did something he could never get away from. That man moved to a different state, even went back to a seminary. But he came back. Prayer had released God's power in his life.

When you pray, you bring a force into play that



you can't generate yourself. So start a prayer list and keep with it.

5. *Develop natural relationships.* This is the key to much that I am saying. Aside from praying, nothing is more important than developing natural relationships with people that are not Christians. I am not suggesting that you backslide so you can reach sinners. You can be holy and be with sinners.

Jesus established natural relationships with sinners. The Bible says, "The common people heard Him gladly." He was called a "friend of sinners." You cannot reach anybody you cannot touch. If you cannot establish a bond, you will never reach them. And if you are super-religious, you will never be able to relate to natural people who are unconverted. You cannot reach people you react to.

Jesus was never shocked by anybody. He was teaching one day and four Pharisees came in dragging a woman whom they had caught in the very act of adultery. "Moses said, 'Stone her.' What do You say?"

Stooping down to write on the ground, Jesus said, "Let him who is without sin, cast the first rock," and they all dropped their stones and left.

When they left, Jesus said to the woman, "Where are your accusers?"

She said, "I don't have any."

Jesus said, "I don't condemn you, either. But don't do it anymore."

Jesus had a totally different response than the religious leaders. That is why people loved Jesus. He didn't condone what she did, but He dealt with what she *did* differently than He dealt with *her*. He did not react to her problem. He responded to her need. That is the key.

If you are going to develop natural relationships with unconverted people, you must be prepared not to be shocked. One of the most difficult attitudes to overcome is self-righteousness. It is amazing how quickly we forget our own former ways, but it helps to remember how we were. If you can remember that, you can understand non-Christians much better.

6. *Be ready for the supernatural.* We must get the supernatural out of the arena of spectatorism and onto the frontier of extending the Kingdom of God. I know God is giving us miracles in our churches and meetings, but I also believe God is saying, "Bring the miracles to the people." That is where Jesus brought them—into the marketplace.

Let me give you an example. Several years ago God gave me a relationship with my service station operator and mechanic. He was a good man. He used some foul language, but he tried not to use it around

me. He was just a good old country boy who was always himself, and I enjoyed being with him. I would go to the service station and hang around to talk with him after I got gas.

He started coming to church, and one day he said, "Why don't you come over and visit some time?" So I started going over there every week or so, and I found myself enjoying being with him.

One night I was at his house and we were talking about the Lord. While we were talking, his little girl was in her room just coughing her head off.

I said to him, "Terry, would it be all right if we prayed for her?"

He said, "I guess so. She has a pretty bad cough. Anything you can do would be fine." So we went in there and stood around the bed. When I laid hands on her and prayed she didn't cough one more time. Not one more time.

You should have seen the look on his face. We went back in the living room, and he was looking at me like I fell out of heaven and had all nine gifts hanging off my fingers. He said, "Man, that really works, doesn't it?"

I found out God enjoys doing a miracle in that kind of setting. The Lord wants to demonstrate His power where it counts; not where people are debating whether miracles are real or not, but where His grace and love can be extended to a real need in a real situation. That is God's set-up. That is the way God brings people in.

If you have been walking in integrity and the man has seen God's character in your life, and you have been moving as the Lord has led, and then a miracle happens, that man has been set up by God. Do you know what will happen next? That man will pop the question. And you had better be ready to answer.

7. *Be ready for the question.* They asked Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" On the day of Pentecost, they said, "Men and brethren, *what must we do*?" The Philippian jailer said to Paul and Silas, "What must I do?"

That is the question. Until they ask, they probably are not ready for the answer. The Church has been answering questions nobody has been asking. We need to go back and do our homework and let our lives back up what we say. If we do, people will ask us the question once again.

The question is not, "What must I do to go to heaven?" The question is, "What must I *do*"—period. I like that question because it indicates they are ready to *do* something.

What is the answer to that question? "Repent, believe, be baptized." That is how they answered in



Acts 2. That is the way Paul answered the question.

Let me summarize what repentance is. Most people are in trouble to start with because they have been running their own lives. Man's basic problem is his own will. What a man needs to repent of is not just smoking and cussing and drinking and other outward sins. The root problem is he has been running his own life.

To repent means that while you are going in the wrong direction, you see the error of what you have been doing and you are grieved about it, so you turn around and go the opposite direction. It means that in the process of running your own life, you see it does not work, so you turn around and let Jesus run it.

To me that is real repentance and conversion. It is not just believing that Jesus came, but that Jesus knows how to run the Kingdom. If you insist upon running your life, you are still going to have problems. When you allow Jesus to run your life, He will work out your problems.

Then after a man repents and believes in Jesus, he needs to be baptized into three realities. First, he should be baptized in water to identify with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Second, baptism in the Spirit. Third, baptism into the Body. All three areas are important, and I believe a person ought to be

baptized soon after coming to the Lord—in water, in Spirit, into the Body.

When you lead a person to the Lord, do not leave him alone. Take him through each step. Explain to him his need to be baptized, possibly even reading Romans 6 to him yourself. Pray with him for God to fill him with the Holy Spirit. Most of the time, God will fill people with the Spirit when they are first converted if you tell them He will and pray for them.

Then introduce them to the Body and immerse them in the Body. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12, "In one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." Tell him, "I want to introduce you to the family. God may have used me to reach you, but we have relatives."

Much more could be said about follow-up, but I think primarily we should remember this: the job is not finished until the one you evangelized is evangelizing others.

God's purpose for each of us is that we be fruitful, reproducing in others what He has produced in us. With His commission to ". . . go into all the world and make disciples," we are being sent with the word, the nature, and the works of Christ to confront the world with His Lordship; and hearing His command to us, our response should be, "Lord, make me fruitful." ♣

#### THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING

(continued from page 7)

of joyful service, where lives are laid down, and where personal comfort and convenience is no longer the highest priority. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:4).

Wives, care for and serve your husbands. Families, learn to serve those who are ministering to you. Learn to anticipate one another's needs and how you may help. You might trip over yourself for a while because it is a little awkward at first, but that is normal.

It's interesting to watch brothers learning to serve. They watch for an opportunity, and when someone begins to take his coat off, three men rush to help and fight over the coat! That's all right. We will mature in our expression of service until it is gracious and natural and unobtrusive. The goal is service that does not draw attention to itself.

There are levels of service. One is: "If there is anything I can do for you, ask." That is good, but as we grow in service, the next level is, "Here is something that needs to be done. Can I do this for you?" Then, as relationships deepen, we may express an even higher level of service. We are able to perceive a

need or desire and proceed to do it just to bless another. We don't even have to report it if it is obvious. An atmosphere of gracious service develops that does not draw attention to itself.

We are the community of the Holy Spirit because everything we do is out of His life, rooted in His unction, founded in His grace and His mercy, expressing His love. God is calling us to be a "servant" community.

How do we serve God practically? "If a man cannot serve his brother whom he can see, how can he say that he serves God whom he cannot see?" We serve God as we serve one another.

I think all of us have had the opportunity of experiencing the joy of serving. It's a joy you receive by entering into somebody else's joy. It's a joy that is oriented around someone else's happiness and someone else's highest good.

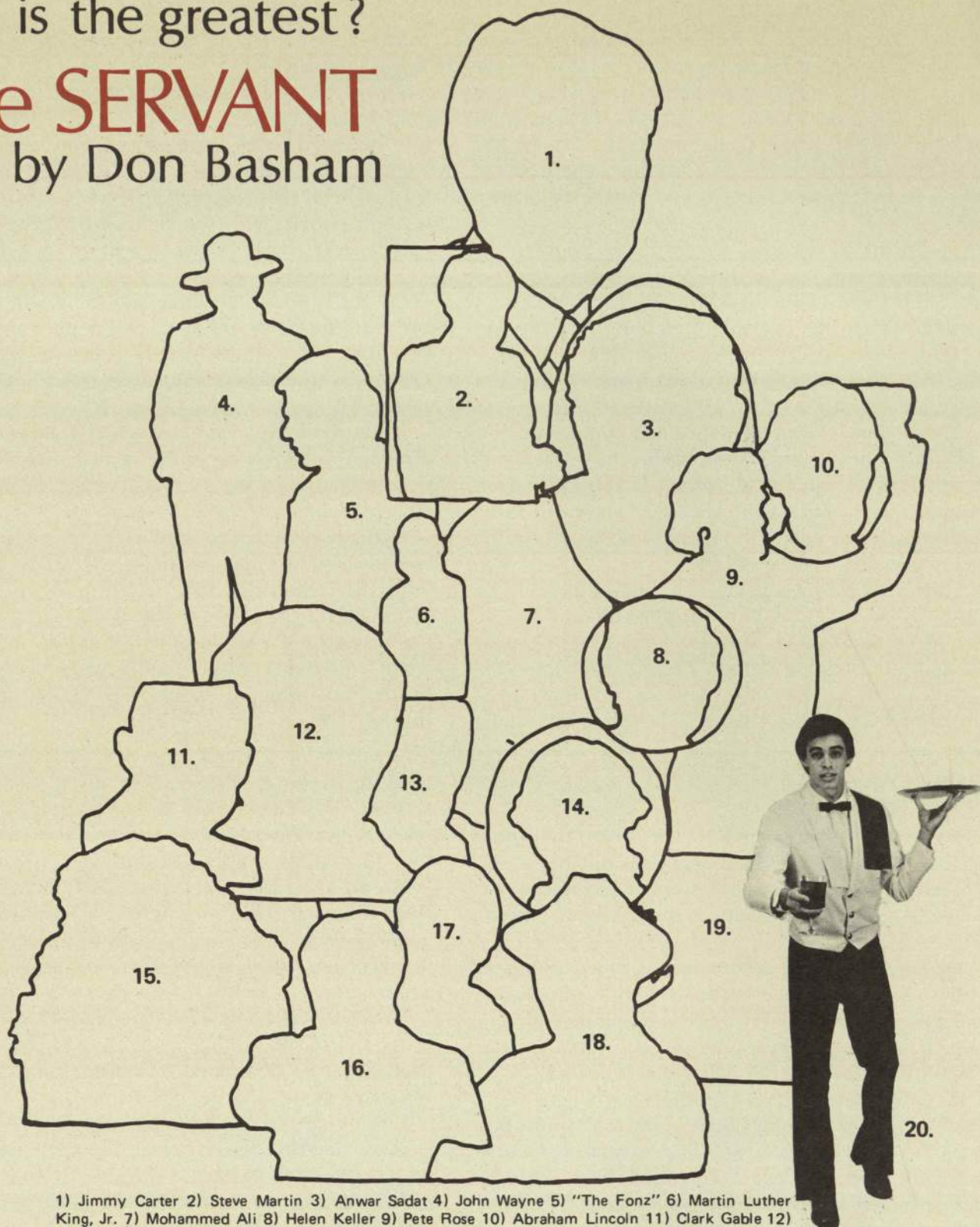
Let this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus, laying aside our rights and privileges as equals, taking upon ourselves the form of a servant, to serve at our own personal expense for the joy that is set before us—the joy of a community of redeemed people who honestly testify, not in word only, but in character and nature, of their resurrected King. ♣



Who is the greatest?

# The SERVANT

by Don Basham



1) Jimmy Carter 2) Steve Martin 3) Anwar Sadat 4) John Wayne 5) "The Fonz" 6) Martin Luther King, Jr. 7) Mohammed Ali 8) Helen Keller 9) Pete Rose 10) Abraham Lincoln 11) Clark Gable 12) Menachem Begin 13) Elvis Presley 14) George Washington 15) Katherine Hepburn 16) Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn 17) O.J. Simpson 18) Franklin Delano Roosevelt 19) Albert Einstein 20) The Servant.

**L**UKE 22 DESCRIBES some of the events that took place the last evening that Jesus spent with His disciples. First, they shared the Lord's Supper, and after the Passover meal Jesus took the bread and the wine and consecrated them, saying that they

represented His body and His blood. Jesus made covenant with His disciples as they partook together.

*This article is taken from Don Basham's taped message, "How to Become a True Servant." This tape may be ordered by using the form on page 31.*



Then He said one of them was about to betray Him, and they all wondered among themselves who it would be. It was a very crucial and emotionally charged scene.

Yet, in verses 24 through 27, there is an insertion that seems out of place. After this deeply moving experience of the covenant meal and the prophecy of pending betrayal, Luke inserts these startling words.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

And he said unto them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Right to the end of His ministry Jesus' disciples were still bickering about who was the greatest, and still had not learned to serve one another.

In John 13, after the Lord's Supper is over and Judas has left to betray Him, Jesus makes His teaching about serving all the more pointed.

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God:

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded . . . .

. . . after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, Verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them (vss. 3-17).

If, after three years of daily living and ministering with Him and receiving impartation from Him, the disciples of Jesus still had difficulty understanding the meaning of service, and still had a struggle about which of them was the greatest, is it any wonder that we have difficulty ourselves?

## THE PURPOSE OF SERVING

In view of the significance Jesus gave to the subject of serving, let's consider the goal of serving—what it is meant to accomplish. First of all, it's meant to deal with our pride and our ambition. In Luke 17:7-10, Jesus gives a basic word about the nature of being a servant:

But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. [I say not so.]

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Jesus tells His disciples "If you have a servant, you don't care how long he has worked in the fields; when he comes in all tired and weary, you don't say to him, 'There, there, my good man. Go get cleaned up and rest and eat. After you're nice and comfortable, then come and fix my supper.'"

A servant is not one who puts his own welfare first, but rather one who puts the welfare of his master first. The servant's role is designed to deal with selfishness or pride or ambition. Jesus is making the point because of the struggle the disciples had all through their relationship with Him about which of them was to be the greatest. Each was wanting to *be served*, rather than to *serve*.

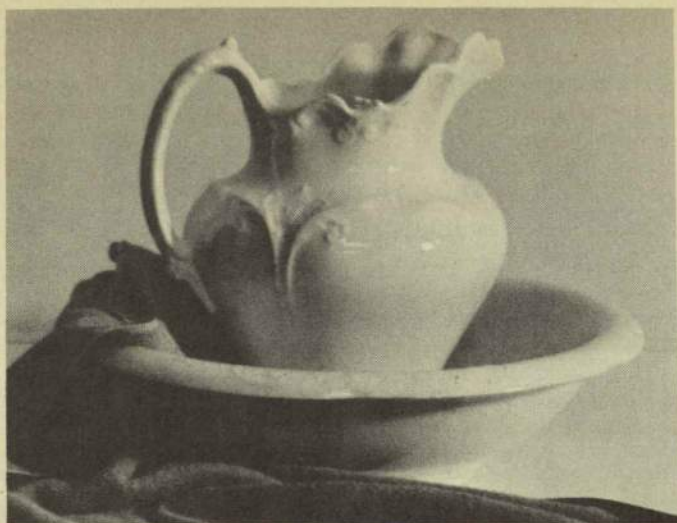
In Matthew 20 we have another illustration of the struggle of the disciples, jockeying for position about who is the greatest:

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom (vss. 20-21).

This is really a rather comical picture. Notice first of all that Jesus doesn't criticize the mother of James and John, because her ambition for her boys springs out of a mother's love and compassion.





Jesus handles the thing very gently. But look at verse 24:

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren (vs. 24).

Why do you suppose the ten were upset? Could it be that they also harbored secret desires to be number one and two next to the Lord? Of course! Each one wanted a greater place than the other. So Jesus proceeded to tell them how to be the greatest.

He said, "If you really want to know who's going to be the greatest in the Kingdom, I'll give you the secret."

Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

But it shall not be so among you: *but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant* (vss. 25-27).

Please notice, there was not a single volunteer! There was no response whatsoever. His profound words settled on a quiet group of disciples, because their pride and ambition was being dealt with. That's one of the aims of serving.

## HOW TO SERVE AUTHORITY

Now I want to consider right and wrong ways of serving your pastor or shepherd or any other authority.

First, I want to list five right ways to serve, later citing a scripture that illustrates each one. They are:

1. To serve anonymously;
2. To serve lavishly;
3. To serve faithfully;
4. To serve selflessly;
5. To serve redemptively.

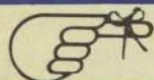
*First, we are to serve anonymously.* A good example of this is the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-47. Joseph is a type of Christ. He became a savior for the nation of Israel through the circumstances that led him into Egypt. Remember that Joseph got into trouble because of a revelation God gave him of what was going to take place in his life. His brothers became jealous and sold him into slavery in Egypt. In Egypt he became a slave in Potiphar's house. Because he served quietly and faithfully, he soon was promoted to chief servant in Potiphar's household.

Joseph would have stayed there in that more or less exalted position in that household had it not been that Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, but failing, she accused him of attacking her. As a result, Joseph ended up in prison. But instead of bemoaning his fate, he began to serve the jailer and the first thing you know, the jailer began to recognize the quality of Joseph's service and made him his assistant.

Then when Pharaoh's baker and wine-taster were thrown into jail for displeasing their master, Joseph interpreted their dreams correctly. Several years later when Joseph was remembered and brought out of prison, he served Pharaoh by interpreting his dreams and ended up number-two man in all Egypt. Later, Joseph's family and the whole nation of Israel were spared because of his faithfulness and because he had a heart to serve *anonymously*. He didn't do it for credit. In fact, when it was all over, and he was finally reunited with his family, he acknowledged that all that had happened was in the purpose of God—even his brothers' cruelty. He said to his brothers: "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

*Secondly, we are to serve lavishly or extravagantly.* Let's look at a short, yet rather amazing incident in Mark 14—the story of Mary anointing Jesus in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. She came with the alabaster box of ointment and poured it out on him. The disciples, mainly Judas, became upset over the seeming waste of the expensive ointment.

[But] Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.



Don't forget: Jan.5 is a national day of prayer and fasting.



For ye have the poor with you always, and whosoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying (vss. 6-8).

Mary took the most valuable thing she had—a vial of ointment—broke it open and poured it over the Lord's head and body. Jesus said, "She hasn't done anything wrong. She's done something wonderful. Don't you criticize her for it because wherever the gospel is preached, this will be remembered."

That says something about the importance the Lord placed on service.

*The third positive way of serving is to serve faithfully.* In the parable of the talents in Matthew chapter 25, the five-talent and two-talent men served faithfully, investing their talents. When the Lord came for the reckoning, they brought not only their five talents and two talents, but more as well, and his response was, "Well done, thou good and faithful servants. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I'll make you ruler over many."

The one-talent man, who took his talent and buried it in the ground was called a "wicked and slothful servant," because instead of taking what had been given him and using it to the glory of his lord, he just buried it and did nothing. Jesus commends those who serve faithfully!

*The fourth way of serving authority is to serve selflessly.* 1 Chronicles 11 deals with the relationship David's mighty men had to him and there's one brief incident concerning three of the mightiest of the men who had come to David in Hebron to make him king.

David and his men were under siege of the Philistines, hiding in the cave Adullam, cut off from Bethlehem. Their supplies were running low, and David was thirsty.

And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate!

And the three brake through the host of Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David . . . (vss. 17-18).

These men were so committed and loyal to David in wanting to serve him that just by hearing what he desired, without receiving any orders, they risked their lives to satisfy his thirst. David was so touched by what they did that he couldn't drink it, but rather poured it out as an offering to the Lord.

These risked their lives for David's sake, with absolutely no thought or hope of reward, simply because they wanted to be faithful—they wanted to serve. That's the kind of people I'd like to have serve me.

*The fifth way of right serving is to serve redemptively.* One of the most moving examples of this in Scripture is the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5. The king of Syria sent Naaman, Captain of the Syrian army, to Samaria because he had heard there was a holy man there who could heal him.

So Naaman came with all of his gifts and his soldiers and his servants and with all his pageantry, and he marched over to Elisha the prophet's little cottage and waited outside.

Naaman was used to being treated with respect and admiration, but when he came up in front of this prophet's cottage, Elisha didn't even give him the courtesy of coming outside and greeting him, let alone praying for him.

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage (vss. 9-12).

Here was a man of high position and rank and authority who suddenly blew it all. He lost control of himself in front of the soldiers and servants with him, and literally stalked off in a rage.

Had it not been for the faithfulness of some unnamed servants who were with him, he would have lost everything. These men were real servants. Consider the picture: Naaman, the general and the big associate of the king, has blown it. What do people often do when somebody in a high place gets in a difficult situation? They laugh. Well, Naaman's servants could have done that and said, "Well, it's about time Naaman got put in his place!" But they didn't. They saw their master in a state of disgrace and confusion, and yet they remained completely loyal. And because of their faithfulness and loyalty, they were able to redeem Naaman in that situation. Let's look at what they did.



And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father . . . if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? (vs. 13).

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## "There is a difference between serving and being a servant."

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Because of their faithfulness and their steadfastness Naaman was able to recover himself. He heard them, and he appreciated what they said, and he got over his rage.

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel . . . (vs. 14–15).

Through the faithfulness of those servants, he not only got his healing, but he got his salvation as well.

There's a lesson for all of us here. There is not one of us in leadership who doesn't blow it from time to time. Every man of God has feet of clay. Everyone of us is going to be in some situation where we don't measure up the way we need to. We'll not only blow it; we'll be in danger of losing something good that God has for us.

Whether or not we come through such a crisis may be determined by the faithfulness of the men under us. So one thing we all have to learn is how to serve redemptively. Not only to serve a man and be loyal to him when he's on top, but serve him just as faithfully when he's so low he has to look up to see bottom—when he's acting, not like a man of God, but like an idiot. When he can't get it together with his family or job or anything else. If you stand with that brother and serve him faithfully, your service to him may result in his healing and redemption.

### WRONG WAYS TO SERVE

Now let's look at some wrong ways of serving. When Naaman was healed, he offered Elisha the gifts and treasures he had brought with him from Syria.

Elisha wouldn't take any of the gold or the changes of clothes. But Gehazi, Elisha's servant, was upset that Elisha passed up Naaman's generous offer. There is a lot we could say about this man. He was the exact opposite of Naaman's servants. His attitude never was right. He was a fellow who served hypocritically and selfishly.

You know, you can go through the motions of serving, without a right attitude toward the man you're serving. Deep down you believe you know more than he knows. That was Gehazi's problem. He really thought he was smarter than the prophet. He thought, "My master doesn't know where it's at, missing this golden opportunity to put us on Easy Street."

So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments (vss. 21–22).

Now, Gehazi was sneaky. He knew that he couldn't tell Naaman that his master had changed his mind, because that would be too obvious. So he concocted a false story and Naaman gave him two talents of silver and two changes of clothing.

Gehazi came back thinking, "Hallelujah, I've got it all fixed up now," and he went in to stand before Elisha. Elisha said, "Where have you been, Gehazi?"

Gehazi replied, "I didn't go anywhere." Now read Elisha's reply:

And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?

Elisha not only chastised Gehazi for doing something that wasn't the prophet's bidding, but with a word of knowledge he revealed the greed in Gehazi's heart. He read Gehazi like a book! He exposed all that lust for wealth and ease. He knew all along what had been in Gehazi's heart. Outwardly, Gehazi had been serving Elisha, while inwardly despising him. Now look at the judgment:

The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever . . . (vs. 27).

I'm glad God seldom judges us today like He judged Gehazi. If He did, we would all be in deep



trouble. The point we're making is that Gehazi had a wrong motive in serving his master. He was a man who served hypocritically and selfishly.

There are some other wrong ways of serving. One is to serve reluctantly as did the prodigal elder brother who stayed at home and fussed and fumed under his breath all the time that his prodigal younger brother was out wasting all his money on riotous living.

Another is to serve for credit or for recognition. There is a good example of this in Luke 10, the familiar story about Mary and Martha when Jesus came to their house. In that incident, Martha had really wanted to serve the Lord a beautiful meal because He was a guest in their house. But her no-good sister Mary sat there at the feet of Jesus, looking up into His face, while Martha was cooking the food and setting the table, going from kitchen to dining room and glaring at Mary.

Finally, Martha just couldn't stand it anymore and she blew up. "Lord, don't you care?! Can't you see I'm working my fingers to the bone while that no-good sister of mine sits there and won't lift a finger to help?" Do you know what Martha wanted? She wanted credit for what she was doing. She wanted to make sure that Jesus knew how hard she was working to serve Him. A subtlety of service is whether you're doing it out of a true servant's heart, or to gain brownie points for it.

Another little parable I never understood too well until I applied it to the principle of serving is in Matthew 21. It makes the point that it's wrong when you serve at your own convenience rather than at your master's convenience.

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.

He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? (vss. 28-31).

One son said, "Yes, I'll go," but then he found out it wasn't convenient for him.

The other son, said, "No, I don't want to go," when the father asked him. Then he had second thoughts about his responsibility to his father, and even though he didn't want to go and it wasn't convenient to go, he set aside his own will and did what his father asked him to do. Do you serve when it's convenient for you or when it's convenient for the one you are serving?

Derek Prince has pointed out that there is a difference between serving and being a servant. To serve without being a servant means you serve when it's convenient for you or when it pleases you to do it. You can serve that way all your life and never really be a servant.

## SERVING HONORS GOD

Now let me say something about how serving delegated authority serves and honors God. I want to give you a personal story.

I have been a traveling Bible teacher for more than ten years now and have spoken at my share of church conferences, conventions and seminars. Like most of my fellow Bible teachers, I've been both graciously treated and poorly treated by those desiring to "use" my ministry. But I've been deeply touched in recent years as we have come into relationship to see how committed people are learning to show honor to God by honoring His ministers. About two years ago, Alice and I flew to California to minister to a small fellowship of committed believers. The first thing that really impressed us after we agreed to be with them was that the pastor and his wife sent us prepaid airplane tickets with a lovely card saying they were looking forward to our coming.

The day we arrived they met the plane and drove us to their home. One of the things I noticed was that the people in the fellowship had taken over the pastor's children and their household responsibilities so he and his wife could give themselves totally to us for the time that we were there. They put us in a small guest house in back of their house. It was beautifully decorated and on the dresser was a bouquet of beautiful flowers with a gracious welcoming note and a pitcher of ice-cold lemonade.

The first evening we were served a beautiful meal—a real banquet—with all kinds of delicious-looking dishes. It is not generally known, but Alice,

## Just Around the Corner

In the next two issues of *New Wine* we will be examining the subject of secular humanism and its effects on the Church and society. The February issue will feature articles by Bob Sutton, Derek Prince, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, and Rev. R.J. Rushdoony.



my wife, suffers from hypoglycemia, and has to follow a special diet. It's often hard when she travels with me, because if we are guests in a home she either has to draw attention to herself by refusing some things, or eat what she shouldn't and suffer discomfort afterward.

I don't know how, but this pastor and his wife knew Alice's situation. Here was this lovely table laden with all kinds of beautiful dishes. Before we sat down, the pastor's wife whispered, "Alice, we know about your diet, and I just want to say you can eat everything on the table. It has all been prepared with your situation in mind." It moved my wife to tears. The next three days this couple devoted themselves totally to being the perfect hosts. We've never had a lovelier stay with Christian friends anywhere.

When it was time to leave, the fellowship gave us a love offering as lavish as the rest of their hospitality. It was more than I would normally receive for a whole week's ministry, and I protested: "But I only spoke to your people twice."

The pastor said, "Don, you don't understand. It's not important how many times you spoke. You and your wife have blessed us by coming. We *wanted* to serve and honor you. Our people have been looking forward to your coming. They've been saving up to bless you."

What effect do you think all that had on us? Do you think it made me square my shoulders and say, "Well, at last somebody has come to appreciate Basham's ministry and know what he's worth"? No, not at all! It made me want to come home and serve those who are over me more faithfully and selflessly.

In closing, I want to challenge you to put serving higher on your priority list than it's been before. We can get so involved in ministry and meetings that we can and often do easily neglect opportunities to serve and show honor to our spiritual leaders and to one another.

Have you ever asked yourself, "How can I really serve my pastor or shepherd in a way that will make his job easier?" and then done something specific about it? Men of God aren't easy to serve and I'm not sure it's the place of leadership to try to make it easy for people to serve us. Proper serving is that you do it for the benefit of the one you're serving, at *his* convenience, not yours. If we have to go out of our way to accommodate ourselves to being served, something is wrong. That defeats the real purpose of serving. So even though you may find it hard to serve your shepherd, be diligent. Don't expect the one you serve to change to make it easier for you. God expects *you* to figure out the ways to make his

situation easier.

## SERVING YOUR FAMILY

Now how about serving your wife, you men of God? One of the most subtle ways that the devil has of undermining Christian families is to tempt us to sacrifice our wives and children for the sake of our ministerial reputations. We wouldn't be nearly so concerned about "our ministry" if we weren't fearful of what we think people would think. Your wife and children need to know that they come ahead of your ministry. They are your special and unique responsibility. They are your first sheep.

It is said about Susannah Wesley, John and Charles Wesley's mother (and she had seventeen other children) that she managed to spend a little bit of time *each day alone with each one of them!* When I think of the times I have missed with my own children, times that I could have served them by devoting myself solely to them but didn't, I really regret it.

One night a few months ago, Lisa, our 17-year old, and I strolled from our home to a nearby shopping center to get a hot dog. We spent about 35 or 40 minutes together and walked back to the house, just the two of us. What really touches me is the number of times she has referred to it since.

"Daddy, do you remember a few weeks ago when we walked over to Nathan's and had the hot dog?" She's not complaining; she's just being appreciative. And it makes me all the more aware of my responsibility as a father.

I don't make any apologies about being a family man. I think God has made it clear that our top ministerial priority is the care of our wives and children. I believe we'll live to regret it if we fail to recognize and honor that priority! God first, family second, ministry third.

Jesus washed the disciples' feet and when He finished He said, "Do you know what I've done to you? You call Me your lord and master, and you're right. I am that. And if I, your lord and master, wash your feet, so you ought to wash one another's feet for I've given you an example. I am among you as one who serves."

Once we learn to serve, it will set up a chain reaction of redemptive activity that will not only bless us and bless our families and fellowships, but bless the heart of God. When the world begins to see us serving one another, it will be a demonstration to them of the nature of Kingdom relationships and that the Kingdom of God is a reality in the earth. ♥



# More Tape of the Month members share...

Dear Tape of the Month:

The *New Wine* Magazine and tapes help us to grow in Christ. I have ordered your tapes of the month even though I am deaf. I believe Jesus will heal me. Mother knows deaf language and interprets the tapes for me.

L.B.  
Somerset, KY

Dear Tape of the Month:

Thank you for the beautiful tape ministry you offer. I'd like you to know that I had pain in my left inner ear that would not stop. But after listening and claiming a healing through Derek Prince's tape, the pain was removed. I thank the Lord for the power of the Holy Spirit.

M.A.J.  
Mansfield, PA

Dear Tape of the Month:

Your tapes have changed my walk. I see God raising me up from preaching the basic salvation and Holy Spirit messages of tongues and gifts. Now I have a burden to teach government, authority, discipline, relationship and commitment. Thank you for the food.

J.L.  
Oxford, MA

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# Reflections of a Former Waiter

*Erik Krueger, leader of Shiloh Fellowship in East Lansing, Michigan, was formerly a psychology instructor at Michigan State University. Prior to that, however, he was a waiter and maitre d' at a number of fine restaurants and we thought it might be interesting to hear some of his insights on serving based on his experience as a maitre d'. Here are some of the thoughts he shared.*

**LEGGATT:** Erik, when did you work as a maitre d'?

**ERIK:** From the summer of 1968 through early 1972 I worked as a waiter and then during all of 1971 I was a maitre d'. I worked in a number of places all over the United States during the summer to put myself through school. During the school year I would work 20 to 30 hours a week. In fact, my senior year I was working almost 40 hours a week as a waiter and a maitre d' while going to school.

**LEGGATT:** Could you give some specific lessons that you learned from your experiences as a waiter?

**ERIK:** Well, there are a lot of analogies I could draw from my experience as a waiter that apply to the Kingdom of God and His purpose for a servant. It's interesting to me that the word "servant" in the Greek literally means "one who waits on tables."

There are seven key words that express the lessons I've learned. The first word when I think of being a good waiter is *sensitivity*. What edifies and serves one person does not necessarily bless another. An example would be that some people prefer to be served hurriedly because they have a pressing engagement. Other people come in for a leisurely meal, so if you rush them, it isn't a service at all. However, if you take your time with someone who is in a hurry, they find that quite offensive. That's an obvious example of the basic need for sensitivity.

A second key word that comes out of sensitivity is *anticipation*. A really good waiter usually knows what a person needs even before the person realizes it. For instance, if you were serving a steak, you brought a steak knife with it. You didn't lay the steak out there and wait for the person to say, "Boy, it sure would be good if I had a steak knife to cut this with." A certain amount of anticipation makes things much more pleasant for people.

**LEGGATT:** So, serving effectively means being prepared in advance, thinking ahead of someone's needs, rather than waiting for that person to have to bring it up?

**ERIK:** Right. That would be the third word—*preparedness*. You have to prepare yourself beforehand, both practically and emotionally, for serving, and learn to check on things ahead of time. When I was a waiter, especially as a maitre d', I would

have to be there at least an hour ahead of opening time to make sure that certain arrangements were made. If you didn't make those prior arrangements, it was very difficult to be effective.

A fourth concept in serving would be *esteem* and *courtesy*. Summed up, that would be *honor*. That sense of honor is manifested in respect, because it is possible to do all the right things without a proper attitude and be rather offensive to people. It is very important in your service that you aren't condescending toward people.

The fifth key word that brings out that attitude is *preference*. Their well-being and desires take priority over yours.

In that regard, there is a sixth word we could touch upon, which is *availability*. To genuinely serve, you have to continue to be available to do whatever might be needful—especially if a crisis arises such as "Junior" spilling his glass of water. You can't be back in the kitchen taking your ease just because you laid out the meal and things seem to be taken care of.

**LEGGATT:** I've heard it said that if someone is really a good waiter, you'll hardly even notice that he's there.

**ERIK:** That's a very good point. There is an unwritten understanding in good waiter circles that at the end of the meal, if you lined the waiters or waitresses up, you would not be able to pick out which one was yours. That's the seventh point. It's very important as a waiter *not to become a personality*. You are there to support the activity that's going on between those people, not to be the center of the activity. Again, that indicates a proper attitude.

**LEGGATT:** How do you see some of these principles applying to service in the Body of Christ?

**ERIK:** Well, I think those seven traits of a good waiter I mentioned—sensitivity, anticipation, preparedness, honor, preference, availability, and not trying to be a personality—would be a worthy goal for anyone involved in serving others in the Body. One additional trait that makes a really good waiter is the ability to coordinate and integrate responsibility, especially when you are responsible for serving a number of tables. We found that to do this effectively, a *team concept* is needed—where everyone from maitre d' to busboy works together in rendering service. Ultimately, that's what it takes in the Kingdom of God to do the work God is calling us to. As Christians, we have the life of the godhead in common and to function properly in the family of God, we need to find our place in the Body and take the attitude of a servant.

With the example and the command Jesus gave to serve one another, applying that beyond the individual sense to the "team concept," every member has to be doing his job and working together with others in an attitude of loving service in order for the Body of Christ to grow up effectively. ♣



# People: The Purpose of Abundance

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by Derek Prince

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**I**N OUR CONTINUING STUDY on "God's Abundance," we saw in the previous two articles that the good news of the gospel is that on the cross, by divine arrangement, an exchange took place. Jesus took the evil that was due to us, that we might receive the good that was due to Him. Although this exchange has many aspects, the specific exchange we looked at was that Jesus bore the poverty curse and completely exhausted it so that we might receive the blessing of His abundance.

In 2 Corinthians 9:8 Paul states it this way:

And God is able to make *all* grace *abound* toward you; that ye *always*, having *all* sufficiency in *all* things, may *abound* to every [*all*] good work.

We also covered five conditions for receiving God's abundance: first, our motives and attitudes must be right; second, we must exercise active faith; third, we must use our finances to honor both God and man; fourth, our thoughts, words and actions must all harmonize with God's law; and fifth, we must let God add in His way and His time.

Now we come to our concluding study which is on the purpose of abundance. Notice at the end of 2

Corinthians 9:8 it says, "that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, *may abound to every good work*." The purpose for which God supplies abundance is not merely selfish indulgence. I believe that God likes to see us enjoying His provision; that makes Him happy. But that is not the ultimate purpose. Rather, it is that we will have abundance for "every good work," that we will be able to do everything God asks us to do with complete sufficiency.

One of the remarkable things about the Christians in the New Testament is that they never said, "If we have enough money, we will do **this**." They just said, "We will go here . . . we will go there . . . we will do **this**." Money really was not the question. Though they had much to say about money and were very practical in handling it, their plans did not depend on money. That is very different from the contemporary church, where so much of what is planned is dependent upon money.

I believe in being practical, and I believe it is wise to make a budget, but some religious groups tie themselves down by their budgets. I do not believe God is going to be tied down in that way. In fact, God is not going to let us tie Him down in any way at



all—by our rules, our systems, our theology, or our finances.

## THE PRIMARY GOOD WORK

I want to point out one specific good work for which God provides abundance. I believe this is the primary “good work”: *it is that we may provide Him a dwelling place*. The purpose of God from creation onward has been to dwell with man. We often talk as though the ultimate were to get to heaven, but I find in reading the Bible that the ultimate is to get heaven to earth. In the closing chapters of the Bible, we do not find earth going up to heaven; we find heaven coming down to earth. The ultimate thrust of God’s purpose from creation onward is to dwell with man.

I want to consider two historic examples in the Bible where God asked His people, Israel, to provide Him a dwelling place. The first dwelling place is the tabernacle of Moses. The second is the temple of Solomon. In each case God provided His people with abundance in advance, that out of their abundance they might return to Him all that would be needed to provide Him a dwelling place suitable to His glory.

He also gave very precise specifications as to the kind of dwelling place He wanted. He did not leave one measure nor one material to chance. Everything was precisely specified, and everything was of the highest quality. There was nothing cheap or shoddy in anything that God required for His dwelling place. I believe that agrees with the very nature of God.

First, let’s examine God’s provision for the tabernacle of Moses and the way it came about, and then God’s provision for the temple of Solomon and the way it came about; and finally, we will give an up-to-date application of these examples for you and me.

## THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

In Genesis 15 God makes a covenant with Abraham. He also gives him a preview of the captivity of Israel in Egypt.

And God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.

But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions (vss. 13–14, NAS).

Another translation says, “with great wealth.” When God predicted the captivity of Israel in Egypt and their subsequent deliverance, He emphasized that when they were redeemed and delivered, they would come out with great wealth. This was not an accident. It was part of God’s foreordained purpose.

We see this fulfilled in Exodus 12, and it came as the immediate result of the Passover night, when the families of the Israelites had been spared and every firstborn of the Egyptians had been killed.

Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing;

and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians (vss. 35–36).

The Living Bible says, “they stripped the Egyptians.” The fact is they took everything the Egyptians had—gold, silver, raiment. Anything they set their

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“The purpose of God  
from creation onward has  
been to dwell with man.”

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eyes on and asked for, they got, because the Egyptians were so frightened that all they wanted was to get rid of these people, no matter what it cost.

You might ask, “Was that just?” I want to tell you that God is always just. He is more just than we think He is. Throughout the years of Israel’s slavery in Egypt, God had been keeping a reckoning, and He reckoned that the Israelites were due about four hundred years of back pay. So they collected in one night. That is justice! A lot of people would not see it that way because they do not keep the same kind of reckoning that God keeps.

There’s a beautiful description of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt in Psalm 105:37:

He brought them forth also with silver and gold:  
and there was not one feeble person among their  
tribes.

Redemption makes total provision for the needs of the redeemed.

For Israel in Egypt it all came through faith in the



blood of the Passover lamb. That faith released the supply of every need—spiritual, physical, and material. Some three million people marched out of Egypt. Not one of them limped, not one of them hobbled, not one of them used a cane or a crutch. In the church today we have a long way to go to attain that standard, but I believe it is God's standard. I believe redemption is complete, and that it covers every area of our lives.

Redemption is also very practical. How were the Israelites ever going to get through the wilderness if they were sick or crippled? Bear in mind they had been slaves. They had not had the best food or medical care. They were poor. But when God redeemed them, He took care of everything in one act, and they came out healthy and wealthy, with an abundance of gold and silver and everything that was precious.

We must understand, however, that God had a purpose in all this. God gave Moses the plan for the tabernacle where He was going to dwell in the midst of His people, and then He told him that the people were to provide the material and labor to build the tabernacle.

And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying,

Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass,

And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair,

And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood,

And oil for the light, and spices . . .

And onyx stones . . .

And every wise hearted man among you shall come, and make all the Lord hath commanded (Ex. 35:4–10).

The people were to bring their offering out of the abundance God had provided them through redemption to make God the kind of dwelling He required. He gave them no options about the dwelling place. There was to be gold. There was to be silver. There was to be brass. Everything had to be made just the way He required. However, His requirements were not unreasonable because He had *already* given them everything they were going to need.

Furthermore, God provided His people with the skills they would need to make the best use of all these materials. This He did by filling Bezaleel with the Holy Spirit in such a way that he became a master craftsman, able also to instruct and oversee the other

craftsmen whom God joined to him (see Exodus 35:30–35).

The result is described in Exodus 36:2–7:

And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:

And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning.

And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made;

And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make.

And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.

For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

Notice the closing phrase: "sufficient . . . and too much." By definition, that is *abundance*.

Regrettably, we do not often see such a situation in modern congregations. The trouble was not that they did not have enough; the trouble was that they were bringing so much they did not know what to do with it. That is God's abundance and the purpose for which it is given. Redemption provides abundance, but the goal of redemption is a dwelling place for God to dwell amongst His people. And out of what God gives us through redemption, He asks us to give back to Him that which will provide His dwelling place.

## THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

David is first presented to us in Scripture in a very humble setting—the youngest son in a family of little wealth, out on the rocky mountains of Judah, looking after his father's sheep (see 1 Sam. 16:6–13). Yet by the end of his life David had disposed of the equivalent of many millions of dollars. Before his death, he bequeathed to the house of God—to the temple that Solomon was to build—the equivalent of about one hundred million dollars out of his own private fortune.

One very significant thing we have to see is that during the reign of David there was a fantastic



increase in the wealth of Israel. I do not know any way to calculate it, but their gross national product must have been multiplied hundreds of times over. What had been a poor struggling nation that made its living out of agriculture, husbandry, cattle and sheep was fantastically wealthy by the end of David's reign.

That was no accident. It was partly the result of God's blessing on David because whenever God finds a man after His own heart to lead His people, He will bless His people through that man. But apart from that, God had a further purpose. At the end of David's reign, God wanted Israel to be ready for the construction of the temple that Solomon was to build. Again, God's goal was a dwelling place where He could be among His people, and again, every detail of that dwelling place was precisely defined. Nothing was left to the imagination of the builder.

The account of what was given for the construction of Solomon's temple contains some of the most glorious language found anywhere in writing. There is something breathtaking about the words David uses to describe the preparation he has made for the temple:

Now I have prepared *with all my might* for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the

brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance (1 Chron. 29:2).

Notice the closing word of David's description—"abundance." It sums up the provision made for the temple just as it summed up the provision made for the tabernacle. It is, in fact, the level of provision that God always makes for His people. There is nothing limited or stingy about it. He is the God of abundance.

David then continues:

Moreover because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good [my own private fortune] of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house,

Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir . . . (vss. 3-4).

It is difficult to find an accurate equivalent in our modern monetary system for a talent, but I would say that a talent of pure gold of Ophir was worth at least \$25,000—probably a good deal more. So out of his own personal fortune, David provided the equiv-

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alent in gold of about \$75,000,000. That does not include the silver or the other materials.

Then further on, we read what the chief of the fathers also gave out of their own private possessions:

Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly,

And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron (vss. 6-7).

According to my calculation, that is \$125,000,000 worth of gold. So David and the elders between them gave the equivalent of \$200,000,000 of gold out of their own private fortunes, apart from silver, precious stones, wood, marble and all the other items. That is staggering. And remember, David started as a little shepherd boy on the rocky hills of Judea.

### GOD'S ULTIMATE DWELLING PLACE

The upsurge in the economy of Israel that made possible the building of the temple did not take long—less than seventy years, in fact. I want to suggest that something very similar is happening today. We can talk about inflation and moan about prices, but actually there has never been so much money available anywhere in the world as there is in modern America today. Not only that, but across this nation I find that God is beginning to open up undreamed of levels of prosperity to His people—to those, that is, who will respond to the revelation that the Holy Spirit is imparting.

I believe that God is doing a work in our day that parallels what He did for Israel in the days of David, because God has a *purpose*. What is that purpose? He wants a dwelling place. He wants to dwell with man. And He is very precise about the specifications of His dwelling place. He is not stingy; He wants everything of the highest quality.

However, the dwelling place being constructed for God in this age differs in kind from both the tabernacle and the temple. The distinctive character of God's dwelling place today is described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall

God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

And again by Peter in 1 Peter 2:5:

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood . . . (NAS).

We are talking now about God's ultimate dwelling place, which is not made of gold or silver or of any of the marvelously precious materials that were lavished on the temple of Solomon. There is something infinitely more precious to God, and that is people. So when God wants the most precious dwelling place of all, He chooses one made up of people, not materials. And we are the people! We are God's dwelling place! If God was so particular and so lavish about the tabernacle of Moses, and even more so about the temple of Solomon—both of which were temporary buildings—do you think He will be less particular or less lavish about His ultimate, eternal dwelling place, which is you and me?

To complete this dwelling place will require both labor and expense far beyond all that went into Solomon's temple. The living stones whom God has chosen must be quarried from all nations on the face of the earth, for God will not be satisfied until "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" are represented (Rev. 7:9). Therefore, God has ordained that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations" (Matt. 24:14).

I believe these examples of the tabernacle and the temple are given in the Old Testament because God wants us to understand how much it is going to cost to complete His ultimate dwelling place in this age. We know, of course, that we cannot pay for our redemption, nor can the salvation of a soul be measured in terms of finance. But if we take seriously our responsibility to present the gospel of the Kingdom to the four billion people of today's world, it is only practical to acknowledge that it is going to cost billions of dollars. Literal dollars. It's utterly unrealistic to talk about getting the job done without finances.

God's provision for this need is revealed in Haggai 2:6-9:

For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; [In Hebrews 10 this is quoted and specifically applied to the close of this age.]



And I will shake all nations, and the desire [wealth] of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts (vss. 6-7).

What house? His dwelling place. God is not talking about the temple that was built in the days of Haggai because that temple was destroyed nineteen centuries ago. He is talking about the close of this age and His dwelling place at this time. He says, "I will fill this house with glory." But first He says the wealth of the nations is going to come, to provide all that will be needed to build a house suited to His glory.

The statement that follows in verse 8 is extremely important:

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

Bear in mind that the word "silver" in modern Hebrew is "money." The devil has no legitimate claim to any wealth at all. He is a thief. We do not have to plead with the devil for money. All we have to do is pry it loose from his dirty fingers because he has no right to it. When Jesus died and rose from the dead, all the treasures of this entire earth became legitimately His. He is the heir of all things, and we are co-heirs with Him. We share the inheritance. So in actual fact we have a legitimate right to the silver and the gold through Jesus Christ.

Then in verse 9 God returns to the theme of the glory:

The glory of this latter house [the ultimate house of God] shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

Again, it is very obvious that this does not refer to

the temple that was built in the days of Haggai since that perished in war. Rather it refers to the dwelling place of God at the close of this age. What is God's dwelling place at the close of this age? You and me, His people, His completed Church, His Body! The Lord says for the purpose of building that dwelling, the wealth of the nations will come.

Let's look at one last picture in Isaiah 60. This is spoken to God's people, again, at the close of this age.

Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you.

And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, and your daughters will be carried in the arms.

Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you (vss. 1-5, NAS).

Once again, there is a direct connection between the revelation of God's glory and the wealth of the nations. God purposes to have a dwelling place suited to His glory. For this purpose, He will make available to His people the wealth of the nations.

Do you believe that applies to us today? I do! Why will we need this wealth? So we can complete the dwelling place of God which is made up of living stones—people—millions and millions of people, many of whom have not yet been reached even once with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It will cost a lot. It will cost lives. It will cost time. It will cost everything we have. And it will cost money. But God will make all abundance available to us for the work of completing His dwelling place.

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