

Hands Together through Service Luke 17: 7-10



Background Passages: *Deuteronomy 10:12, Deuteronomy 28:47-48, Joshua 24:24, Psalm 101:6, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Matthew 4:10, Matthew 6:24, Matthew 20:26-28, Luke 22:27, John 20:21, Romans 1:1, 12:7,11, 14:17-19, Galatians 4:7, 5:13, Ephesians 6:5-8, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Peter 5:5*

“I shall pass this world but once. Any good thing therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.” **Quote by: Stephen Grellet, American Quaker**

Subject: To Serve

List these phrases on newsprint or a sheet of paper for all to see:

Oh my, you want me to do what?... Yes, I will do it! ... Not on your life... I would but...

Give me a break ... When do I start? ... I don't think so... I can't, I have to... Who is asking? ... Sure, I don't have anything else to do... Yes, what a blessing to be asked... Next time...

Thanks for asking, but no thanks... I know the perfect person... Here am I! Send me! ...

Which statement above would most likely be your response when asked: Would you...

- Take a neighbor to the market?
- Donate money for a mission trip?
- Bake cookies for a bake sale?
- Read scripture during church service?
- Tell someone about what Jesus has done for you?
- Go on a mission trip to India?
- Open with prayer for Sunday school?

The list of statements could go on forever, as well as the request for you to SERVE.

Opportunities to serve are at every facet of our lives.

- **Which do you enjoy more being served or serving? Why?**

Introduction: Serve or be served?

In today's culture self-glorification is the norm. However in researching the topics of service and the servant's heart, I realized it is not about the individual – it is about God. Therefore, the goal of this study will be to remove the focus from “man” or “mankind” and place it where it truly belongs, on God. Psalm 29: 2 says, “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name.” Our attitude toward the service to our King, when called upon to serve should be that of the prophet Isaiah. *Isaiah 6:8 – Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me!’”* **It's all about serving GOD!**

“I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.” **Quote by: Albert Schweitzer,** French Missionary and Philosopher

Being Served or Serving -- Luke 17: 7-8

- Verse 7 – Ask yourself – What would a master say to his slave (servant) when the slave returned to the house after spending his day plowing a field or tending sheep?
- Verse 8 – Ask yourself – When would the slave eat? Does the master care?

In this parable, Jesus is asking his hearers to imagine if they had servants (slaves) working for them. Jesus then asks a rhetorical question: Do I fix dinner for the slaves or the other way around? Let me think??? Of course not, the slaves fix dinner, serve dinner, and clean up after dinner; even after a long day of usual duties. It is what is expected of them as servants.

The word “servant” means to be a slave, in bondage, in service to another, attendant, minister, deacon, or to work in service of someone else. Jesus said, (Luke 22:27) *“I am among you as the one who serves.”* Jesus shows that He is a servant by choice and example. We should serve because He served, and because we have no other appointment. In other words, we are expected to serve. It is our DUTY to serve.

Jesus knew who He was, and He fully embraced what His heavenly Father had commanded Him to be and to do. But He didn’t exalt Himself, seek His own fame and power, or attract attention to Himself. His purpose was to bring glory to the Father and to obey the Father in all things. His purpose was to serve. In Luke 12:48 Jesus teaches us how to live until He comes. *“But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.”*

The more we recognize all that we have been given by God – including God’s greatest gift to us, our salvation – the more we should recognize that we are required to give much in the way of service.

“We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.” **Quote by: Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of Children’s Defense Fund**

Thanks or not -- Luke 17: 9

Within the cultural mindset of our world people respond and react in various ways to the concept of service. Today “the individual” wants to be asked, thanked or rewarded for what service he or she is willing to render. “Only when it is convenient” is the attitude of many when it comes to idea of service or serving others.

As in Luke 17:10; when we obey God, we have only done our DUTY, and we should regard it as a privilege. Remember, obedience is not something extra we do; it is our duty. Jesus is not suggesting that our service is meaningless or useless, nor is He advocating doing away with rewards. He is attacking unwarranted self-esteem and spiritual pride.

The master doesn’t “owe” the servant a thank you, a reward or a pat on the back for his hard work. Nor should we expect a “thank you”. Once again, it is simply our DUTY to serve.

- How do you respond after completing an act of service – Do you expect a thank you for your efforts? Or did you go about your day, not expecting acknowledgement for your efforts?

“You must give some time to your fellow men. Even if it’s a little thing, do something for others – something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it.” **Quote by: Albert Schweitzer, French Missionary and Philosopher**

A Servant's DUTY -- Luke 17:9-10

In both verses is the word "told," meaning to give instructions as to what must be done. "Orders" or "commands" are synonyms for "told." Having been put in that context, it does not leave you much room for questions. Just do it! It is your DUTY.

The last word of verse 10 – DUTY, "be obligated," "one must, one ought" "what you have to do." These are not very popular statements in today's society. Today, everyone wants to be asked to do something, they want to be thanked and rewarded for doing it, and they want the recognition or credit for doing it.

- How do you feel about DUTY?

An Attitude of "Privilege" or "Unworthy Servant" -- Luke 17: 10

A bold statement, "*You should say, 'we are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'*" This is the only place in the Bible where Jesus says the word DUTY. But once you read the statement above, you got it.

- What kind of attitude do you have when it comes to serving or performing a DUTY?

<p>"Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege." Quote by: John D. Rockefeller Jr. American Philanthropist</p>

Summary – Luke 17: 7-10

If we have obeyed God, we have only done our duty, and we should regard it as a privilege. Remember, obedience is not something extra we do; it is our duty. Jesus is not suggesting that our service is meaningless or useless, nor is he advocating doing away with rewards. He is attacking unwarranted self-esteem and spiritual pride.

What does God's Servant look like?

God's servant feeds, teaches, cares, loves, heals, binds, carries people, and lifts people up. God's servants have a certain glow about them that radiates kindness, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness as well as selflessness.

A true servant does not demand recognition. The reward received by those who seek praise from people is just that and only that-praise from people. Such praise comes and goes very quickly; the approval of people is very fickle and often fleeting. God's praise and blessing are reserved for those who serve other without any expectation of recognition or praise from people.

(Matthews 6: 3-4)

A servant gives without expecting anything in return from the person he or she has served. True servanthood is void of manipulation or a desire to control others.

Jesus Christ is our Lord. He is our Master, our Ruler, and our Owner. He is the One who has redeemed our lives from death. He is the One who we take our daily orders and from whom we receive all that we need. He is the One who has entrusted us to conduct spiritual business in His name. Therefore, a genuine servant knows that he/she has, in Christ Jesus, all that he/she needs!

When we give we will receive! Our hearts are overwhelmed with such peace, joy serenity, and confidence that satisfy the soul like nothing else! We build lasting relationships with others and with God. And because of our service we are entrusted with more opportunities to serve.

We are commanded to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind, and love to our neighbor as ourselves (**Matthews 22: 37-39**). It is out of love that we serve. In fact, service is the manifestation of love. If you love, but you do not give to a person and are not generous in your service to that person, on what grounds can you truly say that you love? Service is the evidence of genuine love. It is love in action.

- What new insight do you have into the nature of service?
- Do you have a servant's heart? Is having a servant's heart something one can develop?
- What does the statement "God doesn't call the qualified, or He qualifies the called" mean?
- How do you heed the call to serve?

One must have an attitude of a servant, know what to do to serve, and to serve. Service opportunities are all around us everyday. (**Ecclesiastes 9:10**) says, "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*". Service is not convenient and it is not always easy. Many times one must give up something to serve but it is always rewarding.

Sometimes it is not a matter of attitude or knowledge, but simply a lack of effort or action on our part. Read **James 1: 22-25**. It is important that we listen to what God's word says, but it is much more important to obey it, to do what it says. We can measure the effectiveness of our Bible study time by the effect it has on our actions, behaviors, and attitudes.

- How will you put into action what you have studied?
- In what ways do you practice what you preach?
- Will you be God's servant?

"Each of us has been entrusted with a God given, unique calling – and the best way to succeed and be happy is to discover what that is, work at it with all your might, allow God to lead you and give it away – serve others." **Quote by: Donna Clark, Educator**

Hymns: *Here Am I, Lord!* and *I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go*

Prayer:

Gracious God, we come to You seeking forgiveness for our failure to fulfill our duty to serve You and Your kingdom. We confess that we are selfish, proud, and boastful people. Grant us, we pray, the desire to do Your will and the quietness and stillness necessary to recognize the opportunities to serve that You send our way each and every day. Grant us the confidence to say, "Yes, Lord Take Me! I will go." May we follow in Your Son's way, putting the needs of others before our own needs. May Your faith, hope, and love be with us always. In Jesus Name we pray, AMEN.

Writers **Donna Clark** and **Sherry Poteet** are members of Elmira Chapel CP Church in Longview, TX. Donna is Assistant Principal at Hallsville Middle School in Hallsville, Texas and Sherry teaches music and band at Gilmer ISD in Gilmer, TX. Donna is also an elder in her church. Both women have been on numerous mission trips.