

The Heart of a Servant

A New Life of Spirit Led Ministry to Others

There are two sides to cultivating a servant's heart which we see fully revealed in Jesus. They also dove-tail beautifully into fulfilling the two commands He gave us. First, there is the passion to be about the Father's business which keeps us asking "What would You have me do?" This takes us upwards into God's heart and downwards into the humility that sets Self aside. Second, there is compassion which keeps us looking to the sea of humanity around us, listening for God's call that comes to us through their need.

"It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:26-28 ESV

The Lowest Place

Where would we be without those opportunistic sons of Zebedee, James and John? Their unabashed desire to one day sit enthroned beside Jesus, provoked the Lord to give us the penetrating look into His kingdom and His calling quoted above. It's not our way, is it? He didn't come to make a name for Himself, or to get anything for Himself, or to be served by us. He came simply and solely to serve us, even to the ultimate end of laying down His life for us. He says that's what He wants us to be like.



With these few words Jesus stands the world on its head. Headship among us is characterized by making sure that others look up to our elevated position, bowing before us in gratitude, respect and obedience. *We didn't climb all this way up the mountain for nothing! There's got to be something in it for us.* Tragically, the very desire to rise to the top which lies behind so much of our excellence and achieving, comes from the lowest thing about us—our pride. We don't have to rise very high to fall into this snare: Even the slightest elevation can have us looking to see if anyone else noticed our advance, or being miffed if they didn't.

Jesus says that in His kingdom the head takes the lowest place. Those who would follow Him, must become like Him in being a servant to everyone else. You don't have to be the Pope or the President for this to apply to you. Moral greatness rests upon anyone who learns to be a servant. Those who seek leadership positions—"being first"—must be willing to descend even lower, becoming "slaves." Naturally enough, our own heads aren't going to take this self-debasement lying down! Fortunately, Jesus has given us a new heart, one just like His—the heart of a servant. Look no further: It is already in you, waiting and desiring to emerge.



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And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 ESV

Growing Your Heart

Our new hearts don't grow all by themselves. Like any tender young plant they require careful cultivation. The basic strategy is to plant your new heart in some field of service, keep watering it with the Word and with worship, and stand ready to pull weeds coming from your fallen nature when they show up. That won't take long. Inevitably, you will discover that there is a battle enjoined between the old ways of our fallen nature which seem so natural to us and the new ways of grace which are sometimes difficult to receive.

This heart of a servant within us doesn't seek recognition or reward. Its reward is to be of service. For that it is ever listening for the call, willing to set the demands of life or the desires of self aside in order to respond to the One who has our ear. Our new hearts live by the law of sacrifice just as Jesus did. By dying to Self we enter into the greater joy of living for God. This new heart works beautifully when everything is going well. Few things give us more pleasure than serving in Jesus name. However, it should be evident that this new heart will have a lot of battles to fight, if it is going to triumph over the self-centered ways of our old nature.

If there was a short cut to eliminating Self, so that the new heart could truly flourish, Jesus would have told us. Instead, He warned us that we should be prepared to battle our selfish, self-centered side *daily*. How can we go the distance with so demanding a task?

Going the Distance

The Old Testament gives us a vivid picture of a devoted servant whose love for his master inspired him to go the extra mile. Rather than take his leave when his indentured time was fulfilled, he chose to stay on as a permanent slave. Foreseeing that such a possibility could happen, the Lord made provision for it in His Word.

"Now these are the rules that you shall set before them. When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing... But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever." Exodus 21:1-2, 5-6 ESV

This may seem incredible to us, even unthinkable. That servant could have walked out a free man, owing nothing. Instead, He freely chose to become a "slave forever." Why? Masters in the ancient world provided food, clothing, bedding and personal security for their servants—the necessities of life. That could have been part of it, but we are simply told that he stayed *for love*. In a dramatic ceremony the "bond servant" was marked permanently as one whose ear would be forever attuned to his master's voice. He would be listening "at the door," whether he was to go outside on his master's business, or inside to attend to his master's personal requirements. His willingness to suffer and bleed sealed the covenant.



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Amazingly, the first apostles referred to themselves in their letters as just such a bond servant. They even introduced themselves as “a bond servant of the Lord Jesus” before they mentioned (*oh by the way*) that they were also apostles chosen by God. They evidently wanted the world to know that they were sold out to the One who had bought them at the price of His own Blood. Once saved, they could have chosen to live within the wide boundaries of the moral law, but they chose instead to enslave themselves to His will. They only wanted to come and go at His beck and call.

There is a significant difference between mere servants and bond servants. Good servants may still cherish and prefer their free time apart from doing their master’s bidding. Bond servants seek only time at their master’s side. Since our Master lives inside of us, this is surely the most searching form of slavery imaginable, with every thought, word and action coming under the scrutiny of our Lord’s all-pervasive presence. And yet, wonder of wonder, in His service we find our perfect freedom! God and Jesus only desire for us that which we ourselves would gladly choose if we had Their wisdom and foresight. Those who go deepest into loving service He raises highest into spiritual friendship. The devoted servant and the kind-hearted Master are intimately intertwined—serving one another in love.

Two Mighty Motivations

We have not one, but two vast reservoirs of motivation.

1) Passion

Our first and most powerful source of motivation grows out of God’s love for us and ours for Him. This can be easily renewed whenever we return and rest our hearts in Him. This is the secret of the bond servant. By always seeking to be at His side listening for our next assignment, there is a built-in reminder for staying refreshed by His presence. Learning to walk step-by-step under the Lord’s leadership ensures that we will spend our days seeking Him, because like Moses, we won’t desire to go anywhere without His presence leading us. You don’t have to be especially good at this, just doggedly determined.

2) Compassion

Our second source of motivation mirrors the Second Commandment that the Lord gave us: to love one another as we love ourselves. Provided that we have learned to accept and [love ourselves](#), our hearts will naturally want to share with others the peace, joy and freedom that keep flooding into us. Because our passion for Jesus is filling our cup, we don’t need to use people or get anything from them. We are free to serve them under His leadership, expecting nothing in return. It is enough to know that He knows. This is our baseline, but we can go deeper. We can want to see what He sees and feel what He feels when He looks into the lives around us. In this way our passion for Him, leads us into greater compassion for others.

Not only do we have these [Two Passionate Purposes](#) to keep ourselves fired up for active service, we also have [Two Monumental Tasks](#): to take the liberating gospel out to the lost world



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and to carry loving compassion into the hurting world. That should keep us busy! But don't let busyness keep you from the most important part of it all: loving Jesus and loving the ones He loves. [Growing a heart of love](#) is our underlying purpose in ministry and our source of lasting joy. Gaining the heart of a servant will carry us a long way towards home.

More to Explore

[The Care of Souls](#) The people we pass every day on the streets will outlast the Grand Canyon and are of infinitely more worth than any governmental structure. How are we to "handle them," especially when they come to us for ministry? Some are obviously stamped "Fragile, Handle with Care." Others have their secret life hidden further from sight. We can easily be like bulls in a china shop, if we don't take care with souls.

[The Art of Listening](#) Hearing what people say is one thing. Really listening is something else entirely. What turns listening into an art form is learning how to juggle listening to others and listening for the Lord at the same time. Listen well enough to others and you will more easily hear from the Lord. These simple rules and visual images will help put you on track, but only practice makes perfect.

Free Downloads

[pdf Doing Ministry in the Spirit \(eBook\)](#)

Scriptures on Servanthood

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Ephesians 6:5-9 ESV

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:3-8 ESV

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them



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repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 ESV

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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