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Service

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Christ, Our Example

by Amanda Stephanus

In 1 Peter 2:21ff, Peter addresses Christians about the example Christ left for us to follow when we suffer. In the context, Peter is talking about servants enduring persecution. As servants of Christ, we know that we will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). As children of God, we want to make sure we imitate the example Christ left us when dealing with various trials and persecutions of this life. The word “example” in verse 21 means a writing copy, to write under, or writing pattern. As beautifully stated by Woods, “It is a figure suggested by the copy-book method of teaching penmanship. Christ thus becomes the copy-head, the beautiful writing at the top of the page. Implied in the figure is a copy-book, a perfect pattern of writing, a white, unblemished sheet of paper, the student’s effort to transcribe the copy, the awkward attempts in the beginning, persistent determination, constant and unremitting practice; and then, eventually—success!” (Woods, 79). Christ went before us and left a pattern for the Christian to imitate and the path is clearly marked by His footprints. Peter gives us four things we must imitate.

- First, Christ did no sin, and neither should the Christian. There are those who believe that one cannot live a life free from sin and that we are all innate sinners. While it is the case that we were once a sinner, we have been set free from sin (John 8:34-36) and are called to put away sin. Christ was tempted in every way just as we are, but He remained free from sin (Hebrews 4:15). God would not have told us to follow in Christ’s sinless footsteps if it were impossible to be free from sin.
- Next, “nor was deceit found in His mouth”. Christ was never deceitful with people and He certainly never tricked them. We must be careful to not deceive people or be guilty of fraud.
- Third, Christ left an example for us to not revile, or retaliate, against those who would berate and abuse us. If anyone ever had justification to want retaliation, it would have been Christ. He was accused of being the devil (Matthew 12:24), He was accused of breaking the Sabbath (Luke 6:7), He was accused of being a false prophet (Luke 7:39), He was accused of being demon possessed (John 10:20), and was reviled against for calling God

His Father (John 5:18). The things which we suffer today in no way compare to the sufferings of Christ, and yet we are told to follow His example.

- Last, Christ physically suffered yet He did not threaten those who abused Him. He was scourged (Matthew 27:26), He had a crown of thorns driven into His head and was spat upon (Matthew 27:29-30), He was hit and then taunted to prophesy who hit Him (Matthew 26:67-68) and He was nailed to the tree and crucified (Matthew 27:35-50). Even through all the physical pain which He wrongfully suffered, Christ never lashed out and He did not take vengeance on those who abused Him (cf. Matthew 26:53, Matthew 27:42).

We can follow in Christ's footsteps during trials and persecution knowing that Christ showed us how He endured. Instead of retaliating, Christ "committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). The word "committed" here refers to delivering someone or something to the charge or care of someone, to entrust (WordStudy). Jesus was able to patiently endure the suffering and unjust treatment because He was able to give Himself to His Father who is the Righteous Judge. Psalm 19:9 tells us "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." As Christians, we can take comfort in knowing God can be trusted to judge righteously because Christ, our example, trusted Him.



Christ Came To Serve

By Alice Simmons

At 12 years of age, Jesus answered His parents: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house, or, as the KJV says: "about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). Jesus knew that He had left the Father in heaven to come to earth and live as a human to do the Father's will.

Jesus came to the earth and taught His Father's truths, i.e., healing the sick, raising the dead, and restoring sight. These signs and wonders proved His Sonship. "Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25).

"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 20:28), He became a servant (Philippians 2:7), was the good Shepherd (John 10:14), did His Father's works (John 10:25), washed the Apostles' feet (John 13:14), and is preparing a place for us in His Father's mansion (John 14:2).

Though He was hated and humiliated, betrayed and forsaken by many, His love and desire to complete His mission never faltered. He was tempted by Satan, denied by Peter, and betrayed by Judas, yet He continued on, knowing what He was to suffer.

The ultimate sacrifice, the greatest gift to mankind, the most humble act ever known was the cruel death that Jesus suffered on the cross for our sins (John 15:13). It is because of His service that Heaven awaits for those who obey Him.

Serving others is a Christ-like trait that we must all strive to have. Being like Him *is* to serve others, and in doing so we are better for it.

God bless us as we serve!



How Do I Serve?

By Wilburta Arrowood

To paraphrase a great writer, “How do I serve thee? Let me count the ways.”

In our modern culture service is seldom on our radar. We want what we want, and right now is preferred. And yet, Christ’s admonition and example is to serve. How do we do that?

Service comes in huge packages and tiny ones. A spouse or adult relative who becomes a caregiver for a loved one with Alzheimer’s offers a huge service. Someone who manages a smile for everyone may not seem so big, but may mean the world to the recipient.

The question becomes, do we look for ways to serve, or do we try to pass those opportunities off to someone else.

Do you see the young mother struggling to corral two or three small children in church and offer to help? Do you open the door for someone? Do you take a meal to a sick or bereaved family?

What about teaching a bible class? It is easy to claim a lack of knowledge or inexperience in a classroom. Let someone else do that. Have you considered that person had no knowledge or experience before they started? Sometimes service involves growing into the job. Ask to shadow another teacher, get a teacher’s manual for the class and study the specific scriptures to be used in the class. You can learn to teach, and do it well.

What are your specific talents? Can you drive someone to a doctor’s appointment? Can you clean the building, either on a regular basis or before and after a special gathering?

Are you good with teens? Can you mentor a child, or host a devotional or party for the group?

Are you artistic? Can you volunteer to help a teacher with handwork or classroom décor? Or can you decorate the bathrooms and the front of the auditorium to make them more inviting? Ask your missionaries about their needs for visual aids. Google and Babblefish offer excellent translation services for free. Flip charts, flannelgraph figures, and puppets are almost always welcome.

Are you a Dorcas? Can you sew or crochet or knit? Hospitals welcome little hats for premature babies and “angel” dresses for stillborns. There is often a need for clothing for children in foreign fields.

Are your kids tired of all the Happy Meal toys they have collected? Bag them up and send them to a missionary. The kids there will be overjoyed.

Do you have a computer and printer? Bible story illustrations, both colored and black and white, can be gleaned from the internet and are a rarity in undeveloped countries. Print them on cardstock, and if possible, laminate them for longevity.

Can you grocery shop for a shut-in? A small plant or even a cupcake can really brighten a nursing home room. So can a small group who sing now and then.

Do you have an old mp3 player you no longer use? Load it up with hymns and/or golden oldies and donate it to a nursing home.

The whole idea is to look up and look around. Christ was a servant, and when he saw a need he filled it. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry, and he even washed dirty feet. Have you thought about how many elderly people need their toenails clipped and can no longer reach their toes? We need to train ourselves to see the needs and do something about them.

How do we serve? One good deed at a time.



A Greater Service

by Elizabeth Turner Beall

Caregiving is obviously giving care to someone who is ill or in some way distressed or handicapped. That usually brings to mind adult children caring for aging parents, or parents of handicapped children. While these are huge challenges of caregiving, is that all there is to it?

Galatians 6:10 tells us to “do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.” Doing good includes caring for others who need our help, especially those in the family of God. Caring is part of our service, whether it’s visiting widows and orphans (James 1:27), or bearing one another’s burdens in our church family, which fulfills “the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). Do we know each other well enough to recognize the help that is needed? Do we let our church family know our challenges so they can have opportunity to serve us in our hour of need? Are we too proud to tell them we need help, or do we just not want to trouble or impose on them? We must remember that our brothers and sisters in Christ have work and service to do as well which may include helping us at times.

Now consider Proverbs 31:10-31. We call her “the worthy woman.” Reading the scripture in its entirety, we see her as wife, mother, business woman, and teacher, among other things. She is benevolent and caring as “she extends her hand to the poor, and she stretches out her hands to the needy” (verse 20). We would say she is serving those in need. Yes, she is, and that is a good thing.

However, look at who she serves first and foremost: her husband, her household (children and other family members), her maidens (maid servants) and herself. As we look at this worthy woman shown to us in scripture, we should consider that as wives and mothers, caring for a husband and children is the greater service we as women can do for God.

Verse 30b says “but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.”

How did this worthy woman serve her family? First, her way of life and actions towards her husband gained her trust. “She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.” (verse 12) She reflects the suitability for him in that she completes him. (Genesis 2:18, 20, 22-24). In verse 14b-15 “...she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is still night and gives food to her household and portions to her maidens.” She gets up before daylight and prepares food for her family and servants. Meal planning and preparing today does not require the physical strength and stamina it did back then, but it still requires thought and work, both of which are service to our families.

Verse 22 says she makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Verses 13 and 19 shows how she works with her hands in preparing yarn/thread for use in clothing and probably other items for warmth. Seeing that the family has adequate clothing can be a challenge in today’s world. Finding suitable modest clothing can be difficult, whether it’s keeping growing children clothed, or replacing worn-out clothes. Shopping might not often be considered a service to our families, but considering the necessity of clothing, it is service.

The worthy woman conducts business for the family (verse 16). She buys a field then plants a vineyard. Again, she conducts business that helps the family where we see “she makes linen garments and sells them” (verse 24a). Verses 18b and 27b show that she works into the night and is not idle or lazy. Not only does she make sure her family has what is needed for every day survival and nourishment, but she gains extra to help out as well. While most women today do not plant, care for, and harvest gardens, they do oftentimes work outside the home to add to financial resources that may or may not be needed. Keeping nourishing food on the table and proper clothing available for each family member while holding down a job or career can be a challenge, but can be done, and can be fulfilling, if done for the right reasons and with a proper attitude.

This Proverbs woman feared God, and spoke with wisdom and kindness (verse 26). That, too, can be a service if used for encouragement and teaching of others.

Most women in our world today, consider homemaking a menial task, and one not worthy of consideration. Let’s re-consider that to raise God-fearing children is a service to the physical family, the spiritual family, and to God Himself. It is a greater service.

Questions for discussion:

1. Name some situations where it would be difficult to restrain yourself in the way Christ exhibited restraint.
2. Think of a time when you were able to restrain. What helped you in that moment and how can that help you in the future?
3. How can you help encourage your sisters in Christ to follow Christ’s example when going through trials and persecutions?
4. Discuss the ways Christ came to serve in Matthew 20:28, Philippians 2:7, John 10:14, John 13:14, and John 14:2. In which of those, if any, can we be like Christ?

Ideas for application:

1. Consider the ways to serve suggested in the articles.
 - List those you already do
 - List those you would like to learn to do, and find someone who can help you learn to do them. Set a goal and learn one at a time.

1. Be alert to those in your church family, i.e. older folks, young mothers, people sitting alone, missionaries supported by your congregation, etc. What might their needs be? Make a special effort to help.

Prayer suggestions for serving others:

1. Pray that you become alert to those needing help.
2. Pray that you learn to do more in the way of service to others
3. Pray for opportunities to serve, and that you recognize those opportunities.



We can serve

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