



THE SERVANTHOOD OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

The Infinite God, Master of the universe, is a Servant. What a phenomenal contradiction! Before the foundation of the world, by the counsel of their own will, the Godhead¹ determined to send the Son in obedience to the Father to be the Divine Servant of man. The Creator of man became the Servant of man. To demonstrate His boundless love to mankind, the Son of God left His place at the right hand of the Father. He took the form of a servant to alleviate man's physical and spiritual needs and save him from eternal damnation. *The Son of Man*² *did not come to be served, but to serve*³, *and to give His life a ransom for many* (Matthew 20:28). Christ is the King of Kings, but He stooped to be the subject. As supreme God He humbled Himself to be subordinate. Prior to offering His life on the cross for the salvation of mankind, He declared to His disciples . . . *I AM among you as the One who serves* (Luke 22:27b).

THEME SCRIPTURE

I AM among you as the One who serves (Luke 22:27b).

¹ Godhead: the Triune God; God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; three Divine Persons in One.

² *Son of Man*: Christ's human nature; title used by Christ when speaking of Himself.

³ *serve* – Greek *diakonos* to be an attendant: wait upon (menially); to minister.

SECTION I – Definitions

1. WRITE your own definition of *servanthood*. _____

Dictionary Definition

A *servant* is a person who performs labor for another through menial duties, heavy labor, assistance or kindness.

Biblical Definitions

In the Greek, there are several words for servant. The primary word used in the New Testament is *doulos*. Originally it meant the lowest term in the scale of servitude, a bond slave. It also came to mean one who voluntarily gives up his own will for the will of his master, devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interest. Reward, position, appreciation, pay, or recognition, as seen through Biblical teaching, does not motivate a servant. He is one who serves out of love.

Another Greek word for servant is *diakoneo* which means to be attendant; to wait upon.

Scripture Descriptions

2. READ the following Scriptures that describe the servanthood of Christ. UNDERLINE the words and/or phrases that speak of His servanthood.

Matthew 20:28 . . . *the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

Luke 22:27b . . . *I AM [Jesus] among you as the One who serves.*

II Corinthians 8:9 *For You know the grace [unmerited favor] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.*

Philippians 2:7, 8 [speaking of Jesus] . . . *made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant⁴, and coming in the likeness of men . . . He humbled Himself, and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

3. What did you learn about God's servanthood from these Scriptures? _____

⁴ *bondservant* – Greek *doulos* slave: subjection, subservience, servant.

PERSONAL

How has what you have learned about Christ's servanthood change your trust in Christ? _____

SECTION II – The Abasement of Christ

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

READ John 13:1-15.

At the time of this story, walking was the main means of transportation. As it remains in many places in our world today, sandaled feet were exposed to roads that were dirty, hot and extremely rocky. The washing of feet was a normal custom that demonstrated hospitality to its recipient. The servant of the household performed this task.

1. Although Jesus knew that His hour had come (His time to be crucified), what attitude did He have . . . *to the end* (John 13:1)?

2. What had Satan put in the heart of Judas (v. 2)? _____

3. What truths did Jesus know about Himself (v. 3)? _____

4. What actions did Jesus take to demonstrate His servanthood and love to His disciples (vv. 4, 5)? _____

5. What title did Peter use to address Jesus (v. 6)? _____⁵
6. WRITE what Philippians 2:9-11 says about Christ and His name. _____

7. What did Jesus answer Peter when he refused to let the Divine Servant wash his feet (John 13:8)? _____

8. What was Peter's answer (v. 9)? _____

9. What did Jesus say about the disciples calling Him Master and Lord (v. 13)? _____

10. What did He tell them to do to one another (vv. 14, 15)? _____

 Why? _____
11. What does Paul exhort believers to do in Philippians 2:5-8? _____

 How did Christ humble Himself to become the ultimate Servant? _____

⁵ Lord – Greek *Kurios* supreme authority: Controller, God, Master.

12. What great truths did He teach them (John 13:16, 17)? _____

PERSONAL

How can you humble yourself to serve others? _____

LOOK DEEPER

READ John 13:1-21. FOCUS on Jesus' words concerning Judas. How was Jesus a servant even to the disciple who would betray Him?

PERSONAL

How have you demonstrated Christ's servanthood to an enemy in your life? _____

SECTION III – Scriptural References of God’s Servanthood

Man’s concept of *servanthood* is the opposite of God’s. It also varies from culture to culture. It can be a humiliating position, of the poor, rejected and uneducated or a well-paid position requiring special training. Neither servant is motivated by unselfish love for his master—one serves by force and the other for financial gain.

The following Scriptures show you how the views of God differ from that of man. MATCH the Scripture references to the corresponding statement:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| _____ Psalm 126:5 | a. serving through tears and trials |
| _____ Isaiah 52:13 | b. work heartily as to the Lord, you serve the Lord Christ |
| _____ Matthew 6:24 | c. cannot serve God and mammon (riches) |
| _____ Matthew 23:11 | d. the greatest is the servant |
| _____ John 6:27 | e. labor for food which endures to everlasting life |
| _____ John 12:26 | f. serving through tears reaps joy |
| _____ Acts 20:19 | g. God’s Servant (Jesus) is exalted |
| _____ Romans 12:10, 11 | h. serve the Lord through brotherly love and kindly affection |
| _____ I Corinthians 3:9a | i. we are fellow workers together with God |
| _____ I Corinthians 15:58 | j. our labor is not in vain |
| _____ Colossians 3:23, 24 | k. Christ dwells with His servants and the Father honors them |

PERSONAL

What verses will you take to heart as either a challenge or a comfort? Why? _____

SECTION IV – Mary and Martha Serve the Lord

Jesus often visited with His close friends Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus. He served them by teaching them the Word of God. In the following story you will see the servanthood that Christ desires of us.

1. READ Luke 10:38-42 and ANSWER the questions.

a. Who welcomed Jesus into her house (v. 38)? _____

b. Who was Mary and what did she do (v. 39)? _____

c. Why was Martha distracted (v. 40)? _____

What did she say to the Lord? _____

d. What was Jesus' response to Martha (v. 41)? _____

e. What did Jesus say about how Mary had chosen to serve Him (v. 42)? _____

PERSONAL

Which sister are you most like? What will you do to serve Jesus in a manner that is acceptable to Him?

THEME SCRIPTURE

WRITE the THEME SCRIPTURE.

(Luke 22:27b).

*Therefore, since we are receiving
a kingdom which cannot be shaken,
let us have grace, by which we may serve
God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

Hebrews 12:28

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Due to the holy nature of God, the first letter of all references to Him,
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