
Words of Truth

Servant Of All

By: Brian A. Yeager

We live in a world that promotes the concept of selfishness. You hear and read statements such as, “I gotta get mine”, “put yourself at the top of your to do list”, and “you first”. Some pervert Scriptures that teach to love others as you love yourself (i.e. Luke 10:27 and Ephesians 5:33). Where they pervert those Scriptures is by emphasizing the self-love above the love of others. These messages ring out daily in our present evil world.

With such messages being constantly promoted, we have to guard ourselves. It is an undeniable fact that the influence of the world is strong against us (I Corinthians 15:33). We are taught not to conform to this world (Romans 12:1-3). Rather than following the ways of the world, we need to be sure our Lord is the standard we live by (II Corinthians 5:14-17, I Peter 2:21, and I John 2:3-6). So, what does our Lord think about selfishness? Does our Lord want us to put ourselves first? Does our Lord want us to practice self-promotion? Let’s answer these questions by looking at the teaching of our Lord on these matters.

They Came To Jesus To Get What They Desired

Jesus initially chose twelve men to work with Him in bringing the Gospel to the lost (Matthew 10:1-15). During the time Jesus worked with these men we can see that they were not altogether aligned with His will nor were they completely converted (Matthew 14:22-33, Matthew 16:1-12, Matthew 28:1-17, Luke 9:37-42, Luke 17:5-6, and Luke 22:31-32). They were not fully ready to learn everything Jesus had to teach them (John 16:1-13). Among the problems Jesus had to deal with in some of His disciples was that they struggled with this self-first problem.

Notice: *“And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much*

displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:35-45).

From the beginning of the text above you can see the problem. They wanted their carnal desires fulfilled. That is the way people think BEFORE conversion (Ephesians 2:1-10), but not after (Romans 6:3-22). Their desire was to be exalted. They wanted the glory of sitting in a certain position. As saints, we know that such a desire is not appropriate. What we say and do needs to be to the glory of God, not ourselves (Matthew 5:14-16, I Corinthians 10:31, and I Peter 4:11). What Jesus did with their request is what we really need to take some time to consider. Jesus taught them that their purpose, as well as His while He was in this world, was to serve. That is what the chiefest of the saints do.

To Minister To Others

To be a minister is to wait upon others; to serve (Strong’s # 1247). The carnally minded apostate saints in Galatia were told: *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Galatians 5:13-14).* Sometimes people struggle with this though. I know that I have talked to so-called brethren that have erred in perceiving that serving others is a weakness.

Those who are strong in the faith are those whom are capable of putting others before themselves. In a context about authorized liberties that started in Romans 14:1, we read this: *“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me” (Romans 15:1-3).* Consider how that our Lord, our Savior, our Master, our King; showed this mindset to His disciples. After they had supped together Jesus put water into a bason and washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1-17). Jesus didn't cease being the Lord because He served. That is a huge lesson for us, if we'll take the time to think on it and learn it.

Conclusion

Paul was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles (II Corinthians 11:5). He, as an Apostle, had authority (Acts 2:42) and spoke as an ambassador for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20). He did not use his position for himself. Rather, he ministered to the saints (Romans 15:25). We need to follow the examples of Jesus and Paul (I Corinthians 11:1).