

Lesson #11

## **Serving the Lord**

*... But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.*

***Joshua 24:15***

- I. The motive for serving the Lord.**
- II. The meaning of serving the Lord.**
- III. How to serve the Lord.**
- IV. The reward for serving the Lord.**

# Serving the Lord

Serving the Lord and preaching the gospel are related. Once a person is saved, he should preach the gospel and serve the Lord. Every normal Christian preaches the gospel and serves the Lord. Furthermore, the more a Christian receives grace, the more he will receive the Lord's leading and dealing and the more he will be able to serve the Lord in a proper way.

## THE MOTIVE FOR SERVING THE LORD

**1. "I love my master,...I will not go out free" (Exo. 21:5).**

Believers do not serve the Lord because of outward encouragement or pressure from man. We serve the Lord out of the inward motivation of our love for the Lord. Our love for the Lord inwardly compels us to serve the Lord. It urges us to serve Him. Our love for the Lord makes us unable not to serve the Lord. We love the Lord, so we must serve the Lord. This is typified in the Old Testament by the slave who loved his master. Although the slave could have been free and did not need to continue to serve as a slave, he did not want to go out free because of his love for his master. He willingly remained as a slave to serve the master whom he loved. This is our motive in serving the Lord. We become His servants and serve Him willingly because of our love for Him. Our service to the Lord comes out of our love for Him.

**2. "I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice...which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).**

We love the Lord because He loves us. The Lord's love moves us and encourages us to love Him. The Lord's love for us produces

our love for Him, making it impossible for us not to love Him. Therefore, the Lord's love causes us to love Him and serve Him. For this reason Paul exhorted the believers through the compassions of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice in service to Him. The compassions of God, the love of God, encourage us to love Him and serve Him. We serve Him because His love encourages us and stirs up a love within us for Him. This deep love is our motivation to serve Him, and it makes it impossible for us not to serve Him.

## THE MEANING OF SERVING THE LORD

**1. "Enslaved to God"; "Christ's slave" (Rom. 6:22; 1 Cor. 7:22).**

To serve the Lord is to be the Lord's slave. The word slave is not a very pleasant expression when it is applied to unbelievers in the world, because it often denotes an inferior status. However, the word slave is a felicitous and glorious expression when it is applied to believers because we are serving the Lord. To be a slave of the Lord is a glorious matter! To be a slave is the status of those who serve the Lord and the meaning of serving the Lord. Serving the Lord is not about doing a great work before men; it is about being a slave before the Lord.

**2. "Live to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8).**

Since serving the Lord is a matter of being a slave, it is also a matter of living to the Lord. The entire being of one who truly serves the Lord is to the Lord. His whole living, his entire life, is to the Lord. Therefore, service is a matter of one's entire living. The call to serve the Lord is not limited to full-time workers and preachers. With the Lord's leading, it is possible to serve the Lord by maintaining

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## Verses

### **Exodus 21:5**

*But if the servant plainly says, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free;*

### **Romans 12:1**

*I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, [which is] your reasonable service.*

### **Romans 6:22**

*But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.*

### **1 Corinthians 7:22**

*For the slave who has been called in the Lord is the Lord's freedman; likewise the free man who has been called is Christ's slave.*

### **Romans 14:8**

*For whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's.*

### **John 12:26**

*If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.*

### **Acts 13:36**

*Now David, having served his own generation by the counsel of God, did indeed fall asleep and was buried with his fathers and saw corruption;*

respectable works in any career (Titus 3:8, 14). Colossians 3:22-24 shows that actual slaves were serving the Lord when they served according to the Lord's will. No matter what our career or job may be, we can serve the Lord as long as it is according to the Lord's will. It is not the Lord's intention that every Christian would leave his job or career to be a full-time preacher. The Lord's will is for every one of us to serve Him, but serving Him does not necessarily mean we must become a preacher. It only means that we live to Him in everything. There are many preachers today who do not necessarily live to the Lord. Similarly, there are many believers who love the Lord and truly live to Him, even though they have a career or job. They may not be preachers, but they are truly serving the Lord by living to the Lord.

According to the Bible, we are not called to make a profession out of preaching; rather, we are called to serve the Lord. This is our career. Any career or job that we have is a secondary matter. Our principal occupation is to serve the Lord; serving the Lord comes first. Our goal for living on the earth is to serve the Lord. We should make serving the Lord the center and goal of our lives. The only reason that we have a career or a job is to make a living and to supply the needs of the Lord's work. We also can contact people through our careers and jobs to preach the gospel to them. No career or job is more important than serving the Lord and preaching the gospel. We should consider our occupation only as something that we do on the side. Our focus should be on serving the Lord and preaching the gospel. Regardless of whether we are doctors, teachers, businessmen, or laborers, our career or job should be for serving the Lord and preaching the gospel. Doctors should serve the Lord and preach the gospel while practicing medicine. Teachers should serve the Lord and preach the gospel while teaching. Whatever our profession, we should serve the Lord and preach the gospel. Each of us should consider serving the Lord and preaching the gospel as our primary occupation and our careers and jobs as secondary occupations. This is the living

of a normal Christian. This is the only way to live to the Lord and to serve Him.

## HOW TO SERVE THE LORD

**1. "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be" (John 12:26).**

To serve the Lord, we must follow the Lord. When the Lord was on earth, He walked a path that we must follow in order to serve Him. We must take His way. We must be where He is. Just as He died to Himself and willingly chose the way of the cross in everything, we must do the same. Just as He refused His own will and lived according to God's will, we must do the same. In order to serve Him, we must follow Him and be with Him.

**2. "David...served his own generation by the counsel of God" (Acts 13:36; see also Heb. 10:7).**

In serving the Lord we must serve those of our own generation. However, we must serve by the counsel of God, just as David did in his time. If we do not serve by the counsel of God, we are merely serving people, not serving God. Only what is done according to the counsel of God can be counted as service to the Lord.

**3. "His master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever" (Exo. 21:6; see also Isa. 50:4).**

Because our service to the Lord is the service of a slave, we should act according to the Lord's will, not according to our own desires. Thus, in order to serve the Lord, we need to hear His word. We can know the Lord's will only when we hear His word. Those who serve the Lord must hear the Lord so that they can know His will and serve according to His desire in order to please Him. In the Old Testament a slave who wanted to serve his master forever would have his ear bored through with an awl by his master according to God's command. This is a type of a serving one who has ears to hear the word of the Lord in order to serve Him. Our ears must be bored through by the Lord so that we can hear His word and serve Him.

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### Hebrews 10:7

*Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God."*

### Exodus 21:6

*Then his master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.*

### Isaiah 50:4

*The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens [me] morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one.*

### Ezekiel 44:15

*But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to present to Me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord Jehovah,*

### Luke 2:37

*And she was a widow up to the age of eighty-four, who did not depart from the temple, serving [God] with fastings and petitions night and day.*

### Acts 13:2

*And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.*

### Matthew 24:45

*Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?*

**4. “They shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me” (Ezek. 44:15).**

Once we have ears to hear, we must come near to the Lord, minister to the Lord, and stand before the Lord. Then we will know what He wants us to do and how He wants us to do it. In this way we can serve Him according to His will, match His heart’s desire, and be acceptable to Him.

**5. “Serving God with fastings and petitions night and day”; “They were ministering to the Lord and fasting” (Luke 2:37; Acts 13:2).**

In serving the Lord we need to fast and pray to seek Him in addition to contacting Him and standing before Him. To fast means that we are willing to give up our rightful enjoyment and to suffer in order to seek the Lord’s desire and accomplish the Lord’s will. To pray means to ask the Lord to reveal His desire and to accomplish His will. We must not be lacking in prayer and fasting in our service to the Lord. Strong and proper service to the Lord includes both prayer and fasting.

**6. “The faithful and prudent slave” (Matt. 24:45).**

We must also be faithful and prudent in our service to the Lord. Faithfulness must be accompanied with prudence. If we are faithful without being prudent, we will make a mess of our service to the Lord, and the result of our service will be the exact opposite of our desire in serving Him. Only faithfulness with prudence can fulfill our desire in serving the Lord.

**7. “Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and you be like men waiting for their own master when he returns” (Luke 12:35-36).**

In order to serve Him, we must gird our loins, have our lamps burning, and wait for the Lord’s return. Girding our loins means that we are not loose, having a burning lamp means that we live in the

light, and waiting for the Lord means that we are watchful. Our service to the Lord must be according to these conditions.

**8. “That I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:24).**

We must be faithful to the end in our service to the Lord. We must not begin and then quit, leaving things half done. We must not be loose or light in the matter of serving the Lord. We must be clear about the ministry that the Lord has allotted to us and know the course that the Lord wants us to finish. Once we are clear about the course that the Lord has chosen, we must be faithful and endure, finishing the course and fulfilling the ministry that we have received from the Lord.

#### **THE REWARD FOR SERVING THE LORD**

**1. “If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him” (John 12:26).**

The first reward for serving the Lord is to be honored by the Father. This is a great matter. It should cause us to pursue serving the Lord.

**2. “Blessed are those slaves whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Truly I tell you that he will gird himself and will have them recline at table, and he will come to them and serve them” (Luke 12:37).**

Today we are slaves serving the Lord. When the Lord returns, we will receive the blessing of reclining at table and being served by Him. This blessing is a reward for our service to the Lord.

**3. “Well done, good and faithful slave...I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master” (Matt. 25:21; see also 24:47; Luke 19:17).**

If we are good and faithful slaves of the Lord today, we will receive the reward of being set over many things in the future, and we will enter into His joy.

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#### **Luke 12:35-36**

*35 Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning,*

*36 And you be like men waiting for their own master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.*

#### **Acts 20:24**

*But I consider my life of no account [as if] precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.*

#### **John 12:26**

*If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.*

#### **Luke 12:37**

*Blessed are those slaves whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Truly I tell you that he will gird himself and will have them recline [at table,] and he will come to [them] and serve them.*

#### **Matthew 25:21**

*His master said to him, Well [done,] good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.*

#### **Matthew 24:47**

*Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.*

#### **Luke 19:17**

*And he said to him, Well [done,] good slave. Because you have become faithful in the least, have authority over ten cities.*

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