

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

Sylvester Onyemalechi

To serve is to work for another. It is to help another. A servant is one who works for another for pay.

A servant of the Lord is one who works for God with all his heart out of love, and hoping for a place in God's kingdom.

A servant is totally committed to his master, and always ready to do his master's bidding.

"Submit yourselves then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

It takes total submission to God and his word to resist the devil. The truth of God's word when accepted and submitted to, will build and strengthen a man, and help him resist temptation to go contrary. Someone, who refuses to accept sex outside of marriage as sin, will never be able to resist temptation to fornication.

"Jesus replied, if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the father who sent me." (Jn. 14:23,24)

Obedience is the proof of love. You can't be committed to the one you don't love. It takes love to follow someone loyally. It takes love to walk in obedience. Disobedience is a proof of lack of love and commitment. You cannot, be committed to the one you cannot obey willingly and wholeheartedly.

The commitment of the servant of God must be total. God must be number one in his life. The interest of God comes before personal and family matters to the servant of God. Daniel, Meshach, Shedrach and Abednego are good examples of the commitment of Servants of God. These men did not want to defile themselves with the king's choice food. They didn't think it right to be feasting while the temple of their God and their nation are in ruins. They preferred to eat vegetables. God honored them by making them better nourished than those that ate the king's choice food. God blessed them with greater intelligence.

They showed their total commitment to God when they refused to bow before idols and pray to them. Daniel was thrown into the den of lions. Meshach, Shedrach and Abednego were thrown into the burning furnace. God showed his admiration and approval for their actions by saving them and causing their promotion and honor. Read Daniel 1, 3 & 6 for the full story. It takes full commitment to do what these men did. If they could do this in the old covenant, then we can do better under the covenant of grace. They were sold out to God completely. Yield yourself totally to God, and you will be honoured.

Hosea showed his commitment when he agreed with God that his life will be a message for Israel. He married a prostitute and had children by her. He suffered years of heartache watching other men share his wife with him, in order for the Israelites to learn lessons. Read Hosea 1-3. To Hosea, only the will of God mattered to him. What about you? What matters to you?

Paul, the Apostle so served the Lord that he refused to marry. He saw marriage as a distraction. Though he would have loved to marry, he couldn't because he was sold out completely to God. He didn't have the time to attend to marriage matters. No wonder, God so used him that aprons and handkerchiefs from his body was taken to the sick and oppressed, and they were healed. Read 1 Corinthians 7:5-7, 32-35; 9:3-6.

To serve the Lord effectively and productively, you must be completely sold out to him. It must be, “Cost what it may, I will follow the Lord” You must be fully consecrated to the Lord and his course.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:1-2)

QUALITIES OF THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

1. The servant of the LORD must give himself totally to the Lord.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”(Rom. 12:1)

The servant of the Lord must have a heart for God.

2. The servant of the Lord must submit himself completely to the word and will of God.

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)

Submission will energize you to resist temptation. What you do not accept in your heart as an absolute truth, you will live contrary to it. It takes a submissive heart to please God.

3. The servant of the Lord must be ready to obey any and every instruction of his master.

“Jesus replied, if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the father who sent me.” (Jn. 14:23-24)

Obedience is the proof of love. Obedience is the proof of commitment and loyalty. You cannot be a servant except you are willing to serve your master. You can’t serve without obeying.

4. The servant of the Lord must be a true witness for Jesus Christ. He must remember he was saved to save others. He is to share with the world what he has received from Jesus. If there is any benefit in following Jesus the servant of the Lord should share it with others.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” (Mt. 28:18-20)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

The purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is to empower the believer to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. A witness is someone who testifies to the things he saw, heard, touched, tasted and experienced. It is those who have encounters and testimonies that can testify about Jesus. If Jesus has affected your life in any way, then you have something to testify about. It will be wrong of you to close your mouth and refuse to testify of his goodness in your life. A true servant of the Lord is someone who is ever willing to witness for Jesus. He does it willingly, cheerfully and with all pleasure. He does not wait for his local church or fellowship to organize an evangelism programme before he will go out and witness, rather, he is always looking out for opportunities to

witness for his Savior. Judge yourself and see if you are truly a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others,” (2Timothy 2:1,2)

Servants of the Lord are reliable. They are trustworthy and dependable. God expects you to pass on the message and teachings you have received to other people, who will in turn pass it on to others. That is how the gospel got to us. That is how the gospel will continue to spread until all have heard it and embraced it. Prove yourself to be reliable. Keep passing on the message. Be a faithful witness of Jesus Christ.

5. The servant of the Lord must be willing to endure hardship and persecution. Persecution and trials are part of the life of a servant of the Lord. You must have your own share of it. It comes in different forms and scope. The Lord never promised us a crisis and persecution free life.

“Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.” (Lk. 10:3)

“Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus... Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” (2 Timothy 2:8-13)

Read also Mathew 10:17-39 and 2 Corinthians 11:16-33.

6. The servant of the Lord must be separated from the world and anything that will distract him from focusing on Jesus his master and the work he has given him. To be separated, your mind set must be based on these scriptural facts:
 - a. You must see yourself as a Son of God and must not live a life that is undignified for a Son of God.

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (Jn. 1:12)

- b. You must see yourself as a soldier of Christ and follow the discipline of a soldier.

“Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer.” (2Tim. 2:3-4)

- c. You must see yourself as an athlete in a race for the prize of eternal life in God’s kingdom. This will help you to remain focused and concentrate on your destination.

“Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules.” (2 Tim. 2:5)

d. You must see yourself as an ambassador of Christ and represent the kingdom well.
“We are therefore Christ’s Ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.” (2 Cor.5: 20)

e. You must see yourself as a farmer whose job it is to farm the hearts of men and plant precious seeds of God’s word that will lead to their salvation and establishment in God’s kingdom.

“The hard working farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.” (2 Tim. 2:6)

Jesus in Mathew 13:1-9, 18-23 taught us that the preaching of the word is like a farmer planting precious seeds in the soil of men’s hearts. Every believer is expected to farm the hearts of men with the word of God.

f. You must see yourself as the salt of the earth therefore you must be separated from the world.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.” (Mathew 5:13)

g. You must see yourself as the light of the world. Without you, the world cannot survive. You can’t afford to mix up with the world. You must be separated from the world to impact them.

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.” (Mathew 5:14-16)

h. Always remember you are the temple (living house) of the Almighty God, and the unbelievers are carriers of devils. You can’t be yoked with them.

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.” (1 Cor. 6:18-20)

Read also 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

i. Another reason why you must be separated is that friends are influence. The people you associate with influence you one way or the other, positively or negatively. The things you hear from them and see them do, affect your thought pattern and actions.

“Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.” (1 Cor. 15:33)

Read Prov. 23:7 and 27:19.

j. Your words create your experience. You will be justified or condemned by the words of your mouth. Your words create your future. Words are seeds that must be harvested in due season. Words are products of the thoughts of man. And thoughts are influenced by the things we see and hear, especially from those whom we associate with, the songs we listen to and the programmes we watch on television. Be separated from all that will contaminate, weaken and destroy your commitment and faithfulness to the Lord.

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil thing out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgement for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted and by your words you will be condemned.” (Mathew 12:33-37)

Read also Prov. 18:20, 21.

7. The servant of the Lord must continually focus on his Saviour and Master.

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Col. 3:1-4)

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2)

8. The servant of the Lord must strive to be like his master in all things and at all times by following his steps.

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” (1 Pet. 2:21)

Read also 1 Cor. 3:18.

9. The servant of the Lord must persevere in following, obeying, living and working for his master.

“So do not throw away your confidence, it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised... But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.” (Heb. 10:35, 36, 39)

10. The servant of the Lord must remain focused and not allow distractions from past successes, failures, oppositions, frustrations and disappointments to disturb him.

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead. I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heaven wards in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:12-14)

Work towards the prize of the high calling of God.

BENEFITS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

1. Your relationship with God will be deepened.

“Jesus replied, if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (Jn. 14:23)

2. Anything you ask for will be given to you.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers: Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (Jn. 15:5-8)

3. No weapon formed against you will prosper.

“No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. And this is their vindication from me,” declares the LORD.” (Isa. 54:17)

4. God will make your enemies to be at peace with you.

“When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.” (Prov. 16:7)

5. The Lord will always provide for you.

“Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘My servants will eat, but you will go hungry; my servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will cry out from anguish of heart and wail in broken of heart.’” (Isa. 65:13,14)