

The Christian and His Ministry: Service for the Savior

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,
acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed
by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is
that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”
(Romans 12:1–2).*

If you haven't already started, you should by now be ready to move into a place of Christian service. That is the primary reason that you have not yet been taken to your new home in heaven. God has decided to use men to reach men for Him. He expects each of us to take an active part in the battle for the souls of men. The purpose of this lesson is to urge you to find a place or places of service and to get involved in the business of rescuing lost souls from eternity in hell.

I. Your Obligation to Serve

There are many reasons why you should serve God. The desire to serve Him should be the natural outflowing of your changed nature. Yet, over time this desire may fade as a result of bad habits or poor teaching after salvation. In spite of how you may have come to feel about it, however, it goes beyond a mere feeling or desire. You must understand that it is an obligation for a Christian to serve the Lord for several compelling reasons.

A. He is Your Savior

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to
be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation,
and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made
in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:5–7).*

Jesus served you in becoming your Savior. He gave His life so that you could have everlasting life. Can you do anything less than serve Him in return?

Luke 22:27; Romans 5:8; 1 Timothy 1:15

1. You are indebted to His great love

If you love your Lord, then you should love whatever or whoever He loves. He loves men, His creation, and desires to save them and then to lead them to perfection. You can and should be a part of His great redemption plan. You are called to minister to others.

John 13:34–35; 1 John 4:10–12; Jude 22

2. You can never repay Him enough for your salvation

Jesus did everything necessary for your salvation and for all those that are still lost as well. You must not let His sacrifice be in vain where you could make the difference.

Mark 8:36–38

B. He is your King

Because He purchased you with His own blood, Jesus has all the rights and power of a king over your life.

1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15; Revelation 11:15–18; 19:16

1. You are indebted to His great grace

Jesus has obtained a full pardon for your sins. You are a recipient of His marvelous grace which simply means you have received His favor through no merit of your own. If Jesus did not extend this grace, you could never be found worthy of entering into His great Kingdom. Therefore, you are entirely in His debt and anything you can do to serve Him is better than doing nothing to show your gratitude. On the other hand, if you are actually ungrateful, you need to consider whether He has in fact extended this grace to you or you are still in a lost condition. Your eternal life depends on it.

1 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:7; Hebrews 4:16; 1 Peter 3:7

2. You no longer belong to yourself or this world

When you accepted the mercy that your King extended to you, you entered into a covenant to make Him your master. It worked like this. His part was to give His very life, to shed His own blood, in payment to God for your sins. He became guilty of all your sins and bore them into hell. However, death and hell could not hold Him. He triumphed over death and hell and, leaving your sins in hell, he rose from the grave and ascended to the Father in heaven. He became the Great High Priest for us and even now makes intercession for our sins to the Father every time we ask for forgiveness.

Your part in this covenant is to ask forgiveness for your sins under His terms. His terms are that you turn from following a life of sin and begin a new life according to His precepts and commandments as laid out in His Word, the Bible. In other words, you must submit to doing His will in those cases where your will and His will are in conflict. In doing this, you have thrown yourself upon His mercy and given yourself to Him.

The important thing to realize here is that you are a purchased possession. He has bought you with His own blood. You must never forget this.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 1 Peter 1:18–19; 2 Peter 2:1

3. Jesus has all the rights of a King over your life

When you got saved, You made your Lord King of your life. A king owns every person in his kingdom. Every person is his servant and is expected to do the will of the king. He should tolerate nothing less than 100% obedience. It is the right of kings.

Psalms 2:6–12; Malachi 1:14, 3:16–18

C. He is your God

God created you. Therefore, you belong to Him. Your free will is a double-edged sword. You can choose to do things your way and die or do things His way and live.

Genesis 1:26; Genesis 14:19; Psalms 24:1

1. You are indebted to His great mercy

When Adam (and subsequently all men) chose to do things his own way, he earned the penalty of death for all of us according to God's covenant with him. God, in His great mercy, decided not to destroy His creation and start again. He extended mercy to all those who will get back into a proper relationship with Him through His only begotten Son.

Ephesians 2:4–6; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:18.

2. His very position as God demands complete obedience

“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” (Romans 9:20).

Romans 9:13–21; Isaiah 29:15–16

II. Getting the Vision

As you know by now, you were saved to serve. You know your obligation. But there is another side to this coin. You must learn to recognize the wonderful rewards of service to your Lord.

Matthew 19:29–30; Matthew 25:28–29

A. God rewards you in two ways

1. Temporal rewards
 - a. Feelings of worth
 - b. Feelings of accomplishment
 - c. Thrill of seeing someone go from “death” to eternal life
 - d. Closeness to God
 - e. Peace in your soul rather than strife
2. Eternal rewards

We do not know all the eternal rewards we can earn, but a partial listing was given in Lesson 13.

Luke 19:12–19; Revelation 11:18

B. The need is great

At a guess, perhaps 5% or less of the world's population is saved. That means that there are currently over 5,000,000,000 people headed for eternity in hell.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14).

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37–38).

C. The time is short

We can reasonably expect the tribulation to start as well as the pretribulation rapture before the end of our lives. You may only have a few months or years to accomplish something for the One you are about to meet.

Romans 13:11; 1 Corinthians 7:29–31; 1 Peter 4:7

III. Choosing Ministry Opportunities

There are far more ministry opportunities than there are Christians to fill them. God's desire is for the whole world to be saved. Until that has happened you will never run out of chances to minister. Once you get serious about wanting to serve your Lord, you will find many opportunities to serve. Your problems will quickly become those of selecting which ones you can handle and not spreading yourself too thin. This is where you will need to immerse yourself in prayer and the scriptures.

It is important to understand that the three main purposes of ministry are to win others to Christ, to edify the Body of Christ, and to bring glory and honor to our God and Savior Jesus Christ. The following areas are generally described for your prayerful consideration.

A. Working within the local church

Most ministries within the local church are ministries of edification. They deal predominantly with saved people who are seeking to know God better and to grow in His grace. They require a minister who has reached a greater level of spiritual maturity than those to whom he is ministering. By diligently pursuing this discipleship program, you have made yourself an able minister for most of the available laymen's positions in any church.

Most churches have many areas for you to minister in. There are Sunday School, choir, usher, and bus ministry positions on Sundays. There are special children and youth ministries that occur during the week. There are opportunities in sports ministries on a seasonal basis.

Many of these jobs are filled by dedicated but overworked men and women who serve because they love their Lord and His work. But they desperately need help. If you can help in any of these areas, you need to seek the Lord's direction as to which urgent need He would have you to meet.

B. Working in an outreach ministry

Outreach ministries are primarily evangelistic in nature. The minister seeks to show the love of Christ to an area of special need in his community. By serving lost people in the love of Christ, you can often earn the opportunity to present the good news of eternal life to someone who would not otherwise be willing to listen to what you have to say. Typical outreach opportunities would be visitation ministries to hospitals, jails, and nursing homes. There are also many ministries that are based on the area needs to which a church ministers. Inner city ministries offer different types of opportunities than suburban or rural ministries. As you can imagine, the possibilities are plentiful, but the workers are few.

Matthew 9:37–38

C. Working in a specialized ministry

While we always recommend that every Christian join and be a ministering part of a local church, we also suggest that you consider other worthy causes that may involve some special interest that you may have. Many times you will find a group of like-minded Christians from where you work or go to school or within a club or some other organization that have a special burden for a particular type of ministry or group of people. You should be open to the Spirit's leading in these areas.

Many Christians work together for causes such as putting an end to the slaughter of millions of innocent babies through abortion. Others band together to run a soup kitchen for the poor and the homeless. There are as many ministry opportunities here as there are needs that people have. All of these ministries bring glory to our God because His children are willing to serve sacrificially.

IV. Establishing a New Ministry

We have explored many avenues of ministry in this lesson. But what if you can't find the area to which you desire to minister already established in your church or geographic area? If you feel the Holy Ghost is leading you to such an area of ministry, we suggest you go in His strength and start a brand new ministry. Your pastor should be willing and able to give you much good advice in this area. Building a productive new ministry can be very exciting and very rewarding in many ways.

A. Defining a new opportunity

Once you recognize an area of opportunity in which you feel led to start a new ministry, you need to carefully and prayerfully consider just how much you can handle and how far you can take it. You should also seek the advice of your pastor and other Christians whose judgment you trust. It is helpful to develop a written plan which details:

1. The need, as you see it
2. The method by which you can meet the need
3. The cost in time and money
4. The results you can reasonably expect to achieve with God's help

B. The Little Red Book story

The idea behind the Little Red Book ministry came when Tommy Tilman, a great missionary to the lepers in Southeast Asia, came to the First Bible Baptist Church in Rochester, New York to present his burden for these people and their special needs. During his message, God began to deal with the hearts of a number of men in the congregation who all worked for the same company. These men began to meet together during their coffee breaks to discuss these needs and what they could do about them. One of these men, Ron Giannetto, felt led to organize the conclusions of these discussions into a formal ministry. Thus, a ministry dedicated to meeting the needs of foreign missionaries was born.

As these men were led of God, they began to “put their money where their heart was” and the ministry was able to meet some of the needs that Tommy Tilman had presented. They also began to meet special needs of other missionaries out of their own church. It soon became apparent that the single greatest need of all missionaries was well written evangelistic material. Through the coordinated effort of a Christian artist and several knowledgeable people, the Little Red Book tract was created. It was determined that this would be given freely to missionaries as the Lord provided funds for printing.

One of the men who later became involved with the ministry surrendered for full time Christian missionary work. He began to travel to churches around the country raising funds to print for missionaries. As the ministry grew, this man took charge of all the overseas needs and the ministry separated into two distinct units. We now provide tracts and printed material to missionaries at no charge and also provide the same materials to local churches and individuals within the U S at very low cost.

As the tract distribution began to grow in the United States, we began to get returns from many people saying they had been saved through this tract and wanted additional Bible study materials. We felt an obligation to those that our ministry had reached for the Lord and so the ministry grew some more. We began to develop a discipleship series that could meet this need to learn from the Word of God.

At the Little Red Book ministry we are ready to grow as far as the Lord wants to take us. We ask you to pray with us that God will use us in His service and we will be ready and willing to follow Him. We thank and praise God for this opportunity to minister to you.

V. The Formula for Success

It sounds strange to say it but nothing could be easier than having success in Christian service. All you have to do is whatever God leads you to do. With God leading the way, it would be impossible to fail. Unfortunately, we Christians don't listen very well or for very long. We are too often guilty of running ahead of God and only manage to get in the way when we do this. This is our natural tendency so we need to develop the proper frame of mind. The scriptures teach the right attitude but we must apply it to ourselves.

A. Not my will, but Thine be done

It is very important to examine yourself to see if your motives are right for Christian service. You will not be successful in God's eyes if you do something because it makes you look good in the eyes of others. God asks for sacrifice in His service. He wants you to do things that promote His kingdom rather than your own. If you will do things His way, then He will give you all those good things in return.

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty band of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).

B. He must increase, but I must decrease

This was the answer that John the Baptist gave to his disciples when they complained that more people were going to Jesus and His disciples to be baptized than were coming to him. This is always the proper attitude toward Christian service. We must always think in terms of what is best for the Kingdom of God rather than what is best for us. This means, for instance, that we have to be careful about what we say and how we say it.

*“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved”
(1 Corinthians 10:32–33).*

C. The true goals of Christian service

Success in Christian ministry is achieved when the three goals mentioned earlier are met by your ministry. They are:

1. To win men and women to Christ
2. To edify the body of Christ through teaching the Word of God to Christians
3. To bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ our Lord

VI. All to the Glory of God

When you finally do achieve success in your ministry, you must remember that you did not do it all by yourself. You were just the tool that God used to accomplish His eternal purpose in the lives of men. Your glory should be due to the fact that God chose to use you in His service.

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Corinthians 1:26–29).

A. The source of power

God empowers you to minister effectively.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

B. The source of knowledge

“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge” (1 Corinthians 1:4–5).

C. The source of love

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5).

*“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him”
(1 John 2:5).*

1 John 3:16–17

D. The answer for lost souls

God is truly all of the things mentioned above, but for the lost man He is above all the answer to his most basic problem. Man has a sin problem and it separates him from a holy God. God shed His own blood to redeem each and every person that will choose Him. We are asked to bring that message to as many people as we can while we are on this earth. Truly the time is short and the way left to go is long. Are you ready to take your place in the Lord’s army? You are sorely needed.

