

## LESSON THREE THE MASTER AND THE SERVANT

In our current culture and society, we know little of the meaning of servanthood. When we think about a master and servant relationship, we often have a negative image of the two because of the many unfavorable examples. But the heart of a true servant biblically is one who cares for the work and interest of his master and who is always ready, seeking only to do what will please or profit him. A servant differs from a slave as the servant's subjection to a master is voluntary, the slave's is not. Every slave is a servant, but not every servant is a slave.

As we will see in this lesson on the master and the servant, Jesus portrays to us the greatest example there is and He doesn't ask us to do more than what He has already done. His own life was a pattern for us to follow. Andrew Murray states: "*The power of an example depends on two things. The one is the attractiveness of what it gives us to see; the other is the personal relation and influence of him in whom it is seen.*" We will now take a closer look at what Jesus did by example as well as what He taught on the subject of servanthood.

### Day One – Servant

The teaching found in John 13:1-17 by Jesus is given in a private setting with His disciples the night before His crucifixion. These words would begin His last instructions to the disciples which were weighty and significant.

1. Read John 13:1-5. Share your thoughts.
  - a. Record the setting and place found in these verses.
  - b. Who was there?
  - c. What, if anything, do you find unusual?

2. Obviously, Jesus was showing by example what the heart of a servant should be. But, when you hear the word *servant*, what is the first thing that pops into your head?

a. Look up the word servant in the dictionary and write its meaning. Keep this definition in mind as you complete this lesson.

3. What do you see as the driving force for Jesus to wash the disciple's feet? See John 13:1.

4. Read John 13:6-8 and answer the following questions.

a. What attitude do you see Peter displaying?

b. Is there anything wrong with this? Explain.

c. How is Peter's attitude in opposition to Christ's? See Matthew 26:39.

d. Why do you think that Peter is the only one who seems to be objecting to Jesus washing the disciples' feet?

5. After reading how Peter responded to Jesus in John 13:6-8, take a moment to reflect on how you think you would have responded and write your thoughts below.

a. How do you feel when others serve you?

*It has been observed, the true test of whether we are a servant is that we don't mind being treated like one.*

*Unknown Author*

## Day Two – Servant Example

Read John 13:12-15

In Biblical times, shoes and sandals were removed from the feet upon entering the home as a guest. It was customary for slaves to wash the guests' feet as they arrived before sitting to eat. This washing was necessary because they sat to eat a meal on a rug or mat with their feet tucked beneath them.

1. Although we don't practice foot washing today, contemplate this practice for a moment. How would you feel about having someone wash your feet? How would you feel about washing someone else's feet? Share your thoughts.

a. Why do you think what Jesus did was such a powerful example to the disciples?

b. What principle(s) is found in the washing of feet?

c. How might we put this principle into practice in our own lives?

2. In verse 14, Jesus refers to Himself as *Lord and Teacher*, (the KJV uses the word Master). Look these two words up in a Greek dictionary ([blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org)) to help you gain a greater understanding of what they mean.

a. Now, explain what each of these titles should mean if He really is both of these in your life.

b. Read Luke 6:46. How does this verse give you insight to the word *Lord*?

3. What principle is being taught in John 13:17 and James 1:25?

a. Is it enough to just know what the Word says? Why or why not?

b. Even though the disciples were chosen by Jesus, followed Him, and enjoyed many intimate moments with Him, we read in John 13:2 that Judas Iscariot would betray Jesus. How can you relate the above principle to what we read about Judas in John 13:2?

4. According to the following scriptures, how are we to serve? What needs to be our motivation?

1 Samuel 12:24

Galatians 5:13c

Ephesians 6:5-7

5. It isn't always easy to follow Jesus' example of servanthood. Share a few reasons why we might be kept from doing so.

6. When we fail to offer loving service to others, we are in essence proclaiming that we are greater and more important than Jesus Himself. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.

7. Give some examples of how you can serve others. It could be for your family, your neighbors, your co-workers, or the body of Christ. List them below.

a. Choose one of these examples of service and go do it! Record what and how you will do this.

*“Conduct often lags behind knowledge. Christ being Lord, as well as Master, demands that we shall not only know, but do.”*

*Alexander Bruce*

## Day Three – Servant Mindset

As we continue to study what it means to be a servant, it will be of benefit for us to examine ourselves in light of the subject of servanthood. Today, we will consider how important one's attitude and mind-set are in being a servant.

1. Sadly, we often have a high opinion of ourselves. What does Jesus teach in these scriptures that dispel this wrong thinking? Matthew 20:20-28 and Matthew 23:11-12.

a. Why is this difficult for us?

2. Though this idea of being a servant may sound unattractive, we have much to learn in the scriptures from those who are considered servants. Look up the following verses to see how Paul, James, Peter and Jude describe themselves and record it below. Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1, James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1, Jude 1:1.

3. Exodus 21:1-6 gives a great description of what it means to be a bondservant. Record what you learn in verses 5-6 that gives you a better understanding of a bondservant.

a. How is this relevant to us today?

4. In Philippians 2:7b, Jesus is referred to as one who willingly chose the position of a bondservant. How is this related to what we studied in John 13:1-17?

5. Fill in the chart below by looking at the referenced verses. Record what the verses say about being a servant and how you can apply it to your life.

Verse	What it says about being a servant	How to apply this to your life
Matthew 20:26b		
Romans 12:1		
1 Corinthians 4:1-2		
1 Corinthians 9:19-22		
Colossians 3:22-24		
1 John 3:16-18		



6. There are challenges that we will face as we put ourselves in the position of a servant. Read the story that Jesus told the disciples in Luke 17:7-10. What do you learn from this story? How do you feel about it?

*“Go, labour on; spend and be spent—  
Thy joy to do the Father’s will;  
It is the way the Master went;  
Should not the servant tread it still?”  
Horatius Bonar*

## Day Four – Jesus-Servant

The people of Israel expected the Messiah to come and reign as King, but God's plan was for Jesus to come as the Servant of God. A servant's sole function is that of obedience, pleasing his master and completing the work that's been given to him/her. Jesus is the perfect pattern for all disciples to follow and for those who seek to live in a close, obedient relationship with Him.

1. To understand what the scriptures teach about Jesus as a servant, answer the following questions.

*How does Jesus identify Himself?*

Luke 22:27

*What does Jesus say about His purpose?*

Mark 10:45

John 4:34

John 17:4

2. You have studied what a servant is this week. Now read Philippians 2:5-8 and record how Jesus was the ultimate example of a servant.

a. How does what you've learned about Jesus as a Servant change how you view yourself as a servant?

b. How well are you following His example? Explain.

c. What changes might you need to make to better follow His example?

3. Jesus is the perfect model of the Master-Servant which He taught His disciples to follow. How is this type of teaching viewed by the world today?

4. As we complete this lesson on servant and master, it is helpful for us to see what important truth Jesus imparted to the disciples as He finished washing their feet in John 13:15-17. Record it here.

a. What does this mean to you?

5. End this lesson by writing a prayer to the Lord; share your thoughts about what He has done, the example He gave, and asking Him for help to apply all that you have learned.

*“O Master, let me walk with Thee...With Thee, O Master, let me live.”*

*Dr. Charles H. Richards*



