

A Spirit of Service

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Introduction

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus washed the disciples' feet, thus stressing the importance of humble service (John 13:3-17). In this lesson, let us consider how cultivating such a spirit of service helps overcome an assortment of self-destructive attitudes.

Key to Overcoming Poverty

A spirit of service is key to overcoming poverty. Sometimes physical privation is purely circumstantial; sometimes it is rooted in pathological behavior (Prov. 13:4; 21:25-26; 26:13-16). Regarding the former, we should be sympathetic and supportive; regarding the latter, Holy Scripture stresses the need for changes in lifestyle. Diligence must replace a spirit of slothfulness; exertion must replace a spirit of entitlement; self-control must replace a spirit of self-indulgence. Heeding the inspired apostolic admonition, let us serve others, in sincerity of heart, with good will rendering service, as to the Lord, and not to men (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25).

Key to Overcoming Pride

A spirit of service is key to overcoming pride. Evidencing an inordinate degree of self-confidence, individuals often become arrogant and egotistical (Prov. 16:18; 21:24; 29:23). Deeming themselves superior to others, they become both conceited and condescending. They strive for positions of power, seeking dominance and dominion. Responding to the request of James and John, Jesus condemned such haughtiness, and emphasized that humble service is the path to true greatness (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27).

Key to Overcoming Pettiness

A spirit of service is key to overcoming pettiness. Sometimes people are small-minded and spiteful, restricted in their sympathies, resentful, limiting the assistance they render to others (Deut. 15:1-11; Prov. 23:6-8). In contrast, Christianity cultivates a spirit of compassion, wherein selfishness is displaced by service (Phil. 2:1-8; Rom. 12:6-8).

Key to Overcoming Pessimism

A spirit of service is key to overcoming pessimism. Overwhelmed by our sins and shortcomings, we may sometimes be tempted to give up. Remorseful rather than repentant, Judas acted thus (Matt. 27:1-5). Expressing a similar despair, Paul spoke of the spiritually hopeless condition of man apart from Christ (Rom. 7:14-25), with a subsequent acknowledgement that the Lord can set us free from the sentence of sin and death (Rom. 8:1-13). After thrice denying Christ, Peter wept bitterly, and afterwards, returning to his old life, said, "I go fishing." Yet, on the shores of Galilee, Jesus restored Peter to his apostleship, commanding him: Feed and tend my sheep (John 21:1-17).

Conclusion

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Isa. 53:4-6). Will we benefit from His example? Will we follow His example? Acknowledging Him as Teacher and Lord, may we walk in His footsteps, evidencing a spirit of service in every area of life (1 Pet. 4:10-11).