

January 2000: Servanthood

by Aaron Greenway

When our calendars turn to January 1st, every year we make determinations as to what we will do differently, that we will have more time with family and friends, that we will spend more time with the Lord and in His Word and with His people. In the world, many determine that they will have better health, more money, more things, etc.

Although, we, as believers, ought not make resolutions to seek after money, power and fame, we find ourselves doing this very thing as the year develops. It is easy to look out for our own interests and our own concerns and not bother ourselves with the needs of others.

This is something the Lord has been dealing with me on in the last year and now into the new year, to have a heart that gives when the only thing we gain is a loss. Perhaps, we as the body of Christ, need to determine that we will lose something for the gain of another this year, that we will love those who don't appreciate it, that we will give to those the creme of our crop.

**“Why don't you
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want?”**

Last year, when asked to give some canned goods to someone in the church, I looked through my cupboard. To my shame, I specifically looked for the soups and foods that I didn't want, but the Lord spoke to me, “Why don't you give away the things you do want?” Why do we always give others (and the Lord) our second best and then call that “service?” A servant never serves only when he has something to gain from it. A true servant will give when it is inconvenient. And he will not give the hand-me-downs, but the best.

Why should we receive a reward from our Heavenly Father if we only give to gain some kind of benefit? Many of us, on this e-mailing list, are in ministry and have made decisions to serve the Lord in a full time, vocational capacity. And so it is very easy to say, “Well this doesn't apply to me. I am serving the Lord. I am giving up my life to serve the Lord and others.” But, even this, although it looks humble and acceptable on the outside, can be tainted with selfish

ambitions. There are plenty of ministers (as I have also struggled) who will only serve when it is convenient, or easy, or beneficial or if it looks good in some way. We will only give the leftovers of our ministries to others and not the best. We will bring the weakest lambs to the altar and not the strongest, whitest lambs. We must remember that everything we do to others, we have done it as unto Christ.

Our Savior is the best example of what it is to be a servant. Can you imagine Almighty God coming down to live among filthy, rotten sinners? Can you imagine Almighty God washing someone's filthy, stinking feet?! Can you imagine touching a leper or an adulteress, the most despised of society? Or can you imagine dying a death you didn't deserve for the sake of others?

The Apostle Paul said, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8). What if we were to say that in the New Year we would be willing to lose for Christ, to lose for the sake of another? I think that this kind of heart will really take us into a better understanding of the heart behind the Scriptures and a better understanding of our the Lord's heart.

If we say that we know Him and are only looking out for our own selfish interests, then there is an inconsistency in what we say and what we do. If we are not giving the best blessings and gifts of our lives to others, then we are not servants. And all our serving is nothing more than a facade to give others an impression of us that isn't true. We must ask God to help us to not consider only our own interests, but also the interests of others, even when it hurts (Romans 12:10-13).

Looking out for number one is not what pleases our Heavenly Father, but rather one who will take on the character of Jesus who healed others when it meant His scrutiny, who gave life when it meant His death.