



# Christian Report

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## Seven Marks of a Godly Servant

**Y**ou know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave. (Matthew 20:25b-27)

While the specific ways in which we serve will differ in time, place, and position, there are things that all God's servants have in common.

### A Servant Is Humble

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:3-8)*

Just before his death, Jesus decided to give his followers a clear picture of the attitude they should have. He took off his outer garments,

got a basin, and washed their feet.

The 12 pairs of feet Jesus washed belonged to hairy men who walked rough roads shared with all manner of livestock, in a time before regular road cleaning or daily showers. Cleaning them would be the job of a servant, and a lowly one at that. The disciples resisted the idea that

their master and teacher should stoop to such a thankless task, but Jesus persisted.



*You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also*

*ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (John 13:13-17)*

If Jesus humbled himself in this way—and even further in his death—then we also should be humble in all we do for him and others.

### A Servant Prepares

*Rather, train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come ...*

*(Continued from page 1)*

*Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. (1 Timothy 4:7b-8; 15)*

When you're hiring someone to make important repairs or improvements to your house or car, you want someone who's spent hours learning and perfecting their craft, and is respected in their field. You wouldn't take on someone with no experience.

However, that is exactly what Jesus does. He is taking on complete novices with no real experience in the work of God whatsoever. Provisionally, through Scripture, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of the Church, God offers on-the-job training.

Jesus completed the work of salvation for us on the cross, brings us into it, gives us the Holy Spirit as our counselor, and sets us about his business. He has finished the work of our salvation, but he still calls us to work for his kingdom. Therefore, with gratitude and love, we train to be the most effective servants possible.

### **A Servant Perseveres**

*Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake*



*when he comes ... If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! (Luke 12:35-37a; 38)*

The work we've been given is long and tiring, receives little thanks or recognition, and may seem to count for little while it's being done.

Continuing in such work is a challenge none of us is up to on our own.

But we are not on our own. The Master gives us others to work beside, a glorious future to work toward, and a promise that our work is not in vain. Most importantly, he give us himself, working in us and through us, so that we may be truly ready for whenever he comes.

### **A Servant Serves Where Needed**

*For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them...I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:19; 22b-23)*

Jesus walked hundreds of miles. He likely often slept on the ground. He was pawed at by people. He got dirty. He had to deal with the bickering of his coworkers. He washed his follower's grimy, smelly feet.

He did what was needed to advance the gospel. While pursuing that end, there was no task beneath him.

*(Continued on page 3)*

Likewise, Christ's followers should have no limits to their willingness to serve; whether that means going abroad or going into the not-so-nice part of town; giving to missions or giving up free time; changing a tire or changing a diaper.

## A Servant Serves (or Not) As God Directs

David wanted to serve and honor God by building God a wonderful and permanent house. He drew up building schematics, made plans for all the details of the Temple, and even talked to the priests and Levites to make sure everyone was on the same page. Even with all the preparation he had done, and all the other ways he had served God, 1 Chronicles 28 shows that the Lord did not allow David to build the temple. It was for Solomon, David's son, to build it. David, as God's obedient servant, accepted this and made as much ready for Solomon as he could.

Sometimes the Lord says no to our plans to serve. Maybe there's someone more qualified, or we are already serving in other places. Maybe we don't know why. But we trust and obey God, knowing that "for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

## A Servant Expects to Suffer

*A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like*

*his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (Matthew 10:24-25)*

As Jesus's light shines through us, people who love darkness (John 3:19) will become convicted and uncomfortable in the light of his glory, and will hate and ridicule us. If we truly seek to serve Jesus, it's only a matter of time before we

must share in a portion of his suffering.

But we take heart that someday Jesus will stand in victory, and we who acknowledged him before men will stand with him.

## A Servant Is Not Ashamed

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be*

*ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

The work we do we do is for Jesus, by the Father's command, through the power of his Holy Spirit. We have the privilege to carry the gospel—that Jesus died to pardon sins and rose to conquer death—to the world.

*It is a joyous work we've been given, and we look to the day when our Master returns and says to each of us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23).*

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One of our long-time members and Local Representatives, Douglas “Pete” Peterson, has co-written an excellent study on the parables of Jesus. While it’s true that we love the parables and the wisdom they bring, it is also sometimes true that we may not have studied them as deeply as other parts of the Bible. So with that, we bring a little quiz to test our personal knowledge:

## 1. What is the meaning of the word “parable”?

- (A) A mysterious story
- (B) A familiar idea cast beside an unfamiliar idea to give truth-seekers understanding
- (C) A discourse on two parallel themes.

## 2. What is represented by the thorns in the parable of the sower?

- (A) The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches
- (B) Persecution
- (C) Ailments of the flesh

## 3. The slave who was forgiven much did something astonishing. What did he do?

- (A) Refused to forgive little though he was forgiven much,
- (B) Forgave the debt of anyone who owed him,
- (C) Never got into debt again.

## 4. The Parable of the Slighted Invitation is about people invited to a dinner. What happened?

- (A) Everyone first invited enjoyed the dinner
- (B) Everyone first invited refused to come
- (C) Only one person turned up

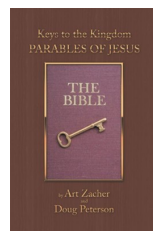
## 5. The parable of the whitewashed tombs represents ...

- (A) Purity and holiness,
- (B) The Pharisees who looked down upon others and promoted themselves as righteous, yet their own hearts lacked humility, justice, and love,
- (C) Outstanding people of wisdom, light, and beauty

Answers: 1. (B) Matthew 7:24 2. (A) Matthew 13:22  
3. (A) Matthew 18:21-35<sup>a</sup> 4. (B) Luke 14:15-24  
5. (B) Matthew 23:27-28 <https://www.simplybible.com/f88d-parables-quiz-30.htm>

## BOOK OF THE MONTH

### PARABLES OF JESUS



No study of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ is complete without an understanding of the parables he taught. Most books that cover parables generally cover the better-known ones. They avoid the difficult, challenging, and obscure.

Art Zacher and Doug Peterson break that tradition in this book, covering dozens of the parables spoken by Jesus. When Jesus shared these parables with individuals and groups, He challenged them to live a godly life—and that challenge is still relevant today.

Each parable is set in its historic setting, with previous and following events noted. The authors reveal where Jesus spoke each parable, who His audience was, and what each one means. Each parable is classified with other parables on the same topic for easy reference.

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