

Ministry101 - Qualities Of A Servant Of God

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[0:00] We're going to look at the subject of ministry.! Paul, as he was Saul then, was heading to create havoc and kill Christians.

And he got turned around on this Damascus road, this road to Damascus, and the Lord met him there. And in Acts 9 verse 6 it says that Paul, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt they have me to do?

Lord, what wilt they have me to do? Paul's crying, Lord, what do you want me to do? That can be our cry today too. And this soul-gripping question should be one we should ask and find the answer to.

What is it? What is it that God wants me to do? Each one of us can ask that of our God. He wants each one of us to serve him.

Serving God. Serving God. At the core, this is what ministry means. To serve. To serve God means that we must be servants.

[1:39] It's been said that there are many who wish to serve God, but only in an advisory position. As if we tell God what to do. But no, he's the one who tells us what to do.

God wants us to be real servants. Each one of us. And I used to work in what was called the CES. The Commonwealth Employment Service. I like pointing people to job opportunities.

And as a preacher back then, I had this sermon called Christ's Employment Service. God's got jobs for people to do. God's got work for us to do.

He's got job openings available now for you to apply for. You have something that you can do for God.

Here. Now. And in this world that we live where it's often a me first mentality, these job openings call for us to have a God first mentality.

[2:41] A mind to serve him. To serve him and others. What will you do for him? That's ministry. We're going to look at that together. What makes a minister?

A servant. And how can we serve God? And the Lord Jesus, of course, he is our ultimate role model, isn't he? He is our example to follow.

So what is it that God's looking for in us as his servants? Really, this is for all of us. Men and women. There's not some select group that are the ministry.

It's every one of us are in the ministry. In this responsibility of serving God. Finding a way to serve him. And doing it with our hearts.

And the Bible speaks of servants often. Of handmaidens. There's a job for all to do. Men and women. To serve God. And to serve our Lord.

[3:39] What does Lord mean? Master. It's right through the word of God, isn't it? So, what makes a minister? We're going to look at some of these qualities together.

I just picked a few that struck me. That make for a good servant. And how we, how you, can be such a servant. For us as God's own people, there's a job for all of us to do.

And it's about really being our best for God. Being our best for God. Firstly, a good servant is available. Available.

Always available. You know, a servant, you know, back in old times, they never really clocked off. They were available 24-7 at the master's call. And a real servant doesn't just serve when it's convenient to.

A real servant does what the master needs him to do then and there. Available. Am I too loud? No? Okay.

[4:41] I've been told off for being a bit loud, so. Forgive me if I get carried away here. But even when it's not convenient, it's about availability, isn't it? The servant of old times, they would be always listening for that call.

That bell to ring, that sound, the sound of the master's voice saying, Come. Listening out for the master to summon him to a task.

And Samuel was such a man. Samuel was available. He made himself available. We see that in 1 Samuel 3 verse 10. He made himself available.

Samuel was sleeping, but he made himself available to listen for God's direction. He was sleeping and he heard this voice, Samuel, Samuel, calling him.

It was the Lord who'd come and stood and called him Samuel, Samuel. It took him a while to get the message, but then it says, Then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy servant heareth.

[5:46] Speak, Lord. I'm listening. I'm hearing you, Lord. Speak to me. Show me your way. What about you and me? Will we be available like Samuel? Samuel was available to be used by God in the service of his kingdom.

What about you? What about me? Will we make ourselves available for God to use us? Will we be like that young boy at Christ preaching who just had five barley loaves and two fish?

Five loaves and two fish. Nothing. Really. Sometimes we might feel like that. What have I to offer? What can I do? What do I have? Why would God want to use me? And even though we feel like that sometimes, even though we feel like we can't offer much, we can give of ourselves, can't we? Just like that young boy did. Andrew said to Jesus, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?

[6:56] Here was this multitude gathered. Listen, it seems so inadequate. So many had to be fair. And we too can feel like that sometimes, can't we?

We can feel like I'm not able. I'm not able. But friends, just say I'm available. God will make you able. God will make you able. Even when you feel like you can't do anything.

It's your availability that matters. Our Lord just asks us to make ourselves available. The boy who made his lunch available to the Lord saw God bless his availability and the multitude was fair.

Will you be available to serve? To let go of other things. To let go of your excuses. To let go of your feeling inadequate even.

If you're not available, maybe re-evaluate. What is making you unavailable? And give up some things. The things that get in the way, give them up. You know, a good servant will make sure that they're ready to bend their schedule and their agenda.

[8:08] You know, the good servant doesn't say to the master, Oh, I can't come right now. I'm busy doing this or busy doing that. They will change their plans. They'll make themselves available.

They'll make it such that they fit in what the master wants for them to do. And so should we of our God. What does God want to bring into our life as God calls us to? What does God want for you? For you to be used of him? Will you make room for God given opportunities? God given opportunities. You know, sometimes things come across our path and it seems like an inconvenience but maybe it's a God given opportunity for you to do something.

I know Brother Bobby and a pony. They were messaging me late at night. It was like 10.30 or something. And then a need cropped up. I came to church and there was a homeless person.

There was a woman lying on the front doorstep of the church. This was 10.30 at night. I was just pottering around like I do at 10.30 at night coming here and sorting things out.

[9:12] And I thought, well, what can we do about this situation? This is unexpected. And so I called Brother Bobby and said, could you make yourself available to come and help me so we can talk to this woman?

So I wasn't on my own. And so we helped this woman and we got her a place to stay so that she was safe for a couple of nights at least so that she was looked after. And we could have seen that woman as an inconvenience.

Bobby could have said, no, I'm not available. I'm having an early night. You know, he could have said, no, I'm not available. But no, he said, yes, I'll come straight away. And his wife. And so I was

glad that they came and helped me with that situation.

We could have seen that as an inconvenience. It's not always convenient to serve God. But we will make ourselves available. That God will be our top priority.

And serving him. That he is the one to whom we've entrusted our resources, our time, our energy, our intellect, our listening, our encouraging words.

[10:10] We can give it all to him. For him to use us. To use us as his servants. To make ourselves available for him. And when we have this heart, even what seems like interruptions will actually be divine appointments for ministry.

You know, don't make your diary so jam-packed that you can't say, hey, I'm going to fit this in. I'm going to do this for God. I'm going to make myself available for those opportunities to serve wherever that I can.

And another quality that we need if we are to fulfil this job opportunity today, this opening for you, this job for you, this opening for you, is this.

Humility. God wants humble servants. In Colossians 3 verse 12, it speaks amongst other things of humbleness of mind.

Humility. Making ourselves humble. Being a humble servant. Means that we will think of others above ourselves. We'll think of others. And the humble will think of God and others first.

[11:17] And himself last. The humble servant will desire to fulfil God's will for his life above anything else. Do we stop and think, what does the master want of me?

What does the master's will mean for me? And to be a good servant, we must surrender our ego. Our ego. Our ego.

Now the Lord Jesus is the ultimate example again of this. In John 13, we see the record of him ministering to his disciples. In John 13 from verse 4, he's there with his disciples gathered.

It's not long before the cross. And it says, He riseth from supper, and he laid aside his garments, and he took a towel and girded himself, like a slave's apron, as it were.

And after that, it says that he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel where he was girded.

[12:23] Here is our Lord. He stoops down to perform the most lowly of the lowest common tasks of a servant. A common servant.

This was the lowest duty of all. Now cleaning someone's, let's face it, smelly feet. It's not the greatest of jobs.

Yet this is what our Lord did. The ultimate servant. Our master. This is what he did to show these people his love. His disciples.

He showed love. He showed that hospitality as a host would serve their guests by washing their feet. He took a towel and he washed their feet.

Twelve pairs of feet. It wasn't a comfortable thing to do, was it? Real servants will put on the apron, as it were, the towel of service, of humility, to serve one another.

[13:26] It says in the word that God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble, those who are humble. He gives grace and blessing to those who are aware of this attitude, the attitude of a servant.

In 1 Peter 5 verse 5, in part it says, Yea, all of you be subject, one to another, the submission there, to one another, and be clothed with humility. He says, put it on like a garment.

Be humble and wear it like a badge of honour to be a servant. For God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble.

What about you? Can we be encouraged today to see what a real servant is all about? Not someone to big note themselves or brag about themselves and all that they've done and how good they are, but they will be real.

They will be real like Jesus was real. They will show that real kind of love, that real kind of humility, that real kind of service. Not a show, but the real deal.

[14:29] And it was not to put an act on, but it was real. And the Lord Jesus spoke about those who just put on an act of their serving God. You know, there were those who wore great robes and finery, and there were those who made a big show about helping others, about giving, about

prayer, turning it into a performance, a show, just to impress people.

And our Lord Jesus hated this attitude, the attitude of the Pharisees. He says, when you do your good deeds, don't do them to be seen of man, to try to show off. You're not going to get a reward from your Father in heaven for that, but do them quietly, in secret, to be seen of God.

And this is what we are to do, brothers, sisters, as real servants, to take on the humble tasks, even when no one is watching. Real servants don't serve to get praise from others.

Paul said, if I was still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. As God's servants, we're not here to please people, but our Master and Lord, and honour Him to be humble.

You know, there's quiet, unseen tasks. There's people that are running here and there, doing things for God, in this church. There's people that I know I can phone, and say, sister, there's a lady that needs a visit, and I know I can count on her.

[15:49] I thank God for her. There's not many like that. I'd like to see some more people say, pastor, I want to be on the visitation team. There isn't a team yet. We've got one.

You know, I want to be, I want to be one you can count on. I want to be one that I can, you can phone me at 10.30 at night, and I'll come. No excuses. I want to be on the team.

I want to be a servant of God. You know, there's lots of jobs to do. There's no end. There's plenty of opportunity for us to serve God. Just make yourself available, and be humble.

Be humble enough to do those things that maybe no one cares about. There's things that need doing that nobody seems to care about. Be humble enough to do those unseen things.

There's caring for the property here. Putting the signs out that someone who's doing that week after week, I can count on him. I used to have to do that. Thank God for Ian driving the bus.

[16:47] I used to have to drive the bus for many years until Ian stepped in to the need. He saw the need, and he was humble enough to say, I'm available, and I'm willing to serve.

So another quality that God wants in our serving is this, that we be wholehearted, wholehearted, wholehearted, not half-hearted, that you've got to be badgered, and hounded, and harassed, and cajoled, and press-ganged into it.

Our Lord wants us to be servants who are willing, wholeheartedly willing, not half-heartedly, but with all of our heart. Our Lord calls us to a zeal, to a fervency.

In Romans 12, 1, it says, not slothful in business, not lazy, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Let us give of our heart. Brothers and sisters, this is to encourage you to have your eyes open to see these things, to be fervent for God.

It's a word that refers to like a boiling pot, a boiling hot. In other words, God doesn't want us to be cold or lukewarm, but to be on fire for God, boiling, fervent, zealous, devoted, to serve God fully from our heart, to not hold back, but serve Him in a full way.

[18:06] And a servant is completely dedicated to serving His Master. This is what God wants for us in our service. Maybe Kangamo, can you just check the air con?

See, I can... Kangamo's available. It's in there, Kangamo. Check the button, make sure it's working. We need people that see a need and meet the need. This is what we need in our church.

A servant is one who's given up all of his rights. There's a real dedication there. When someone's a servant, thanks brother, when someone's a servant, they will give up all of their rights and they'll say, I'm ready to serve.

I'm ready to serve. This is what God wants for us. Our aim as God's servants is to glorify God wholeheartedly and as servants will gladly serve. Will gladly want to please our Master.

This is our joy. Paul writes about servants in the context of daily life and employment in Colossians 3. Of course, in those days, many were serving as servants, as house servants in that setting and it could have been to ungodly masters.

[19:11] But Paul writes in Colossians 3.23, whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men. Whatever you do whatsoever, do it heartily as to the Lord.

And so, as Christian employees, we should have that attitude. It doesn't matter whether the supervisor is watching us. We're going to do it heartily because God is watching us.

We're doing it with His eyes watching us. Not caring about eye service with men's eyes watching us. But we will serve in our jobs heartily as to the Lord.

And it says, verse 24, knowing that we'll receive the reward from Him. So Paul's saying here, whatever you do as God's servants, even as we go about working a job, even our daily responsibilities, let's do it heartily with our whole heart.

with that same commitment to every task, no matter how great or small, no matter how ordinary or seemingly minor, or whether anyone's watching us or not, we will serve heartily.

[20:20] We'll put our hearts into it. This is the heart that God is searching for in His servants. This heart attitude that will have that desire to serve God.

And the size of the task or how important it might seem to others it doesn't matter. It could be something that's very trivial. But we're doing it to please Him so we'll do it right.

We'll do it heartily. There's a commentator called Wust who describes this word servant as this. He says, it refers as one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another.

Now when you're a servant working for a master in a worldly context, your will is swallowed up by the will of the master. And so it's also even to the disregard of His own interests.

That's the kind of servanthood that we're called to. And what matters is what needs to be done. What needs to be done. That's what counts. So our Lord Jesus is again the ultimate example of this.

[21:25] We see that our Lord Jesus He took on those tasks that everyone else tried to avoid. Oh, Pastor wants someone to volunteer. Oh, we just look at our feet. Oh, he's going to pick someone else.

Oh, now I can look up again. That's can be what happens, can't it? Oh, can someone do this? Yes. That's what we should say, isn't it? I'm really having a go at you today, aren't I? But the Lord Jesus, He had this attitude, didn't He? That He washed feet. He helped children.

He prepared breakfast. He served lepers. Nothing was beneath our Lord. Nothing was beneath Him. And He came to serve. He says, I've come to be serving.

I've come as a servant, He said. I've come to serve. And our Lord Jesus expects this of us too. As He says in John 13, after He washed the disciples' feet, He said, I've given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

[22:30] Another quality of a good servant is this, faithful. Faithful. Real servants are faithful in their serving. It's one of the character traits of Moses, for example.

Numbers 12, 7, in part it says, God says of him, my servant Moses is faithful. Faithfulness is defined as firm devotion, as steadiness, of allegiance, of affection, loyalty, constancy.

Our servanthood should be a loyal obedience that will finish the task we've been given. We can be counted on. We're reliable. We will fulfil our responsibility.

We'll do our job fully and completely. We'll be trustworthy and dependable. There is a real quality here, a rare quality. Faithfulness, isn't it?

It's a rare quality. It always has been. In Proverbs 20, verse 6, it asks, Most men will proclaim their own goodness, but a faithful man who can find.

[23:35] People will proclaim everyone their own goodness, but a faithful man who can find. Many people are not faithful. They lack commitment.

It's been said that in some quarters, it's not true of this church of course, that 10% of the congregation does about 100% of the work and the other 90% just let them get on with it.

And we're all faithfully called to serve, every one of us, each one of us here, all of us can find at least one thing to do. Maybe you can welcome people, encourage people, maybe you can teach children, sing in the choir, visit folk in hospital, make that call to encourage someone, make that visit.

Every one of us can pray. Some of us can work with the youth. God can use you to bless others. Faithfulness, it's a quality, a rare quality that God looks for in his servants.

So can you be counted on in this faithfulness, in this commitment? Think of Paul in Acts 28, verse 3, they've just been a shipwreck, what's Paul doing?

[24:46] He's probably, you know, he could have laid back on that beach after just getting out of the deep, out of nearly drowning, he could have

laid back on the sand and just had a bit of a rest, but no, Paul in Acts 28, verse 3, he got busy, he started gathering sticks so they could have a bit of a fire there.

He gathered firewood. This is Paul, the apostle, stooped down and picked up sticks so he could warn the people after the shipwreck.

He was just as exhausted as everybody else. No task is beneath you if you have a servant heart. And so in those little things of life, let's have this eye to being faithful in the everyday things and looking for those opportunities, those open doors of service.

Our Lord wants to develop in all of us this servant's heart to be willing to serve, to serve our heavenly Lord and master in whatever is needed.

So we see these qualities, available, humble, wholehearted, faithful and another quality God wants in us is obedience. He wants us to be obedient servants so that when there's a task that needs to be done, we'll obey God and do what he asks of us.

[26:09] When there's opportunity to serve him, we'll serve where he's placed us and we'll serve well. And as good servants, we'll do what he requires of us.

Because friends, we are under authority. It's a principle that there was a centurion came to our Lord and he says to the Lord Jesus, I'm also a man under authority, having under me soldiers and I say unto one, go and he goeth, come and he cometh and to my servant, do this and he doeth it. There was an obedience that flowed from the authority of the centurion. And we serve the living God, the master, the Lord of all creation and we are privileged, each one, to come under his lordship.

And so, as we come under his authority, let us be glad, obedient servants. As Samuel, Lord, speak, your servant hearer will respond to his will and obey his leading.

another quality is that a servant is consistent, consistent. As God's servants, we are called to be reliable. So, we'll do our very best with what we have.

[27:27] You know, a good servant doesn't make excuses. He doesn't make excuses. He doesn't put things off. He doesn't wait for better circumstances to serve God. You know, some people think, oh, yeah, I'm planning to serve God.

I'm going to get around to it. when this happens or that happens, I've got a bit more free time, maybe when I've retired, I keep putting it off and putting it off until it's a great tragedy.

Friends, let's be consistent and serve God no matter what. Let's not put it off. Now, some people think, oh, yes, I'll serve God when I'm more qualified. You don't need qualifications.

These are the qualifications. And so, serve God no matter what. Of course, we'll try to study, we'll try to be a servant who's in the word and going to the utmost, perhaps Bible school.

But don't wait for that. Don't let that be your excuse. So God expects us to do what we can, whatever we can, wherever we can, whenever we can.

[28:38] It's consistency. Daniel was such a one, he had consistency. He served God even in the midst of a heathen nation. In Daniel 1 verse 8 it says, he purposed in his heart.

Daniel purposed in his heart. He would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Daniel was such a one. He served God even in this corrupt society.

He was consistent. He was a man of biblical convictions. Even though all around him people were bowing to the ways of the world, joining in the boozy ways of those around him.

But no, Daniel was rock solid. He was true and faithful. He'd been taken as a teenager from his family and his people, but he stood alone, he stood consistent. He remained true and faithful to God and firm in following him and believing his word and following it.

He accepted this as the single authority. We have got an authority. It's the authority of the scriptures. It's God's authority for how to live. So let us not be weary but be consistent.

[29:43] Paul writes, let us not be weary in well-doing. It's easy, the hard yakka takes its toll. I used to have hair once. I used to have black hair once.

It takes its toll on you. But don't be weary in well-doing. Don't be weary. Carry on. Keep on keeping on. Don't give up. Be consistent. Be a servant who can be counted on through thick and thin.

It's a quality of God's true servants. Another quality is being sensitive. Real servants will have a sensitivity. What does the master want from me? What are the needs he wants me to fill? Servants will look for the ways that they can help serve others. Have those eyes peeled to see, wow, there's a need. Maybe God wants me to fill it. Here's a need here. Maybe God is sending me here to meet that need. Let's be sensitive to his will and listen for his voice. Seize those opportunities. As Galatians 6.10 it says, as we have opportunity, let us do good. [30:44] When someone comes across your way in need, it could be a God-given opportunity for you to do something about it. So let's develop that sensitivity.

Here's another one, responsibility. God calls us as stewards. It means he's put something in our charge. He's given us some responsibility. He's entrusted us with things to do. There's things that God holds us responsible for. God has given us our bodies to live. Don't damage your body by doing dumb things. Do it.

Look after your body. You've only got one. Your mind. He's given you a mind to think. He's given you hearts to love. He's given you a will to choose. He's given you an influence in many ways. We all exert an influence on other people, whether those we work with or those we communicate with. It says in Romans 14 7 that none of us live to ourselves.

[31:42] No man dies to himself. You've got an influence. You've got an influence. Wherever you walk and live, whatever you do with your life, by the way that you talk, how you live, how you act in circumstances, you are influencing others as God's servant.

So don't do dumb things. Please. Now let's do what's wise and right. So he set a good example. Be a good steward. As parents, we've got a stewardship.

We've got the gift of children. That's a responsibility, isn't it? A heavy responsibility. So let's take note of these things, of these ministries, of these servant responsibilities and one day God will measure what we've done.

And let's hope that one day his voice will say, well done, you're good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord. You've been faithful over a few things he says there in Matthew 25.

Well done, good and faithful servant. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord. Friends, to wrap up, will we have a servant's heart?

[32:54] Will we care enough to serve? Will we have eyes open? Will we learn to be a servant? To be a blessing? With serving comes honour. There's a principle here.

Serving God is right through from Genesis to Revelation. Serving God, Genesis to Revelation. The Lord of Gods, the Master, our God, the Lordship of our God.

Joseph served Potiphar. Joshua served Moses. Samuel served Eli. David served Saul. Paul. Elisha served Elijah. Timothy served Paul.

John Mark served Simon Peter. Serving God is a great privilege. And one day it says that our works as God's servants will be evaluated. Revelation 22, at the end of the book it says, the Lord Jesus says, Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me to give to every man according as his works shall be.

God will reward your faithfulness. Brother, sister, God will reward you. You might be doing things that people don't even know about. God will reward that. God will reward that.

[34:01] It doesn't have to be things you get patted on the back for. 1 Corinthians 4 tells how we're stewards, we're ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God.

And so we should be found faithful. It's required in a steward to be found faithful. So let's make it personal now. Let's get back to Paul on the Damascus Road, just as we think of this, as Paul cried out, Lord, what will they have me to do?

Lord, what do you want me to do? Of course, this was the starting point for Saul who became Paul as he was gloriously saved there. At that moment, as he bowed his will, as he confessed Christ as Lord and Master.

And the next step was, Lord, what would you have me to do? That's the next step. It's not by works we are saved, but because we are saved, we want to serve.

And so let us serve gladly today, with joy. Let's make ourselves available. Let's stop making excuses. Let's say, I'm available. Let's be humble, not that we're here to big know ourselves or brag on, but we'll be humble enough to do the little things.

[35:17] We'll be whole hearted, not half-hearted. We'll be fully wholehearted in our serving. We'll be faithful such that we'll be there. We'll be obedient to God's word.

We'll be consistent so you can be counted on. We'll be sensitive to God's leaning and find those openings, those needs.

We'll be seeing those needs and meeting them. We'll be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. And we'll have that responsibility that one day our works will be evaluated.

And will there be value in those works? I pray so today. Lord, let's so just pray. Lord, we thank you today for each one. We pray, Lord, we'll all have that moment, as it were, as Saul who became Paul had, as he said, Lord, what would you have me to do?

He confessed to you as Lord. He was saved. And then his heart was, Lord, what would you have me to do? Help us, Lord, to find our place of service.

[36:22] Help us to find a way to serve you. Help us despite our inadequacy, Lord. Help us even though we feel like that little boy with the five loaves and two fish and yet you used even him as he made himself available.

Lord, help us to see the need and to meet it. Help each one, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.