

Lord of Our Service



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 10

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: John 13:1-17; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28-13:3; Luke 10:38-42.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘You know about those [people] who are rulers of the nations. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them around. Don't [do not] be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant' ” (Mark 10:42, 43, Nlrv).

IMPORTANT THOUGHT: Jesus gives the perfect example of service. He reminds us that, “ ‘Even the Son of Man [Jesus] did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free' ” (Mark 10:45, Nlrv). God calls us to serve in Jesus' name.

THE CALL TO BE A SERVANT. When we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord, He invites us to follow in His steps. This is not a call to become famous. Rather, it is a call to service. It is a call to have the mind of Jesus. He humbled Himself and took upon Himself the work of a servant. Like the disciples, we often find ourselves fighting for the place of honor or power. But Jesus lovingly reminds us, both with His words and with His life, that “This, however, is not the way it shall be among you” (Matthew 20:26, TEV).

Jesus calls us first to serve Him as our Lord and then to serve others in His name. We will serve out of love for Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us. This is the only service He truly accepts. This is the service born out of a heart of love for God and others.

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 17.

SUNDAY—SEPTEMBER 11**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS
(John 13:1-17).**

Only John wrote about the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not. Neither did Peter nor Paul. But when you read this story, it reminds you so much of Jesus' true character.

How did Jesus' actions in the upper room show His willingness to serve rather than to be served? John 13:1-17.

The foot-washing service is an opportunity for Christians to admit their need for spiritual cleansing through faith in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Jesus made this point clear. He said, " 'A person who has had a bath needs to wash only his feet. The rest of his body is clean' " (John 13:10, NIV). He also said, " 'If I do not wash your feet, you will no longer be my disciple' " (John 13:8, TEV).

The foot-washing service is an opportunity to say Yes again to Jesus as your Savior and Lord. The foot-washing service is also an act of service. Jesus gave the disciples, and each one of us, a perfect example of service when He washed the disciples' feet. Jesus had every right to let someone else wash their feet. But He humbled Himself. He chose to act as a servant.



**Say Yes again to Jesus
as your Savior and Lord.**

Study other times in Jesus' earthly ministry (work) that show His willingness to serve. What can we learn from these stories about the call to service?

Mark 1:32-34 _____

Luke 9:12-17 _____

John 2:1-10 _____

Jesus showed, both in word and action, that He came to serve rather than to be served. He calls you to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him. He calls you to a life of service.

When was the last time you sac-

rificed your time, money, or both in service for someone who had no chance of paying you back? What does your answer tell you about yourself?

MONDAY—SEPTEMBER 12

OUR GREATEST SERVICE (Luke 19:2-7).

There are many good things we can do for others. But the greatest thing you can do is to lead people to Jesus. Jesus is the One who paid for the sins of every person by dying on the cross. We believe every Christian is commanded to share this good news with the world. The question is not *whether* we should witness¹ to others, but *how*. Here again, we can learn from Jesus' example. "Jesus' method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mixed with people because He wanted to do good things for them. Jesus showed His sympathy for them. He worked to meet their needs and won their confidence (loyalty). Then He told them, 'Follow Me.'"—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Ministry [Work] of Healing*, p. 143.

Go through the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to find examples of when Jesus won people's confidence by meeting their needs, and then told them to follow Him. For example, read Luke 19:2-7; Mark 2:15-17; Matthew 12:9-14.

How can you lead people to Jesus by meeting their needs?

Jesus' method of reaching souls took something that many of us do not want to give. That something is ourselves. Often we might be tempted to think that giving a mission offering or passing out a few flyers for an evangelistic series is enough. Doing these things is good. But they are not the same as mixing with people. We must spend time with people and meet their needs. To do this, we need to give of ourselves in unselfish service. That is not always easy. It requires a painful death to self. It also requires a willingness to serve Jesus by serving others. When we take up our cross daily, we will be doing what we can for Jesus through working with others. This is the focus of Christian service. Bible studies, prophecy charts, and reasoning can help people accept Jesus. But meeting people's needs is one of the best ways of helping them accept Jesus.



¹witness—to teach other people about God through words and loving deeds.

Think of persons around you who need to hear about Jesus. How can you use His method to reach them? Are you willing to make the sacrifices needed in order to reach them?

TUESDAY—SEPTEMBER 13

DIFFERENT KINDS OF SERVICE (1 Corinthians 12:28).

We are all called to share the good news about Jesus with others. This is our greatest service. Our work will have results when we follow Jesus' method for reaching people. It is important to understand that the way we serve others will not always be the same. It depends on our personality² and spiritual gifts. We are not all called to do the same thing. We need to die to self for Christian service if we are to accept just what our gifts and callings are and are not.

Write down the different kinds of service listed in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28–13:3. In what ways do you think God is calling you to serve others in His name? Give reasons for your answer.

Every follower of Jesus must ask how God is calling him or her to serve. Here is a way to help you answer that question:

Step 1: Explore other kinds of service found in many of the Bible

stories (Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28–13:3 are not a complete list of kinds of service).

Step 2: Experiment with different kinds of service. As you serve others in different ways, notice your thoughts and feelings. When you serve in a way the Lord has given you as a gift, you will experience freedom and joy.

Step 3: Pay attention to the advice of brothers and sisters in Christ. Christ often uses people to tell you whether or not you are doing well in serving people. Or they can suggest other kinds of service that might work out better for you. Often, their advice and comments are based upon the gifts they see in your life.

How were you able to recognize the gifts the Lord has given you? How are you using those gifts to serve others? Do you need to change how you work?

WEDNESDAY—SEPTEMBER 14

EXAMPLES OF SERVICE (Acts 9:36-39).

The New Testament is filled with examples of men and women, boys and girls, who served others in Jesus' name. Some well-known examples

²personality—the qualities of a person; what makes one person different from another person.

include Andrew. He brought his brother Simon to Jesus (see John 1:40-42). Another is Dorcas, who sewed clothes for those in need (see Acts 9:36-39).

You may find it interesting to read any book of the Bible to find examples of service.

Quickly read through the book of Acts, which holds many examples of service in Jesus' name. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you recognize examples of service you might do in your own life.

When we serve others in Jesus' name, we are following His example. We also are giving proof that He is helping us to become more like Him. We are not self-centered and self-serving anymore. Rather, we find joy in serving others. There is a power in unselfish service for others that nothing can remove. For sinful people who are naturally self-centered and selfish, service does not come easy. Daily surrender to the Lord is very important.

Another important thing is to always keep the Cross in mind. The Cross is the greatest example of unselfish service for others. As we daily think about Jesus' great sacrifice for all of us, our hearts will be broken. In front of the Cross, nothing Jesus asks of us will be too much. Our service to others will be the least we can do for Him. He has said to us, " 'Anything you did for one of the least important of these

brothers of mine, you did for me' " (Matthew 25:40, NIV).

Think about Jesus' sacrifice. This is the greatest example of unselfish service. How does thinking about the Cross influence you to serve others?

THURSDAY—SEPTEMBER 15

THE WRONG KIND OF SERVICE (Luke 10:38-42).

We must be careful not to let our service in Jesus' name hinder³ our relationship with Jesus. We need to keep our relationship with Jesus at the center of our life. Our relationship with Him is the basis of our desire to serve others. If we neglect our relationship with Jesus, we can become proud and think that our service for others can add to our salvation and make ourselves more acceptable to God.

We can become so busy serving others that we have no time to spend with Jesus. A very good example of this is when Jesus visited the home of Martha. In many ways, Martha is a model of faithfulness. She believed Jesus was the Savior, the Son of God (John 11:27). She was willing to keep trusting Him, even when she did not have hope (John 11:21, 22). But one time, when Jesus visited Martha's home in Bethany, she let her service take the place of her relationship with Jesus.

³hinder—to take the place of something; to interfere with something.

How did Martha's service influence her personally and her relationship with the Master? Luke 10:38-42.

Martha was worried. The verb used here in the Greek (translated as "careful" in the KJV) is a strong one. We find this same verb in Philippians 4:6, where Paul warns the believers to "be anxious [worried] for nothing" (NKJV). We find the word as a noun in 1 Peter 5:7. In this verse, Peter asks believers to put all their worries upon the Lord. But Martha was holding on to all her worries. She was anxious. Her mind was not focused on Jesus.

Martha was also troubled. The Greek verb (translated "troubled" in the KJV) suggests she was acting in an angry way. Her service for Jesus was the wrong kind of service. As a result, her relationship with Jesus suffered. Martha missed the opportunity of sitting at His feet and experiencing close fellowship with Him. Instead, she challenged Him with these words: "Lord, my sister has left me to do the work by myself. Don't [do] you [not] care? Tell her to help me!" (Luke 10:40, 41, NIV).

How can we avoid being too "busy" serving in Jesus' name so we do not have a good relationship with Him? Why must we not let anything take the place of our relationship with Jesus?



Do not let anything get in the way of your relationship with Jesus.

FRIDAY—SEPTEMBER 16

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Sometimes, Christians serve others in Jesus' name as if they were in a contest. We can easily fall into the trap of comparing ourselves with others or contrasting⁴ our service with others. Study the following Bible verses that discuss the problem of trying to do better than others in our service for people: Luke 9:49, 50; 1 Corinthians 1:11-13. What lessons can we learn from the teachings of Jesus and Paul?

The teaching of Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46 shows that our service for others is an important test of our Christian experience. The story about the separation of the sheep and the goats tells us about people who are not involved in acts of service to others. They are the ones who will be punished. Why do these verses not contradict⁵ righteousness by faith?⁶ Are acts of service necessary for sal-

⁴contrasting—showing how things are different.

⁵contradict—to disagree.

⁶righteousness by faith—the truth that we are saved through faith in Jesus.

vation? Is it correct to say we must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the sick if we expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven? Explain your answers.



Our service for others is a test of our Christian experience.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. A friend tells you she would like to serve others in Jesus' name. But she feels she is too busy. What advice would you give her?
2. What can you do as a class to show others the caring and serving spirit that is a sign of people who truly follow Jesus?
3. How can we avoid believing that our service for others gives us a better chance of going to heaven?
4. What modern example of serving others has been most inspiring to you? Why?