

Being Hospitable

Philippians 2:3-4; John 13:12-17

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“Who being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather He made Himself nothing by taking on the nature of a servant being made in human likeness.”

Philippians 2:6-7

On His last night before His crucifixion Jesus wanted to teach His disciples one final lesson, not with words but with action!¹ “Imagine yourself for a moment stepping down to the lowest of moral environments into the company of rapists, murderers, and hardened criminals



awaiting execution”² and God expects you have an unquenchable desire to love and serve them! Whom amongst us could ever humble ourselves enough to love those so far “beneath” the lowest of any civilized standard and yet Christ not only emptied Himself and became incarnate but also gave up His life as a ransom for all (Mark 10:45)³ ... yes even for the most sadistic, hateful, and evil people of this world! Knowing “fully the mysteries set forth in the incarnation,”⁴ that He was about to atone for humanity’s sins (1 John 2:2) on a cross and be exalted above all names (Philippians 2:9), how would the Lamb who was slain before the foundation of this world (1 Peter 1:19-20) ever get through to His disciples the incredible significance of the climax of His earthly ministry?⁵ He could

have walked on the water, healed more lepers, the blind or the sick, called on 12 legion of angels (Matthew 26:53) or even raise the dead to point to His supremacy over all things seen and

¹ James Montgomery Boice, [*The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1008.

² James Montgomery Boice, [*Philippians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 105.

³ F. F. Bruce, [*Philippians*](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Peabody, MA: Baker Books, 2011), 63.

⁴ Joseph Parker, [*Mark-John*](#), vol. 21–22, Preaching through the Bible (Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 730.

⁵ James Montgomery Boice, [*Philippians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 105.

unseen (Colossians 1:16) to get their attention but instead of exalting Himself before His appointed time⁶ Jesus took a towel and girded Himself, poured water into a basin,⁷ and used His tender loving hands⁸ to wash the disciples feet! While it would have been easy to wash the feet of the “disciple He loved” (John 13:23), Jesus showed no partiality for He washed Peter’s feet who would betray Him three times (Luke 22:54-62), Thomas’s feet who would doubt His resurrection (John 20:24-29), and even Judas’ feet who would sell Him out for a mere 30 speckles of silver (Matthew 26:14-16)!⁹ Jesus did this humble and selfless act not just to teach the disciples they needed “cleansing from the contaminating effects of sin”¹⁰ but also to show them that their leadership was not to be one that “lords their position over others” (Matthew 20:25-28) but one in which the grace they had received would be humbly and freely given in servanthood to all others!

Hospitable Service

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Philippians 2:3-4

While the world measures a person’s “greatness” based on their acquired power, persuasion, prestige, and position,¹¹ being “great” in the kingdom of God is “measured by a person’s heart of service!”¹² Taking care of the needs of those around us is the “heart of a right relationship with Christ”¹³ and proof that we are indeed His disciples (John 13:35). The Oxford dictionary defines hospitality as “the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors and strangers.”¹⁴ In a biblical sense hospitality can be further defined as lovingly

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Philippians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 105.

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1010.

⁸ Joseph Parker, *Mark-John*, vol. 21–22, Preaching through the Bible (Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 732–733.

⁹ Alan Carr, “[Jesus: The Humble Servant \(John 13:1–20\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1729.

¹⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 1011.

¹¹ Tony Evans, “[The Mindset of a Servant](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

¹² Tony Evans, “[The Mindset of a Servant](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

¹³ James Montgomery Boice, *Philippians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 103.

¹⁴ Taken from the following website:

https://www.google.com/search?q=hospitality+defined&rlz=1C1CHBD_enCA783CA783&sxsr=A0aemvJjY_H3ro1S

servicing to meet the needs of one's neighbors which include fellow Christians and even one's enemies!¹⁵ To value others better than ourselves means servicing them in a manner that takes care of their needs and pleases their hearts. Here in North America we often choose to purchase from those companies that function in a manner that expresses real appreciation for us the consumer.¹⁶



When the person servicing us has a non-caring or outright bad attitude towards us we tend to never return to such establishments but to those places that make us feel welcomed and appreciated we will drive out of our way and pay even more for their goods or services!¹⁷ If the world can service one another with this kind of respect how much more should those who have been grafted into the vine and basked in the grace and mercy of the Father

(Romans 11:11-31)? I am not suggesting there is anything wrong with being served,¹⁸ for love in action is to be reciprocal from God to me, me to God, from me to you and you to me; but merely that genuine love that comes from Christ seeks the interest of others above interests of oneself. Humbly servicing others is not a sign of weakness like this world suggests but strength that one is so in love with Christ that one can always see God's image in others and humbly offer them cups of cold water in His name and for His glory (Matthew 10:42)! It is precisely through our sacrificial giving of our time, money and love that we point the world to the Father who is our portion and the desire of our hearts (Psalms 73)!

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¹⁵ David K. Huttar, "[Hospitality](#)," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1006.

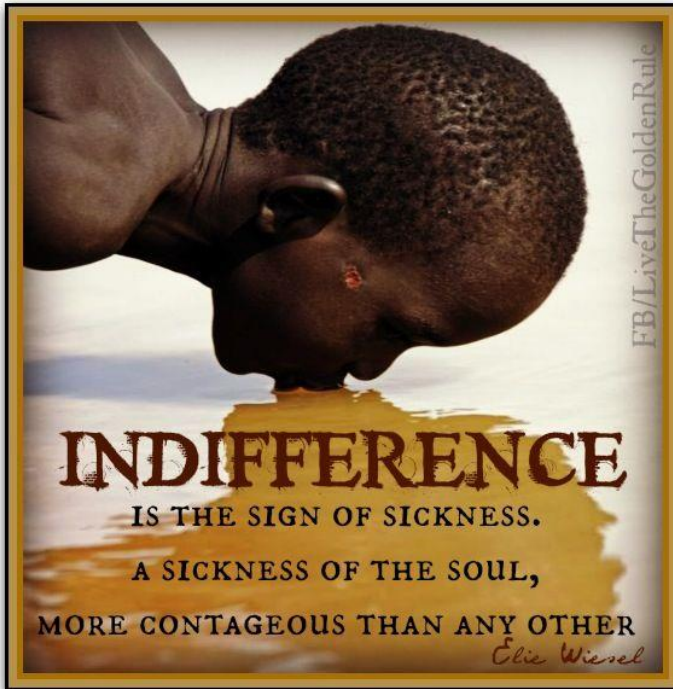
¹⁶ Tony Evans, "[The Mindset of a Servant](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1-11.

¹⁷ Tony Evans, "[The Mindset of a Servant](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1-11.

¹⁸ Tony Evans, "[The Mindset of a Servant](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1-11.

What Keeps us From Serving?

What keeps us from taking the grace we have received and offer it to everyone that we meet? While many redeemed masterpieces of God's grace will say that they are the kind of person who loves people and gives themselves in service to others like Christ did by washing the disciples' feet, very few of them practice hospitality towards one another!¹⁹ Sadly, for



many born-again believers the cross (Matthew 16:24) of humble service is simply too costly to bear! For example, for many believers the amount of effort, time, patience, forbearance, money, and love needed to “walk a mile” of empathy in another person's shoes is simply a price beyond their “sensibilities” or desire to give. They fear that in giving up some of their limited and precious resources they might miss out on some of the pleasures of life. For others, since the world often views hospitality “with contempt because it portrays lowliness, weakness, lack of freedom, servility and subjection,” they do not humbly serve out of fear it will damage their reputation of “greatness.”²⁰ For

others the cost of putting away self-aggrandizement and pride is way too costly because this would require serving the Master, not self!²¹ While none of these costs are near as expensive as Christ's sacrifice on the cross, maybe what holds Christians back the most from humble service is the knowledge that their rewards for humble service are often delayed until they get to heaven (Matthew 6:19-24)! One of the greatest sicknesses of the soul is to become indifferent to the needs of others merely because the costs of service are too high, and one is too selfishly serving the lord of their own life ... themselves!

¹⁹ James Montgomery Boice, [*Philippians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 106.

²⁰ G. Walter Hansen, [*The Letter to the Philippians*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 115.

²¹ James Montgomery Boice, [*Philippians: An Expository Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 106.

Humble Service Begins with a Desire to Please God and not People

Indifference soon melts away the moment the reward of which we seek in humbly serving one another becomes the approval of God the Father in heaven! While those who serve others to please them might get an occasional praise or even a temporary “righteous reputation” it will be short lived and pure vanity because those who clapped today will forget or worse yet boo them tomorrow!²² The reason one serves is not to selfishly receive carnal



rewards but to put into practice God’s law to love one another and in turn receive God’s approval and blessings. To receive what God has promised His own cannot be obtained through idleness and self-absorption, as if one could ever sit in the light while chasing after the darkness,²³ but can only be obtained by obeying the truth in which these blessings reside! While we could say with Peter “go away from me, Lord I am a sinful person” (Luke 5:8) or with Isaiah, “I am a person of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5) in an attempt to disqualify our “fitfulness” to serve,²⁴ this would be foolish for if the dust of the

earth (Ecclesiastes 12:7) is not righteous then repent and be cleansed (1 John 1:9) so that one might fulfill the law of Christ that demands those purchased at the price of His very life (1 Corinthians 6:20) might carry one another’s burdens in love (Galatians 6:2)! Paradoxically the path to greatness in God’s kingdom is not through “introspective, self-absorbed, egocentric thoughts”²⁵ but through humble learning and taking care of the needs of other believers, strangers and yes even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48)! We do this not because we desire rewards from others that are here today and gone tomorrow (Matthew 6:19-24) but because we want to follow Christ’s example (1 Peter 2:21) and let our love and light shine so that we might receive our heart’s desire and eternal reward (Matthew 5:16), adoption as heirs of His glorious kingdom (Romans 8:17)!

²² Tony Evans, [“The Mindset of a Servant,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

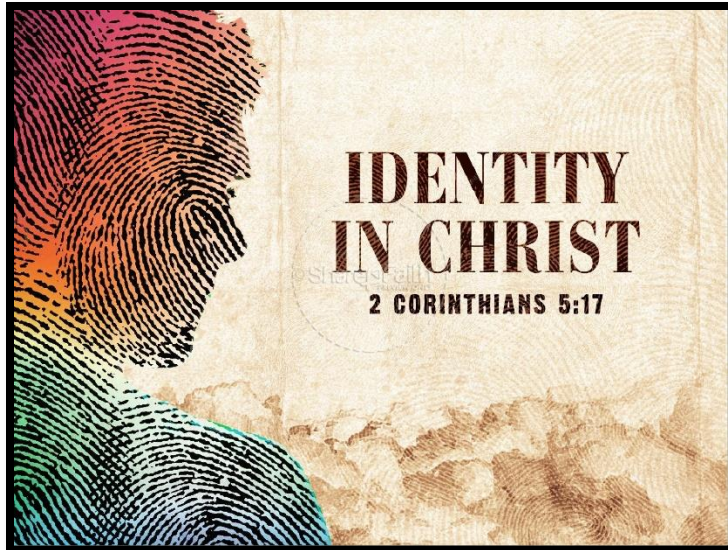
²³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Knowing and Doing,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 59 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1913), 163.

²⁴ James Montgomery Boice, [Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 107.

²⁵ G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 115–116.

Knowing our Identity in Christ

Before we are willing to take the “servanthood bread” from the Master’s table and live by it we must first learn to trust Him to provide for our every need.²⁶ The costs of humble service will always be too high until one knows ones identity and future position in God’s kingdom. The antithesis of vain conceit²⁷ is “Christ-centric worship”²⁸ that in considering the



comfort and the sharing in the Spirit one has received one rejoices over the privilege of looking out for the interests of others (Philippians 2:1-4). After all is not a cup of cold water offered to another like offering it to Christ (Matthew 25:31-40)? When you know your identity in Christ service no longer seems costly but a source of unspeakable joy!²⁹ Spending all that effort, time, patience, forbearance, money, and love to walk a mile of empathy in another’s shoes does not fill a child of God with fear that they might go

without because they have eternity placed by God within their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11)! We are God’s very own children and as such His promise to always do good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28) forever rings within our souls. Whomever and whenever God asks us to humbly get on our knees and wash another’s feet, we will imitate Christ and joyfully lay our lives down.³⁰ We have not been given a heart of fear but faith (1 Timothy 1:7) that says I know that even in death there is victory so none of my work I do for the Lord is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:55-58). And when it comes to a reward for serving, because we know we are God’s children and heirs we will be satisfied and overwhelmed with joy with the spiritual blessings we have received (Ephesians 1:3) and the ones that await us ... but ultimately our heart’s desire and eternal reward is to please and be in the presence of our Lord!

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Knowing and Doing,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 59 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1913), 162.

²⁷ Gordon D. Fee, [Paul’s Letter to the Philippians](#), *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 187.

²⁸ Tony Evans, [“The Mindset of a Servant,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

²⁹ Tony Evans, [“The Mindset of a Servant,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

³⁰ Tony Evans, [“The Mindset of a Servant,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

Unified in Sense of Purpose

If our churches are to be known as families of humble servants deeply and compassionately caring for the interests of one another then a unified sense of purpose³¹ grounded in God's word and Spirit must be the collective goal of each member! Let us be honest due to the constant war between our new and old natures there is a constant desire to



sin that often overwhelms us (Romans 7). "Self-interests and self-aggrandizement" are too often the primary motivations for much of many Christian's values and behaviors.³² If left unchecked even believers tend to seek the "glory of position, power and possessions"³³ and even become jealous, cantankerous, and outright divisive over disparate backgrounds, temperaments,³⁴ social clicks, modes of worship and doctrinal differences!³⁵ In maintaining such

an attitude we not only break Christ's command to wash one another's feet but also witness to the world that self, not Christ, is the desire and ruler of our hearts! Those who have been brought into "a vertical fellowship with God by grace"³⁶ can only obtain a horizontal fellowship with one another of humble service and hospitality by allowing the "comfort, fellowship, love, mercy and compassion"³⁷ they have received from Christ to compel them to jettison their personal agendas³⁸ to seek and obey Christ's will for the church. Apostle Paul states the key

³¹ Tony Evans, "[The Mindset of a Servant](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

³² Gordon D. Fee, [Paul's Letter to the Philippians](#), *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 186.

³³ G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 114.

³⁴ F. F. Bruce, [Philippians](#), *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Peabody, MA: Baker Books, 2011), 61.

³⁵ James Montgomery Boice, [Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 99–100.

³⁶ James Montgomery Boice, [Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 100.

³⁷ James Montgomery Boice, [Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 99.

³⁸ G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 116.

humble service is to be “like-minded” by submitting to the Lordship of Christ (Philippians 2:10-11)³⁹ so that while each member performs their unique functions in the church, they also build each other up in the faith and humbly serve one another! May we never stop sharing the love God has poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5) in a manner that glorifies His name by sacrificially serving in a manner that promotes the washing of the feet of each member of the body equally and sacrificially in love!

The Motivation of Humble Service

True religion is not forgetting to offer the grace and love by which we ourselves got out of the pit of sin that so easily enslaved us to other believers, strangers and yes even our enemies (James 1:27; Romans 6)! “One of the reasons that believers lose the servant’s heart is



that they forget the pit from which they themselves have been freed. See, once you forget the grace of God that you needed, then you are hesitant to give the grace of God to somebody else who needs it.”⁴⁰ The Bible states you will know you have “true religion” when your heart’s desire is to “feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, the lonely,” (Matthew 25:31-46)⁴¹ and take care of the orphans and the widows with the joyful knowledge that offering the lowest of society⁴² these cups of water not only fulfills

Christ’s command to love and humbly serve one another but also is a sweet aroma of sacrifice unto the Lord of one’s life. Hospitable service is one that gives others the place of honor, respects, listens, speaks to, strengthens, and encourages all others.⁴³ It does not waver

³⁹ G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 113.

⁴⁰ Tony Evans, “[The Mindset of a Servant](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

⁴¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Philippians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 103.

⁴² Tony Evans, “[The Mindset of a Servant](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Php 2:1–11.

⁴³ G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 116.

between two opinions, love of self and love of God (1 Kings 18:21)⁴⁴ nor does it express itself in “beatific quietism or sentimental contemplation”⁴⁵ but by the power of the Spirit takes every thought, word and deed captive and obedient (2 Corinthians 10:5) to fulfill the law of Christ by bearing the burdens of those they meet (Galatians 6:2)!⁴⁶ So let me finish with one final and hopefully heart provoking question: when was the last time you washed another person’s feet by humbly offering them the grace and love you have received from the Lord?

⁴⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Knowing and Doing](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 59 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1913), 165.

⁴⁵ Joseph Parker, [Mark-John](#), vol. 21–22, *Preaching through the Bible* (Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 732.

⁴⁶ Gordon D. Fee, [Paul’s Letter to the Philippians](#), *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 190.