

SERVING OUR LORD FAITHFULLY

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“¹⁴ Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. ¹⁵ He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip. ¹⁶ “The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. ¹⁷ The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. ¹⁸ But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master’s money. ¹⁹ “After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. ²⁰ The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’ ²¹ “The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’” Matthew 25:14-21

KEY TRAIT OF THE GOOD SERVANT: FAITHFULNESS - THE ABILITY TO COMMIT & FOLLOW THROUGH OVER THE LONG HAUL WITHOUT GIVING UP

I. WHY IS FAITHFULNESS IMPORTANT?

1. I HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED BY GOD WITH A MISSION OF TREMENDOUS IMPORTANCE

“¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.” Matthew 28:19-20

“¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Ephesians 4:16

2. MY KINGDOM BUILDING WORK WILL TAKE TIME TO ACCOMPLISH

3. I WILL LIKELY FACE SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE CHALLENGES & DISTRACTIONS

“³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

WHY?

Satan, The World, & My Flesh Fight Constantly Fight Against Me

“¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12

“¹⁸ “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.” John 15:18-19

“¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other.” Galatians 5:16

4. BECAUSE I TEND TO GROW SLOWLY OVER TIME, I MUST FAITHFULLY DO THOSE THINGS THAT HELP ME GROW

“²⁶ So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. ²⁷ I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.” 1 Corinthians 9:26-27

KEY: God Usually Has To Do A Work In Me Before He Can Do A Work Through Me

5. FAITHFUL KINGDOM WORK WILL BE REWARDED

“²³ The LORD rewards everyone for their righteousness and faithfulness.” 1 Samuel 26:23

“⁵⁸ So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

II. HOW CAN I BE MORE FAITHFUL TO GOD & HIS KINGDOM?

1. TRUST THAT GOD’S WAY IS BEST FOR ME

“⁸ The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.” Psalm 32:8

“⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. ⁶ Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” Proverbs 3:5-6

“¹² There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.” Proverbs 14:12

2. ADOPT GOD’S PLAN FOR MY LIFE

“¹⁰ For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Ephesians 2:10

“²³ Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23

3. SURRENDER MY LIFE & COMMIT TO A LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS/OBEDIENCE

“³ And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. ⁴ If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. ⁵ But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. ⁶ Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.” 1 John 2:3-6

4. REALIZE THAT LIFE IS A MARATHON, NOT A WIND SPRINT, & WORK HARD TO BUILD DISCIPLINE

“²⁴ Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! ²⁵ All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. ²⁶ So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. ²⁷ I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.” 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

KEY: Every Small Act/Step Of Faithfulness Is Important!

5. CAREFULLY MANAGE MY LIFE

“¹⁵ So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.” Ephesians 5:15-17

MANAGE:

i. My Schedule

- ii. My Spending
- iii. My Input
- iv. My Thought Life
- v. My Company
- vi. My Ministry
- vii. My “Abiding In The Vine” Activities

KEY: My Management Must Be In Full Submission To The Holy Spirit

“²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” Galatians 5:24-25

6. SIMPLIFY MY LIFE WHERE POSSIBLE

“²⁵ That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?... ³¹ “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” Matthew 6:25 & 31-33

“⁶ Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. ⁷ After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. ⁸ So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.” 1 Timothy 6:6-8

“²³ You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is good for you. You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is beneficial.” 1 Corinthians 10:23

7. PRACTICE BEING FAITHFUL EVEN WHEN I DON’T FEEL LIKE IT OR THINK I CAN’T

“⁹ So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.” Galatians 6:9

“²⁶ Jesus looked at them intently and said, ‘Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.’” Matthew 19:26

“²⁹ He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. ³⁰ Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. ³¹ But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:29-31

8. GET SOME ACCOUNTABILITY SUPPORT

“⁹ Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. ¹⁰ If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. ¹¹ Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? ¹² A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

“¹⁷ As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.” Proverbs 27:17

9. DON’T JUST DO MINISTRY FOR MINISTRY’S SAKE; SEEK RESULTS

“⁵ Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing... ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.” John 15:5 & 8

10. REMEMBER: THIS RACE IS NOT THE END, BUT ONLY THE BEGINNING

“⁴⁵ A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. ⁴⁶ If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁸ But what if the servant is evil and thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ ⁴⁹ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? ⁵⁰ The master will return unannounced and unexpected, ⁵¹ and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 24:45-50

“¹ Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ³ For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.” Colossians 3:1-3