

Intro: Continue our series titled: Marks of Victory. If you have your bibles turn with me to Rom 12:1-2. Each week we have been looking at those behaviors that mark the life of an individual, clearly identifying them as a Christ follower. Carpenters have splinters, Concrete workers have dry hands, Plumbers often have green marks from copper, Hairstylists have tiny v shaped cuts and burn marks! Every discipline in life has MARKS!

Thus far we have said Marks of a disciple are clear! Jesus told us that, if you are going to be my follower...you are going to do what I do! *Worship: Prayer: Word: Today ADD Significant Service OR Ministry FOR God TO Others!*

Every Follower Of Christ Serves! Jesus said, The Son of Man came not to be served...but to Serve...and to give His life as a ransom for many! He went on to say...what you have seen me do...you do as well...and even greater things! Follow in my footsteps! Walk the way I walk, do the things I do...SERVE THE WAY I SERVE!

Now, today, I am going to use the term for service and ministry interchangeably. To get a good understanding of what I'm talking about, Look at how Paul defines ministry or service for us in Rom 12:3-8

Now that we know WHAT it is...Let's Talk about WHY we do it! That is what we find in Rom 12:1-8

5 Keys To Understanding True Biblical Service

1. Because Service Grows Out of Salvation.

Vs 1

When you get to Rom 12, There is a switch: From What God has done for US to our response to grace! (Roman Road) Romans 1-12 describes God's work in our life in exacting detail! Then...He says, Ch 12:1: THEREFORE!

- Therefore: Because of everything I said in first 12 Chapters: This is how you should RESPOND!
 - >Ch 1-11 God's Redeeming Work of Salvation
 - >Ch 12-16 My Service in Response To His Salvation
- Reasonable: Lit = *Logical and Rational response "It's the only thing that makes sense!"*
- Worship/Service: In the scripture the word can be translated either way: Grows out of OT Priest

Here is what Paul is saying: If you sit down and consider all that God has done for you...the only logical response is to want to serve Him and worship Him. That is the only thing that makes sense. For Paul, if there is no service on any kind...it would call into question one of two things.

1. Something wrong with your mind: NOT being logical or rational OR,
2. You REALLY didn't experience Rom 1-12 *Whatever you GOT: It wasn't saved!* Because, for someone Reborn; New creature in Christ Service logically grows out of salvation....so if there is no service...Question salvation!

2. Because Sacrificial Service Is What We Are Called To As Follower Of Jesus

Living Sacrifice

Somewhere along the way many have lost the idea of sacrificial service. Should we WANT to serve? Yes Should we enjoy and feel good about what we do...YES Should we try to make it work with our schedule...Yes...But at the end of the day, Serving God is NOT always what we want...NOT always going to make you feel Good, Not always convenient!

- Offer Bodies: Word used of bringing an offering of praise and thanksgiving to God: Jesus Infant: Lk 2
- Living Sacrifice: Instead of offering an animal to be slain as in OT; We are offering living sacrifice: Daily

All too often when we think of Service we think:

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| >What do I <u>WANT</u> to do | >What makes me <u>FEEL GOOD</u> |
| >What is <u>CONVENIENT</u> and works into my schedule | >What am I <u>COMFORTABLE</u> doing? |

The reality is, sometimes service is sacrificial. It was for Jesus, it was for Paul, it was for disciples, will be for you too! Illus: 2 Sam 23 David: *I wish I had water from well "Is this not the blood of the men who went at risk of their lives!" Poured it out! WHY? Because He couldn't imagine treating their sacrifice so lightly...Offered it to GOD!*

In light of that, how could you ever look at what Jesus did for you on the Cross and think: *I am going to serve where I feel good, want to, where it's convenient, and I am comfortable!* How could we ever treat the blood of Christ as if it requires NOTHING of us! David would not even drink a cup of water brought to him in risk, and poured it out as an offering to God. Sacrificial Service is the LEAST we can do for the one who gave His life on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sin!

3. Because Sacrificial Service Is An Act of Worship!

Reasonable Worship

To SERVE God is TO WORSHIP God! This grows out of the OT understanding of what happened when the OT Levites went to the Temple to fulfill their rotation as worship leaders for the Nation of Israel. They had all kinds of roles: Some worked at the doors, others worked with the animals, some played music, all different kinds of duties. Typically during the NT times a Priest would go up to serve in the temple for one week twice a year! Here is the interesting part. One of the major OT words used to describe what the Priest did is translated: Worship/Serve! For the Priest going up to serve in the Temple...to Serve WAS to Worship!

You see when the Priest went to serve in the temple...He was Worshipping! That is why Paul tells us

1 Cor 10:31 *"whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."*

>Teaching: For God

>Encouraging/Counseling: For God

>Children: For God

>Students" For God

>Usher/Welcome Team: For God

>Worship/Sing/Play: God!

Whatever you do in ministry: Do it for Him! That puts a total difference of expectation on you and others!

When you have that filter, and that focus, and that as the guardrails of your actions, ministry comes into focus

4. Because Sacrificial Service Helps Transform You Into The Person God Wants You To Be.

Be Transformed

- Do Not Conform: Lit = STOP being made into the pattern of this world! (Process underway, STOP!)
- Be Transformed: Lit = Be Transformed: Changed: Transfigured: Metamorphosis (From inside out!)

There are a couple of things going on here that I want you to see. Be changed by renewing mind, serving others!

- Change IS taking place...but it is the WRONG change! We are being made into the image of the world!
- Serving others...Ministry...Is ONE of the processes God uses to bring about the change He wants!

Let me say it this way. You cannot become the follower of Christ, the disciple God wants you to be w/o service

Service/Ministry is one of the TOOLS God uses to change you! Left to ourselves, we would do what we want, what we like, what feels comfortable. But when we submit to God, and engage in serving others...He uses that to CHANGE US! Yes He changes them...but in the process of doing that He changes YOU as well! *"As Iron Sharpens Iron"* Both Sharp!

Illus: Just this week I had a conversation with a ministry leader that was struggling. Ministry right now IS HARD! They have been investing themselves in others for a long time. Tired...worn out...struggling: I asked them to do ONE more thing. I knew they were tired..I knew they were exhausted...But I also knew...Sometimes ministry helps us more than them: And this is the note I got after they did it!

"I think today helped me more than it did THEM. I also think you knew it would!"

Ministry Shapes You. And if you opt out of ministry, with all of the pain, with all of the struggle, with all of the burden, with all of the responsibility...you opt out of becoming the follower of Jesus He wants you to be!

When you teach and see the light come on: Changes you. When you work with kids, go to lunch...run and hug you
When a student comes back and says...You made a difference When you reach out, pray, love...see a baptism..change

Illus: Years ago: Darlene and I first married: GA's Will you teach: I have asked EVERYONE: 10 men preparing ministry. 10-12 About missions: I agreed...so much fun: Year or two later: Student ministry: One girls 13 Found boys! Hanging out window...dressed rather inappropriately I tried it as gently as I could: FURIOUS! Changed ME: Do right!

5. Because Sacrificial Service Helps You See Yourself Accurately.

Vs 3

- Not too highly: Lit = Don't be vain and arrogant: Never think: "I got this!" Young Pastors: "Let me tell you God's
- Sober Judgment: Lit = to be in right mind, think accurately and rightly: God HAS gifted you...and YOU CAN!

Key: God Equips those He calls: OR *"If God calls you TO it, then God will give you're the capacity to DO it!"*

Every single person in this room has a God given capacity to make a spiritual difference in the life of others. If you will surrender yourself to God...He will use you in incredible ways! *Issue is not ABILITY...but rather AVAILABILITY!*

Illus: I hear people say all the time: I don't have any gifts. Well: Either God is a liar...or you have a gift. Vs 3: Each

CONCL: Right now...In this Covid Environment, Ministry is hard. The Pattern of the world is to pull back, slow down, stay home, do less. But the call of God to those of us that know Him...It to have our lives marked by service and ministry. We are called to bring hope to hopeless, help to struggling, light to those in darkness. Will you do that? Is 6