

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HOW TO SERVE GOD

A. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE

God has a wonderful plan for your life! When you became a born-again Christian, not only were you transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God, but you were automatically enlisted in the army of God. You have become an ambassador for Christ. As Christians, we have the wonderful privilege and responsibility of serving God and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others. Not only does God want you to be **blessed**, He wants you to be a **blessing**. Not only does God want to minister to you, He wants to minister **through** you to others. Let's look at what the Bible teaches us about serving God.

B. ALL CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO BE SERVANTS

1. Matthew 20:26,27

If we want to be great in God's kingdom, what must we do? _____

2. Matthew 9:35-38

How did Jesus describe the multitude of people? _____

The harvest of souls (unsaved people) is plenteous, but what is lacking? _____

What did Jesus tell us to pray for? _____

Are you willing to be a laborer? _____

C. ALL CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO BE WITNESSES FOR CHRIST

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

What ministry has God called every believer to be involved in? _____

We are called "_____ for Christ."

In your own words, how would you define an ambassador? _____

As an ambassador for Christ with the ministry of reconciliation, what are we to tell people who do not know Jesus Christ? _____

2. Mark 16:15-20 and Matthew 28:18-20

What did Jesus tell us to do? _____

How would you summarize the Gospel, the Good News? _____

GOSPEL: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news. Gospel means good news. The good news is that although we were slaves of sin and doomed to eternal death and subject to sickness and poverty, Jesus Christ through His death on the cross, His shed blood and His burial and resurrection has once and for all released all mankind from the bondage of sin, sickness and poverty. The good news of the Gospel is that through Jesus Christ we can be reconciled to a relationship with our loving heavenly Father.

This is called the "Great Commission." Every believer has been commissioned by Jesus to go into their *world* to tell others the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

3. Romans 10:13-15

Who can be saved? _____

Before a person can call on the Lord, he must _____

Before a person can believe in Jesus, he must _____

Before a person hears about Christ, there must be a _____

Will you allow God to use you to be a preacher of the Good News? _____

4. Acts 1:8

When the Holy Spirit comes upon us (when we are baptized, or filled, with the Holy Spirit), we receive power to do what? _____

In your own words, how would you define a witness? _____

5. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Who are we to serve? (v. 19.) _____

What is Paul describing in verses 20-22? _____

In order to relate to sinners and to become "all things to all men," do we need to participate in ungodly practices? _____

How do we go into all the world and befriend unbelievers, becoming all things to all men, and yet maintain a lifestyle pleasing to God — being in the world but not of the world? (John 17:16.) In your own life, how do you do this?

6. Luke 15:1-7

Who came to hear Jesus? (vv. 1,2.) _____

Who got mad at Jesus for being with sinners? _____

What was Jesus telling us about the priority of finding the "lost" in verses 4-7? _____

Jesus was a great example of being in the world and not of it. He knew how to be a friend to sinners without condemning them; at the same time, He was not dragged into their sin and hypocrisy.

7. Proverbs 11:30

What does a wise person do? _____

Every believer has been given the commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel and to make disciples of all nations. There are lost people all around us. Pray and ask God which of the unsaved people you come in contact with each day you should befriend and begin to share the good news of Jesus Christ with.

In addition to being witnesses for Christ, we need to recognize that God has a unique plan and place for us in His great plan. There is nothing like finding and fulfilling the purpose for which you were created. Let's look at what the Bible says about God's will for our lives.

D. ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD SEEK GOD'S PLAN AND WILL FOR THEIR LIVES

1. Matthew 6:33

In our life what are we to seek first? _____

2. 1 John 2:15-17

What are we told we should not love? _____

What is going to happen to the world? (v. 17.)

What will happen to the person who does God's will? _____

3. 2 Corinthians 4:18

We can live life from a temporal perspective or an eternal perspective.

Things that are seen are _____

Things that are not seen are _____

Are you spending your life and investing your time and energies in temporal or in eternal things? _____

What changes could you make? _____

4. Mark 8:34-38

If we try to save our life and do our own thing, what will happen? (vv. 35,36.) _____

If we lose our life for Jesus and the sake of the Gospel, what will happen? _____

What do you think it means to "lose your life" for Jesus and the sake of the Gospel? _____

This is an area where you need to use wisdom. Some young Christians, in their zeal and because of a lack of knowledge of God's Word, have foolishly *left all* for the Gospel. Some have quit their jobs, left their families, not paid their bills, gone into the streets and preached hellfire and brimstone, while running from their responsibilities as a citizen, as a husband or wife, as a parent and as an employee. Oftentimes these types of people become a menace and a burden to society, and their bad reputation affects the Body of Christ. When they left all, they left their common sense as well. This is not God's plan. This type of lifestyle does not glorify God.

The important thing, as a new or young Christian, is to have a heart attitude that says, "Lord, I give You my life. I will do what You want me to do. I will go where You want me to go. I will say what You want me to say." It may be that the Lord will have you do just exactly what you are already doing, except now you will be doing it to glorify Him.

On the other hand, God does call some people to leave their current vocation and status in life in order to serve Him in a full-time vocation. Often this type of call will include some type of formal ministerial training or an apprenticeship under a seasoned minister of the Gospel. God is not in the business of raising up "flash in the pan" superstar ministers. The type of people God uses are likely to experience years of developing a history with God. Over time, when God counts an individual faithful, He will put them in the ministry. If you sense the call of God on your life, it is wise to speak with your pastor, or an older, mature Christian who knows you. God's timing and His wisdom are important ingredients when it comes to these matters.

E. ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE GOOD STEWARDS

God has given each of us the responsibility of being good stewards of all that He has given us. This includes our time, talents and our tithe (the tithe is ten percent of our income). Let's look at the subject of being good stewards.

1. Matthew 25:14-29

In this passage we see Jesus expects a return on the talents He has given us.

What did the Lord say about those who were good stewards of their talents? (vv. 20-23.) _____

What did the Lord say to the servant who was a bad steward of his talent? (vv. 24-29.) _____

2. 1 Peter 4:10

Who has received gifts? _____

What are we to do with the gifts we have received? _____

Perhaps you wonder what specific things God has given you stewardship over. What gifts and talents has He given you? Each of us is to be a good steward with our time, tithe and talents. To get started in identifying and being a good steward of your time, talents and tithe, ask yourself these simple questions:

How do I spend my time?

What gifts, talents or abilities do I think God has given me?

What type of things do I enjoy doing?

What type of things am I good at doing?

What talents have other people recognized in me?

What are the needs around me that would benefit from my talents?

Can I glorify God with my talents and gifts?

How do I spend my money?

What percentage of my finances do I give to advancing the Gospel and helping others?

F. DEDICATED AND CONSECRATED TO THE WILL OF GOD

As you have studied this chapter on serving God, maybe you have been challenged to give your life completely to the Lord. There is nothing like being totally consecrated to God's plan for your life. There is no freedom like the freedom of totally surrendering to God's will. If

you have never given Jesus Christ the complete lordship over your life and your future, saying a prayer like the one that follows, from your heart, can be your first step toward serving God effectively.

Dear Father God, I come before You in the name of Jesus. I give myself completely to You and to Your will for my life. Lord Jesus, when I see You, I want to hear You say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," so I surrender and yield to You. Have Your way in and through me. Holy Spirit, help me to be a bold witness for Jesus Christ. Help me to stand perfect and complete in all Your will, Lord. Help me to be a good steward of my time, talents and tithe. I will go where You want me to go. I will do what You want me to do. I will say what You want me to say. I dedicate and consecrate myself to You, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

G. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Lifestyle evangelism and disciple-making should be the goal of every Christian. That is, our very lifestyle should be one of leading others to Jesus Christ and establishing them in the basic truths of God's Word. Consider this faith-adventure challenge:

1. Pray and ask God for one or more persons with whom you can share the good news of Jesus Christ. Make a list of your non-believing friends.
2. Pray and ask God for one or more new, or young, Christians that you can help to establish in the basic truths of God's Word. Make a list of your new, or young, Christian friends.
3. Invite these individuals to join you in a thirteen-week study through this workbook. Ask them to commit to a specific time, day and place, once a week for thirteen weeks.
4. Pray and trust God to use you! Teach them what you've learned from God's Word and this workbook.

H. GROUP EXERCISE

Challenge each person in the group to become a committed and vital part of a local, Bible-based, Word-oriented church. Encourage each person to get involved serving God by doing the following:

1. **Commit yourself.** Offer your heart, time, talents and tithe to a local church. Get behind a pastor and a church vision you can believe in. One of the best things to do is let your pastor know that you are committed and available. Pastors cannot read minds. Oftentimes, unless you tell him, he does not know that you are committed and available to serve. Once you have committed yourself, trust God to give your pastor wisdom on where you can start serving.

2. **Humble yourself.** Once you commit yourself to be involved in a local church, take the necessary steps to get involved. Many churches have specific steps that you must follow if you want to serve in that church. Do whatever it takes to be involved. If it means taking a membership class, other foundations classes, or even more, do it. In some churches, this process may take as long as one year, or more. Your attitude during this time of orientation and preparation is important. Keep a humble heart.
3. **Be teachable.** Take advantage of every opportunity for training, growth and spiritual development that the church offers. Never become a "know it all." Stay teachable and you will continue to grow.
4. **Start serving.** Every pastor is looking for faithful people who are willing to do anything that needs to be done. Be faithful in little things. Be on time. Complete your tasks. Keep a good attitude. Work with excellence. Trust God to promote you to the areas where your gifts will best be utilized. The Bible tells us that a man's gift will make a way for him. (Prov. 18:16.) Don't force your way into positions of service. Maintain a servant's heart and God will open the doors He has for you.