

SANCTIFICATION THROUGH SERVING

Mark Mitchell

I. Introduction

A. Goal of this seminar:

“While serving is one expression of godliness, God also intends for it to be a means of growing in Christ-likeness. This seminar will give you faith to see serving others as a gift from God to help you become more like his Son.”

II. Why Serve?

A. Outward Motives

1. “It’s what I’m supposed to do.”
2. “I’m filling a need.”
3. “It’s a way to meet others and build relationships.”
4. “It’s a way to express my gifts.”

B. Hidden Motives

1. “This is an opportunity to promote myself.”
2. “Others will get to see how gifted I am.”
3. “God will love or accept me more because of how I serve.”

C. Biblical Motives

1. To glorify God
2. To demonstrate good stewardship
3. To become more like Christ

III. Sanctification Defined

A. “Sanctification is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the believer throughout his earthly life whereby he grows in grace (1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18; Eph 4:14f) and is changed more and more in mind and heart and life into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:23f, Col 3:10)” - J.I. Packer, *God’s Words*, page 178

B. “Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.” - Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, page 326

IV. Common Misperceptions about Sanctification

- A. Sanctification is something that happens during care group;
- B. Sanctification happens during my quiet time
- C. Sanctification happens while listening to a message
- D. Sanctification happens when I'm ready for it
- E. Sanctification happens when I'm actively praying about my sin
- F. I get to choose the time and place of my sanctification
- G. I get to choose the sins I want to work on and the context in which to work on them
- H. The real truth: Serving is more than we typically think it is. God is not simply at work through me, he is at work in me. God is actively at work in every moment, relationship and situation for our progress in holiness, including serving
- I. Helpful reminders
 - 1. Serving is something we have to learn.
 - 2. Serving is not natural to us. We are naturally selfish.
 - 3. We should not be surprised by our own sin or the sins of team members.

V. Sanctification and Serving

Eph 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Rom 8:29

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Eph 6:5-8

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, **6** not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, **7** rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, **8** knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Col 3:22-24

22 Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Rom 12:1-2

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

How is God seeking to make me more Christ-like when I serve?

- A. Faithfulness (1 Cor 4:2)
- B. Humility (Phil 2:5-11)
- C. Joy (Phil 4:4)
- D. Others-centeredness (Phil 2:4)
- E. Gentleness (Matt 11:29)
- F. Kindness (Luke 6:35-36)
- G. Patience (1 Cor 13:4)
- H. Graciousness (John 1:16-17)
- I. Perseverance (Gal 5:22)
- J. Gratefulness (1 Thess 5:18)
- K. This is not something to begrudge. This is a joyful privilege! God is using the circumstances of my ministry team to make me more like his Son!

VI. Preparing Your Heart Before You Serve

- A. Remind yourself of God's purposes and God's truth before you serve
 - 1. "Lord, use whatever happens today to make me more like your Son"
 - 2. "Being more like Jesus is more important than accomplishing a task"
 - 3. "Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve and be sanctified"

- B. Pray for the people you are going to serve or serve with.

VII. Submitting to the Spirit While You Serve

- A. Cultivate awareness of your heart
 - 1. "What's going on in my soul right now?"
 - 2. Not morbid introspection, but biblical self-examination
 - 3. What is the effect of your attitude on others (e.g. your leader or those you serve)?

 - 4. Situations that Reveal our True Motives
 - a. You believe your idea or plan is better than your leader's
 - b. Your setup or serving fails and it affects others
 - c. Others are honored or recognized but you are not
 - d. Your gifts are overshadowed by another's gifts
 - e. Your gifts are more pronounced than others' gifts
 - f. You're not convinced your leader is going in the right direction

 - 5. Helpful Questions for Evaluation
 - a. How do you respond to encouragement?
 - b. How do you respond to correction?
 - c. How do you respond when things go well?
 - d. How do you respond when things go poorly?
 - e. How do you respond when others are honored?
 - f. What do you do when your contributions are ignored?
 - g. Do you serve for the eyes of man or of God?
 - h. Do you crave the praise of man more than that of God?
 - i. What is our heart posture toward a request to serve?

- B. Cultivate awareness of others
 - 1. Are you actively looking for ways to encourage others?
 - 2. Are you expressing thankfulness to God inwardly and outwardly?
 - 3. What is the effect of your attitude on others (those you serve and those who serve you)?

- C. Cultivate awareness of God
 - 1. His pleasure
 - 2. His justification
 - 3. His power
 - 4. His grace
 - 5. His gospel

VIII. Honoring the Lord After You Serve

- A. Transfer all glory to God
 - 1. Acknowledge the difference between you and God

1 Cor 3:5-8
5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. **7** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. **8** He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.
 - 2. Acknowledge your own unworthiness (Luke 17:7-10)
 - 3. Actively declare that all good has come from him (James 1:17, Acts 17:24-25) therefore all the glory belongs to him
 - 4. Thank God for the fruit of the service
 - 5. Thank God for how he used others

- B. Invite evaluation

- C. Initiate appropriate confession of sin

IX. Modeling the Savior's Servanthood (John 12:20-26, Phil 2:5-11)

X. Recommended Resources

A. "The Cross and Criticism" by Alfred Poirier

<https://secure.hispeace.org/html/artic10.htm>

B. "Humility: True Greatness" by C.J. Mahaney

<http://www.sovereigngracestore.com/ProductInfo.aspx?productid=B3615-00-11>

XI. Q & A