

SUBMITTING TO GOD (AND ONE ANOTHER)

In His time with the disciples, Jesus demonstrated an attitude of service both to God and to all of humanity. From the time of the Old Testament prophets there was an expectation of a new leader (called the Messiah) who would rescue Israel from its enemies. The expectation was the Messiah would be a military leader who would overthrow Israel's enemies with force. Jesus revealed God's intention to rescue Israel (and the rest of humanity) not from political or physical oppression, but from spiritual oppression. As we have learned in other studies, it was through His willingness to sacrifice Himself for our sins that all creation has access to God. This required Jesus to submit to God and give Himself to others. If we are going to be faithful in following Christ, we too must learn the Biblical concept of submission. The Church Father Ignatius wrote:

Few souls understand what God would accomplish in them if they were to abandon themselves unreservedly to Him and if they were to allow His grace to mold them accordingly.

This study is designed to help us understand the wisdom of Ignatius' words.

Washing the Disciples' Feet

Read John 13:1–17.

What does John tell you in verse 1 about Jesus' purpose for washing the disciples feet?

What does John's description of Jesus' authority in verses 2–3, tell you about the nature of submission and leadership?

Why is washing the disciples' feet such a powerful example of submission?

The act of foot washing is an important symbol of servant-leadership. In the ancient Near East, people traveled barefoot or in sandals. You can imagine the effect this would have on people's feet during this time in history. Jesus willingness to wash the disciples' feet illustrates the willingness all Christians should have to serve one another. For Jesus this service would even entail His death on the Cross.

Why does Peter state, "you shall never wash my feet"? What aspect of this lesson does he not understand?

In verses 10–11, John makes a direct reference to Judas' betrayal of Jesus. While Peter represents those who allow Jesus to wash them, Judas represents those who reject the sacrificial gift of Jesus Christ and its related requirement of serving others.

What command does Jesus give the disciples in verses 13–17? What should be the response of those who understand Jesus point?

How can you follow Jesus' example in your daily life?

Read Luke 22:24–30.

What is the relationship between this passage and the previous one?

How is greatness measured in God's kingdom?

One of the primary focuses in Luke's gospel is Jesus' instruction regarding the Kingdom of God. In this passage, Jesus highlights the difference between how the world measures greatness and how God measures it. He also demonstrates the results of kingdom rewards for those who heed His example. The idea of "judging the twelve tribes of Israel" refers to the "new management" Jesus will inaugurate when He returns. This is important to remember because Jesus does even not promise things will go the way we think in the meantime! Jesus was arrested and tried later in this very chapter!

Why is Jesus example so important in this regard?

Read Philippians 2:5–11.

What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

What do you think the phrase "made himself nothing" implies about Jesus?

The Greek word used in this verse means "to empty". Jesus emptied Himself of all His authority and demonstrated true humility and obedience. According to verses 9–11, what will be the result of Jesus' obedience?

What admonition does Paul give to open this passage?

Your _____ should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

How does this passage help you understand the importance of submitting to God through obedience?

Read Ephesians 5:15–21.

What attitudes exemplify Christian behavior in these verses?

In Ephesians 3—5, Paul highlights behavior that should be manifested in a Christian's life. What two admonitions conclude this section?

- 1) Always _____ to God the Father for everything
- 2) _____ out of reverence for Christ.

What does this teach you about the relationship between our willingness to submit to one another and our understanding of what Christ has done for us?

The following section in Ephesians focuses on the importance of submitting to one another in the marital, family and worker/boss relationships. Read Ephesians 5: 22—6:10. Notice how every relationship in our lives is affected by our decision to follow God. (Paul makes a similar statement in Colossians 3:18—4:1) What does this teach you about the importance of submission as a demonstration of obedience? How is our submission to one another a perfect example of our willingness to submit to God?

Going Deeper

Submission is easily mistaken for weakness and can be abused. How have you seen the discipline of submission abused? How can Jesus' example and admonition help you to overcome any fear you might have of submitting to others?

Richard Foster writes that submission frees us “to down the terrible burden of needing to get our own way.” Why is this liberty so important?

Make It Personal

How does the example of foot washing help you to understand the importance of submitting to God? From what you have learned in this study, what is the relationship between submitting to one another and our relationship with God?

The idea of submitting to others is difficult in the world in which we live. Everything our minds and our society tell us goes contrary to this fact. However, as we have seen this is what God requires of His followers. In what areas of your life do you struggle to serve others? How has the teaching in this study helped you to understand the importance of submitting through service?

Recommended Reading

William D. Watkins, *The Transforming Habits of a Growing Christian*.
Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*.

Guide 6

Following Christ



Bible Study Guide

These study guides have been designed to help you deepen your walk with the Lord. Check the Baseball Chapel website for other study guides that are easy to print off and copy.

Other study guides are available at
www.baseballchapel.org