

3 Characteristics of God's Servants

by Zac Poonen

To be a great servant of God, one must become like a little child, humble, dependent, and simple, and serve without seeking to be seen or praised.

Duration: 51:41

Scripture: Genesis 14:18-20, Genesis 14:22, Matthew 6:33, Luke 18:16-17, Luke 22:26

Topics: "Servant Leadership", "Christian Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of serving the Lord and highlights three aspects of serving Him. Firstly, he warns against negative influences such as the power of money and the power of the soul. Secondly, he encourages believers to have a childlike and servant-hearted attitude in their service to God. Thirdly, he draws from 1 Corinthians 4 to explain the difference between being a teacher and being a father in the faith. The speaker emphasizes the need for simplicity in our speech and lifestyle, and the importance of not seeking to impress others but rather to have a mind like that of a child.

Transcript

In the last session, we were thinking about serving the Lord, and we spoke about certain negative things that should not be found in our life, the power of money and the power of the soul, dangers to avoid. We want to look at something positive now. We get rid of the negatives.

How then should we serve the Lord? First of all, let me turn you to a verse in Matthew chapter 18. Jesus said to his disciples when they asked him this question, Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus said, He called a child to himself, Matthew 18, 2. And stood him in their midst and said, Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Now this was so contrary to the disciples' understanding of greatness. Because they had for many years grown up in the synagogues where the older a man became, the more he knew of the Bible, the more capable he was as a speaker of something, he was considered great. And if you were to ask Peter, James and John, before they met Jesus, who were the great men, they would have mentioned the names of some of the old Pharisees in the synagogue.

And they come to Jesus and find that Jesus doesn't even care for those elders and those leaders. And he says, You must become like a little child. The values that Jesus presented were so totally different from

that of the religious world.

Today we have the same religious world that existed in Jesus' time in the synagogues with the same type of rulers, with bishops like Nicodemus, who need to be born again. But there is no one like Jesus to go to them and say, You must be born again. Everybody is scared.

That's the only difference. But the world is still the same. The religious world is still the same.

And unfortunately, young people look at all this and think that this is Christianity. And what they need is to go back to the scriptures and see who is the greatest person in a church. Is it the man with the greatest Bible knowledge? Is it the man with supernatural healing powers? Is it the man who is a great leader of an organization? Come back to the scriptures.

And you find Jesus saying, Whoever becomes like a little child, he is the greatest. Now, if I were to ask you today, who is the greatest person in heaven today? And who will be the greatest person for all eternity? We know the answer. The Lord Jesus.

God has given Him a name which is above every other name, and He is the greatest person in heaven. And if the greatest person in heaven, Jesus said, is the one who humbles himself as a child, Matthew 18, verse 4, then that must prove that Jesus, during His entire life on earth, He lived like a little child, dependent on His Father. This is the greatest person in God's kingdom.

There are many things we can learn from little children. Do you want to be a servant of God? Okay. First of all, let's learn from a little child.

To be a servant of God, Jesus said, you want to be a great servant of God? A really great person in God's kingdom? Then look at a little child. Don't look at these great preachers and great men. What all can we learn from a little child? I've sometimes thought of a, looked at a little baby lying in a cradle, two months old, and I thought, what are the thoughts going on through that, the mind of that child? Is he thinking, oh, what a great, smart person I am? Do you think those are the thoughts going through his mind? Everybody's admiring me.

Nothing of that. He's just so happy, he's not thinking of how great he is, or how clever he is, or what a great work he's doing, or what other people think of him. That's the mind of a child.

You want to be great, in God's kingdom? Seek to have a mind like that, which when you are at rest and alone, you're not thinking of what a great work you did for the Lord, or what an important person you are, and what people think about you, and how smart you are, and that's not the thinking of a child. Those are the thinking of adult people who have gone far astray from God. The message of the gospel is, become like a child.

And you can become like a child by the power of the Holy Spirit. Simplicity. Where you're not thinking about what other people are thinking of you.

That's very, very important. That's what we can learn from a little child. What else can we learn? A child, a little baby lying in the cradle, he can't remember the harm that you did to it yesterday.

Supposing you go and give that baby a very hard pinch, hurt it, and it starts crying. And you were just evil, just wanted to hurt it. And next day, when you come and look at that child, he'll smile at you.

He doesn't remember that you're the one who pinched him so badly yesterday that he was crying. How blessed it is to be like a child. Adults remember.

Adults will remember 20 years later, this is the fellow who pinched me in 1978. But not children. They don't remember even what happened yesterday.

Do you want to be great in God's kingdom? You think you're going to become great that will only make you great in the eyes of men. If you want to be great in God's eyes, be like a little child. Meditate on what a little child is.

And say, Lord, I want to be like that. Humble, small, with no sense of accomplishment. You know, we have a sense of accomplishment maybe even at the age of 20.

You've accomplished something. Maybe you can play an instrument or sing well or preach well. We accomplish as we grow up.

And the more we have accomplished, we read about Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 4, that he looked out at this great kingdom of Babylon that he had built and he said, what a mighty, isn't this great Babylon that I have built for my glory. But a two month old child, what can he boast about? What has he accomplished? He has accomplished nothing. He cannot think of any accomplishments.

Do you want to be great in God's kingdom? Be like a little child. With no sense of, I have accomplished this. That is all Babylon.

Everybody who thinks that I have done such a great work for God and I have blessed so many people and I have done this, that and the other, it is all Babylon. Beware of such thoughts when they come into your mind because your thoughts will finally mold your character. And the more you think about your accomplishments, the more proud you will become and the more you will lose the grace of God.

Paul said in Philippians 3, forgetting the things that are behind and pressing forward to the things that are ahead. Now many people when they read that verse, they only think of forgetting our past failures. In fact that verse is very often quoted to people who have been failures.

It can be. It is a very good verse to quote to people who have messed up their life and say, well you have confessed your sin, God has forgiven you. Forget the things that are behind and press on.

But I want to quote that verse also to people who have been successes in their ministry, in their life. Forget the things that are behind. Press on.

Many times I think, Lord, I want to serve you today as if I have never served you for a single day in my life so far. As if this is the first day I am serving you. With no sense of accomplishment Lord, I want to preach a sermon today as if it is the first sermon I am preaching in my whole life.

No sense of having done something for the Lord. Forgetting the things that are behind and saying, Lord, I have got just that much left for you. I want to do something for you.

If I am 59 years old today, I want to say, Lord, I want to think as though I have done nothing. But at last, in the little time left, I have the opportunity to do something for the Lord. And that produces in me a tremendous zeal and passion to make the most of the little time I have left.

But, if you constantly look back and say, well, I have done so much for the Lord and you congratulate yourself, you are going to lose grace. No. Who is the greatest in God's kingdom? Not the one who accomplishes so much, but the one who has the mind of a little child and who says, what have I got which I did not receive? What have I done which God did not do through me? I cannot boast about anything.

It is humility that is the greatest thing in God's kingdom. The more humble you are, the greater you are in God's eyes. Not the more you have accomplished.

In the world, people measure people by accomplishment. Some great scientist, some great political leader, look what he did for his country. Some great preacher, look how many people he has brought to Christ and how many sick people he has healed and how many millions he speaks to.

You see these advertisements of great preachers. They tell you all the countries they have traveled to and all the millions of people they have spoken to. It is alright for other people to say that, but if you yourself feel like that about yourself, then it is dangerous.

You cannot stop other people from saying things, but if you yourself feel, this is what I am, this is what I have sacrificed, this is what I have done, then you are a child. And that hinders your usefulness in God's hands. Let me tell you something else about a child.

A child is very dependent. It cannot be independent. When it is a baby, its mother has to do everything for it.

It is a life of dependence. An adult is not dependent. An adult is independent.

And Jesus' humility, the humility Jesus spoke of here, is a humility which brings a life of dependence upon God. Lord, I can never do anything without you. It is impossible.

I can never do anything without your support and strength and help. I am always dependent on you, Lord. There is an amazing statement that Jesus made in John's Gospel, chapter 5, which shows how he had that attitude of a child.

John 5, verse 30, I can do nothing on my own initiative. Verse 19, the son can do nothing of himself unless it is something he sees the father doing. And later on, he even said, even the words that I speak John 14, verse 10, the words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own initiative, but the father abiding in me does his works.

Do you see there? Jesus was so dependent on the father, like a child dependent on his parents, saying, Father, what do you want me to say? At the trial, the father said, say nothing. He kept quiet. The ladies wanted to stone a woman caught in adultery.

And they came to Jesus and said, what shall we do to this? Moses said, you must stone such people. They wanted to find out whether Jesus would support the law or be against the law, so that they could trap him. For Jesus, life was very simple when a question like that came.

Like a little child, a small child will go to his daddy and say, Daddy, some people have come to ask you a question. He goes and tells them. So Jesus was like that.

He said, Father, what shall I say? Tell them, whoever is without sin, throw the first stone. So Jesus said, whoever is without sin, throw the first stone. That is the end of the argument.

You know, when you listen to God like a child, you say, Lord, I'm not clever. I'm clever in earthly things. Give me wisdom.

The father will say, and with one sentence, we can solve a problem which a huge sermon can never accomplish. A child's life, this is what faith is. Faith is a life of helpless dependence upon God.

That's the greatest person in God's kingdom. A humble person has no difficulty in depending upon God like this. No grudges, no sense of accomplishment, no ability to do so many things oneself.

The biggest problem makers in all churches are people who have not understood what it is to be like a little child. I've seen that in many churches that I have seen. The biggest troublemakers are the clever people, the smart people, the people who have not understood one percent of what Jesus taught of becoming like a little child.

The most useful, effective brothers and sisters in a church are the ones who know what it is to be like a little child. Do you want to be a blessing in God's kingdom? Wherever you go, be like a little child. Your cleverness and your smartness is the thing that becomes an instrument in the devil's hands that's destroying it.

Be like a little child. It's my advice to you. I don't know how many of you will take it because the world doesn't teach that.

And unfortunately the spirit of the world has come into the church and even into Christian leadership and Christian workers that they know nothing of what it is to be like a little child. A child is helpless. You know, if somebody comes, a big man comes and hits a child, he's a father.

And that's how God wants us to be. Jesus said, don't resist evil. When you are attacked, don't hit back.

Go to your father and say, Lord, what shall I do? When they called Jesus Prince of Devils, he never said anything. He spent long hours with his father. He would slip away into the wilderness because he was like a child.

He needed to hear what God was saying to him. Do you find people like that? You know, now I say one more thing about a child and that is, you know, if you hear children speaking, they're very simple. They're not complicated.

I feel a lot of preachers and servants of God are so complicated. I myself can't understand what they're saying sometimes. Don't ever seek to be like them.

The greater you are, the more simple you will be. You will be able to speak like a little child. Maybe with a tremendous depth of wisdom because you walked with God so many years.

But when you express it, you will not be making people terrified or impressed with your heavy wisdom. I've always felt that the best mathematics teacher is the one who can explain a problem very simply. The best chemistry teacher and the best Bible teacher is the one who can make the Bible so living and so simple.

Seek to be like that all your life. Start when you're young. I remember when I was very young, I said, Lord, I want to preach like you did.

I don't want to preach like the great preachers of my time. I want to preach like Jesus did, simply, clearly, so that the youngest and the smallest and little children can understand. If you will be like that and not follow all the great so-called Bible scholars, you'll be a blessing.

Otherwise, you will be like the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' time who couldn't help anybody. Now, another thing Jesus said, we've spoken about if you want to serve God, you must be like a child. Secondly, the kings and the Gentiles lord it over them and those who have authority over them are called benefactors.

But it must not be like that with you because the greatest among you must be like a child or the youngest and the leader must be as a servant. So if you want to serve God, you must be first of all like a child and secondly, you must be like a servant. Now, there's a lot of difference between being a servant and being a benefactor.

In Genesis 25, he speaks about a benefactor. Now, benefactor means someone who does good to others but makes those people feel very conscious of the fact that I have done good to you. You know, they like sometimes some rich businessmen or they call them philanthropists.

People who've got a lot of money and they give money for the poor and they have a fund with their name. So and so name, fund or foundation. For centuries, they want everybody to know that I'm the one who did this.

You see that sometimes in church buildings. This chair was donated by so and so or this fan that's going round and round and name is there going round and round also. People who have given must know.

They are benefactors, they are not servants. And when you serve God in such a way that you want people to know that you're the one who did that, you want your name to be known, you want yourself to be projected, you may do a lot of good. For example, the philanthropists in the world, they do a lot of good.

They build hospitals, orphanages, but their name will be there. Their name is there. Even you go to some Christian institutions, you'll find that.

This block was built with somebody in America who was given that money and that person's name is there. They are doing a lot of good, but they are not servants. They are benefactors.

And Jesus said, the Gentiles are like that. It's true, every heathen businessman who does good to other people, they are like that. But Jesus said, you must not be a benefactor, you must be a servant.

It's possible even without that, for example, when you help a poor person in a church. You can either be a benefactor or a servant. A benefactor is one who makes that person feel.

You won't say it like that, but you give that impression. I'm a rich man, but here I'm giving you some money for his insecurity and his lack of dignity because he's poor. And you have further humiliated him by making him more aware that he's poor.

You've robbed him of his dignity as a human being. That's why in our church I say to the brothers and sisters, when you want to help a poor brother, don't give it to him directly. Put that money in an envelope, write his name and put it in the offering box so that the treasurer will pass it on to him and he won't even know who gave it.

That way you preserve his dignity. And if you want to give it to him next month, use a different color envelope and a different color pen and disguise your handwriting so that he will not know it came from the same person. That way you preserve his dignity.

Do it a different time the third month. You can give him every month. You can give it to different people and vary the amount.

We must be wise to preserve the dignity of another human being. You know, benefactors don't care for the dignity of human beings. They just want to get a satisfaction themselves.

I have helped so many orphans. I have helped so many sick people in my hospital. And there are preachers like that who get some satisfaction.

I have done so much for God. These are all benefactors. It is not like that.

Servants serve and disappear. Think of a... Supposing you have a servant girl in your house and you have got guests coming there to the table. How does that servant girl work in the house? Does she blow a trumpet and say, I am bringing the rice? She will quietly come and keep it when nobody is looking and disappear.

Anything, whatever you do, is quietly done. If she sweeps the floor, she won't come when the guests are there. When the guests have gone, sweep the floor and go away.

The guests never see. That is a servant. A good servant is never seen.

The rice is on the table, the floor is swept, but you never know when it is done. Do you want to serve the Lord like that? Or do you want to serve with trumpets and coming in such a way that you may serve? But you are not serving the Lord. You are serving yourself.

Do you want to be like God? God's nature. The Bible says we are made to partake of God's nature. And one very important part of God's nature we read in Isaiah 45 is this.

Isaiah 45 verse 15. Truly, thou art a God who hides himself. O God of Israel.

That has really thrilled my heart. God is a servant. And one mark of his being a servant is he never behaves like a benefactor.

When he does something for me, he doesn't blow a trumpet and say, listen, I'm doing something for you. In fact, he does so many miracles in our lives and sometimes people think, oh, that was a coincidence. What do you mean coincidence? That was an answer to prayer.

The only thing is, God did it in such a hidden way that you thought it was just accidental, coincidental. That person happened to come at that time. He didn't happen to come.

God sent him in answer to your prayer. But he did it in such a hidden way that you didn't even see him. You see how God has hidden himself in the universe in such a wonderful way that there are people who are atheists.

There are people who don't believe that God exists. That is how cleverly God has hidden himself. When the sun rises every morning, he doesn't blow a trumpet and say, hey, do you know who's making the sun

rise? It's me.

A servant. God is a servant. Do you want to be like God? We say we want to be like God.

But we want to show ourselves. We don't want to hide ourselves. God hides himself.

He doesn't get any credit from these atheists for what he has done. People never thank him. Some of us get disturbed when we serve others and they don't thank us.

God is never disturbed. When you are a benefactor, you are disturbed when people don't come and say thank you very much. That was very kind of you and they must write letters of thank you and all that.

But 99% of the world never thank God for all the things that he has done and he is not disturbed. He still continues to bless them the next day. That's the spirit of a servant.

Quietly do something and disappear. He would walk around Israel quietly serving, helping people. He would heal the sick and say don't tell anybody who did it.

I'm glad that you are healed. He didn't heal people in order to pull them up to the pulpit and make them all give their testimony so that everybody can see I'm a great healer. No.

He was happy the person was healed. He said don't tell anyone. So different from the benefactors who are in the Lord's work today.

And if you look at the benefactors, you'll become a benefactor yourself. Look at God. How quietly he served and moved around Israel.

Sometimes once we read he walked 50 miles. Do you know how long it takes to walk 50 miles? At least one full day. He didn't go by bullock cart or horse or anything.

He walked from Galilee to Tyre of Sidon. And there he was led by the spirit that was outside Israel. He healed one Syrophenician Canaanite woman's daughter.

Not even a Jewish woman. A Canaanite woman's daughter who was demon possessed. That's the Canaanite woman who said let me get the crumbs that fall from the table.

Healed her. Walked 50 miles back. This is service.

How many people will walk 100 miles to help one heathen woman's daughter? This is the Jesus we say we are serving. We must have his spirit. The spirit of service.

When he spoke to the woman of Samaria he did not embarrass her. He spoke to her and brought her to salvation. He was always like that.

He never humiliated people. He served people. He served and disappeared.

You know the Bible says in the Old Testament they had the priesthood of Levi. And that was a grand priesthood. Aaron's dress was all fantastic dress.

Very impressive. People could be proud to say I am of the tribe of Levi. I'm going to be the next high priest when my father dies.

But in the New Testament we read that God has got rid of that priesthood of Levi. Have you read that in Hebrews 7? And you know what the New Testament priesthood is called? The priesthood of Melchizedek. Now Melchizedek is Jesus is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

What does that mean? Well Melchizedek is mentioned only one place in the Bible and that's in well it's mentioned in the Psalms where Jesus is called by that name in Psalm 110. But otherwise the real Melchizedek is in Genesis 14 and you read about him in verse 18 to 20. It's just about three verses.

That's all there is about Melchizedek in the whole Bible. And that man who's mentioned only three verses in the whole Bible Jesus is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek. And you need to understand what it means because we are junior priests under Jesus our high priest of the same order.

Listen to this. Abraham had just come back from a battle with 318 servants he had fought the armies of many kings and defeated them with the power of God rescued his nephew Lot who was captured and in those days the rule was if you won a battle all the property of the enemy was yours whoever won the battle that was the rule in Old Testament times.

So Abraham could become all the loot of so many nations and secondly he could be proud that with 318 not even soldiers but servants I fought and slaughtered these soldiers of a king and rescued my there was two dangers that Abraham was facing at that time pride and covetousness and thirdly he was exhausted somewhere in that area in Salem Jerusalem there was a man who knew God his name was Melchizedek he was in touch with God and God spoke to him and said take a little food and go in that direction there is another servant of mine coming that way who is tired exhausted who needs a little food go and give it to him and not only food he needs a little message from you to save him from his pride and to save him from his covetousness go to him and tell him two things your God possesses heaven

and earth that will free him from his covetousness your God is the one who puts enemies into your hand that will free him from his pride don't give him a big sermon on pride and covetousness no need do it in a gracious way we are talking about the priesthood of Melchizedek so Melchizedek goes Genesis 14 verse 18 he first of all brings out the food to exhausted Abraham and meets his first need his physical need and then he blesses him he doesn't give him a sermon he puts this message it's a tremendous example of graciousness and gentleness in giving a man a message without even rebuking him he says blessed be Abraham praise the Lord of God most high possessor of heaven and earth and a little seed is dropped into Abraham's mind that my God possesses heaven and earth so why do I need all

this loot which I have got here and blessed be God most high who has delivered your enemies into your hand and another seed gets dropped into Abraham's mind I didn't get this victory myself and then what does Melchizedek do he just disappears you never see him again in scripture he is gone and then the king of Sodom comes and says to Abraham well Abraham according to the rules of war I will just take the people you can take all this property and see what Abraham says I have sworn to the Lord God most high possessor of heaven and earth where did he get that title from possessor of heaven and earth it was what Melchizedek had put into his head I have sworn to the Lord God possessor of heaven and earth that I will not even take a thread or a shoelace lest you say you have made Abraham rich

where did he get that how did he get protected from making a mistake there with the right word a prophetic word and it was one sentence the whole message just takes a few seconds and Abraham was delivered delivered from covetousness and he said I will take nothing and from pride you see what the ministry of Melchizedek is a hidden ministry to be sensitive to the physical and spiritual needs of people around us

and God prompts us to go and meet that physical need with food perhaps or in some other way to serve them physically maybe wash their feet that is also the ministry of Melchizedek their feet are dirty wash their feet if they are hungry give them food it's a question of meeting their physical need whatever it is and then give them a word but don't give it like in a rebuking hard way

as though they are you rob them of their dignity say it in such a gracious way that they don't even think it is a message but you put a seed in their hearts and that saved them from covetousness maybe from lust maybe from pride maybe from jealousy maybe from something or the other that they were in danger of going into in a few moments when the king of Sodom comes that is the priesthood of Melchizedek that's how Jesus lived all through his life alert sensitive to the needs of others meeting that need and disappearing how many of you want to be junior priests of this great high priest I want to but you won't get name you won't get fame you won't get honor maybe somebody else will get the honor for what you did are you happy you do something and somebody else gets the credit for it praise

the Lord your reward will be even more when Jesus comes again the question is where do you want your reward do you want it now you want the acclaim of people then you'll never be a priest according to the order of Melchizedek forget it go become a priest of Levi you'll get your tithes and you'll get your honor and all that now I believe if we can be gripped by this and say Lord I want to be like this this is real prophetic ministry to be alert sensitive to what God is saying and to care for the people if you want a prophetic ministry to people my dear brothers and sisters the number one thing you need is a heart that cares for people if you care for people you care for their burdens you put yourself in their shoes and you try to understand what they're going through God will give you a

word that will bless them liberate them set them free straight from heaven God will give you money to give them because maybe they need money maybe they need food maybe they need a lot of God's people need material things that's also part of the ministry of Melchizedek but not as a benefactor but as a servant Melchizedek is a servant it's a priesthood of being a servant how many of you want it and not just right now when you think about it but say Lord all my life I want to be a servant of others at the end of my life I want to sit at the feet of my junior workers and wash their feet I want to sit at the feet of those who have come to the Lord through my ministry and wash their feet that's how I want to end my earthly life that's how Jesus ended his earthly life can you do better than

that and I don't want anybody to know that it was I who did it I don't want any honor I don't want any credit I don't want anything I don't want to be a benefactor okay now a third thing I want to say we must if you want to serve the Lord we must be like children we must be like servants and this the third one 1 Corinthians 4 we must be like fathers 1 Corinthians 4 Paul says verse 15 even if you have 10,000 teachers you don't have many fathers you know there's a lot of difference between a teacher and a father he says here verse 14 I am not writing these things to shame you but to correct you as my children because he says I am not a teacher I am a father you know a teacher may say things to shame you that happens in many schools some student does something wrong and the teacher doesn't

care for the feelings of that student and publicly humiliates him I remember in the school where my children used to study they told me once of a poor boy there who was an orphan who did little badly in the maths examination his marks were very low and the teacher asked him stand up and tell everybody how many marks you got what an evil thing to shame a person like that a father would never do it a father will cover his child's weakness or nakedness or failure but a teacher will expose it shame the person publicly there are 10,000 teachers for one father in Christendom that's the proportion that's what it says here and

it's very it's much easier to be a teacher than a father to just rebuke and correct without any heart but to be a father that's different you want that child to develop

think of a father who's got a child that's weak in maths or physically weak he's always wanting that child to get better but a teacher would say well get out of this class if you're not good enough go and join some other school father will never talk like that a father wants that child to develop and come through into a good and glorious life and it's very easy when you preach the word to be a teacher than a father to shame people you know a teacher another thing about a teacher is a teacher will be very upset if you point out something wrong in what they have done I'll never forget how one of my boys pointed out to his maths teacher in school something wrong that she taught she never forgave him for the next rest of his school life and not only him she never forgave his younger brother

also for your older brother pointed out a mistake that I made once in the classroom a father would have said oh thank you son that's right I was wrong there thank you for pointing it out but not a teacher a teacher feels humbled that a student can point out something wrong in me I'm gonna get my own back on him one way or the other and if he's got a younger brother I'll get my own back on that one too are you like that? and somebody much younger than you points out something in your life which is not Christ like questions your interpretation of the word of God and you have a feeling that he's right and you're wrong and you hadn't thought about what he said but you're not humble enough to say yeah maybe you're right you know I hadn't thought about that you want to preserve your dignity

your prestige and then you try to get back get your own back on him and trying to say that he's wrong in so many ways that's a teacher God wants fathers fathers who care who don't shame think of the father of the prodigal son I see two things in that father one is that when his son rebelled and went away he allowed his son to learn some hard lessons you see that's also the love of God that father loved his son so much that he never sent him any money order in that far country never sent him any food packets allowed him to struggle allowed him to come to the level of the pigs so that he'd learn a lesson that is also love sometimes we can have a foolish type of love think of that story of the prodigal son when he was in the far country and you if you were his next door neighbour and you saw

this poor boy living with the pigs and every day you give him good food what would have happened? he would never have gone back to his father's house then would you have been serving God's purposes or the devil's purposes the devil's purposes sometimes your so called human love serves the devil's purposes that is soulish love it's not divine love there's a lot of soulish love in the world that hinders God's purposes in other believers a prodigal who needs to go through a rough time because he's rebelled against God rebelled against authority thought too much about himself and you feel kind and you say you must be nice to him sometimes you know as elders I know we have to discipline somebody because he's been like a prodigal son and then there are other immature foolish carnal believers

who say no we must be kind to him and these prodigal sons gravitate towards those foolish carnal believers and find some sympathy with them and the end result is years go by and this prodigal son never comes back to the father's house there's a lot of this type of foolish carnal soulish love which goes under the name of love and goodness which does not help people at all the father's love was I won't send him any food packets yeah he's struggling but he still hasn't learnt his lesson fully let him come down to the level of the pigs then he will come back you know there are a lot of people who leave the church and are disciplined and they want to come back like maharajas God will not receive people back like that you've got to come back like the prodigal son and say I'm not fit to be in

the church I'm only fit to be in the servant's quarters and not just with false humility but really feels that that's the time that a person is ready to come back to his father's house and true love will allow a person to be out there till he has come to that place do you understand that? if you're soulish you'll never understand it since 75% of people in the church are soulish and carnal they don't understand this but that is part of the father's love see there are two types of backsliders one is like the lost sheep who went astray by mistake with such a person we have to go after them and bring them back that was not rebellion that was they got deceived and went astray but the other type of backslider is the one who rebels and goes out you should never go after him the father never went

after the prodigal son let him come back on his own when he's learnt a lesson and if you don't have discernment you're not a father if you live by rules you see the christian life is not a book of rules you're led by the holy spirit we need to understand and the second part of the love of the prodigal the father for the prodigal is that when he did learn that lesson and come back the father embraced him loved him more than anybody else could love him and showed him his love and said I'm not going to remember your past anymore he never held any grudge against his son you need to learn these two aspects of fatherhood if you want to be a christian leader if you're mature if you want to have discernment look at these examples of fathers and see how jesus did it how jesus taught it this is

what god looks for in us be a child be a servant be a father don't wait for people to be grateful to you serve them care for them carry them in your heart and help them to come through to the life god wants them to have if your concern is for others and you're not seeking your own you can be a union be a useful servant of god in this land and god needs many many people like that there's much more on this the holy spirit will teach you as and when the time comes in your own life let's pray while i head about in prayer i want to ask you has god spoken to your heart do you want to be a true servant of the lord then respond to his voice in the areas where god has spoken to you and say lord i want to serve you i really want to be different from much that i see in christendom today i want to be

a true servant of god help me in jesus name amen

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