**THINGS THAT DISTRACT US FROM SERVICE**

Sunday School Lesson 9

*Servants of Christ*

Mark 4:18-19

10/1/2023

**Lesson Recap:** With just two lessons left in our series on service, we are going to look today at the things that often distract us from serving the Lord as we ought to. Last week, we looked at five areas of service that we must not lose sight of. First, as servants of Christ, we must not lose sight of the purity of service. We have a holy calling and a holy service. We are called to be holy as God is holy. We must stay obedient to the principles of God’s Word as we serve Him. A servant behaving in an unholy manner will not please our holy God, no matter how many things we accomplish. King Saul is an example of this. Second, as servants of Christ, we must not lose sight of the preference of service. We looked at the example of Mary and Martha. In the midst of her service, we see that Martha lost sight of where her focus in service was supposed to be. They had brought Jesus into their home to fellowship with Him, but she was frustrated at Mary for keeping her preference of service in the right area. We must remember that we are to prefer Christ above all in our service. Third, as servants of Christ, we must not lose sight of the purpose of service. Regarding the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the church at Corinth had lost sight of the purpose of those gifts and their service in them. Paul had to remind them of their purpose to the Gospel. We must remember the purpose behind our service to Christ. Fourth, as servants of Christ, we must not lose sight of the plainness of service. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments. If someone claims to be a servant but does everything against God, that person is not being truthful. Fifth, as servants of Christ, we must not lose sight of the profit of service. Serving Him is more valuable than anything.

1. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LET THE LOVE OF MONEY DISTRACT HIM FROM SERVICE.**

* Luke 9:3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. 1 Timothy 6:10, 17-18 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; The pursuit of wealth has distracted many saints of God from serving Him as they ought to. The love of money is the root of all evil. It causes men to behave wickedly and selfishly. It is singularly minded, as it causes men to focus only on their objective of wealth (even at the harmful expense of those around them). This behavior is the opposite of that which a servant of Christ ought to have. Paul instructed Timothy to charge those who are rich in this world to not be highminded but to be rich in good works. We ended the previous lesson being reminded of our need to keep focus on the profit of service. When we allow ourselves to be distracted by material wealth in this world, it prevents us from staying focused on the incorruptible rewards awaiting the servant of Christ in Heaven. We must be vigilant in guarding against the distraction of wealth.

1. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LET HARMFUL CURIOSITY DISTRACT HIM FROM SERVICE.**

* 2 Thessalonians 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 1 Timothy 5:13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. 1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Jeremiah 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Have you ever noticed the natural curiosity of mankind? If not, then I guess this point might be moot for you! Consider how curious children are. They come into this world with a curious eye, and they are constantly learning from the things around them. This is why everything is a food item to a young child! As people, what are we supposed to do with this curiosity? We are supposed to direct it toward the Lord. We are to search after Him with all our heart. This curiosity should feed our desire for God, His Word, and His wisdom, but what happens if we direct that curiosity in worldly directions instead of Heavenly directions? Well, the result is an idle servant who is a busybody. In 2023, a busybody might look a bit different than a hundred years ago. We can become distracted with what everybody else is doing and never even leave our own home to find that distraction! Servants of Christ must direct our curiosity to Christ.

1. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LET AN APPETITE FOR ENTERTAINMENT DISTRACT HIM.**

* John 12:9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. Luke 11:29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. Psalm 84:10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. The early church did not have to deal with the entertainment distraction caused by television, cell phones, and video games, but they still did have their own struggles with letting entertainment distract them from service. Consider that the people and the disciples had something much greater to entertain them than anything you or I could see today. They had the miracles of Jesus Christ. We only know what is recorded in the Bible, but it’s clear from Scripture that there were many other things done during Christ’s earthly ministry. Every day was a highlight reel of supernatural events. We know that the crowds did not follow Jesus because they truly believed. They were watching the show. It ought not to surprise us that even the disciples struggled with service early in their discipleship. We must be careful not to allow an appetite for entertainment to distract us from serving the Master.

1. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LET RELATIONSHIPS DISTRACT HIM FROM SERVICE.**

* Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 1 Corinthians 7:32-33 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. All throughout this lesson series we have considered the need for servants of Christ to balance pleasing God versus men with the command we have to serve and love one another. When it comes to our relationships with others, we must ensure that we do not allow those relationships to distract us from serving the Lord. This can be very challenging. Husbands and wives are commanded to love each other. Parents and children should love each other and have a good relationship with one another. Fellow believers in the church ought to have a love for one another. We just finished a lesson series on relationships, so we know how important relationships are in our lives. In what ways do we have a tendency to let relationships distract us from our first obligation to serve Christ? First, too much social interaction in our relationships can distract us from time needed to be spent serving the Lord. Second, negative peer pressure in relationships can distract us from serving the Lord.

1. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LET DISCOURAGEMENTS DISTRACT HIM FROM SERVICE.**

* Mark 4:16-17 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended. Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Deuteronomy 1:28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. Sometimes, our biggest distraction can be the discouragements that come along as we are serving the Lord. This is why we are warned to grow weary in well doing. Consider what the children of Israel were called to do. The Lord was going to use them to judge the people of the land of Canaan. They were going to drive these wicked nations out, and God was going to give them this promised land. Unfortunately, the people were very distracted by all of the discouraging events that happened along the way, and it kept an entire generation from serving the Lord as they ought to have. The disciples allowed the discouraging events of Calvary to totally debilitate them from serving God. Peter was done with his service, and he was going to return to fishing. The Lord had to encourage them to continue. Maybe someone is discouraged today in their service to the Lord. Don’t let it distract you. The Lord is good to His servants, and He is always faithful. Trust Him in the work that He has called you to do.

1. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE MUST SERVE THE LORD WITH SINGLENESS OF HEART.**
2. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE MUST EXAMINE WHO WE ARE TRYING TO PLEASE.**
3. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE MUST SERVE THE LORD WITH GOOD WILL.**
4. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE MUST SERVE THE LORD WITH JOYFULNESS AND GLADNESS.**
5. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE MUST NOT ALLOW LAZINESS AND APATHY INTO OUR HEARTS.**
6. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, OUR SERVICE IS A WILLFUL ACT OF SUBMISSION TO THE LORD.**
7. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE UNDERSTAND THAT OUR MASTER PAID OFF OUR GREAT DEBT.**
8. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE OWED NOTHING FROM THE LORD.**
9. **AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, WE OUGHT TO SERVE AS A SON SERVES HIS FATHER.**
10. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF MEDITATING ON THE MASTER’S WORD.**
11. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF LOOKING TO DO THE MASTER’S WILL.**
12. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF INSTANT OBEDIENCE TO THE MASTER.**
13. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF COMING AND GOING WHEN WE ARE CALLED AND SENT BY THE MASTER.**
14. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF LOOKING UPON THE MASTER’S WORK WITH THE SAME CARE THAT THE MASTER HAS FOR IT.**
15. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF TAKING CARE OF THE LITTLE THINGS.**
16. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF SERVING OTHER PEOPLE.**
17. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF AVOIDING UNNECESSARY STRIFE.**
18. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF FEARING THE MASTER IN ALL THAT WE DO.**
19. **SERVANTS OF CHRIST MUST BE IN THE HABIT OF WATCHING FOR THE MASTER.**
20. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST IS SOMEONE WHO CONSTANTLY STRIVES TO THINK LIKE CHRIST.**
21. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST IS SOMEONE WHO HOLDS HIMSELF ACCOUNTABLE.**
22. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST IS SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT HAVE REGARD FOR HIS REPUTATION.**
23. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST IS SOMEONE WHO DOESN’T GET DISTRACTED BY TRIVIAL THINGS.**
24. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST IS SOMEONE WHO MUST BE CLEAN FOR SERVICE.**
25. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD THROUGH THE WORK OF PRAISE.**
26. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD THROUGH THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL.**
27. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD THROUGH THE WORK OF PRAYER.**
28. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD THROUGH THE WORK OF GIVING**
29. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD BY CARING FOR THE NEEDS OF OTHERS.**
30. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD BY OFFERING SPIRITUAL EDIFICATION TO OTHERS.**
31. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD BY THE PREACHING AND TEACHING OF HIS WORD.**
32. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD BY BEING AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS.**
33. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST SERVES THE LORD BY DOING EVERYTHING HEARTILY TO THE LORD.**
34. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE PURITY OF SERVICE.**
35. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE PREFERENCE OF SERVICE.**
36. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE PURPOSE OF SERVICE.**
37. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE PLAINNESS OF SERVICE.**
38. **A SERVANT OF CHRIST MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE PROFIT OF SERVICE.**

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Romans 6:20-22 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.