

A Model Servant

Introduction. A model is something we consider ideal. The models on television and other advertisements have perfect faces and figures. The same kind of definition applies to servanthood. The model servant is one which stands as an example to all others.

Paul wrote a letter to the Galatians relating to them the events in his life. Chapter 2 relates the story of the meeting in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-29), and it is in the course of these events that we see how Paul demonstrated the qualities of a model servant.

I. ***He Respected Authority (Galatians 2:2)***

- A. We all realize that the crying need today is people who will recognize authority. So many religious bodies ignore authority and distort God's message (2 Peter 3:15-16).
- B. Paul understood the need of authority (cf. Jeremiah 10:23). He stressed that during his first 17 years he had preached the gospel without any human instruction, relying instead on divine revelation (Galatians 1:11-12, 16-17).
- C. In order to "rightly divide" the truth, one has to understand the "chain" of authority.
 1. Authority originates with God (James 1:17-18; Hebrews 1:1-2).
 2. Authority comes through Christ (Matthew 17:5; 28:18; John 12:47-48).
 3. Authority was delegated to the apostles (John 14:26; 16:13-14; 1 John 4:6).
 4. Authority is contained within the scriptures (James 1:25; 2 Peter 1:3-4; Jude 3-5).
- D. Both testaments clearly teach the seriousness of following the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; 5:32; Joshua 1:7; Proverbs 4:27; 30:5-6; 2 Kings 22:2; Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Colossians 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3; Revelation 22:18-19).
- E. Just about everyone has met someone who is ready to stake their eternity based on a personal claim without any scriptures to back that belief.
 1. One of the pleas of the restoration was, "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." God wants us to follow the scriptures just as closely as He wants us to follow Him.
 2. If people understood and respected that level of authority, and are "hungering and thirsting after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6), it would not be nearly as difficult to set up Bible studies and talk with people.

II. ***He Refused To Be Overawed (Galatians 2:6)***

- A. While he rejoiced in the other apostles' concurrence, and while he sought their approval, he did not believe that he was inferior to them as an apostle, or dependent on them for the correctness of his views (1 Corinthians 15:9; 2 Corinthians 11:5).
- B. Paul knew his allegiance rested with the Lord, not with men (Galatians 1:10). It is difficult for us to look to a Being who is not visible. Because of this we find it difficult to take a stand against people who are close to us.
 - 1. Parents (Matthew 10:37).
 - 2. Friends (1 Corinthians 15:33).
 - 3. Elders and preachers (1 Peter 4:11).
 - 4. Teachers (Acts 18:25).
- C. We convince ourselves that surely no one as smart and experienced as they could be wrong. Because we may have to stand against people who are close to us, young Christians need their own faith so they can be bold (1 Corinthians 16:13).
- D. God does not show partiality (Acts 10:34). My opinion and beliefs mean just as much as yours, which in turn means just as much as anyone else. Do not let disagreement intimidate you into changing your convictions if you have really studied and are sure of your beliefs. A dangerous path that some go down is the one Jesus illustrated as the blind leading the blind -- both will end up in a pit (Matthew 15:14).

III. ***He Knew His Special Task (Galatians 2:7-9)***

- A. I would hope that anyone who is a Christian would be conscious of their special task. As a child of God, you are set apart to perform duties for the Lord (2 Timothy 2:21). Exhortations to duty are common in the New Testament.
 - 1. Remain faithful (Revelation 2:10).
 - 2. Teach and baptize other people (Matthew 28:19-20).
 - 3. Worship with the saints (Hebrews 10:25).
 - 4. Live a holy life (2 Peter 3:11).
 - 5. Help those in need (Galatians 6:10).
 - 6. Be constant in prayer (Luke 22:46).
- B. Paul understood that the greatest work he could do in his life was not tentmaking, but being God's servant. When he set out to be His servant, he was a good one because he was conscious of what he had to do. He set his mind to the task and he kept it there.
- C. We have obligations when we become Christians. We have to work, and believe me, there is plenty of work for us to do. Successful people have goals and they work hard to attain them. Being a successful Christian is no different. Setting your mind to the task and keeping it

there will enable you to do so much work for the cause of Christ. The greatest work you can do is not what you do 40 hours a week, but what you do for the Lord (Psalm 112:1).

Conclusion. During World War II, England needed to increase its production of coal. Winston Churchill called together labor leaders to enlist their support. At the end of his presentation he asked them to picture in their minds a parade which he knew would be held in Picadilly Circus after the war. First, he said, would come the sailors who had kept the vital sea lanes open. Then would come the soldiers who had defeated Rommel in Africa. Then would come the pilots who had driven the Luftwaffe from the sky. Last of all, he said, would come a long line of sweat-stained, soot-streaked men in miner's caps. Someone would cry from the crowd, "Where were you during the critical days of our struggle?" And from 10,000 throats would come the answer, "We were deep in the earth with our faces to the coal." It is often the people with their "faces to the coal" who help the church accomplish its mission.

The apostle Paul certainly shows us how to be a model servant. He knew the importance of service, and we can learn from his example and be pleasing servants of Jesus Christ.