

Going The Second Mile

Introduction. During the New Testament times, the Roman military had the right to compel Jews into their service, kind of like a policeman commandeering your vehicle today. Imagine if you worked at a roadside market and a soldier commanded you to stop everything, immediately pick up his backpack and carry it for one mile without question. Would it disturb, irritate, and annoy you? You would have to leave everything and submit to his demand. You would lose valuable work time and maybe even your goods would be stolen while you were gone. Not only would you have to march, transporting a heavy load for one mile, but you would have to hike one mile back. Instead of being bitter, angry, and complaining about what you have to do, Christ challenges you to go beyond what is expected (Matthew 5:41). We will examine some practical ways to go the second mile in serving God.

I. ***With Your Family***

- A. Homes that are filled with self-serving parents and self-centered children will explode with conflict. Fathers, do you spend as little time as possible with your children, or do you shower them with attention and lead them to Christ? Do you let your children run wild or do you train and admonish them in the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)? Husbands, your responsibility to your wife does not end with your paycheck. You provide for her, but do you nourish and cherish her (Ephesians 5:29)?
- B. Wives, do you nag, criticize, and belittle your husband or do you love, honor, and respect him (Titus 2:4; Ephesians 5:33)? Do you fight tooth and nail against your husband or do you submit to him "as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22)? Mothers, do you do the bare minimum required of a homemaker or do you rise early and work willingly to care for your home (Proverbs 31:13, 15; Titus 2:5)?
- C. Children, do you do your chores halfheartedly, trying to get away with doing the least amount of work around the house, or do you go the extra mile and do more than is expected? Slothfulness is not a good trait to develop in youth (Proverbs 10:26; 15:19).

II. ***With Your Job***

- A. Are you lazy and indifferent about your job? Yes, you are showing up to work, but are you working with all your might (Ecclesiastes 9:10)? Do you work hard only when others are watching? A Christian does their best even when no one is looking because they live to a higher standard (Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3:22-25).
- B. Have you decided not to give your best because you have been unappreciated or mistreated? Jesus expects a second mile effort even then (1 Peter 2:18-20). Those of you who work in positions of

authority, do you take advantage of those who work under you (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1)?

III. ***With Your Brethren***

- A. As a Christian, you are enlisted in the Lord's army with fellow soldiers (Ephesians 6:10-18). How are you fighting? Are you leaving your brethren to fight on the front lines while you retreat? Are you doing your share? Imagine the strength of the church if every Christian wanted to go the second mile. Do not squeak by with doing the least. Go the second mile and attend faithfully even when you think you have too much to do or you do not feel 100%. Teach classes. Serve your brethren. Care for the sick. Get involved.
- B. What about when brethren discourage you, let you down, and sin against you (Galatians 5:15)? Will you hold a grudge the rest of your life, or will you go the extra mile with love, patience, and forgiveness (Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-13)?

IV. ***With Your Prospects***

- A. What kind of efforts are you making in sharing the gospel with the lost? Do you think, "We put an ad in the paper and a sign by the road. That is enough. If they are interested in Christ, they will come," and that ends your efforts in evangelism? Inviting someone to a gospel meeting once or twice a year does not absolve you of your responsibility to teach the lost during the rest of the year (Mark 5:20; John 12:20-22). You would want others to go the extra mile to save you from physical danger, but will you go the extra mile to save others from spiritual danger (Jude 22-23)?
- B. The prophets relentlessly attempted to turn God's people back from certain destruction. Paul was so determined to spread the gospel that he traveled thousands of miles through Asia and Greece to save the lost. Stephen preached the gospel even when it cost him his life (Acts 7:59). New Testament Christians were so committed to teaching the lost that they continued spreading the gospel even when they had been kicked out of their homes (Acts 8:1, 4). Will we compel them to come in (Luke 14:15-23)?

V. ***With Your Enemies***

- A. If the first several points of this lesson have been difficult for you to accept and act upon, the last point will not be any easier. Jesus tells us to go the extra mile for those who hate us (Matthew 5:44-45; 26:52; 1 Corinthians 6:7).
- B. You may not retaliate or return evil for evil (Romans 12:17, 19; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9), but do you love your enemies? Will

you go the extra mile and do something good for those who do you harm? Will you take the time to pray for those who abuse you? This is important because your relationship with God depends upon it. God's children love even their enemies.

Conclusion. While you are contemplating the full implications of what Jesus asks you to do for Him, remember that He went the second mile for you (Philippians 2:5-8). Jesus bore the cross and walked to Mount Calvary to be crucified for you. Will you now bear your cross and follow Him (Luke 9:23)?