

CHAPTER 14

THE PARADIGM OF THE CROSS IN SERVICE

JESUS AS A BOND SLAVE—THE RADICAL PARADIGM FOR ALL OUR SERVICE

The more repulsive we find slavery, the more deeply we appreciate Jesus taking on the role of a slave in accomplishing our salvation, but the less likely we might be enthusiastic about Scriptural injunctions to be conformed to being like Jesus as a slave.

The Greek word *doulos* occurs frequently in the New Testament (about 130 times), referring usually to Jesus or His followers and is almost always translated “servant”. However, *doulos* never refers to a hired servant, but “. . . a slave, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of the other . . .”¹ Other words translated as “servant(s)” refer to those doing various categories of service, but not being necessarily slaves. I am emphasizing the use and meaning of *doulos* because the picture of Jesus as slave expresses poignantly the paradigm of the Cross.

“. . . Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be **slave** [*doulos*] of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45)

Jesus contrasts the self-important authoritarianism of those who rule over the Gentiles with His own service and the sacrifice of His life:

Here clearly, it is not a case of direct replication of Jesus’ own unique action, for the preceding exhortation is not to death but to service, and in any case disciples are not able to give their lives as a ‘ransom for many’. . . Jesus’ death here is paradigmatic of a servant ‘culture’ that is to characterise his followers.²

The following passage declares that **Jesus’ becoming an obedient slave** is the chief aspect of the paradigm of the Cross that He lived out from His incarnation to His death and thus is to be the chief aspect of our attitude in all things:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant [*doulos* - “**slave**”], being made in human likeness. . . . he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Phil. 2:5-8)

Notice that Paul, James, Jude, Peter call themselves slaves: “Paul, a servant [*doulos* - **slave**]” (Rom. 1:1, Titus 1:1, etc.)

¹S. Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Iowa Falls IO, World Bible Pub., 1994), 483.

²L. W. Hurtado, “Jesus’ Death as Paradigmatic in the New Testament” <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~mahigton/Hurtado.rtf> .

The following are pertinent comments from *The Calvary Road*:

. . . When we understand the humbling and self-emptying that is involved in really being a servant, it becomes evident that only those who are prepared to live quite definitely under the shadow of Calvary, ever contemplating the humility and brokenness of the Lord Jesus for us, will be willing for that position.³

. . . [Jesus was] without rights, willing to be treated as the will of the Father and the malice of men might decree, if only He might thereby serve men and bring them back to God. And you and I are to be bond-servants of Him . . .⁴

The next scripture declares that Jesus' complete obedience as the perfect servant/slave to His Father is an extremely significant aspect of the Cross:

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Heb. 5:8, 9)

Note that His slave-like obedience was to His Father, not to a set of rules or principles:

. . . "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing," (John 5:19)

“. . . I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” (John 8:28, 29)

Let us daily adore Jesus' amazing love in humbling Himself for us in such an awesome way—becoming a humble, despised slave. As we worship (our highest form of service), we become open to the Holy Spirit convicting us of ways we fall far short of the paradigm of Jesus' obedience and humility and invite Him to change us daily into His image. I invite you to worshipfully sing the following hymn to Jesus, our Lord and Master, as an act of loving worship and commitment to Him:

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days—let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King;
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold—not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use ever'y pow'r as Thou shalt choose.
Take my will and make it Thine—it shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart—it is Thine own, it shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my love—my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself—and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.

—Frances R. Havergal

Remember also: His “yoke is easy” [i.e., comfortable on our neck and shoulders] and “His burden is light” [i.e., relative to our strength and ability]. (Matt. 11:30) – more on this in a later chapter.

³Hession, Roy, *The Calvary Road*, 56.

⁴Hession, Roy, *The Calvary Road*, 57.

One morning last week, as I was worshiping Jesus as the example of a Perfect Slave and talking to the Lord about my desire to serve Him more humbly and effectively, I was reminded that my Master was actually Love itself (“God is love”) and that He loves everyone with an incredible love—even those whom I do not particularly like or who, some might feel, do not deserve His love. I realized that serving Him includes being so submitted to His love that I allow the maximum flow of His love to everyone I encounter. Next, I felt enveloped by His loving arms and assured that I would always be wonderfully blessed if I sought to serve Him in every situation by letting His love flow through me.

Contemplation of Jesus as the Ultimate Slave in His humility and obedience led me to think of three similar metaphors in Scripture that might help us appreciate and apply the paradigm of the Cross in our service: (1) Athlete, (2) Soldier, (3) Prisoner.

(1) Athlete

As I watched the last Olympics, I was deeply impressed by the extent that the athletes’ passion to win medals had virtually enslaved them, demanding total submission to lengthy, arduous training and often pushing them to the limits of their endurance. This passion demanded a singular focus on and perfect obedience to all performance criteria and demanded 100% of their energy at the games, even at the risk of brutal pain and complete exhaustion. Then came this awesome thought: Our Master expects the same level of submission, discipline, obedience, self denial, and sacrifice from us, His disciples!

. . . Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. . . . I beat my body and make it my slave* so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1 Cor. 9:24b-27)

*a compound using *doulos*—“to make a slave and to treat as a slave i.e. with severity, subject to stern and rigid discipline”⁵ Note that this is a present tense: “am making it a slave”—daily, continuously.

Notice how Jesus demonstrated the slave-like commitment, self-denial, and discipline of a champion Olympian marathon runner:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and **let us run with perseverance the race** marked out for us. **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Heb. 12:1-3)

Paul takes up the challenge to run as Jesus did, willing even to die in His passion to be conformed to Jesus’ sacrificial service:

. . . that I may boast on the day of Christ that **I did not run** or labor for nothing. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. (Phil. 2:16b, 17)

. . . **I press on** to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. . . . Forgetting what is behind and **straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12)

⁵Strong’s Concordance

Are we truly “running” as Paul did and taught? Is our goal to be like Christ in our service not as worthy as a gold medal?

When I have considered what it means to be an Olympic athlete or a slave like Jesus, I have felt utterly incapable in myself of being like Him, so opposite in many ways to His standard that He sets, and have been tempted to despair of any possibility that I can have such a passion to be like Him. What I do is worship Him as the Ultimate Athlete and Slave, accept my needy condition and lack of passion for Him, repent of specific ways I am unlike Him and trust Him to change me.

It is both essential and wonderful to realize that Jesus, the Ultimate Slave, actually lives in us by His Spirit; the extent that He expresses His humility and obedient nature through us depends largely on (1) how much we depend on His life within us and (2) how much we focus on Him in our daily worship as the Ultimate Slave in His suffering and death, as a little chorus says: “Oh, the light and the glory of His unveiled face is the glory that is changing me.” (See 2 Cor. 3:18)

Remember also that Jesus was being **a perfect Son** when He took the place of a slave. If we want to become mature sons of God, we will have to follow His pattern, the paradigm of the Cross. No other way!

May this old Gospel song be true in our experience: “There is Joy in Serving Jesus”, even if we paraphrase it like this: There is joy in being a slave/an Olympic athlete for Jesus”.

(2) Soldier

Protecting his homeland and conquering enemies obviously demand a soldier to become much like a slave: He must obey his commander totally, be willing and able to endure all kinds of hardships, and give up all rights even to live. These criteria were not only perfectly fulfilled by Jesus; they became major elements in the very method by which “He . . . disarmed the powers and authorities . . . [making] a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them **by the cross**.” (Col. 2:15)

For he . . . destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by **abolishing in his flesh** the law with its commandments and regulations. . . . to reconcile both of them to God **through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility**. (Eph 2:14, 15)

In these verses, we see Jesus as our Champion Warrior, single-handedly defeating sin, the law, and evil powers. There is much about the paradigmatic aspects of His victory to consider; however, for now, I only want to underline the amazing truth that He overcame and conquered all evil powers and sin not with guns or sword or human strength, but with **the obedience of a slave** and with **sacrificial love**. **So must we!! Jesus Christ is the victorious Conqueror within us to the degree we are conformed to the Cross**, a paradigm that includes the criteria of a good soldier—commitment, obedience, endurance, and sacrificial love.

Are we truly “enlisted”? How much like Jesus is our obedience? endurance during hardships? willingness to lay down our lives for our friends? for our enemies? Sad to say, some seem to be deserters to the enemy’s underground and are attacking those Christians who have slightly different uniforms!

The Lord has been opening my eyes to see more clearly what it means to be like Jesus as a victorious soldier, but I do feel I am just starting boot camp. (Better later than never!) In any case, it is marvelous that I/we can be “. . . confident of this, that he who began a good work in you [me/us] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1:6)

(3) Prisoner

Six times in his epistles, Paul calls himself a “prisoner” of Jesus Christ; other expressions conveying this metaphor are also common in his writings. Paul thus indicates his willingness to be like Jesus in accepting the humiliation and restrictions cruelly imposed on him by the Romans, but stresses that they are not his real captors—he is bound primarily to Jesus. Considering that Paul links this metaphor with his apostolic service, we can infer that he had in mind the Romans’ practice to force prisoners of war to labour as slaves, sometimes in a rock quarry, sometimes on long lines of oars in a warship. This picture of prisoners forced to do hard labour helps convey vividly the meaning of passages in which we find types of service linked with the verb *sunecho*, which essentially means to “press/squeeze on every side” or “**to hold fast as in arresting/imprisoning a criminal**”.⁶ The one very important difference, as you will see, for Jesus, Paul, and us—**our Captor/Master lives within us and He is love**.

But I [Jesus] have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed* I am until it is completed! (Luke 12:50)

*passive of *sunecho*, “***captivated***” (by passion and purpose)

. . . Paul devoted himself exclusively** to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. (Acts 18:5)

passive of *sunecho*, “*totally captivated***”

For Christ’s love compels*** us . . . We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled⁷ to God. (2 Cor. 5: 14a, 20)

****sunecho*, “***captivates/arrests***”

Two other Greek verbs can be seen to express a similar metaphor by including in our reading of the following passage the appropriate forms of the amplified meanings given.

(1) *katalambano* “to take hold of” as in ***capturing and binding a prisoner***.⁸

(2) *dioko* “to press on” or “***pursue with the object of capturing***”.⁹

. . . I ***press on*** (2-*dioko*) ***to take hold of*** (1-*katalambano*) that for which Christ Jesus ***took hold*** (1-*katalambano*) of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to ***have taken hold of*** (1-*katalambano*) it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I ***press on*** (2-*dioko*) toward the goal ***to win*** the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12-14)

Paul explains that to reach this goal (for which he had been “apprehended”—KJV), he has “lost all things” and considered “them rubbish” (v.8) in order to know Christ, even in “the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” (v. 10, 11). Accordingly, for us to powerfully serve Christ, we need like Paul (1) ***to be bound as prisoners to Christ*** and (2) ***to pursue and capture the likeness to Christ in His suffering and death*** (a paradigm which includes His slave-like obedience and sacrificial love).

It seems utterly paradoxical that in the same short epistle—Philippians—Paul exhorts us 14 times to rejoice in the Lord! We will need to explore later how we can be prisoners and slaves and still constantly rejoice.

⁶Online Bible, Strong’s #4912

⁷The Greek word translated “reconciled” essentially means “to be totally changed or transformed towards”. I pray that I will be so bound as a prisoner to His love that I can effectively pass on to others His command to be reconciled; i.e., ***totally changed to the paradigm of the Cross***.

⁸Online Bible, Strong’s #2983

⁹Online Bible, Strong’s #1377

Note that we are to be bound to Him not only as individuals only, but also with other believers:

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph. 4:16)

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, Lord, bind us together with love.

— Bob Gilman

Other Masters

Perfect freedom comes from being a bond-slave to Jesus and to Him alone.

As we seek to be bound to Jesus as Master (Lord) and learn His humility, we realize more and more clearly that other “masters” have motivated and controlled us—probably much more than we have considered possible. Thank God in His mercy He exposes only one of these “masters” at a time for us to repent of our sin and to be released from its bondage at the Cross.

In the following verse, consider that “righteousness” means totally being like Christ and “obedience” is continuously obeying the desires of a personal Lord, not merely fulfilling written or unwritten expectations of a particular church group. Consider also that “sin” as a “master” includes not only obvious sinful habits but also religious and/or emotional “masters” that might motivate us to do “good” things but are in reality addictions or emotional compulsions; i.e., fear of rejection, craving approval, codependency, etc., etc.

. . . you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are ***slaves to sin***, which leads to death, or ***to obedience***, which leads to righteousness. (Rom. 6:15)

Like several other spiritual leaders whose testimonies and teaching on brokenness have blessed and helped me, Pastor Don Williams, in *Jesus and Addiction*, relates first his great difficulty in admitting his religious addictions (as in quote below) and then his brokenness that led to his honesty about them and to his deliverance. His testimony and his prescriptions to transform dysfunctional people and churches are well worth reading.

. . . I sat at the brink of a nervous breakdown. . . . Even in that state there was no way that I would admit my addictions to adrenaline caused by crisis situations, . . . my self-image as a ‘radical’ Christian, and my many codependent relationships in the church where I served.”¹⁰

I, too, allowed religious/emotional addictions to develop in me and was blind to most of them until recent years. Here is a very condensed version of the development of a few of these addictions that developed in my younger life:

During Grade 1, my mother’s death caused me deep grief and feelings of abandonment. I had already realized that I received the most recognition and approval from teachers when I did my work perfectly. After my bereavement, my craving for anything that resembled love led me into “performance orientation”, being enslaved by a compulsion to try to earn from teachers what I felt I needed emotionally. The same kind of compulsion later motivated most of my church activities.

¹⁰Don Williams, *Jesus and Addiction: A Prescription to Transform the Dysfunctional Church and Recover Authentic Christianity* (San Diego: Recovery Publications, Inc., 1993) 3.

My good, quiet behaviour at home was largely because of my fear of the strap and harsh words of a strict foster mother and my attempt to win her favour and approval. A potent pressure developed within me to make sure I always looked good on the surface and to cover over all my hurt, my fear, and the bitter anger that was growing inside me. I felt extreme panic when I thought someone might not see me as being good.

By age 11, soon after my Dad remarried, my buried anger and anxieties caused me to stutter badly, this handicap helping to bring on deeper feelings of inferiority and fear of failure. Unconsciously, during my teens, I somehow developed a concept that God's job was to make me succeed. Instead of learning how to be His servant, I was angry that He did not serve me! In some areas, God seemed to help me, but lack of relief from stuttering and tensions between me and my parents seemed to indicate that I was somehow disqualified to receive His help in these areas and help in dealing with the emotional problems that caused them.

In my middle teens, an image of the perfect man I wanted to become gradually took shape in my mind—an image of the ultimate respected and admired Christian leader and successful, middle-class family man. Although some attributes of this image resembled Christ's nature, it brought with it an undercurrent of anxiety that I could never attain to the demands of this "master" and a mixture of jealousy and attraction towards those who I perceived had qualities of my "perfect" idol. (Some day I might write a fuller analysis of this "master" and its effect on my life.)

My dreams included becoming an acclaimed gospel pianist. Finding that I achieved recognition and admiration for playing well, I worked hard at my lessons and by 16 was our church's pianist. Sad to say, my service was mainly not to the Lord, but was motivated largely by my craving for appreciation and adulation. Often, my inner anger at receiving less of these responses than I longed for revealed my selfish motivations and the dark side of my ambition.

My obsession with my "Mr. Perfect" image partially grew out of my own self-rejection and struggle for identity; moreover, I have found that each denomination tends to formulate its own particular image of the ideal Christian to which members are pressured to conform. Such images reflect more or less some aspects of the nature of Christ, but often reflect very little of the paradigm of the Cross. It is vital we humbly seek the Lord to show us how denominational spirits or "masters" have restricted our perception of and transformation to Jesus' true nature and that we seek the Lord to be totally free of their bondage. Then we can be effective bondslaves of Jesus in intercession for other church members to be freed from blindness to the fullness of the paradigm of the Cross.

It is tragic that the dynamics, teachings, and attitudes of many Christian groups encourage some addictions rather than provide cures for them. Sometimes one addiction is replaced with another. I do thank God for the ministries that have helped bring me to the Cross for healing and deliverance from "masters" other than Christ Himself, and I know He will continue to heal and free me as I "press on" to be bound to Him more fully as a bondslave. Remember my song?¹¹

I praise you, Lord, you've planned **ev'rything**
[even all the pain, sin, blindness, and addictions of my childhood!]
To make a wonderful change in me.

¹¹Chapter 2 "The Cross and the Father's Ultimate Intention", page 15.

Lord Jesus Christ, to become like You [**as a humble slave**]—
O what a glorious Destiny!

And we know that in *all things** God works for the *good*** of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be *conformed to the likeness of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Rom. 8:28, 29)

* “All things” include all the bad memories from my childhood.

** “Good” = “being conformed to the likeness of his Son”.

Glorious Rewards for Humble Obedience

The glorious exaltation of Jesus “to the highest place” is declared to be His reward for His humility and His obedience “to death—even the death of a cross!”:

. . . but [Jesus] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant [**slave—doulos**] . . . *he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore* God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *Therefore*, my dear friends, *as you have always obeyed* . . . continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose [conforming us to Jesus’ humility and obedience. (Phil. 2:7-13)

Notice that the exaltation of Jesus follows the command in verse five for us to have the same humble attitude/mind as Jesus (see Chapter 7) and is followed by the command for us to be totally submissive to God working in us. Thus, it is evident that Jesus’ exaltation by God the Father is included here not only as a ecstatic hymn of praise and worship but also as a promise that *the Father will exalt us also if we become conformed to Jesus’ likeness as humble, obedient servants/slaves*. Here are Jesus’ words on this subject:

The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Mat. 23: 11, 12)

Paul affirms that those who are glorified were first of all predestined to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus (including, of course, His humble obedience) and that God works in all things to accomplish this good purpose to which we have been called—”His ultimate intention” (see Chapter 5).

Many scriptures clearly teach that our rewards given in heaven depend on the measure we are conformed to Jesus’ humble obedience in this life. However, I find no limit in Scripture to the extent of rewards that He wants to give us *now*. We know that we receive here the Holy Spirit as our “deposit” or “down payment”; this might sound limited, but I conclude from Scripture that our total inheritance will be so inconceivably wonderful that even a small percent of that as down payment here is beyond our mind to grasp and we should put no limit on what we or others can receive now.

Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession--to the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:13b, 14)

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9)

Now that I, your Lord [Master] and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant (*doulos*—slave) is greater than his master . . . (John 13:13-16)

Later in the same discourse, Jesus declares that our obeying Him by loving others according to the paradigm of the Cross qualifies us to be exalted to the status of being His *friends*—not only later in Heaven, but now!

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. **You are my friends if you do what I command.** I no longer call you servants, [**slaves—*doulos***] because a servant [**slave—*doulos***] does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:12-15)

Other immediate rewards for humility include more of God's grace and being lifted up:

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” . . . humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:6b, 10)

These wonderful promises are not given for us to glory in the rewards we will receive or in what great beings we will become but are given to show us how great and lavish is God's love for us and that His ultimate intention is that we be conformed to Jesus' likeness by our humbling ourselves and offering ourselves as bond-slaves to Him.

We know that our rewards include ruling with Him, but not as many perceive; I am convinced that the **only way** we will rule through all eternity will be **in humble obedience to our “Lord of lords” [Master of all masters]**. This life is meant to train us for our destiny by training us in humble obedience. How committed are we to this training?

As I have mentioned in previous chapters, we are being changed “from glory to glory” as our eyes are opened and we worship Jesus; therefore, let us worship Jesus daily in His ultimate humility and His total obedience to His Father in going to the Cross. As we focus on Him, the Holy Spirit tends to convict us about how far we fall short from being like Him; we thus repent of any specific ways we are not humble or obedient in our attitudes or actions and commit ourselves to the hands of the Potter to mold us into His image. This takes faith and the vital realization that **we cannot conform ourselves; He has to do it.**

It is also important to realize that the Christ Who lives in us is perfectly humble and obedient; the more we appropriate the truth of our crucifixion with Christ, the more our outward life is conformed to the indwelling humility and obedience of Christ:

I have been crucified with Christ and I [the self not conformed to Christ's humble obedience] no longer live, but Christ [the perfect obedient slave] lives in me. The life [of Christ's humility and obedience] I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

This chapter has been extremely challenging for me to write, as I consider the implications in my daily life of being conformed to the humble obedience of Jesus. I am slowly learning to yield myself to Him to be a slave to—totally controlled by—His love. It is becoming more natural to ask the Lord in every situation what it means to be His humble servant. Sometimes, it means choosing to do menial tasks for others. It also means seeking the Lord that my motives are to serve Him and not the approval of others. As I pray for specific people, I ask the Lord to change me, to specifically help me to love each one in my attitudes and actions as He wants. Somehow, when I pray like this, I find myself

experiencing the love of Christ in a beautiful way—a great reward! Loving each person whom I think about or I encounter includes praying that he or she will be more conformed to the likeness of Christ, including being conformed to His humility and obedience. The more we are so conformed, the more the Father’s ultimate intention is fulfilled in us and the more we will be rewarded in this life and the next. Can you think of anything better for which to pray?

My present reward for seeking to serve the Lord by writing these articles has been to learn that a few lives have been enriched by becoming more conformed to our Pattern. I know that the more humble and obedient we become to the Lord through His Spirit, the more we will see blessing through our service—certainly a wonderful and fulfilling reward.

Again, let us keep our focus on Jesus, the perfect servant/slave, and give Him often our adoration for His humility in becoming like a slave to accomplish our salvation. Further, let us meditate much and worship Him for His self-denial as an Olympic athlete, for His victory through sacrifice as a champion warrior, and for His willing “imprisonment” to His Father’s will. Finally, we can only respond in praise and worship as we see Him exalted by the Father as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Included in our worship of Jesus and adoration of His qualities as the perfect servant will be **our commitment to be changed so that we can live out more and more the same humility, obedience, self-denial, and self-sacrifice that we adore in Him**, realizing that we can only do this by depending on His Spirit to work such a transformation in us and that daily repentance is a necessary part of this process.

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