

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 28

Our Identification with Christ

By

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Servant Leadership – Lesson 28
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1

Let's read starting at [John 15:12](#):

- 12 This is My commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.
- 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends.
- 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.
- 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.
- 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.
- 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.
- 18 If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.
- 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet, because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.
- 20 Remember the word that I said to you, "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.
- 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.
- 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin.
- 23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.
- 24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now, they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.
- 25 But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, "They hated Me without a cause."

Years ago, the people of Texas were plagued by a Mexican bandit by the name of Jorge Rodriguez. And his style was to come across the border, rob banks, and then quickly go across to his mountain hide-away in Mexico. And nobody could catch the guy. So the United States decided to hire a well known detective to go down to Mexico, find Jorge, and bring him to justice. Well, the detective went across the border, went into a little small town in Mexico and there in the saloon, in the corner, was Jorge Rodriguez, sitting, having a drink. So the detective walks over to the table, pulls out his gun, points it at Jorge and says, "Ah-ha! I found you. Tell me where you've hidden the money or I'm going to blow you away." Just then, another guy comes up. His name is Juan Garcia. And Juan says, "Excuse me, Señor, but Jorge cannot understand a word of English. He has no idea what you just said. But if you would like, I will translate for you." He said, "Fair enough. You tell Jorge to tell me where the money is or I'm going to kill him." So Juan and Jorge gabber together in Spanish. Jorge is pointing and moving his arms. And he tells the man in Spanish that if the detective would go three miles out of town, he'd find a well. Climb down into the well, go down and pull out the fifth brick. And behind the fifth brick would be three million dollars in gold. So Juan Garcia turns to the detective and says, "Señor, I am so sorry. Jorge says he cannot remember where the gold is. You're going to have to shoot him!"

Now this was a guy who pretended to be Jorge's friend and the detective's helper, but actually he was both of their enemies. He was in it for himself.

In our ministry we have both friends and we have enemies, and sometimes our enemies are disguised as friends. And sometimes our friends start out as enemies. They might come and not really like God or you or your ministry. But slowly, surely, through a process, the Holy Spirit will win them over. And those who were once your enemies become your friends.

In our text that we just read, the word love is mentioned eight times. The word hatred is mentioned seven times, in the same context. This is the context of a very special kind of friendship that Jesus has with His disciples. Now you know this is the last night Jesus spends with His men before His crucifixion. It's sort of like the pre-game get-together with the team. It's those last few moments together and Jesus extends His hand of friendship. He washes their feet. He reaches out to Judas. He instructs them through the evening. But here, He invites them into a whole new relationship of being their friend. The disciples certainly were Jesus' closest friends on earth. And He says here, "I shared with you. I gave you what I had. I revealed Myself to you."

You know, it's interesting that ministers, by and large, many of them, do not have close friends. A lot of research has been done and one researcher says that seventy percent of pastors don't have anyone they would consider a close friend, either inside or outside of their churches. Now, not to sound cliché here, but Jesus Christ is the best friend you could ever have in the ministry. I mean, think about it. He loves us. He chose us. He equips us. And then, after it is all said and done, He rewards us for what He equipped us to do. It's a wonderful set up.

I believe that working for Jesus as a friend is the highest form of ministry. Working for Jesus as a friend—or we might even say, working with Jesus, since we are co-laborers with Christ. Working with Jesus as a friend is even better than working for Him as a servant. Now, we are His servants. In [John 15:17](#) He says, "These things I command you." And a master can do that to a servant. Down in [verse 20](#), He said, "Remember a servant is not greater than his master." And we know that all the biblical authors in the New Testament, be it Paul or Jude or James or John, would open up their letters by calling themselves bondservants of Jesus Christ. Yet the highest form, I believe, is serving with the Lord as a friend in a friendship, because when Jesus is your friend it changes everything. It changes the whole meaning of your ministry. Now it's relational it is not just functional. You are doing something with someone, for someone that you love. And we all love to do things for someone who is a friend of ours.

If a pastor is not enjoying his ministry, I think something is radically wrong. In [John 15:11](#)—even though I started in [verse 12](#), I am going to sneak back to [verse 11](#). "These things I have spoken to you," Jesus said, "that My joy might remain in you and that your joy may be full."

It is not that the ministry is all smiles; we know that there are hardships. There are trials that we go through. But don't you love, doing what you do? In fact, isn't it true that sometimes it is hard to drag you away from the church building? You just love being there. You love what God lets you do, because you are doing it for Him, with Him, as a friend.

Serving the Lord, if He is your friend, is not punishment. It is nourishment. Remember Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish it." It is what recharges us. It is not like, "I want to get away from these people. They're such a drag, man. They're such a drain." Don't you find that it invigorates you because you are doing it for the right reason?

Well, back in [John 15:16](#), Jesus says that He initiates this friendship. “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain. And whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.”

You know, it’s interesting, in human friendships there is an autonomy of choice. It is mutual. If you meet someone, there are a few options—option number one, you both don’t like each other. Well, you will not be friends. You might shake hands and say a few nice words, but it’s over. Option number two: you like that person, that person does not care too much for you. The result is the same, there will not be a friendship. But if you like that person and that person enjoys your company as well, it is mutual and a friendship is going to develop.

But here the Lord, by virtual of His sovereign position says, “You didn’t choose Me. This choice has been made about you, long before you were ever you. You didn’t choose Me, I chose you. I appointed you that you would go and bear forth fruit.”

Here is the point I want to make for us. The Lord chose you and He did not make a mistake when He chose you for the ministry. God didn’t pick you and then later say, “Oops!” That word is not in His vocabulary. He knew what He was doing when He chose you in the ministry and put you in the place where you’re at. It is part of His plan. Remember that when you are going through dark times. Remember that when you are prone to think, “What am I doing here, Lord? This is so far over my head.” The Lord knows all about that. The Lord knows all about you, just like the Lord knew about Peter, who would deny Him. He knew about Judas, who would betray Him, and about Thomas, who would doubt Him. And yet, the Lord chose them.

The Bible says—and it is my life verse. I suspect it’s probably all of our life verses to some degree—“The Lord has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise” ([1 Corinthians 1:27](#)).

There is a great old story about a block of marble that was cut at the quarries in Carara, Italy and sent to Florence to be made into a statue by one of the great artisans of the city. It was brought into town and one of the great artists, Donatello saw this block of marble; but because of its imperfections, he rejected it immediately. And so it sat in a cathedral yard for a couple of years. Another artist came by and looked at it. His name was Michaelangelo. And Michaelangelo, seeing the imperfections said, “There’s an angel trapped inside and I must set it free.” He began working on the marble, and January 25, 1504 he unveiled his greatest work—David, the great statue by Michaelangelo.

The Lord sees our flaws, the cracks, the imperfections but He also sees the potential. The potential of Him getting a hold of you and reshaping you and restoring you. He loves to do that.

Years ago, my father, before he passed away, gave me one of his prized possessions. It was a 1967 British Land Rover, an old safari vehicle. It was what I learned to drive in. He paid like \$1500 for it and it sat out in the back. It was aluminum, so it couldn’t rust. He gave it to me. I took it home and sort of in his honor, decided to restore it. It became a pet project. I wanted to see it looking good, and running well. It took a lot of time and a lot of labor. But what a joy it was to see that old thing—which others would say should be on the scrap heap—restored and useable.

That is what the Lord does with us. How many testimonies in this room of people who others said, “Flawed, imperfect, should be in the junk heap.” God says, “Perfect. I’ll choose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. So you didn’t choose Me. I chose you. I appointed you.”

Now as friends, having been chosen by Jesus, He does something for us. He reveals Himself to us and He reveals Himself through us. If you look at verse 15, where He says, “No longer do I call you servants,—[and get this]—for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” ([John 15:15](#)).

Think of the privilege of being able to do what we do. To stand in front of the congregations God has given to us and tell them the words that Jesus has revealed about Himself. Could there be anything better than that?

I remember when I would come to Calvary Chapel and I would see Chuck Smith on a Thursday night, sit on a stool and just expound the Word of God. I had never heard simple, powerful, Bible teaching. And I said to the Lord, “I want to do that. That’s what I want to do.” And I look back from that point and see where I am today, where we are today and say, “Thank You, Lord. You revealed Yourself and I get to do this.” We get to speak the Word of God to others.

Now, we are His friends so He reveals things to us about Himself—His secrets, His Word. In the ancient times, servants were never given reasons for their tasks, they just had to do them. But there was a special group of people and maybe Jesus had this in mind when He used this. They were called friends of the king. The king had his servants, and the king had his friends. The friends of the king were a select group that he drew around himself. And in his walled garden would reveal his deepest secrets and information would flow freely to this group of friends. Jesus brought them into His inner circle.

The Lord opened up a door for me this last year to be a chaplain with the FBI. And I did not know it, but I have FBI agents that have been going to my church for years. But they never came by to ask for prayer or talk until I became their chaplain. And then they felt like, “Well, now you are in the brotherhood. Now we can trust you. You’ve been approved.” And I am seen differently, I am seen as their friend, once I was on their turf. They will bear their souls quit freely to me now.

Well, Jesus told His disciples so many things. Think of what He revealed in the last three and a half years of His ministry up to this point. Think of what He revealed just in the Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet Discourse, and here in the Upper Room Discourse. In fact, Jesus revealed so much of Himself and His truth to them, that in [John 14:26](#), He says:

The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you.

So He anticipated that He has given them enough information that they are going to forget a lot of it and will need the help of the Holy Spirit to have it brought back to their memory.

Not only that, but in [John 16:12](#), He said, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.” So, this was that process of unveiling or revealing Himself to the disciples. He speaks to us in order that He might speak through us to the people that are around us.

Now let me just say something about that before we move on. Because the Lord wants to speak to us and through us from His Word, allow your heart to process the truth of Scripture apart from commentaries first. Commentaries are great, and we all have them. We like certain ones. We do

not like certain others. We recommend them, but before you grab the commentary, just open the Bible. Just take a notepad, open your heart, and pray: “Lord, what are You trying to say to me?”

You know, there is a kid whose dad had to discipline him and he took off his belt and was going to spank him. And the little boy, as his dad turned around to get his belt, put napkins in his britches so that the pain of the belt would not be felt.

I think we can do that with commentaries. We can stuff our theological britches with so much Greek and Hebrew and commentaries, that when the Holy Spirit wants to get through to us, we are padded. We need to feel all of what He speaks directly to us.

Then as He is revealing Himself to us as friends, you are going to notice something in this process. You are going to find yourself experiencing the very things you’re going to teach. Have you noticed that? When you are going to teach on love on Sunday, during that preparation process, you will find it challenged on Wednesday before you teach it. There is some irregular person in your church that is hounding you, hassling you; and you are teaching on love on Sunday. You are going to teach on trials and you will have a few, probably before you get there. It is all part of the Word becoming flesh in us, making it real so you can preach from the heart. Otherwise, we will be like the servant of Elisha who said, “Alas, Master; for it was borrowed when that ax was missing” (cf. [2 Kings 6:5](#)). So just let the Lord reveal Himself, speaking to your heart as His friend. It will change the whole meaning of your ministry.

The second, I think that this relationship changes the motive of your ministry. Again, I am sort of sneaking back, but if you look at [verse 8](#), it runs through the whole text here. “By this My Father is glorified,” Jesus said, “that you bear much fruit” ([John 15:8](#)).

Now there is the aim of the ministry: to glorify Him, to please Him. And when you enjoy this relationship of friendship, when you serve Him as a friend, you want to please Him. You want Him to enjoy what you are doing for Him. You do it, not because you have to, but because you want to do it.

Joe spoke yesterday about going through the weekly routine. You know, we have our days when we do certain things. It is a routine to us, but it is a lovely routine. We are doing this trusting: “Lord, I am doing this to please You because I want to glorify You.” We want to honor that friendship. And because we want to honor that friendship, since He selected us and He is the sovereign Lord, we want to do our ministry in such a way that He gets all the glory. The spotlight must shine on Jesus—not on the minister, but on the Master. We do not want to be celebrities. We want Him to be the celebrity. What Jesus said for the crowd, goes for those in the ministry. He said, “So let your light shine among men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” ([Matthew 5:16](#)).

And I think there is some point in our ministries where we are going to have to decide, whether to be a celebrity for people, or to be a friend to my Master and do my ministry in such a way that all of the arrows point to Him and not to me. That is what Paul said. Paul wrote and said he wanted Jesus to be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. And let’s not forget Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence. He was in the ministry and he loved the limelight, more than giving the limelight to the Lord (cf. [3 John 1:9](#)).

We face all sorts of interesting temptations. When we guest speak and somebody gives us a great introduction, we secretly think: “Yeah, keep going. You forgot a few things.” A. W. Tozer once was a guest speaker and somebody gave him a great, flowery introduction. And he got up

afterwards and said, “Well, the only thing I can say to that introduction is, God please forgive him for what he just said, and forgive me for enjoying it so much.” We all find that to be true, don’t we?

But serving the Lord as our friend changes the meaning of our ministry—the whole motive of our ministry. And third, it changes the method of our ministry. What I mean by that is when He is our friend, we want to do the very best for Him. We do not want to give Him the leftovers. We want to give Him the very top.

In verse 16 Jesus speaks about bearing fruit, so fruitfulness is our aim. Of our Master they said, “He does all things well.” Could that be said of us? Or would some say, “He does all things mediocre, just okay.” Do all things well, putting your very best into this calling that God has given to you.

You know the easiest thing to do in the ministry is to perform the routine routinely. That means you just sort of get into that little vibe of, “I have to do this. I don’t like it, but I am after all, a minister, so I am going to do it.”

The church at Ephesus forgot that friendship, didn’t they. When Jesus said, “They have left their first love” (cf. [Revelation 2:4](#)). They were going through all the works and all the motions, but I think that they forgot their friendship connection with Him.

It is possible to minister carelessly, perfunctorily, as a duty instead of as a joy unto the Lord. Or sometimes we may do it just for a paycheck. Remember the priests that Malachi spoke about. It says they offered the blind and the lame and the sick and they said, “Oh, what a weariness” ([Malachi 1:13](#)). And God says, “You sneer at it.”

It is easy to get callused. We have been in the ministry a while. We know about profiling. There is a certain type of person and I know where this person is coming from—been there, done that. And we can get hardened and callused to the needs that are before us and we can start seeing people as an inconvenience rather than as a real challenge that God has given, or as an opportunity to minister to them.

It was George MacDonald who said, “Nothing is so deadening to the divine as the habitual dealing with the outsides of holy things.” We are dealing with things outside of the divine over and over again.

So in order to avoid pastoral arterial sclerosis, hardening of the arteries, you need a friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Because when a friend asks you to do something, no demand is too difficult. Then, when He is your friend, “His yoke is easy, His burden is light” (cf. [Matthew 11:30](#)). It is something you enjoy doing. “Jacob labored seven years for Rachel, and it seemed but a few days because of the love that he had for her” (cf. [Genesis 29:20](#)).

My wife reminded me of that not too long ago. I have been telling her she needs to take certain vitamins in the morning because when we reach a certain age, we all need vitamins and supplements. So I said, “Honey, you need to take those vitamins.” She said, “If you really love me, you would set the vitamin out for me or bring it to me.” And I am thinking, “Oh, come on.” And then I thought, “Hey, whatever it takes. I’ll take the vitamins out. I’ll put them out there for her. If I love her, I will give her the vitamins.” And I have done so.

And something else will happen. We are going to start looking at God's church, God's people, even the irregular people, as a great opportunity and not as an inconvenience. We are going to start seeing God's church as Jesus' friends too. They are His friends too.

In fact, look down at [verse 12](#). It's all part of it. "This is My commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." And in [verse 17](#), "These things I command you, that you love one another."

The Scottish pastor, Andrew Bonar, was listening to a famous preacher give a message. The guy was quite good. Afterwards Dr. Bonar said to him, "You love to preach, don't you?" The preacher said, "I sure do." Then Andrew Bonar said, "Let me ask you this. Do you love the men to whom you preach?" You love to preach. But do you love the people to whom you preach?

You know, before Jesus told Peter to feed His sheep, He said, "Peter, do you love Me?" (cf. [John 21:15](#)). That is the basis of it.

There was a pastor, himself he cherished.
Who loved his position and not his parish.
And so, the more he preached, the less he reached.
And that is why his parish perished.

We are to love those sheep that He has commissioned into our care.

Fourth, it changes the whole manner of our ministry. Do you ever think about those twelve, now eleven personalities in the upper room that night, around that table with Jesus? They were so different from one another. They were not the same. They did not even go to the same places. Peter stayed in Jerusalem. Thomas, it says, went off to India. Matthew went down to Ethiopia where he was killed. Philip went to Asia Minor. And they all had distinct personalities, and they were all chosen to be Jesus' close and intimate friends.

Here is the point. Since Jesus chose you, chose us, you can relax in the ministry. You can be who God made you to be in the ministry. You do not have to copy anyone else. You can just be who God made you to be. You are unique with your spiritual gifts and God does not want to destroy your uniqueness by having you imitate anybody else. He has chosen you. And that is so freeing, just to perform the manner of your ministry as God made you to be.

Now it is common for younger ministers to emulate older ministers, doing certain affectations. And one person pointed out to me that a lot of Calvary guys say "you know" a lot, because often in Chuck's tapes we will hear Chuck say, "Now you know." And then he is thinking and he will share. And so a lot of us do this. It is common for that to happen. Even Charles Spurgeon said he found himself doing that and whenever he did, he just let it run its course.

But the key is to ask, "Lord, who am I? What gifts do I have that are unique and let me just be me, redeemed me for Your glory." And some of us can be so insecure in the ministry that we actually wish there were two of another person. "I want to be that person."

I was in Kiev about a month ago, in the Ukraine. And it was really a beautiful town with onion domed churches and architecture. And in the middle of town was a western barbecue restaurant called "The Arizona". And I will tell you, it looked so out of place in Kiev. It would look great in Arizona or New Mexico or California, but not in Kiev.

And we can sort of do that, can't we? We can be like David trying to wear Saul's armor. It does not fit quite right, but we are out there. This friendship with the Lord changes all of those things.

“God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He pleased” ([1 Corinthians 12:18](#)). He did not make a mistake. Let Him work through you.

Finally, this changes the make up of our ministry. In [verse 18](#), Jesus begins something that almost sounds like He is off on another track now with a whole different theme and context. He says, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

Now remember in this section of Scripture in John 15, love is used eight times and hate is used seven times. All of them are used in the context of this friendship. In other words, when you are Jesus' friend, you are going to have Jesus' enemies. That's part of the package. You know, we would love to ride into Jerusalem with Jesus on the donkey with the hail of the crowd. But after that was the cross. And it was Paul who said in Philippians—“The fellowship of His sufferings, that I might know Him.” The fellowship of His sufferings and the glory of His resurrection, all of those things together make the ministry. We cannot separate one without having the other. If you are Jesus' friends, you are going to have some of Jesus' enemies.

We learned that on September 11th. We learned on September 11th that if you are going to be Israel's friend you are going to have Israel's enemies. A lot of us did not know that until that point. And we have slowly, as a nation, been discovering that.

Well in the ministry, one relationship requires the other. Those who love God and love God's truth will love you if you speak God's truth. Those who hate God and hate God's truth will hate you and hate the truth that you speak. Great persecution is the result of the Great Commission—always. In fact, you can plant this in your mind. If you are doing [Acts 1:8](#) you will have [Acts 8:1](#). [Acts 1:8](#), “Go into all the world,” Jesus said. You will go into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth and be witnesses for Him. If that happens, you will have [Acts 8:1](#) which says: “And at that time a great persecution arose in the church that was at Jerusalem.” The Great Commission results in great persecution. If you are My friends, you are going to have My enemies.

I found a news article called, “Not in My Backyard,” concerning the percentages of Americans who would not like the following minorities, as their neighbors. And it starts with Catholics. One percent of Americans say they do not want Catholics as their neighbors. Two percent say they do not want Protestants as their neighbors. Three percent say they do not want Jews as their neighbors. Nine percent do not want Hispanics. Twelve percent do not want unmarried couples. Thirteen percent do not want blacks. And last and greatest on the list, over thirteen percent do not want religious fundamentalists as their next door neighbors. This by the way was before September 11, when there was a new casting on the word fundamentalism. They do not want you living next to them, man.

“The world would love its own,” Jesus said, “If you were of the world.” So it changes the whole make-up of our ministry.

Now when you and I are just faithful to the Word, preaching the truth and going through the Bible—that is going to bring enemies. Because the Bible will say certain things that people do not want to hear. You do not have to go out of your way to make enemies. You do not have to go out

of your way to let people know what you are against. Just if you are for Jesus you are going to make enemies.

I remember one Sunday morning two women came up to me, and I did not even talk about homosexuality, but they were angry. They were lesbians. I talked about Jesus and His love and forgiveness. And they said, “What do you think about homosexuality?” I said, “Jesus loves homosexuals. Jesus is willing to forgive homosexuals. And He is willing to forgive you, if that is what you are talking about.” And one of the ladies said, “I thought so!” And they walked away angry. Hey, but that is okay, isn’t it? I would rather have Jesus as my friend and the world as my enemy, than the world as my friend and Jesus as my enemy. We are on the best side.

Now that is only one side of friendship. We are coming to a close here. Jesus says in verse 14, “You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.” The other side of friendship is not just that Jesus is our friend. What kind of a friend are we to Him, right?

My son just turned sixteen. Nathan drives now. I know, it is kind of scary, but it gives me tremendous leverage, you see. And we have become great friends. It is a whole new relationship, a whole new understanding. And I let him know that with privilege comes responsibility. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. If you do not, you will not drive.

Now Jesus’ friends obey Him regularly. For Jesus said, “If you love Me you will keep my commandments” (cr. [John 14:15](#)). He says, “If you’re My friends you will do whatever I command you to do.” That is in the present subjunctive. It means you are going to continually do it. You will not just do it at the beginning of your ministry and then stop.

And then we obey Him completely, for Jesus said, “Do what I tell you to do.” Whatever. Even in the smallest matters we show our friendship by obeying Him in all things. We cannot pick and choose what we are going to obey Him on. We cannot say, “Well, I’ll obey You in preaching and in the pulpit, but not in my marriage.” Or, “I’ll obey in my marriage and when I preach, but not in my private life. The Internet—that is private time.” You obey Him in all things, if you are Jesus’ friends.

So being Jesus’ friend is a wonderful relationship. We are going to love difficult people. We are going to obey Him in the smallest matters. We are going to speak the truth even when it is not popular. Folks, in order to be His friends, it takes courage.

We have spoken about the filling of the Holy Spirit. God, please give us the courage to be the kind of friends that You want.

In 1877 in his Yale lectures, Phillips Brooks said,

Courage is an indispensable requisite of any true ministry. If you are afraid of men and a slave to their opinion, go and do something else. Go make shoes to fit them. Go even and paint pictures you know are bad but will suit their bad taste. But do not keep on, all of your life, preaching sermons which shall not say what God sent you to declare, but what they hire you to say. Be courageous. Be independent.

Let’s pray.

Servant Leadership – Lesson 28
Our Identification with Christ by Skip Heitzig

10

Lord, make us Your courageous friends. How honored we are that You—though You have every right to just simply treat us as servants—we are unprofitable servants, Lord, doing what we've been commanded to do. Yet You bring it up to the next level—the highest level. For You said, "You're My friends now." What an honor that is, Lord. It changes everything. The whole complexion of our ministry, the way we do things, why we do things, how we do things. So Lord, I pray that You would help us prevent pastoral arterial sclerosis, by kindling, and maintaining, a wonderful, warm friendship with Jesus Christ. Truly, You are the center of everything—of our ministries, of our lives. I pray that will never cease. In Jesus' name, amen.

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