Characteristics of God's Servant

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The apostle Paul proclaimed, "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16)? It is true that servants have distinguishing characteristics, and the loyal servant of Christ certainly has his. Let us now notice some distinct traits of a faithful follower of Christ.

As the apostle Paul noted, a servant of Christ is obedient. People today desperately need the attitude of young Samuel. When God called out Samuel said, "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 10). God speaks to all who will listen today through His Son (Heb. 1:2). The Son, who has been given all authority (Matt. 28:18) said, "...If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

Christ has clearly stated that His sheep will hear His voice and will follow Him (John 10:3-4). Even though the world beckons, an obedient servant will not follow the voice of a stranger (John 10:5). Christians today sorely need the response of God's people during the days of Joshua. "And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken " (Joshua 24:24).

A servant of Christ will be diligent in all that he does. The wise man admonished, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom; in Sheol, whither thou goest " (Eccl. 9:10). Jeremiah warned his people, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently ..." (Jer. 48:10). The word "diligence" means to "use speed, i.e. to make every effort, to be prompt or earnest" (Strongs). We must remember the lesson taught about the one who was afraid and hid his talent. A lack of diligence contributed to him being called an unprofitable servant (Matt. 25:30).

The Lord's servant will persevere. A Christian should not question the work that the Lord would have him to do in the kingdom. An Old Testament text illustrates this point beautifully. Elijah sent his servant seven times with the instruction each time being, "Go up now, look toward the sea... " (1 Kings 18:42). Six times the answer was the same: "... There is nothing " (v. 42). The servant did not murmur nor complain. The seventh time he went to look and replied to Elijah, "Behold, there ariseth a cloud out of the sea, as small as a man's hand" (1 Kings 18:44).

We learn a most valuable lesson. It was not the servant's place to make the cloud or to grow weary of repeating the task he was bid to do. The servant's duty was to go and look. How often we grow weary and discouraged because we do not see the progress we are seeking! The admonishment of the apostle Paul is surely needed by all followers of Christ: "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Let us never fail to be faithful laborers in the Lord's church.

A servant of the Lord will be faithful. God does not measure success the same way that man measures success. It is required that the Lord's stewards be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2). If we always "serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind" (1 Chron. 28:9) we will be considered a success according to God's way of reckoning. Men may consider us to be a miserable failure, but loyal obedience to the inspired pattern is what counts with God. Let us remember that one may plant and another may water, but it is always God that gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

A servant of Christ will always be courageous. Moses demonstrated outstanding courage when he boldly demanded that the Pharoah let the children of Israel and their possessions leave the land. His authority was, "The I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exo. 3:14). If a servant goes forth in his
own name he has cause to tremble, but a servant who goes forth with a “thus saith the Lord” has no reason to fear. Soldiers of the cross must not manifest “a spirit of fearfulness” (2 Tim. 1:7) in doing the Lord’s will. Let us gladly say, "...The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me " (Heb. 13:6)?

**In all things the Lord's servant will strive to be humble.** Humility is not a trait of a worldly person. Envy and jealousy will leave one unfit for the Lord's service. Are we joyous when good is done in the kingdom regardless of who is recognized for doing it? Does the glory go to the God to whom it belongs, or do we pout because we are not praised and honored? Are we willing to "serve one another" (1 Pet. 5:5) and "edify one another" (Rom. 14:19)? A great definition of humility is given by Paul: "doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).

May we truly seek to be God's obedient servant!