

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 1

Characteristics of a Servant

By

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Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa

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I want to talk about the minister in this lesson. And then next, I want to talk to about the ministry. I am certain that the reason why all of us are here tonight is because deep down inside we want to be used of God. I want God to use my life for whatever ministry He might have for me. And in desiring God to use me, I want to be used to the ultimate. If I am going to be in the ministry, I want my ministry to achieve its ultimate for God.

Years ago when I felt called of God to enter the ministry, I sought to study the lives of men who had been effective for God, in order that I might learn from them. I wanted to discover why they were effective for God because I wanted to be effective for God in my service to Him. And so, I studied the Book of Acts because to me it seemed that the church hit its peak in the first thirty years and has been going down ever since. In the first thirty years, the church reached the known world, at that time, with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It made a tremendous impact upon the world. The Pharisees (or the Sanhedrin) accused the disciples of filling Jerusalem with this man's doctrine. They were so effective they had filled the whole city with the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Then, later on when they arrived in Berea, some people reported to the leaders of the city, "These men who have been turning the world upside down have come here" (cf. [Acts 17:6](#)). The early church was very effective. It was turning the world upside down.

I think that there is a reason why the demise of the church came about. I do believe that the church began to substitute the abilities of the flesh for the enablings of the Spirit. When they started developing fancy structures, fancy programs, fancy schools; when they began to demand a certain amount of education, higher education, et cetera; when the men began to trust in their own trained abilities, then they ceased depending on the anointing and the guiding and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. And I think that, as we look at what God is doing today, we find that by far the most effective works are those that are just empowered by the Spirit. The church program church is dead. And all over the United States we get letters from people who say, "We love Jesus. We love the Word of God. But we cannot find a church where we can just learn the Word of God." There is so much *churchianity*. And people are hungry for just the work of God's Spirit.

Let us turn to Acts 3 and we will see many of the characteristics of these men who were so mightily used of God.

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour
of prayer, being the ninth hour. ([Acts 3:1](#))

And here we have our first clue. They were men of prayer. The men whom God uses are men who are in contact with God, men who pray. You cannot do any true, effective work for God apart from prayer. Jesus told us that you cannot go in and just take the goods from a strong man. But you first go in and bind the strong man of the house and then you go in and take the spoil. (cf. [Matthew 12:29](#); [Mark 3:27](#)). Now through prayer we are binding the strong man. We are binding the work of Satan. And then all that our Christian service should be is going in and taking the spoils. We have already won the victory in prayer. We have already fought the battle in the closet and there we have taken the victory, binding the strong man of the house. And then when we go out, we just go out to take the spoils.

Prayer is, by far, the greatest outlet of spiritual power that we have. One of the mysteries of heaven will be why we did not pray more when God has given to us such a valuable tool for power. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal they are mighty in God for pulling down strongholds [of the enemy]" ([2 Corinthians 10:4](#)). And a lot of people are getting battered in the battle because they have not really fought the battle in the closet, in their prayer life.

There are five outlets of spiritual power that I can think of. One is your words, what you say. God can use your words to touch lives. It is not necessary that they be eloquent words. It is necessary that they be anointed words of the Spirit. I have heard some of the greatest orators alive in the world today. They were so polished. They were so smooth. The words just rolled out of their mouths. But they just rolled right off of me as easily as they rolled out of their mouths. It did not stir me. It did not touch me. It did not move me though it was marvelous speech. Looking at it from a homiletical standpoint it was perfect, but yet there was nothing behind it.

Several years ago on vacation up at Bass Lake, we went over to North Fork to a little country church. The pastor was not there and some woman was speaking and she was from the hill country of Kentucky. She was a little hard to understand because it sounded like she has gravel in her mouth when she talked. She truly butchered the king's English. But as this precious saintly woman spoke, my heart began to burn. There was such an anointing of God's Spirit upon her life and upon her words that I was really ministered to that morning.

My words can be an outlet of spiritual power. God can use what I say.

The second outlet of spiritual power is your life. Every day your life, without saying a word, you are having an influence on other people for either good or bad. If your life is in tune with God and filled with the Holy Spirit, your life is having that silent influence for good wherever you go.

Now in looking at our words and looking at our lives, we realize that our words can never be any greater than our lives. A lot of times what a person says is totally disavowed by what he is. His life does not back up what he is saying. And therefore, what he is saying becomes meaningless because there is no real life behind it. So our words are important but they can never be greater than our lives.

Another outlet of spiritual power is our service—what I do for God, what I do in the name of the Lord. And God's Spirit can use even a cup of cold water given unto a prophet in the name of the Lord. My service for God can be a vital outlet of spiritual power.

My money can be an outlet of spiritual power—that which I release for the work of the Lord.

Several years ago there was a young girl here in the Los Angeles area going to Biola College. She felt called of God to go to China as a missionary—so she took all of the courses. She studied nursing and earned her RN. When she finally applied to the mission board to go to China as a missionary, they required that she get a physical. After her physical the doctor said, "There is no way you could ever go to China." And he rejected her because of a heart problem that she had that would have just been aggravated in China. And so, after all of those years of training and preparing she received the disappointing word that she could not go because of her heart problem. She cried before the Lord because of the frustration of her ambition in her life. But then she came across another girl, who also felt the call of God to go to China as a missionary. This young woman was qualified but lacked the funds. She said, "I have an idea. I will get a job and we can be partners. And half of what I make, I will send to you to support you in your work in China." So they made a pact together and she went out and got a job and took half of what she earned and sent it to the gal in China and supported her as a missionary in China. God began to bless her at her work. She began to get promotions. And before long she met another girl who felt called of God to go to China as a missionary. And she said, "You go and I will support you." God continued to bless her. She became an executive in that company and was, at one time, supporting five young ladies over in China.

Now, when the time comes for the Lord to hand out heavenly rewards for those Chinese who were led to Christ by the five girls that went over there, that one gal who stayed home and supported those five will share equally in the reward. She released her money and it became an outlet of spiritual power and it began to do a work for God over in China.

Paul, in writing to the Philippians, thanked them for the offering they sent, and then added: “I thank you for the offering that you sent to me. Not that I necessarily needed any money. But I desire that fruit might abound to your account” (cf. [Philippians 4:17](#)). The fruit of my ministry, you see, is going to go to your account because of what you sent.

So our money can be an outlet of spiritual power, that which we release for God.

But by far the greatest outlet of spiritual power is prayer. I can do nothing of real service for God, until I have first of all done it in prayer. You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you really cannot do much more than pray until you have prayed.

Now, one of the problems that many people have faced in their ministry is that they go out unprepared. They have not prayed in advance and they just go into a situation without having a lot of backing in prayer. You may say, “But Chuck, it seems to me that what I do for the Lord in service is greater than what I do in prayer.” But we must face the fact that when we serve the Lord, our service is limited in location to where we are. Now I am serving the Lord tonight. I am sitting here, sharing with you the things of the Spirit, giving you help and understanding so that you will know what is necessary if your life is to be used by God. I am teaching you about the minister, what he is like, what he must do. But while I am sitting here, I cannot be ministering up at the conference center. Tomorrow morning I have to get up early, get in my car, and drive up to the conference center. And tomorrow I will be ministering to the students up there in school. But it will take me an hour and forty-five minutes to get my body from here up there, so that I can minister up there. My service to God is always restricted and limited to my body. I cannot be two places at once, so my ministry is limited in locale to where I am.

Whereas, when I release the power through prayer it is unlimited. I can touch a world for God. I can go into my closet and I can begin to serve the Lord over in China. And I can spend an hour of my life in China, strengthening the brethren there, helping them, protecting them, shielding them, giving them strength and power and support. Then if I get tired of serving the Lord in China, I can jump over to Africa, and I can start praying for the work of God in Africa, to open up the minds of people to understand the tract or the Word of God that has been given to them, creating a hunger in the hearts of those people to really know God and the fullness of God’s love. And then I can jump down into South America for a while, and then over to England. And you can just bounce around all over the world without ever leaving your closet, and doing work for God in each of these areas, putting in time, getting credit in God’s books for missionary work around the world, as through prayer I uphold them and I help them and I strengthen them. My prayer becomes a spiritual force and power, strengthening them and helping them wherever I direct it. So prayer is an exciting outlet of spiritual power because it is so broad, so unlimited.

These men that God used were men of prayer. They were going into the temple about three o’clock in the afternoon, which was the evening hour of prayer. And as we study through the Book of Acts, we find how often they resorted to prayer. We find out how much prayer is mentioned as a vital part of their lives.

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Peter and John were going into the temple to pray. And there was a certain man there who was lame from birth, asking for alms. You go to Jerusalem today and you will find there at the Damascus Gate, people who are lame or blind or infirm who still beg. All the way out through the Damascus Gate you can see the beggars there. Peter said to him, “Hey fella! Look here.” And he turned, no doubt holding out his hand expecting to receive something. Peter said, “I don’t have any silver or gold. But what I have I’ll give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand to your feet and walk” (cf. [Acts 3:6](#)). Now it says that Peter took the man by the right hand and lifted him to his feet.

I would like to suggest that these men who God used were men of faith, because it would take an awful lot of faith to lift a lame man to his feet. I know that Satan was just whispering in his ear, “Peter, what are you going to do if this guy collapses? If he goes right down in a heap, what are you going to do? All the people are going to look at you and they are going to think that you are molesting this handicapped man.” It must have taken a lot of faith. And at this point we have to be careful regarding faith and presumption. If God tells us to do something then do it by faith. If God does not tell you then do not mess with it.

When we were over at the little chapel, a block away, after a Sunday morning service they wheeled this man up in a wheelchair to the front and they asked me to pray for him. They did not tell me what his problem was but, I assumed because he was in a wheelchair obviously he could not walk. And so we prayed for him. And the Lord spoke to my heart. I had just been reading this account of Peter, and the Lord spoke to my heart and said, “Lift him out of the wheelchair.” I thought, “What if he falls?” And so I said to the man after praying, “In the name of Jesus, stand and walk!” And I lifted him and put him on his feet. And the fellow began to walk! He began to walk up and down the aisle. Then he began to sort of trot up and down the aisle. And the family said, “We did not bring him here for that!” The guy was having some kind of a financial problem or something and they wanted us to pray for him. But he had not walked in over six years. And of course, they were going just berserk.

The following Wednesday evening I was speaking down in Tucson and at the close of the service there was a lady there with a wheelchair. And a guy came up and he said, “Would you pray for my wife?” And so I laid hands on her and prayed for her in the name of the Lord. I patted her on the shoulder and I said, “God bless you, sister. I just pray that the Lord will really touch your body and heal you.” And the guy wheeled her out. And my son said, “Hey Dad, why didn’t you lift her out like you did that guy last Sunday?” I said, “Because, God did not speak to my heart and tell me to do it.”

You see, there is a difference. When God lays something upon your heart, then dare to venture out. But if God did not lay it on your heart, then do not mess with it. If you do not have the faith for it, you see (and I just really did not) I just said to my son, “I just did not have the faith to do it and I did not feel impressed of the Lord.”

But these men that God used were men of faith.

Now in Romans 4, we have four keys given to us for faith. Speaking of Abraham’s faith, it is in about verse 19. Speaking of Abraham,

And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ([Romans 4:19](#))

So the first key to Abraham's faith was not looking at the human aspects. And really when we are considering God as the agent doing the work, we should not be looking at human difficulties. But it is interesting how, whenever any problem comes up, the first thing we try to figure out is humanly how we might be able to do it. That is always the first thing we consider are the human difficulties or the human impossibilities. And we are always measuring things by our ability or by man's ability. But that is absolutely wrong. Because it is not up to me to do it, it is up to God to do it. It is not my ability here that is going to be working, it is God's ability, you see. And yet, I am always measuring it by man's ability.

It is interesting when a person comes along with a headache and says, "Would you pray for me? I have this crazy headache tonight," you say, "Oh sure. God, heal this headache. Oh, thank You, Jesus. Praise the Lord. Amen." You know, if it does not go away, take an aspirin. Headaches go away and aspirin will help. They are not a big deal.

But another time a guy comes up and says, "I just came from the doctor and I have been having a lot of problems. He says I have leukemia and I have about two weeks to live. Would you pray that God will heal me?" Two weeks to live? Leukemia! Oh, man! And suddenly my prayers become more fervent. "Oh, God. Oh, God in heaven, Creator of the heaven and earth. Oh, God!" I have to really work myself up for this one, because the doctor has given up on him. And leukemia is a lot tougher than a headache.

What am I doing? I am carrying my human limitations over to God. I am considering the difficulties as measured by man. But if God is going to heal somebody, God can heal a person of leukemia just as easily as He can heal a headache. It does not take any more from God or any more of God to heal from some of these things that man is unable to do anything about. But if God is going to do it, it is no problem for God.

The problem lies in our faith. But the problem with our faith is that we are measuring it by our own analysis. Abraham did not consider his own body, almost dead at a hundred years old; nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not take that into account, because you see, he was dealing now with the promise of God. Abraham is thinking: "God promised me a son through Sarah. So what if I am almost a hundred? So what if she went through the change of life twenty years ago? It does not matter. So what if I have been trying for seventy-five years? It really does not matter." He did not consider the human aspects, the human impossibilities, because God is the one who was going to be working here.

Secondly, he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief. How many times do we find ourselves staggering at the promises of God?

Remember in the Old Testament Samaria, the capital of Israel, was being besieged by the Syrian army, at this particular time by Ben Hadad and the Syrian army. Things were really desperate and the king of Samaria was blaming the prophet of God, Elisha. And Elisha was sitting there in his house with some of his friends and he had a real keen insight. God just revealed to him all kinds of things. And as he was sitting there he said, "Well, how about that? Look what that son of a murderer is going to do now. He is sending a guy down here to get my head." Elisha said: "When he knocks on the door, open the door and pin him back with the door. For behold, his master's footsteps are right behind him. The king is coming down too." So this guy came down to Elisha's house and knocked on the door and Elisha's men opened the door and pinned him back. And pretty soon the king came up and said to Elisha, "Are you the one who has been troubling Israel?" And they said, "Come on. Get over that." Elisha said, "No, but you are the one that has troubled Israel. You are the one that brought the Ba'al worship and turned them away from Jehovah. Do

not blame me. It is your fault for the problems that they have, because they have turned away from the true and the living God” (cf. [2 Kings 6:32–33](#)).

Now there was a horrible famine going on. They were selling the jawbone of a donkey for sixty-five pieces of silver. But Elisha said, “Do not worry. Tomorrow morning they will be selling a bushel of fine flour of wheat for sixty-five cents in the gate of the city.” The man upon whom the king leaned said, “If God would open windows in heaven, could such a thing be?” (cf. [2 Kings 7:1–2](#)).

What was he doing? He was staggering at the promises of God because he could not figure out how God could possibly do that, unless He would go around in heaven and open up windows and dump flour out. He could not figure out how God might be able to do it. That is not my problem—how God is going to do it. That is not my concern. God said He was going to do it, so how God is going to do it is His business, not mine.

I so often get into trouble by trying to figure out how God is going to do it. And we often times stagger at the promises of God. “Well, that is all right, Lord, if I do not understand.”

Abraham staggered at the promises of God, when the Lord came to Abraham and said, “I am going to give you a son.” And here was Ishmael, thirteen years old, playing outside. Abraham said, “Oh thank You, Father. That is great. Let Ishmael live before You forever. You do not need to put me on anymore, God. Here is Ishmael, that is fine.” God said, “No Abraham, through Sarah shall thy seed be called” (cf. [Genesis 17:18–19](#)).

Now after that he did not stagger. But being strong in the faith, he began to give glory to God. What does that mean? He started praising the Lord for a son. And so here is this hundred-year-old man out there, just so happy. He is just sitting there sort of rolling and laughing. And he says, “All right!” Someone might go up to him and say, “Hey old man, what are you so happy about?” “Oh, I cannot believe it. My wife is going to have a son!” “Your wife is going to have a son?” “Yeah! Praise God! Oh bless the Lord. God is so good.” “How old is your wife, old man?” “Oh, I forgot. But she is somewhere above ninety.” “How long you been married, old man?” “Well, we had our seventy-fifth anniversary a while back.” “You have not had any children up till now?” “No.”

That person walks away saying, “Poor ol’ fella, but he is happy.”

Being strong in the faith he gave glory to God. Oh, what a key, what a key, what a key! Start acting like you have it before you ever get it. God is as good as His Word. And God’s Word is as good as He is. Do you have God’s promise? Do you have God’s Word? Then just rejoice. That is as good as having it.

Abraham did not stagger at the promise of God, but he, being strong in the faith actually began to give glory to God. He was praising God for what God had promised.

Several years ago when we had been in the ministry for about six years, I was working at Alpha Beta Markets in order to support the family because the church could only pay us about twenty dollars a week. We had three children, so it was necessary for me to work in order to take care of the needs of the family. And we looked at it as God providing our needs. He provided me with the ability to do grocery work and provided me good hours with the job at Alpha Beta. I was head of the produce department. I went in the morning at four o’clock and I could get off in the early

afternoon and had the rest of the afternoon and evenings were for the ministry. And so it was just a great deal because it helped provide for the needs of the family.

Then my mother-in-law died who lived in Phoenix, and I had to take a leave of absence from the job and we went on down to Phoenix. By the time we were able to get everything all wrapped up down there, taking care of all the affairs and all that you have to take care of with the papers, a couple of weeks had gone by. When I got back I went in to check my schedule to see when I was supposed to come back to work, and the manager said, “Well Chuck, I got a call from the union. You cannot go back to work until you first of all go over and clear it with them. I guess you are behind on your dues.” I said, “Oh yeah, I forgot to pay them before I left.” So I went over to the union hall and I said, “I want to pay my dues.” They told me that there was a fifty-dollar fine, plus the back dues, which I did not have. They said, “Well, we cannot give you a release to go back to work until you pay it.” I said, “Well, I cannot get it unless I am working.” They said, “Well, you cannot work until you get it.”

I was really in a jam because the church just was not paying adequate salary to get by on—with three kids, twenty dollars a week just would not cut it. So our debts began to pile up on us. We were praying. Alpha Beta had offered me a management position if I would leave the ministry. They promised me a great career with Alpha Beta Market. And they wanted me to come in and just to go into management with them. And so I was really discouraged because of the bills and everything else. I was thinking about leaving the ministry. I was thinking, “Well, Lord, maybe You want me to just be a good Christian businessman and just support the church. I really do not seem to be very successful in the ministry. And I was getting more discouraged every day and as the bills were mounting it was really tough.

One morning I got up early before everybody else. I went to the desk and pulled out all of the bills. I totaled everything up and we had \$416 in bills. And you know, twenty dollars a week was not even buying the food for the kids. I mean, we were going deeper every day. And I thought, “Well, this is it. There is no sense of trying to kid myself any longer. I cannot just, sit here and go deeper into debt all the time. I am going to have to, leave the ministry and get a job, or something. It just does not make sense.” And I was just really discouraged that morning. I just figured, this is it. I have had it, as far as the ministry is concerned.

Then the phone rang. It was a long distance call. The people said, “Hi, Chuck, how are you?” I said, “Oh great. How are you?” They said, “We called you to let you know that yesterday that we put a letter in the mail for you. We sent it special delivery airmail. You should get it today. It’s just because the Lord put it on our heart to send you a check.” I said, “Oh, praise the Lord! I am really thrilled about that.” They said, “Yes, the Lord laid upon our heart to send you a check for \$425.” I said, “What? Ooh, weee! Man!” When I hung up the phone after talking to them I ran into the kitchen and grabbed my wife and began to waltz her around the kitchen. Boy, was I happy, just praising the Lord. You never heard such praises. “God, You are so good! Lord, I love You! All right! Every bill I had is going to be paid. Ooh, God is so good.” And I was just so excited and so high.

And when I began to settle down a little bit, the Lord began to speak to me and say, “What are you so happy about?” I said, “Lord, You are so neat. Oh, how I love You. Lord, You are so good. Oh, I love You, Lord. You are just all right.” The Lord said, “How do you know they are going to send that money?” I said, “Come on, God. You have got to be kidding me. How do I know? They already sent it, Lord. They told me. These are good honest people. I would trust their word any place. They are just good people, God. And they gave me their word. And I believe it.” The Lord said, “Very interesting. You had My word this morning when you first got up. I did not see you

jumping around the place. I did not see you all happy and praising Me.” He said, “I saw you going around kicking the floor and murmuring and complaining. And you had My word I was going to supply all your needs. Now you have the word of man and you are so excited. You are so happy. Whose word is greater?”

I had to end up repenting and asking God to forgive me because He was right. I had God’s promise but I was discouraged and blue. We have the word of God. We ought to get excited over the promises of God. Abraham did. Part of his faith was, “God said it, I know He is going to do it. Hallelujah! Bless God!”

Finally, being fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able also to perform. The fourth key to Abraham’s faith—he just believed in the ability of God.

Now how big is your God? Tell me, what is too hard for God to do? Name something that is too hard for God. God said to Jeremiah, “Lo, Jeremiah, I have made the heaven and the earth. Is there anything too hard for Me?” ([Jeremiah 32:27](#)). Now look at that universe. He created it all. Is there anything too hard for Him?

You know, sometimes we come to God with sort of an apologetic attitude. “God, this is really a tough one. If You do not want to, I can understand, Lord, because this one is really tough.” Like it is going to put a real strain on Him to come through on this one. Being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able to perform (cf. [Romans 4:21](#)). Of course, I believe God is able to do it. Well, if He has promised He is going to do it then surely He will.

So, they were men of faith. Now, their faith had come because they were men of the Word. When this guy made his little pass through the temple, running, leaping, praising God, people inside the temple said, “Hey, did you see that guy just now? Isn’t that the lame man that has been out there at the gate all these years? Man, it sure looked like him. How could it be him, he was running? I do not know, but I will find out.” And this guy made one pass through the temple and 5,000 people followed him out to Solomon’s porch, greatly wondering. And he grabbed a hold of Peter and the people began to assemble around looking at Peter. And Peter said, “Ye men of Israel, why marvel at this? Or, why look on us as we through our own righteousness have done this good deed to this lame man?” (cf. [Acts 3:12](#)).

Now here is an important key for anyone who is considering the ministry at all. I believe one of the greatest dangers that exist in the ministry and I think that it will put you out of the ministry quicker than anything else, is taking the credit or taking the glory for the work of God. If you are going to have an effective ministry for Jesus Christ, you must first come to the cross and reckon the old man to be crucified with Christ. You must, as Paul, be crucified with Christ because the moment God begins to work in your life through the power of the Holy Spirit, there are a lot of naïve people out there who are going to start looking to you as though you are something special. Somehow people get their eyes upon man instead of God. They are looking at the instrument and they want to glory in the instrument rather than in God who uses the instrument.

Several years ago we were pastoring in Los Serranos and a lady started attending some of my Bible studies. Her husband was one of the most prominent psychiatrists in that area, but he was having a problem. He had gotten hooked on Valium and it was beginning to affect his practice. He was so loaded on drugs that when the patients would be there talking to him, he would fall asleep. And it was really beginning to affect his practice and yet he was hooked.—He was really in bad shape. His wife told me, “Chuck, he is an atheist but he is such a brilliant man.” But she said, “If anyone can reach him, you can.” So they invited my wife and me over for dinner on Friday

night. After dinner my wife and this gal headed off for the kitchen and left her husband and I alone. And so we started talking about God, and about the Bible, and about the world and about all kinds of things.

She kept inviting us over on Friday nights, and she and my wife would disappear and then I would have my shots at him. So after a while, one evening I said, “Well, we have gotten pretty well acquainted now through this time we have been able to share together. You are a psychiatrist and I recognize from some of your questions you have been seeking to analyze me. And you probably know a lot more about me than I know about you. Now having come to know me as you do and observing me, my attitudes, you know how much joy I have. And you know my whole philosophy of life. Tell me, what if Jesus Christ is not the Son of God? What if there is no God? What do you think I have lost by believing in Jesus Christ? As far as my lifestyle and the joy and everything like that, what do you think I have lost because I have believed in Jesus Christ?”

And he looked at me and studied me for a bit and he said, “Not a thing. I wish I were as happy as you are.” I said, “All right. Let’s turn it around. What if Jesus Christ really is the Son of God and He died? What if what I believe is true? What have you lost by not believing?” He said, “You trapped me.” I said, “No, I did not. God did.” So he knelt down and accepted the Lord.

The next morning his wife was in my office bright and early. She is a very emotional type. She is the kind that does not just walk into a room, she storms. She came bursting into the office and said, “Oh Chuck, I knew you could do it. I knew you could do it. I knew that if anybody could do it, you could do it, Chuck. You are the greatest.” And she just kept on. I said, “Wait a minute. Hold on here. Let’s get something straight. Your husband is a psychiatrist and a neurosurgeon.” She said, “That is right.” I said, “What if one of his patients had an aneurysm and he had to cut open the skull and took the little clips and clipped off the veins up there and stopped the aneurysm and put him back together? And when that patient had recovered he came back to your husband’s office and said, ‘I’d like to see the scalpel that you did the work with.’ And he began to hold that scalpel or the saw that they cut the skull with and said, ‘Oh, you are the greatest scalpel. You are so beautiful. I knew you could do it.’” I said, “You would think that it was time for your husband to take them from the operating room to the couch. There is something wrong when they start to praise the instrument. Lady, you are praising the instrument—All I am is an instrument. It is God who did it, not me. I was only the instrument that God used. Do not praise the instrument. Do not glory in the instrument. Glory in God who uses instruments to do His work.”

Now you must remember that you are never more than an instrument in the hand of God and therefore you, as an instrument, cannot take glory for what God does. The minute you take glory for what God does then God will set the instrument on the shelf and will not use it anymore. You will go on. Oh yes, you will go on with the motions, but listen, there will be a dynamic power of the Spirit that is lost. And one of the tragic things is that you see a lot of empty shells. A lot of guys around are still trying to do the thing. It has become mechanical and they are going through the motions, but there is no dynamic of the Spirit there anymore, because they have dared to take the glory that should only be given to God and they have accepted the glory and the praise and the honors for themselves that should be directed to God.

Now that will be a continuing danger to the ministry. People will seek to glorify you. People will seek to honor you and seek to give you glory for what God has done. Do not take it. “Ye men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or, why look on us as though we, through our own righteousness have done this work to this lame man?” (cf. [Acts 3:12](#)). Why do you look at me like I am so holy? Like I am so spiritual? Like I am so righteous? We are only men like you are. “Be it known unto you that it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that this man stands here

before you whole” (cf. [Acts 3:16](#)). Do not take credit. Point them to the one who has done the work, the one that should receive the glory and the credit for what has been done. You do not dare take glory for what God has done.

Many ministers have come to an end of their ministry in that point. That is the pitfall that has destroyed more ministers than any other pitfall I know. If you want to continue to be used by God, if you want God to continue His work through your life, then make sure that you are not in it for personal glory for you, you are not looking for your own glory or you are not taking and accepting the glory or the honors, the plaudits that people are wanting to heap upon you.

Paul the Apostle was in Lystra and as he was preaching there, there was a guy about thirty-eight years old. He had been lame from birth and Paul perceived the guy had faith to be healed. And he said, “Brother, Jesus of Nazareth makes you whole. Stand up and walk.” And the guy stood up and walked. And the people just gasped. This man had been lame all his life. He is walking! They ran down to the street, to the temple of Jupiter. And they said to the priest, “Hey man, your god is up here in the street. He came to earth! Along with Mercury and they are right down there in the street right now.” And so the old priest came pulling an ox up the street, going to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas right there in the streets of Lystra. Paul and Barnabas ripped off their clothes. They said, “Hey look, we are not gods. We are men just like you are. Do not do this.” But scarcely were they able to restrain them (cf. [Acts 14:8–15](#)).

People want to honor the vessel. They want to give glory to the vessel. Do not take it. You do not dare take it. When Paul is writing Romans 12 about ministry gifts, he begins that portion of that chapter on ministry gifts by saying, “take heed that no man thinks more highly of himself than he ought” (cf. [Romans 12:3](#)).

Be careful for that. See that you do not start getting an exalted opinion of yourself. “Well, God used me because God knew that...” Do not get an exalted opinion of yourself. Do not take glory that belongs only to God. You have got to come to the cross. You have got to have only one ambition and that is to glorify God. The old man, the old life is dead. Ambition is dead. Just bring glory to my Master, not to me. I am just a servant bringing glory, seeking to bring glory to my Master. Jesus said, “Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men. For I say unto you, ye have your reward” ([Matthew 6:1](#)).

Be careful. We can contrast what we see today with what went on in Peter’s day. Those who go around claiming the gifts of healing, I have heard them say, “Oh well, I fasted for many days. And to have this kind of ministry takes tremendous sacrifice. You have got to be willing to give your all. You have got to give up everything. You cannot do this and that and the other. And it takes a real price. You have got to pay a price to have this kind of ministry.” That is just the opposite of what Peter said. “Hey, do not look on me as though through my righteous I did this.” You see, he was not even trying to say, “Hey, I am holy and I am righteous and I fasted and I did an awful lot to get this kind of power in my life.” No, it was, “Hey do not look on me. This is the work of Jesus Christ.” And then he does not even take credit for the faith. He said, “And it is through the faith of Him.” He did not even take credit. “It was not my great faith. God gave me the faith to do what I did. It is through the faith of Him.” Peter is not taking any credit at all. This is the work of God. Glorify God in it.

Now, when Peter began to talk to them he began to quote Scriptures. And as you read the quotations you find he is quoting out of several areas of the Old Testament. He is not having to turn and find it and everything else. It was just a part of him. He just knew the word and he starts quoting the word.

The men that God uses are men of the Word, men who have God's Word just tucked away in their heart. So if you want to be used of God, get into the Word, study the Word, learn the Word, know the Word. For as you really get the Word of God there implanted in your heart, then you are able to use the Word and also you will know the God that you are serving. And the more you know God, the more trust and faith you will have in God because you will know Him so fully and so completely.

Now the next day they arrested Peter for this and they brought him into court. They said, "Now tell us, by what name or by what power did you do this work on this guy?" Now this was really a tricky lead question. Under the law in Deuteronomy, if a man comes and does a miracle and he leads you to worship any other than Jehovah, then let him be put to death. So it was a trick question. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit"—There you have your qualifying phrase. The men that God uses are men that are filled with the Holy Spirit, men who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" ([Acts 1:8](#)). And the men that God uses are men who are filled with the Spirit of God.

But then as you read on, he said:

If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the "stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone." Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. ([Acts 4:9–12](#))

Peter, you are pretty bold there, boy.

Yes, the men that God uses are men that have a holy boldness; men who will speak out in the face of all kinds of opposition, speak out forcibly for Jesus Christ; men who are not ashamed to speak out for Jesus Christ, even in the midst of the toughest adversity. These guys are ready to pounce on every word, and Peter just lays it out with tremendous boldness.

Well, the Sanhedrin was sort of stuck. The lame guy was standing there whole. What can we say? And seeing the lame man standing with them whole, they could say nothing. You know, when God is working and you have the evidence of the work of God, it is amazing how it closes a lot of objections of people. What can you say? Here are a bunch of messed up people who are now straightened out, a lot of lame people who are now whole. What can you say? It is the witness of that work of God and you cannot really say much about that.

So they beat them and commanded them not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. So they returned to the other disciples rejoicing that they were accounted worthy by God to be able to suffer persecution for Jesus Christ. "Oh, Lord, we do not deserve to be punished and suffer for Jesus. Lord, You are so good. Oh God, how blessed we are that we were able to suffer for Jesus."

Hey, these men were the kind of men you cannot stop. They came back to their own company and they told them all the things that had happened, how that they had been beaten and commanded

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not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus Christ. (cf. [Acts 4:23](#)). Now they were men of prayer. And so when the guys heard that they said, “Let’s pray.” And so they prayed.

Now their prayer is something else. And we do not have time to study it tonight, but it is a classic prayer. They do not jump right into the request. I think that a lot of times we just say, “Oh God, I need this and I need this and I need this. Amen.” We just come and lay the trip on God and we do not even bother to have any fellowship, communion, or lay any groundwork. They said,

Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: “Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.” ([Acts 4:24–26](#))

“Lord, surely that is exactly what happened.” They prayed acknowledging first of all that God is God, and then secondly that God knew in advance the very stuff they were going to be facing that day. God was aware of what was going to be going on because through David He talked about the very things they saw that day. He prophesied the very experiences that they had that day. So they acknowledged to the Lord, “You know all about our lives in advance. You know everything about us, God. And through the mouth of Your servant David you talked of these very things that we experienced today, as the people had gathered together against You and against Your anointed One. Surely Lord, that is what they did. Now, behold Lord, their threatening.” And then they got to their request: “And grant unto Your servants that with boldness we might speak the word of Christ.”

Hey, I like that! What are they asking God for? They are asking for boldness to do the very thing that got them in trouble, not to back away from it, not to go hide some place because they had been threatened. “God, help us not to let down just because we have had a little persecution. Help us not to lay off, Lord, just because we ran into a little trouble. God, give us boldness that we might speak Your word, that we might speak in the name of Jesus.”

And the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. ([Acts 4:31](#))

These are the men that God used to turn the world upside down. These are the keys of the men that God uses and will use today to turn the world upside down. If you will determine that you will become a man of prayer, a man of the Word, a man of faith, and filled with the Holy Ghost, and not looking for any glory or honor or whatever for yourself, but only as an instrument to be used of God, to bring glory and honor to Him, and will just commit yourself in reckless abandon for Jesus Christ, hey, you will turn the world upside down.

One day when Dwight Moody was a shoe salesman, a man that he was selling a pair of shoes to said to him, “The world has yet to see what can be accomplished through just one man who will totally dedicate his life to Jesus Christ.” That challenged Moody and he said, “God, I want to be that man.” Well, he came close, but the world has yet to see what can be accomplished through one man who will really dedicate himself totally to Jesus Christ. Why don’t you be that man, that woman?

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The minister is an instrument and God uses instruments. God uses people to do His work. We have this glorious privilege. Paul said that we have this marvelous treasure here in earthen vessels ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)). Now he is pointing out something that is quite ludicrous. You have got the most valuable thing in the universe—the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. And what has God put it in? This dumb clay pot, cheap ol' clay pot. Why? That the glory may be to God and not of us. God commits His work of sharing and spreading the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to these instruments, in order that the glory might be to God and not to man, not to us.

Now there is a glorious ministry. And this is what we want to get into in the next lesson as we talk about the ministry and what it is all about. So, God bless you. It has been a joy to share with you.