

# Principles for Serving God - Not Seeking Your Own Interests

by Zac Poonen

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*The main qualification for serving God is not seeking our own interests, but being centered in God and seeking His will.*

**Duration:** 1:00:32

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:9

**Topics:** "Principles"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being responsible and alert when leading a meeting. They highlight the need to pay attention to details, such as ensuring that everyone hears the announced song number. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of speaking in a way that is understandable to all, considering the diverse language abilities of the audience. They then shift to discussing the qualities of a servant of the Lord, focusing on the need to be gripped by God's specific task for us and to serve in His power. Lastly, the speaker mentions the importance of not seeking our own interests, using the example of Timothy's genuine concern for the welfare of others. The sermon is based on Philippians 2:19.

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## Transcript

In the last two evenings, we were considering two characteristics that qualify us to be servants of the Lord. One is being gripped by the fact that God has a specific task for us and our life's ambition being to fulfil that appointed task. And then we saw, secondly, the necessity of being a servant in the power of God.

And today I want to say one more thing, and that is not seeking our own interests. In Philippians 2.19, Paul, writing to the Philippian Christians, says, I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. So we find here, that when Paul wanted to send someone to Philippi to encourage the Christians there and to build them up and to lead them on, and he was trying to make a selection among his co-workers, he didn't have many people. He couldn't say, ah, well, I can send any one of these ten.

No. He says, I have no one else. Verse 20.

That is quite an amazing thing, that when Paul looked around, he could not find anyone else. Does it mean that the others were not filled with the spirit or not gifted? He wasn't looking for that. There were people who were gifted, there were people who knew the scriptures, there were people who had many qualifications, but Paul knew those things are not really what I'm looking for.

To build up the church in Philippi, I'm looking for a man with another type of qualification. Then he considered Timothy. I can imagine Paul considering the different ones in his mind and writing off each one as not fit.

Then he comes to Timothy, and Timothy was a man who had many disqualifications. He was young, first of all, and the people in Philippi and Ephesus, wherever he went, were usually much older than him. Not only he was young, from the writings of Paul to Timothy, we discover that Timothy probably had a spirit of timidity.

He was a timid type of person, withdrawn, a bit reserved, not this aggressive type like Paul. Quiet, reserved, and we also read from 1 Timothy 5 that he had frequent stomachs infirmities. He was a sick person, frequently in pain, sickness.

It's not a very good type of person, humanly speaking, to send. One who is frequently sick, can't stir the other people for faith, for healing, if you yourself are bound by stomachs infirmities, and one who, though he was gifted, tended to not exercise his gift. Humanly speaking, and even spiritually speaking, we could say, from a gift standpoint and personality standpoint, Timothy is the last type of person you should send.

Timothy should be hanging around Paul all the time, you know, washing his clothes perhaps, and doing odd jobs, going to the market, that type of thing, because he's a shy, timid type, would be alright along with Paul, but on his own, and we wonder how he'd act. But yet, Paul, out of all the people, he selected Timothy. He said, that's the man I'm going to send, because all these disqualifications count for nothing.

I'm not bothered if Timothy cannot stir faith in you for healing, just because he's stomachs infirmities. That's not the main thing. I'm not interested in that.

I'm not bothered if he's timid and withdrawn and all that. But he has one outstanding qualification in which he excels way above all the others, and that is this. He does not seek his own interests.

Verse 21, they all seek their own interests. Were they believers? Yes. Were they full-time workers? Yes.

And pretty good full-time workers to manage to get into Paul's team. But Paul was a discerning type of person. All the believers, co-workers of his, to see where they stood.

How much responsibility can I commit to this person? He loved all of them. He respected all of them. But he also discerned all of them to see who was so free from seeking his own interests.

And he found one like Timothy. It's an outstanding example to follow. I just want to hold him up before you because I want to say, brothers, we can have stomach infirmities or any other type of physical infirmities.

That's no disqualification to serve the Lord. We may be timid, shy, withdrawn, all these things. But if we have this, it makes up for all our other lacks.

And if you have all the others qualifications and you don't have this, Paul would not have sent you or me on some important task. He knew that the believers in Philippi, what they needed was not powerful messages or wonderful gigs, demonstrations of all that. What they needed was somebody who could lead them on to a life where they are centered in God.

And Timothy was centered in the Lord and could lead them on into that type of life. I want to turn to Matthew chapter 6 and look at the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. Matthew 6, he said in verse 9, Pray then in this way.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Notice here the requests in this prayer. A concern for God's name. Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. Now the opposite of all this is, my name, my kingdom, my will.

And every one of us when we are born again, our life centers around my name, my kingdom, my will. What does that mean? That means, my name means my honor, my reputation. And I am very careful to safeguard my reputation.

People must not think less of me. They must have a high opinion about me. And I do everything possible to build up the opinion that other people have about me.

Now such a person cannot be like Timothy. He is concerned about his name. And he is disturbed when he hears that someone has dragged his name in the dust.

His reputation. The opinion that other people have about him. I want to serve your brothers.

We cannot serve God if I am thinking about the opinion that other people have about me. My name. What people think about Zak Poonen, or put your name there.

What difference in the world does it make to the kingdom of God what people think about Zak Poonen? Absolutely no difference. Then why am I so bothered about it? Because I am concerned about my name. I may be acting spiritual about so many things, but deep down I am concerned about my name.

And that's what puts me in a category quite different from Timothy's. If I can rejoice when I see my name being dragged in the dust. If I can rejoice when I am dishonored.

When people think less of me and drag me down. Yeah Lord, that's fine. It's only your name that I am concerned about.

It's a very very important thing. This is the difference between Babylon and Jerusalem. You see in Genesis chapter 11, the origin of Babylon.

We read there that when they built this tower of Babel, they said, Come, verse 4, let us build for ourselves a city. A tower whose top will reach into heaven. And thereby let us make for ourselves a name.

This is the origin of Babylon. Let us make a name for ourselves. Maybe through building a pure testimony in my locality.

Isn't that a good thing? I may not get name in the evangelical world, but at least the few brothers whom I come together with now and then. They will see, oh, this brother has also raised up something there in that locality. So he must be one of the elder brothers now.

Woe unto us, woe unto us, if we allow such thoughts. We can't prevent ourselves from being tempted by such thoughts. We will all be tempted by such thoughts.

But woe unto us if we allow such thoughts to linger in our heart and mind and we don't drive them away. In Daniel chapter 4 we read, Daniel chapter 4, that Nebuchadnezzar one day stood on top of the palace in Babylon. And it says in verse 29, 12 months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar.

And the king reflected. He looked out over this wonderful church that he had built. And he said, is this not Babylon, the great, which I myself have built for the glory of my majesty.

You see the spirit of Babylon, which I have built. I am the man God used in this locality to do this work. That is of the essence of Babylon.

Hallowed be my name, is my prayer. And it is quite a job to be converted from that to pray, hallowed be thy name. Let me disappear Lord.

Let me hide myself. Let my name not be known. In Isaiah 45, there is a very beautiful description, a title of God.

It is not a title that many people know God by. Because if we are to partake of God's nature, we must have this characteristic that God himself has. Isaiah 45 verse 15.

He is called a God who hides himself. What a title. A God who hides himself.

We see that in creation. God has created the universe. And he has hidden himself to such an extent that there are atheists in the world who say that God does not exist.

Look at the extent to which God has hidden himself. That people think he doesn't even exist. What a wonderful God he is.

What an example. He has so hidden himself. And sometimes, you know, we ask God to answer some prayer of ours.

Some really tight spot we are in. Very awkward situation. And it looks as if there is no way out.

And we pray. And a series of circumstances happen. Some person comes along there or something happens.

And our problem is solved. Usually through some apparently natural events that took place. And certain person landed up.

It is like a coincidence. And so much so that if we testify to that answer to prayer to a skeptic. The skeptic will say no.

And nothing happened. And that person happened to come along there at the right time. And what do you mean prayer? How wonderfully God has hidden himself.

Think if God had come there with pomp and show and trumpet and angels and this that and the other. And the skeptics could not say that it was not an answer to prayer. But God has hidden himself.

So much so that we who pray sometimes doubt whether it was an answer to prayer ourselves. Or whether it was merely a natural coincidence. Wonderful.

Wonderful. The way God has hidden himself. I tell you brothers, this is an example for us.

You see the human personality particularly where soul power has been developed to such an extent. A person can, he does not have to do anything. The very way he comes into a room can be in a very pompous type of way.

He does not know how to come quietly even into a room. It is a very pompous type of way. I remember once many many years ago when I was, when I went for a meeting in a CSI church where one particular well known evangelical Anglican man was speaking.

And it was quite interesting to see the way this man walked up to the pulpit. It was a show all by itself. It was worth going there.

I forget all about his message. But I remember the way he walked up to the pulpit. It was a majestic slow and everybody was watching in awe as this man of God slowly moved up and climbed up to this pulpit up on top.

I don't regret going there because it was quite a thing to see, you know. It was a, there was no hiding himself there. It was a show from the time he left his seat till he reached the pulpit.

So much so that I don't remember anything else in that meeting except this one, his movement from his seat to the pulpit. It was fantastic. My brothers, we are to be far from all that.

We are followers of a God who hides himself. And the more we partake of that nature, the more we seek to hide ourselves. That is not to seek my name.

Let them think that somebody else did it. You see, God has answered our prayer. But people are saying that somebody else did it.

And God's not worked up over there that people are not giving Him the credit for what He did. He is at rest. Let people say whoever did it.

Think that we can partake of this nature, that we have done something at great sacrifice and then at the end of it all, somebody else gets the credit and name for it. Wonderful! Leap for joy in that day. Because there we have the privilege of following in the footsteps of a God who hides himself.

We are not praying, Hallowed be my name. We are praying, Hallowed be thy name, Lord. Let somebody else get the credit gladly.

I want to withdraw. I don't want to present myself. I was speaking about soul power yesterday and I want to show you this verse.

I don't know how many of you have seen it. It's an amazing verse in Job 33, which Elihu says to Job. He says in verse 7, Behold, no fear of me should terrify you, nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you.

When I do not seek my own name or my own influence on other people, then I don't seek to terrify them through fear of me. You see, there is a holiness that can come in people through the fear of the servant of God, through the fear of the preacher, through the fear of the man of God, that when he is there, they are a bit scared to do certain things. But Elihu says no fear of me should terrify you.

And that's a good thing for us to say to all to whom we minister. There's a sense in which if you understand what I mean correctly and don't misunderstand me, I'm not afraid of that. Many people misunderstand me, but I don't want you brothers to misunderstand me.

There's a sense in which we should make it easy for other people to sin if they want to. You understand what I'm saying? That they should not keep away from sin because I am there, or because I may know about it. Do it, brother.

God makes it easy for people to go to hell, leave alone sin. He does not frighten people and threaten people and open up the earth in front of them when they do something wrong. He lets them go.

And we also in that sense must let people go. Go, brother. You can go the way you like.

He who is filthy, let him be filthy. He who will live in sin, let him live in sin. No fear of me should terrify them into a holiness which is merely pharisaical and outward.

If they have a holiness, according to 2nd Corinthians 7.1, it must be in the fear of God. It must be before God. It must not be before me.

They can do what they like. No fear of me should terrify them. It's the fear of God alone which should make them perfect holiness.

That's what I mean. As far as I am concerned, I must make it easy for them to just live as they like. I must not make the atmosphere around me such, by my soul power or my gifts or anything, that people have to act spiritual when they are in my presence.

No. They can be themselves. And my pressure should not weigh heavily on them.

This is the definition of soul power. A man's pressure weighing heavily on me and I have to always think, what will he think if I do this? What will he say if I do this? No. I am to withdraw.

I am to withdraw because I don't want my pressure to be on another person so that that person is free of me. So that I want them to be holy. I want them to flee from sin.

But God sent Adam and Eve into the garden and He, we can say, He made it possible for them to sin freely if they wanted to. He didn't have an angel appointed around every tree and about ten or twelve fiery angels with a sword near the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There would be no sin in the garden of Eden then.

Why didn't God do it that way? Have you asked yourself? If God's only intention was that Adam and Eve should not sin, that could have easily been done. That cherubim whom He placed finally in front of the tree of life, He could have put that cherubim, all of them, in front of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve wouldn't have gone anywhere near it.

And if that was the only aim, that they should not eat of that tree, God could have accomplished it easily. No. God's aim was that they must independently choose when there are no angels around, when there's no pressure on them, and when it is easy to sin, and the way is made easy to sin, then they don't sin.

That's what God is looking for. And that's why, in a sense, He makes it easy for you to sin in your office and no believer in the assembly will ever know about it during your entire life. It's possible for you and me to be unfaithful in money matters and no believer in the assembly will have a clue.

He has made it easy for us. Because He does not want a holiness that comes out of cherubim standing in front of us with flaming swords of fire. And we also must not be like that, terrifying people and thereby bringing them to holiness.

It's a holiness which is worth nothing. When you disappear, their holiness will also disappear. So, we are not seeking our name.

We are not seeking our personality to be impressed. We withdraw, we hide ourselves. We withdraw and let people be free.

Likewise, we do not seek, you know, thy name be hallowed, thy kingdom. We do not seek our kingdom. We are not saying, my kingdom come.

And yet, in my unconverted days, that's what I'm seeking. I've been seeking. My kingdom means my job, my ambitions, my family, that must all be taken care of.

My kingdom, my conveniences, that's all very important for me. And I safeguard my kingdom by a high wall around my kingdom, which I do not allow anybody else to enter. We all safeguard our kingdom very carefully.

And now, I'm seeking to be a servant of God. I have to destroy this kingdom of mine. You know, in the olden days, these castles, in England and all, they used to have moats around it, a little channel of water around it and a drawbridge, so that people could not enter.

This is how we have built our kingdoms, our convenience and keep a little distance. And now, I come to the place where I say, Lord, I'm finished with all that. The moat is, I've dried it up, the drawbridge is down, anybody can walk in.

And I am not seeking to preserve and build up my kingdom. It's Thy kingdom come. I'm not seeking my interest here.

Lord, how will it affect You? Not my convenience, but Lord, will it build up Your kingdom? I cannot be a servant of God if I'm seeking my convenience. How will it affect my family? I have to sacrifice many things. I will not be a loser.

No. If I serve others, I will never be a loser. I have seen wholehearted brothers who have served God at much sacrifice to themselves and their family.

And God has rewarded them. I don't mean in terms of money. God has rewarded them that their children have come to faith in Christ and have followed the Lord, even though because the father was

wholeheartedly seeking to do the Lord's work, he did not have very much time with his own children because other people wanted his advice and counsel and help and he was required here, there and everywhere.

One would think, humanly speaking, according to all the theories of upbringing of children, if a father doesn't spend much time with his children, it cannot go well with them and all that. God demolishes all those theories. It has gone well with them because the father sought the kingdom of God first.

How can God dishonor him for that? Impossible. So, if I seek to build my kingdom, I cannot build the kingdom of God. You remember that story in John chapter 6, where we read that the multitude was following Jesus for about three days.

They were all hungry and then there were more than 5,000 men there and we know the disciples fed the multitude. Jesus fed the multitude through the disciples. And it says here that Jesus took the loaves and distributed it through the disciples.

Now, the disciples also had been hungry for three days. They were just as hungry as all these 5,000 men and others and they could have very easily thought, I hope there is something left for us after all these hungry fellows have finished eating the loaves and fishes. I don't know how long this miracle is going to continue and these people seem to be pretty hungry.

But the Lord told us not to eat first but to serve. This is what I mean by not seeking our own interests. You are hungry, the Lord says.

I know you are hungry. I know you have been without food for three days. But they have been without food for three days.

You are my servants, therefore you eat last. Have you understood that? You are my servants, therefore you do not eat first. You do not seek your own interests, you eat last.

You have to deny yourself. And it is more difficult to deny yourself if you are distributing food for hungry people who are eating and you yourself are hungry too. And they serve and they serve and they serve and they serve.

And then at the end, because we were faithful, the Lord says, here is one basket for each of you. You can take home. For yourself and for your family.

That was quite a lot. See, when it says that they gathered twelve baskets full, it doesn't mean all the chewed up bones of the fish and scraps of loaves. I don't believe that the Lord was telling them to clean up the countryside.

That's not what He was saying. That I have multiplied so much. And it says they gathered up of the fragments, filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over.

Left over doesn't mean the scraps. That means what people had not eaten. The Lord had produced so much.

And I believe that each one of those disciples took one of those baskets home. That's why there were exactly twelve. If not thirteen, it was not eleven.

He gave each one of them one and said, take it home. And learn this lesson, that if you deny yourself and serve me, in the end, you will not be the loser. I shall repay you a hundredfold.

What you have suffered loss, you will get back. You will not be the loser if you serve me with self-denial because God can never be in debt to any man. That is impossible.

We serve an earthly organization and they pay us. The time when I left the Navy and I was... This is what I told people, the unbelieving people around me who were wondering where my bread and my needs would come from. I said, well, I have served the Navy for all these years and not a single month did they withhold my salary.

Not one month. Do you believe that Almighty God is more faithful than the Indian Navy? Then the problem is solved. If you feel that He might be less faithful, and of course, there are many problems and it is better not to serve Him at all.

But is it possible for a person to serve God and not seek his own interest and be left high and dry as they say? His needs not met? Impossible. If we honor Him and seek His kingdom first. Lord, not my kingdom.

Not my family needs. Your kingdom. Your family needs.

There are times I know when I had to go out to different places and some of those times somebody has been sick at home, maybe my wife or my children and I often felt, yeah, this is the devil trying to stop me now. And this is what I have said as I have left. Lord, I am going to seek your interests and I leave it to you to take care of my interests.

It is a good exchange, I will tell you. You take care of God's family and tell Him to take care of your family. He will do a better job than if you try to take care of your family yourself.

He really will. That is where we are to trust Him. And invariably I have found that God has done a better job of looking after my family than if I had stayed and tried to look after my family myself.

Invariably. But what the devil wants me to do or you to do at that time is, yeah, now you don't be worse than an infidel. He who does not care.

He has got scriptures to quote for us. He who does not care for his own family is worse than an infidel. That is all true.

But the point is, is that the right verse for that particular moment? That is another thing. That verse is applicable for some situations but not maybe at that particular time. So, we seek the kingdom of God.

We seek His honour. We don't seek our own interests and our own convenience. We say, Lord, I want to forget about all that.

I want to seek Your kingdom. And I just want to say something more in this connection in relation to a local church, particularly as you begin to build it in any place, you will find that a lot of the responsibility concerning many aspects of that falls on you. As it grows, many, many brothers grow up and begin to take responsibility for many things.

But in the beginning, you will find many things may fall upon you, yourself. And then, can come in your heart a spirit of complaining. Why don't the other brothers also do something? I will tell you why.

They are not mature enough yet. What's the use of complaining about that? You are father, you are mother, you are to be everything there. And our mind must be thinking, how can we do it better now? How can I do it better? What can I do now to make it better? I want to say, brothers, if you have responsibility for a meeting, to lead the meeting, there are many things that you have to look at.

It is not just that you must have a message to give and get up and sit down. You have to see many things. You must be alert in the meeting.

You can't afford to go to sleep like the other brothers. You have to be alert in the meeting to see, now a song has been announced. But I look around and I see some people are gaping around, which means they have not heard the number that was announced.

Now, the person who announces the song number may not have that sense of responsibility to look around. He is not mature enough. But you are leading the meeting.

You got to look around and you see some people are gaping. That means they didn't hear it. They are not turning to the number in the book.

Then, you have to make sure that you call it out again so that they get it. It's a very small thing. But it is just an indication of being concerned, not just that you heard the number, but that everybody sitting in the hall heard that number being called out.

It's a very small thing. But it shows an attitude of mind that we must have to be concerned about every single person in the meeting. We have to look around and see is somebody feeling a bit uncomfortable? Is there something? Is there some disturbance? Something like that.

I must be alert all the time and be thinking about everyone. For example, when you are speaking, we have to see if everybody is able to hear. Or I called out a reference and I see that most people are not looking at their scriptures.

Maybe they didn't hear the reference clearly. To be alert. Not just that I have given my message and I sat down.

That's alright for immature people. That's alright for people who are still growing up. But if you have the responsibility to lead a meeting, there are lots of things that you have to be alert like this for.

Are the windows open there? Are people feeling a bit stuffy? Maybe we need to open the windows so that they can get fresh air. Yes, I know that it may be somebody else's responsibility. But the one who leads the meeting has to look into that also.

Not just get up and give a message and sit down. It is alright to be a pastor in some denominational church where they have got all types of funny names and all these sextons and various, I don't know what else they have got doing all these other things. But we are not in that category.

We are everything, ourselves only. We have to look to see everything. Maybe the light is not switched on in that part.

All the other lights on and some people they are straining their eyes. That means the light is not on there. We have got to put that on.

Or maybe it is getting a bit stuffy and we need to have the fans on. We have to be alert to down to earth practical things. This is what it means to train our mind not to think just about our own interests.

And it is amazing what a lot we have to work on our salvation in this area to think just in one meeting I am talking about leave alone all the other things to think in one meeting about all the people and their interests. Are they hearing it? Are they hearing it clearly? Are they understanding it? And then we look around and we see that some of these people here sitting here they can hardly speak English properly. Alright, then I must take that into consideration when I speak that I don't use some bombastic words but I seek to speak simply so that some of these people who don't understand it can follow.

And if I am giving an illustration or saying something that I make it so clear if need be repeat some sentences so that everybody has got it. Oh brothers to reorient our way of thinking so that I am thinking always in terms of the interests of the other. That is a very very important requirement if we are to serve the Lord effectively.

To think and think now is there something there? Is there something there that will make it a little more convenient for them? Maybe a little more convenient for the mothers with small children or something like that. Whatever it is that we are to be alert to this if God gives you any responsibility in a local assembly. The whole thing depends on you.

And we are to be alert to it. And think about it. To train our minds away from am I comfortable? Am I everything alright with me? But to see everyone sitting here are they alright? Or am I just formally coming to a meeting and going through the procedure and finishing the meeting? No.

We are to grow up from that. To think in terms of the needs of the others. Not my kingdom.

Not my convenience. But that thy kingdom Lord. Your people.

And the third thing there was not my will but thine. In everything that I don't want it my way. I don't want to have things my way.

I may feel that a particular way is good. And but to discuss it with the other brothers who have responsibility and if they do not feel that that is the way to give it up. Not my will be done.

But thy will be done Lord. Thy will may be manifested through other brothers who also share responsibility with me. I want to submit to them.

And if they feel that it should not be like that give it up. Not seeking our own interests. Timothy was like that.

Jesus has called us into a partnership with him when he said take my yoke upon you. That means one end of the yoke is on him. And one end of the yoke is on my neck.

And that means I have to give up my own will. It's like a senior bullock teaching a junior bullock how to plow a straight furrow. And I am the junior bullock Jesus is the senior bullock who has already walked this new and living way.

Now he is teaching me how to walk it. I take his yoke upon me means I can no longer go in the direction I want to. If I don't have the yoke I can go where I like as a single bullock.

But now no longer my will. And no longer at my pace. I may like to go fast Jesus may want me to go slow at some time.

Another time I may like to relax and he may say you know we got to go on not at my pace not the direction I want to go to. A partnership. And it's a very wonderful thing that the Lord calls us to a partnership in serving him.

A tremendous honor. He could have done a better job of evangelizing the world without us. His angels would have been glad.

They would have been glad to crawl on their knees in this earth and preach the gospel to others. And to build the church. We don't appreciate that privilege sufficiently.

We don't realize what a tremendous honor it is that God gives us one small part to do to build this church. I tell you the Archangel Michael would be willing to crawl on his knees if he could get that small part that he's given to us. We don't appreciate it sufficiently.

It's an honor to be a partner with Jesus. He says I will build my church and I'm going to be I'm going to do it through you. You see the miracles in John's gospel.

They're all teaching that thing basically. When there was a lack of wine in the wedding in Cana the Lord could have created wine from nothing. You think that would have been difficult? Not at all difficult.

But he wanted to do it in partnership with the servants there. So he told the servants let's do this together. You pour the water into the water pots.

Fill it up. And then I'll convert it into wine. And then you draw it from the water pots and take it to the people in the feast.

What a partnership that was. And the servants could go home that day and say you know Jesus and I turned the water into wine today. And that was what the Lord wanted them to have the honor of.

Yeah they were partners together fellow workers in providing the wine when the wine lacked. It's a tremendous thing. He didn't want to do it all himself.

He did not want to do it all himself. And as far as possible that's how it must be in the local church too. That spirit of Christ must be in us.

We don't want to do it all ourselves and get the honor for it. Even if we have done the major part of it behind the scenes let other people also do that part and get the honor. Sure.

That's how it is we see in John chapter 6 Jesus could have provided the needs of everyone without using his disciples. But he used the disciples to multiply the to distribute the loaves that he had multiplied. And they could go home and say Jesus and I fed the multitude today.

That partnership everywhere we find that that the Lord wants to involve us in a partnership. For example at the tomb of Lazarus we say well there is one thing nobody can do to raise the dead. Okay.

But somebody can roll away the stone. Alright. Then you do that part.

It's amazing. The Lord who could raise Lazarus from the dead he would have no problem in rolling away the stone. In his own resurrection no man came to roll away the stone.

The stone rolled away by the power of God. That could have happened at the tomb of Lazarus too. That would have been quite a scene.

Stone rolling away by itself over there. But he wouldn't do it. It had to be a partnership.

He said you do what you can. I'll do what I can. You can roll away the stone.

Do it. I'll raise the dead. Then we can go and say together we raise Lazarus from the dead.

This is how it is with Jesus. Right through you find that. You see after his resurrection in John 21 you know it says he appeared to the people there and he allowed them to cast the net and catch the fish.

There would have been no problem for the Lord to make those fish jump into the boat straight away without any net or anything. But he said let's do this together. You cast the net.

Jesus and I caught so many fish today. And then he says when they came home when they came to the land and they came out on the land with this fish they found in John 21 9 that the Lord had already prepared a charcoal fire there for breakfast and there was fish placed on it and bread. And now the Lord could have said well I've made breakfast for you come and eat it.

No. He says in verse 10 bring some of your fish also and let's make breakfast together. Why did he need those few fish? He already is in the business of multiplying fish.

It would have been no problem for him to prepare any amount of fish on that charcoal fire. But he did not want them to feel left out. Bring some of the fish which you have caught so that you can also have the honor of participating in the breakfast we are making.

Let's do it together. My brothers there is something wonderful in this to be involved in this partnership. And that's why even in the ministry in the meetings we don't I just want to tell you something that if you are ever leading a meeting anywhere if you are really a wise prophet or prophet in the making leading the meeting you will not say everything there is to be said on the subject.

Because then you might as well close the meeting and sit down. That's everything that has to be said on the subject. You have gone through the concordance in such detail before the meeting that there is nothing else left to be said on it after you sit down.

And there are the one or two fish that other brothers have caught there is no need for them because you have already prepared the whole breakfast without all their fish. No. There we have to follow Jesus.

It can be a bit of a dangerous thing if you go with a tooth comb through a concordance and speak everything that needs to be said on a particular subject. That's alright in a teaching session but not in a meeting of the church where we are seeking to prophesy and encourage others. We seek to say what the Lord reminds us of and then sit down and then say now bring the fish you have caught and let's eat together.

And then you are thrilled that the Lord made you forget so many of those verses which you had intended to say because the Lord had given that fish to somebody else to come and bring to the breakfast. That is

wisdom. We are in a partnership.

We do not seek our own. Not our will. Not our name.

Not our kingdom. We are seeking to build the body of Jesus Christ. We are in partnership with the Lord.

We are not here to get a name for ourselves. You see it says in Romans 12 Romans 12 and verse 2 It will be impossible to find such a man anywhere in the world. And I tell you in eternity when all the thousands of believers stand there not one person will be able to say to the Lord Lord I sought your kingdom and your honor and I sought to live for your will and I was let down badly.

Not one human being anywhere on the face of the earth will be able to say that. And that day we will feel ashamed that we were so concerned about protecting our own interests. We could not trust God with it.

And thereby our hands being full of our own burdens we could not receive the burdens of the Lord. Our hands being so occupied with our own interests we could not be occupied with the interests of the Lord. That is a sad thing when it is like that.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That means you begin to think in terms of others and their interests. Not what you are going to get out of the whole thing.

Forget about what you are going to get. See it says about those to whom godliness is a means of gain. Can be financial gain.

I have to see not if I do this for the Lord what will I gain financially or what will I lose financially. That must not enter into my thinking. Is this something that has to be done for the kingdom of God.

Here I am Lord I pitch in and I do it. My money is available to do it. I have read in the biographies of some great men of God how in the beginning of their ministry God has tested them in this area.

That some particular project needed to be started and there was not enough resources and in more than one case I have read this particular servant of God this brother has got down before the Lord and said Lord I have so much savings here it is for this project that needs to be done for your kingdom it is yours and do you think that they or their family suffered because they gave their savings for the kingdom of God. Do you think that God doesn't have that much decency as to repay a debt. Oh what a lack of faith there is.

Is it possible that I can give something for the kingdom of God and God remain in debt to me. Impossible even human beings have a sense of decency there that if I have done something for them and if they have some resources they will help me in my time of need. How can it be possible that God almighty can remain in debt to a man who has given all for his kingdom.

Impossible such a human being does not exist to whom God remains in debt. He will repay it. But God has tested them to see whether they will give everything for his worth.

And those are the ones who will accomplish something for the Lord. But those who carefully like Shylock draw a line between this is mine and this is the Lord's God will also be calculating with them. To the calculating he shows himself calculating.

To the shrewd business like person he don't realise how shrewd and business like God can be also towards you. He is exactly as we are he will be also. If we are liberal, open handed and generous he will

be liberal, open handed and generous towards us.

We cannot lose. I don't think in terms of my gain. Even it can be something more spiritual than that.

It can be thinking in terms of my growth. My spiritual growth. I am concerned about that.

And that looks like a spiritual thing. What about the growth of the others? The prayer is not deliver me from evil. It is deliver us.

Material needs. What about the material needs of others? If you are a leader in an assembly give us our day our daily bread not give me. If you have a responsibility in an assembly my brothers you have to allow your mind to think about every single individual family and every single brother in that assembly and see is there anyone who is likely to be in any type of financial need.

Is there anyone who is in maybe at the present time in some type of special need that has come up and then you have to plan to do something about it. That is a responsibility that comes upon us if we have a responsibility for leadership to renew our mind to think about every single person there. Never mind if they don't think about me that's not my business.

God thinks about me. My business is to think about them. God takes care of my needs in abundance but our business as fathers and mothers is to think about them.

We do not seek our own interests but we are genuinely concerned about the welfare of others and we have to train our mind to think. Now what does he need there? Lord give me and give him daily bread. Maybe someone who is weighed down with need for assurance of forgiveness.

Forgive us our sins Lord. Forgive that brother. Forgive him releasing people.

To train our minds not to think of ourselves. Be renewed in your mind and do not be conformed to this world. One more thing I want to say Romans 15 1. We who are strong are to bear the weaknesses of those who are without strength.

Do not seek our own interests means I do not think as to how that brother has taken advantage of me. That thought does not exist in my mind. I eliminate it from my mind.

I am here for him to take advantage of me. That is why God has placed me here. That is the way we must look at it.

Why do you think God has placed you there brother? So that somebody can take advantage of you. That is our calling. And I must not think that is some great sacrifice I am making.

That is your calling. When you a father walks with his little son and the little boy says daddy my legs are tired you got to carry me now. Daddy has to carry him.

What is daddy's there for them? They are there only to carry their little babies when the children's legs are tired. That is to bear the weaknesses of others. Oh what a need there is for fathers for those who can bear.

And somebody says something foolish or some people don't have understanding of submission to authority and they speak in a rude way to you. Forget it. Don't take it so seriously and keep that in mind

and he doesn't understand submission and all that.

Take it like a little six month old baby slapping his father. What is it? Forget it. He doesn't have light.

He doesn't have light. It's not a question of submission or authority there. If a father gets so disturbed when a six month old child slaps him, he is not fit to be a father.

I'll tell you that. There is a great need that we don't take so many things seriously which people say and do. Forget it.

Forget it. The Lord's servant must have a very bad memory on such matters. He must be deaf on many matters, blind on many matters and a very bad memory on many matters because he is concerned about the interest.

Are they growing? Not just am I growing and is it growing well with me brother? How is it going? It says about those who have to give an account for you. It says in Hebrews 13.17. Do you know that one who is a leader has to give an account for every person whom he has a responsibility for in the assembly? Then I cannot do that unless my whole mind is renewed to think in terms of the interest of others, the interest of God in the church. Blessed are those who take this word seriously, that God can use many of you dear brothers.

I believe it is a tremendous privilege that God has given many of us to hear the truth of the new and living way in this land. And my sincere prayer is that God will use many of us and raise up many fathers, not those who want to be known as fathers, far from it, who want to serve as fathers and who want to be like the God who hides himself, who want to be unknown, who want to disappear, who would be very delighted if somebody else gets the credit for it and who are sort of waiting, hoping that somebody else will get the credit and that nobody will know that I did it. Think to have such a spirit, brothers.

I believe that God will take note of that and that is how the Lord will note of it. And that is Lord will take note of it. So may the Lord find satisfaction in our midst.

May he find his heart's desire and the glory of God in all things, his kingdom, his name, his will and the welfare of others. So the Church of Jesus Christ can be built in this land and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

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