

Jesus is Lord. That is the reality of the world. He created everything, owns everything, and everything exists by him, for him, and in him. Jesus is master. We have, as modern westerners, an instinctive dislike of the idea of having a master. To us, having a master means we will be a doormat, be downtrodden, and never be truly ourselves. Nothing could be further from the truth. When we accept Jesus as master, we find that we are glorified, elevated, and are more truly ourselves than we could ever have imagined. In the master and servant relationship with Jesus, we become all we can be in every sense of the word. To show how this could be the case, I found a list online of what makes a good employee, and I think many people will be surprised that what makes a good employee and what makes a good servant of Jesus has some interesting overlap.

## Day 1

### Ambitious

The bible is against selfish ambition, so could it be that a good servant of Jesus could still have some kind of ambition, and not be mired in self-doubt and even self-hatred? While the bible is clearly against selfish ambition, it is not necessarily against all ambition. To be of the best possible service to Jesus is not something that the bible speaks against, and in order to become the best possible servant we must cooperate with Jesus as he makes the most of us that he can. In the parable of the talents, the reward for the servants who were faithful with what the master entrusted to them was to receive greater responsibility. They were faithful with little, and the reward was to be entrusted with much. But wasn't the sin of Satan ambition? And didn't Adam and Eve follow in his footsteps? Sure, not all ambition is good. But the answer isn't to become worms who are busy grinding themselves into the dirt, becoming as little as possible until they disappear. The problem with Satan as well as Adam and Eve is that they wanted to become God, rather than having the ambition to be the best servants they could be. Do we have the ambition to serve God by being of the best service in the kingdom that we could be? We often think of being the best service as doing the lowest job possible, the job that no one wants. I remember one of my sons thinking about being an infantryman when entering the military, and pointing out to him that it may be better service to the nation to do the highest job he is capable of, rather than the lowest. The lowest job is important, for sure, and there are times when each one of us will be called upon to do the lowest, and we should not be too proud for it, but in humility do the best job we can and consider it an honor. But at the same time, the kingdom advances when God gets the use of all the gifts he has given us, not just the lower gifts. The kingdom is glorified when we are glorified, when we take our place in creation as prophets, priests, and kings, not when we try to be worms. The fall was a tragedy, not a triumph.

Verses: Luke 9:25, Matthew 23:12, Matthew 6:33

Prayer Topics: Diligence, Improvement, Passion

## Day 2

### Communicative

Obviously, Jesus doesn't want any of our lip, or our backtalk, or our sniveling. In fact, if we could just suffer in silence, that would be great. Or maybe not. Interestingly, what makes a good employee, and what makes a good servant of the master, is to be communicative. Jesus wants to hear from us, and he wants to communicate with us. In fact, when we look to the tabernacle as a picture of what the spiritual life is to be about, we find that the idea of watching over the table of presence, that is, watching over the flock, is paramount. We are watchmen on the walls. We raise the alarm. We lift others into the presence of God through our prayers. When Jesus was on this earth, he spent many hours with his

Father in prayer. I am willing to bet the father didn't say to himself, "what is he on about now, why won't he just get on with his ministry and leave me in peace?" The father loves the son, and the son the father, and part of the joy of love is to communicate with the beloved. Even in terms of organizational function, each part of the organization or body must communicate with the others, and if they don't the body quickly becomes sick and dies. Jesus wants to hear from us, and we must hear from him. What is it you want to say to him? What do you think he doesn't want to hear? How long has it been since you really talked to him? Maybe this week could change that.

Verses: Psalm 145:18-19, 2 Chronicles 7:14, 1 Peter 5:7, Hebrews 4:16

Prayer Topics: Humility, Connection, Conversation

Day 3

Marketable

One of the things that makes a good employee, or a good servant of the master, is to be marketable. What does it mean to be marketable? It means to be attractive, to be good at your job, to have useful skills and talents, and to represent the company well. Someone with a voice good enough to do a radio spot for the company, with an appearance good enough to do a commercial for the company, with a mind good enough to write the copy for those ads, while knowing how to put the customer at ease and find out their needs that the company might meet. That is the person you want to represent your company, and that is the person who will have many choices of who to represent. You might think that Jesus wants to trap you in service to him, so you have no other choice but to be in his employ. That may be where you were when he found you, but that is not where he wants to leave you. Jesus wants to make you wise, so that you have the wisdom of a serpent but the innocence of a dove. Jesus wants to make you appealing, so that as an ambassador he can make his appeal through you. Jesus wants to elevate you, and he wants to glorify you. Jesus might not do anything about your face or your voice, at least not in this life. That is ok, because Jesus isn't making his appeal through tv and radio. But he is making his appeal through relationships, and he will definitely make you much better at that, if you let him be Lord and you obey him. We are his ambassadors, and he will make us very good at our jobs, if we will follow him.

Verses: 1 Peter 4:10, Romans 11:29, Romans 12:3-8

Prayer Topics: Gifts/Skills, Expertise, Tools

Day 4

Passionate & Positive

Working for the man is such a drag. That's what I thought when I was a teenager. I remember going to school and talking to other teenagers about what a bummer having a job was. When we talked about our jobs, I don't recall having conversations about the fun aspects of our jobs or the benefits, just complaining about the parts that we didn't enjoy. It's fair to say that most of us were not passionate and positive. Our bosses, on the other hand, did their best to try to get us to be passionate and positive, but most of the attempts were lame. I remember working for Kmart and having these dumb meetings at the beginning of the day where they tried to get us to be enthusiastic about working for Kmart. It didn't work. One of the most formative memories I have about the early jobs that I had was working with Pepe. Pepe was a guy that was somewhere between 50 and 100, and I honestly to this day have no idea how old he was. His face was lined with deep grooves, and I couldn't tell if it was because he was ancient, or because he worked a lot outside at some point in his life and just ended up weathered.

Looking at him I would say he was 100, but watching him move I would say he was 25. He could outwork anyone I have ever known. He loved to work. At the time I knew him, I was working with him in the dish room at J.B.s restaurant, and even though I was decades younger, I didn't have the strength or stamina that he had, and I certainly didn't have the positive attitude. Work for him was a joy, and he looked forward to it. When it got slow, I got happy, but he didn't, and he would go looking for other stuff to do, not happy until he was moving like lightning. One of us enjoyed the job, and it wasn't me. Looking back, I realize that if you are going to have to work, it punishes no one but yourself to have a bad attitude. God wants us to have joy, to find passion and value in what he has given us to do. He wants us to see our lives as they really are, full of opportunities to do things that really count. Let him be your lord, and find out what he has for you to do.

Verses: Proverbs 17:22, Philippians 2:14-15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Prayer Topics: Eagerness, Anticipation, Hope

Day 5

Proactive, Inquisitive & Creative

Rather than an office drone, what makes a good employee, and a good servant of the master, is someone who is proactive, creative, and inquisitive. We have this idea that if we give our life to Christ that we will become boring, and I guess it's not hard to see why. When I think about the church people that I grew up with, a not insignificant number of them were pretty dull. Too many times as Christians, we think of our faith as keeping a set of rules, and rule keeping does not lead to being proactive, inquisitive, or creative. What does lead to those things is a relationship of love with the creator of the universe, who sees glory in concealing things so that we can find glory in finding them out. Our relationship with Christ is endless discovery of his glory. Our task of taking dominion over the earth is an endless treasure hunt of seeing his glory manifest in the world he created, and of learning the names of things, and of perfecting all of creation. When you let Jesus be lord of your life, an endless adventure awaits, not a life of tedious rule keeping. If that is the life you have been living, it is not because he has led you there, but your fears and doubts have ruled over you and given you a life that is tedious and dull. Be free of the tyranny of letting your flesh lead you, and embrace his lordship, for he is the king of kings, and the lord of lords, not the king of rule keepers, and the lord of the dull.

Verses: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Exodus 35:30-35, Proverbs 22:29

Prayer Topics: Imagination, Inspiration, Action