



JANUARY 15, 2024 MONDAY - DAY 8

# PRAY THAT WE WOULD SERVE ONE ANOTHER

GALATIANS 5:13

Years ago in a humble Philadelphia hotel, an elderly couple approached the desk clerk. There was a convention in town. All of the hotel rooms were full. Since the clerk was working all night, he offered them his room. The elderly man was John Jacob Astor, who went on to build the famed Waldorf Astoria Hotel and hired the young desk clerk, who went on to become one of the greatest hotel men in the world. He served and was rewarded for it.

## SLAVES TO CHRIST

The theme of Galatians is our freedom in Christ. Judaizers were tempting the church in Galatia to add the legalistic customs of Judaism to the gospel of grace. In other words, one is saved by grace, but still must be circumcised, keep the feast days, and observe other customs. Paul cries out, "Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you" (Gal. 3:1)? We are called to freedom.

Chapter five begins with a reference to "freedom in Christ," affirming that believers are not to be "burdened again by the yoke of slavery." Now that they are called to be "free," they must realize that "freedom in Christ" is not freedom from servant hood. Rather than being common slaves, they are to be uncommon slaves/servants to one another. Christian freedom involves servant hood. First of all, it involves servant hood to Christ. Jesus said, "Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:34 - 35).

Make no mistake: You cannot accept Jesus as Savior and reject him as Lord. Salvation involves repentance (forsaking the old, self-centered life) and faith (trust in obedience to Christ). The "allness" of our relationship to Christ is illustrated in an old hymn.

**But we never can prove the delights of his love  
Until all on the altar we lay.  
For the favor he shows and this joy he bestows  
Are for them who will trust and obey.**

## SLAVES TO CHRISTIANS

Secondly, Christian freedom involves servant hood to one another. How can Christians be slaves and be free at the same time? True freedom in Christ is found through total commitment to Christ.

Being a "servant of Christ" means serving one another, perhaps even serving those when no one else is willing to serve. Christianity Today reported an excellent example of servant hood that was demonstrated following Jim Bakkers's release from prison. Two days after his release, a call came to the Salvation Army halfway house where he was living. His request to attend a church service had been met. When he arrived at church, the Pastor greeted him warmly and sat him with a family occupying two rows. Just as the organ began playing, the mother of the family entered and sat down next to Jim, proclaiming to the whole world that he was her friend. After the service, Bakker was invited to the family home, where Ruth Graham gave him one of Billy's wallets to replace the prison envelope in which Jim was carrying some addresses.



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What is it that hinders us from serving one another?

- A defeated Heart - erroneous feeling that there is nothing you can possibly do to be of service to someone else. This is absolutely false. God has both called and equipped every member of the body to a special task of service.
- A Resentful Heart - Perhaps you tried to serve but experienced some criticism. The wrong conclusion is to wallow in self pity and refuse to try again.
- A Selfish Heart - The lifestyle that insists, "I did it my way! I'm nobody's slave. I'm going to look out for Number One." That kind of spirit is destroying churches across the land.

The story goes of the great violinist, Nicolas Paganini, who donated his marvelous violin to the city of Genoa with the restriction that no one be allowed to play it again. It was agreed upon, and the violin was placed in the town museum for all to see and admire. But after several decades, the curators were appalled to notice that the wood began to rot and decay. Wood must be handled in other to resist decomposition. Paganini's exquisite violin is now a worn infested ruin. Life in the body of Christ is like that. We either serve one another, or fall into hopeless decay and ruin. Pray that we would serve one another.

**For you brethren, have been called  
To liberty, only do not use liberty  
As an occasion for the flesh,  
But by love serve one another.  
Gal. 5:13**

## PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

- Pray that God would grant you the grace to care for the needs of loved ones and church members without becoming overly anxious and fretful.
- Pray that God would work in the hearts of your church member to become more transparent and vulnerable enough to share needs with each other.
- Pray that God would lay upon your heart individuals to whom you can minister specific acts of kindness and ministry.
- Pray that God might lead your church to organize and fund ministries that are designed to demonstrate care for people in need.

**When will we learn that, within  
And between churches, we are not  
In competition, but in cooperation?**