

40 Items Selected from: 101-Plus Differences Between Givers And Takers

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http://www.ministryhealth.net/mh_articles/239_101_plus_differences_givers_vs_takes.html

<u>Givers</u>	<u>Takers</u>
Generous	Covetous
Why shouldn't I help?	Why should I help?
Ask, "How will this benefit others?"	Ask, "What's in it for me?"
Spenders (on others)	Hoarders
Seek opportunities to serve	Seek personal comfort
Invest in people	Invest in themselves
Go out of their way to help	Just "too busy"
Do for themselves and others	Do for themselves only what others won't do for them
Help unconditionally	Help given until angered
Want to reach out	Don't want to get involved
Doers	Excuse makers
Willing to give up their own agenda for others	Will stop at nothing to get their way
Willing to pay the price for others' well-being	Make others pay the price for their desires, needs, wants
Willing to wash feet, take out trash, do dirty work	Refuse to submit to demeaning tasks below their dignity
Flexible, open to sudden needs	"Too busy"
Reality-based	Fantasy-driven "If only..."
Always growing	"Stuck"
Survivors	Victims
Dependable	Dependent
Roll with the punches	Easily overwhelmed
Take care of self and others	"Please take care of me"
Seek ways to provide help	Helpless: "I can't do it by myself!"
Do not "use" others to a fault	Manipulative
On spiritual pilgrimage	Resist spiritual transformation
Accept responsibility for their own behavior	Project responsibility & blame on others
Live confidently, day by day	There's "always something..." to worry about
Concerned with the important	Concerned with the urgent
Willing to give virtually unlimited resources	In need of virtually unlimited attention and support
Energize others	Drain energies of others
Listener	Needy talker
Seldom call attention to successes	Often engage in one-upmanship
Can be ignored as long as people aren't hurt	Must make a point and be heard no matter the cost
Can face and work through pain; bear silently	Draw attention to pain and suffering
Share comfort, confidence	Share discomfort, fear
Always satisfied, but looking for new opportunities for growth	Never content, but unwilling to seek growth opportunities
Pick up after themselves	Leave damage behind them
Maintain confidences, proper communication	Gossip, innuendo, behind the back conversations
Constructively critical	Judgmentally critical
Trusting, able to give the benefit of a doubt	Suspicious, untrusting
Forgive, forget, and come back supportive	Don't forgive unless they have to
Help facilitate great healing	Cause much pain

Givers vs. Takers, or “Serving One Another”

Much of the content below is based on an outline at <http://www.gardnerhall.com/sermons/Givertakerredone.html>

Introduction

A. It has been said that everyone can be divided into one of two categories: Those who are primarily givers and those who are primarily takers.

1. Givers are those who have learned that happiness comes through serving others, through giving. Giving not just money or gifts, but time, energy, attention, effort.
2. Takers are those whose thoughts, words and actions are focused on receiving.
 - a. Talk a lot about what’s wrong, what’s lacking, what could be better; dissatisfied, discontented, negative.
 - b. Talk a lot about money. Talk a lot about themselves.
 - c. Talk about how others don’t do enough for them, or others don’t treat them right.

B. No person is 100% a giver; all of us have to battle the taker in us.

1. Even those who are primarily takers will help and serve and give at times.
2. But generally speaking there are no 50/50s. Most are either primarily givers or primarily takers. **Matthew 6:24 (NKJV)** ²⁴“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

C. The word "taker" may seem a bit strong, since all people can be givers in some ways. But how are we towards God?

1. Are we givers to God or do we just want to receive? Do we want God to bless us with money without working hard for it, or forgiveness without truly repenting, or blessings without obeying. Receive, receive, receive!
2. **Matthew 10:25** - For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
3. To leave the life of a taker, we have to give up our life to God. But notice what happens when we make that sacrifice. In giving our life up to God, we find it!! We find out what it's all about, we find out where happiness and salvation is.

I. Identifying the Problem

A. People may be baptized, become Christians, without completely changing their lives, without truly giving themselves over to Jesus Christ.

1. They read **Mark 16:16** – "Yeah, I guess it says I need to be baptized." But they're not converted to the person, to Jesus Christ.
2. They're never moved by who Jesus is, they never truly repent, never change their heart, never change their lives. They're not devoted to dying to self and living the way He says to live.
3. Congregations can fill up with people who are converted to some facts but not to Christ – there will be disastrous results.

B. We are slaves to the desires of our hearts, whether to sin (ourselves) or to Christ.

1. **Romans 6:16 (NASB)** ¹⁶Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as **slaves for obedience**, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?
2. Either way we are slaves, so it's imperative to let Jesus change our hearts.

II. True disciples of Jesus Christ are taught by His example to become unselfish servants of all people.

A. A true disciple has a servant's heart.

1. **Acts 20:35 (NKJV)** ³⁵I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'
2. **2 Cor. 9:7-8 (NKJV)** ⁷So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, **may have an abundance for every good work.**

B. Every command in the Bible to LOVE is a command to be a giver.

1. **John 3:16**, "God so loved the world that He gave..." "
2. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NKJV)** ⁴Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

C. Other verses on SERVING OTHERS that come quickly to mind:

1. **Mark 10:42-45 (NKJV)** ⁴²But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. ⁴⁴And whoever of you desires to be first shall be **slave of all**. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, **but to serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many."
2. **John 13:12-17 (NKJV)** ¹²So when He had **washed their feet**, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
3. **Ephesians 4:12 (NASB)** "For the equipping of the saints **for the work of service**, to the building up of the body of Christ."

Some people assume the church is there to serve them. Or they complain about others not doing enough for them. They don't get it.
4. **Philippians 2:3-8 (ESV)** ³Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷**but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant**, being born in the

likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

5. **Galatians 5:13 (ESV)** ¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. **Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.** ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵But if you **bite and devour one another**, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
6. **Luke 6:37-38 (NKJV)** ³⁷"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸**Give, and it will be given to you:** good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Conclusion:

A. We're talking about the very essence of Christianity: Love = giving. Answer honestly? Are you a giver or a taker?

B. To be Christ-like is to root out every trace of the taker in us. The goal is not to be 80%, 90%, but 100% a giver.

C. Practical suggestions:

1. Learn that the joy and purpose of life is giving. Don't worry about self, but others.
2. Ask what keeps you from reaching out to others more generously.
3. Look at examples of givers: How do they give and serve? What can you learn? Offer to go with them on visits, to meetings etc.
4. Make a list of people you can help, and how to do it.
5. Dedicate one morning or evening a week to: visiting sick, writing notes, calling the sick.
6. Take your children or others' children with you. Get them involved.
7. Pray for God's help, pray for others by name.

1. From <http://thomrainer.com/2013/01/the-main-reason-people-leave-a-church/>

All the research studies of which I am aware, including my own, return to one major theme to explain the exodus of church members: a sense of some need not being filled. In other words, these members have ideas of what a local congregation should provide for them, and they leave because those provisions have not been met.

Certainly we recognize there are many legitimate claims by church members of unfulfilled expectations. It can undoubtedly be the fault of the local congregation and its leaders.

But many times, probably more than we would like to believe, a church member leaves a local body because he or she has a sense of entitlement. I would therefore suggest that *the main reason people leave a church is because they have an entitlement mentality rather than a servant mentality.*

Look at some of the direct quotes from exit interviews of people who left local congregations:

- “The worship leader refused to listen to me about the songs and music I wanted.”
- “The pastor did not feed me.”
- “No one from my church visited me.”
- “I was not about to support the building program they wanted.”
- “I was out two weeks and no one called me.”
- “They moved the times of the worship services and it messed up my schedule.”
- “I told my pastor to go visit my cousin and he never did.”

Please hear me clearly. Church members should expect some level of ministry and concern. But, for a myriad of reasons beyond the scope of this one blogpost, we have turned church membership into country club membership. You pay your dues and you are entitled to certain benefits.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Paul describes church members not by what they should *receive* in a local church, but by the ministry they should *give*.

The solution to closing the back door, at least a major part of the solution, is therefore to move members from an entitlement mentality to a servant mentality. Of course, it is easy for me to write about it, but it is a greater challenge to effect it.

2. From <http://www.transformativechurch.org/2013/01/21/does-the-church-have-an-entitlement-mentality/>

Thom Rainer recently wrote a blog he called, “Ten Things Church Members Desire in a Pastor.” The huge response to that blog led him to write, “Ten Things Pastors Desire in a Church Member.” For this blog he interviewed 23 pastors, simply asking them, “What do you desire in a church member?” He got some interesting responses, listed here in the order of frequency:

1. Vibrant prayer life.
2. Spirit of unity.
3. Respect of pastor’s family
4. Members who are critical to my face.
5. Encouragers.
6. Faithful attendees.
7. Members who share their faith.
8. Members who lead their families spiritually.
9. Members who confront other members for being negative and critical.
10. Members who read the Bible regularly.

Now, I would hardly disagree with any of these; as a pastor I certainly would like members who do all of these things. However, it seems to me there is something vitally important missing from this list. In the 25th chapter of Matthew Jesus describes the final judgment where the goats will be separated from the sheep. Those who feed the hungry and clothe the naked, etc. will be the sheep who inherit the kingdom. Jesus repeatedly taught his followers to be servants; as a pastor I most want members of my church to be servants who meet the needs of others in the name of Jesus Christ.

3. From <https://lonerwolf.com/sense-of-entitlement/>

Sense of entitlement symptoms

You may be asking yourself: Do I have a sense of entitlement? Like anything in life there is a spectrum, and while you may not be a full-blown narcissist or have a borderline personality disorder, you may exhibit a certain level of selfishness that makes other people's lives hard. If you have a sense of entitlement, symptoms include the following:

1. You impose unrealistic demands onto your family, children, friends, acquaintances, employees, and/or employers.
2. You tend to feel sorry for yourself if things don't work out the way you wanted (self-pity), and openly advertise this in melodramatic, attention-seeking ways.
3. People have called you a "bully", "manipulative", "ruthless", "egotistical", "vain", ~~or a "liar"~~.
4. You believe that you deserve happiness and go to great, sometimes extreme lengths to ensure that happens, often at the expense of others.
5. You punish people when they don't do what you want, either passively (e.g. silent treatment, gossiping, spreading rumors) or aggressively (e.g. shouting, verbally/physically abusing).
6. ~~In order to "succeed" in life, you believe in going to any lengths.~~
7. You constantly see other people as competition or "threats".
8. You tend to exhibit many double-standards in the way you behave/interact with other people, e.g. *I can be late and forget my duties and commitments, but YOU can't; I can treat myself, but YOU can't; I can abuse or disrespect you, but YOU can't to ME.*
9. You tend to *take* more than give in friendships and relationships.
10. ~~You tend to look out for yourself, your needs and desires more than anyone else almost 100% of the time.~~
11. You have a hard time negotiating or compromising.
12. ~~You have a deep-seated conviction that you have priority and should always come first, even at the expense of stepping on others.~~
13. People always seem to be offended or upset by what you do or say.
14. You generally think that you are better, or more important, than other people and other people should see this and unquestioningly respect you.
15. You crave admiration and adoration.
16. You like to assert your dominance or superiority over other people, finding it second nature to do so.

II. Problems Caused By Takers In Various Circumstances:

A. Takers in the home

1. Husbands, wives:
 - a. If both givers, success; both takers, no hope; one of each, rough going
 - b. I want it my way, I want to control you to do it my way
 - c. Husbands - **Eph. 5:25** "*Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.*"
 - d. Wives - **Titus 2:4-5** Older women are to teach younger women to..."love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their husbands." In other words, learn to be givers!
2. Parents
 - a. Some parents are takers; see children as way for self glorification, live through their children
 - b. *Child does something wrong, parent responds, "Why did you do this to me?" "What will everyone think of me?"*
3. Children
 - a. We do no favors by overloading with toys or other blessings.
 - b. Do we emphasize only the joy of receiving or do we teach joy of giving?
 - c. Are we raising our kids to be givers or takers? How? Praise them when give, give them opportunities to give, buy them cards to send to others, take to nursing homes, take to visit sick!
 - d. Greatest gift we can give is to teach them to give, be givers.

B. Takers in local congregations: big difference: some primarily give, some primarily take

1. Attitude towards attendance
 - a. **TAKER** says, "I didn't get anything out of that." **GIVER** says, "What can I give?"
 - 1) Preacher is boring, no one is friendly enough, sees others as hypocrites, "feel worse after services than before"
 - 2) Views the worship services as a time to take, be entertained, be served by others.
 - b. A giver attends for completely different reasons.
 - 1) **Hebrews 10:24-25** "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but encouraging one another..."
 - 2) Wants to encourage, shake the hand of that young Christian, smile to those little kids, maybe a pat on the back, maybe a little piece of candy if it's OK with Mom.
 - 3) Wants to pray for a sister who is sick, and talk about how to help her.
 - 4) Wants to talk about efforts to reach others in community.
2. Attitude towards service:
 - a. A taker will often complain: You didn't visit me, you didn't include me, you didn't send me a card, you didn't call me.
 - b. Givers are too busy being concerned with the needs of others to be complainers.
3. When there is controversy:

- a. A taker will rarely apologize, may use sarcasm, carnal tactics, try to round up allies, humiliate those who disagree with him, make them look bad.
- b. A giver has only two motives: Know and do God's will, help a brother to see it.
 - 1) Will be quick to apologize if he has contributed in any way to a problem.
 - 2) Concerned with being tactful: **James 3:17** "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."
 - 3) Those words do not describe a taker in controversy. Different motives: Taker - win an argument. Giver - win a soul

How can you tell the difference between "Givers" and "Takers"? Here's a simple listing.

<u>Givers</u>	<u>Takers</u>
Why shouldn't I help?	Why should I help?
Don't question motivations	Ask "I wonder what they want?"
Ask, "How will this benefit others?"	Ask, "What's in it for me?"
Releasing	Controlling
Finds power and peace in spiritual wisdom	Finds power and peace in externals and things
Willing to be servants	Must be "lords"
Follows the flow with insight	Appears "In control"
Roll with the punches	Easily overwhelmed
Love unconditionally	"Love" conditionally
High capacity for pain	Low capacity for pain
Bear pain silently and with patience	Whiners
Seldom call attention to themselves	Braggarts
Live confidently, day by day	There's "always something..." to worry about
May be left "holding the bag"	"Squeaky Clean"
Pick up after themselves	Leave damage and behind in them
Sharers	Collectors
What can I do for them?	What's in it for me?
Invest in people	Invest in selves
Willing to give virtually unlimited resources	In need of virtually unlimited attention and support
Dependable	Dependent
No time table	Time, schedules closely monitored
Flexible, open to sudden changes	"Too busy"
No expectation of return	Tit-for-tat
Simply give for the joy of it	Pre-occupied with facade of "gratitude"
Help people change their own lives	Change people's lives for their own ends
Committed to others	Committed to self
Support	Undermine
Energize	Drain energies
Seek opportunities	Seek personal comfort
Constructively critical	Judgmentally critical
Do for themselves and others	Do for themselves only what others won't do for them
Doesn't "use" others to a fault	Manipulative
Releasing	Controlling
Agenda is announced, overt, and open to scrutiny	Cleverly hidden agenda
Trusting of leaders	Distrust any and all leaders
Help unconditionally	Help given until angered
Trusting, able to give the benefit of a doubt	Suspicious, untrusting
Concerned with the essential and important	Perfectionistic and controlling
Defensive/Supporting	Offensive/Attacking
Can face and work through pain	Fear of pain and suffering
Listeners	Needy talkers
Flexible	Live by schedules
Share comfort, confidence	Share discomfort, fear

Gospel-Driven	Legalistic
On spiritual pilgrimage	Resist spiritual transformation
Worships God by giving life as a living sacrifice to God	Worships God according to their own set procedure, schedules, and manner
Forgive, forget, and come back supportive	Don't forgive unless they have to
Spontaneous, fun-loving	Rigid, rule-enforcer
Willing to "break the rules" to show compassion	Live, fight and die by "principles" and "rights"
Willingly give up their own agenda for others	Will stop at nothing to get their way
Focus on becoming transformed for God's purposes	Focus on conforming others to themselves
Concerned with the important	Concerned with the urgent
Willing to pay the price for others' well-being	Make others pay the price for their desires, needs, wants
Permeable boundaries	Impermeable, rigid boundaries
Doers	Whiners
Proactive	Reactive
They come, assist, and when done, leave no "silver bullet" behind	"Humbly" seek "deserved" attention, affection, reward and recognition for efforts
Willing to wash feet, take out trash, do dirty work	Refuse to submit to demeaning tasks below their dignity
Focus on helping others achieve their goals	Focused on titles, position
Can be ignored as long as people aren't hurt	Always must make a point and be heard no matter the cost
Help facilitate great healing	Cause much pain
Patient	Impatient
No shows	Overly polite, mannerly
Help when others hurt	Cause helpers hurt
Shed tears, feel deep grief when hurt	Don't talk, trust or feel
Accept responsibility for their own behavior	Mercilessly project responsibility & blame on others
Survivors	Victims
Submit to God's will	God is Aladdin's Lamp
Reality-based	Fantasy-driven "If only..."
"Things" just aren't that important	Materialistic
People are important	My things are important
Internally driven by "grace" values	Externally driven
Welfare-of-others conscious	Status conscious
Expansive	Territorial
Not appearance conscious (e.g. weight, height, clothes, figure, hair, coordination, flashiness)	Hyper-conscious and hyper-sensitive to appearance
Attention tends to be deflected away	Draw attention to themselves by things (jewelry, cars, homes, et al)
Do all they can to protect and uphold their neighbor's welfare	Pre-occupied with comparing others' wealth, benefits, possessions to their own
Generous	Covetous
Spenders	Savers
Utilize all available resources	"Squirrel" things away
Maintain confidences, appropriate communication	Gossip, innuendo, behind the back conversations are characteristic
No need for secrets	Keep secrets
Give gifts freely	Gifts have strings attached

Relationship unconditional	Relationship is conditional
Want to reach out	Don't want to get involved
Concerned	Aloof
"I'll be there if you need me"	"See ya!"
Willingly works even amid unfair treatment and conditions	Always expects "something for nothing"
Will undergo humiliation and pain to assist others	Avoid embarrassment and risk for others
Always growing	"Stuck"
Encourages others growth	Restricts others growth
Mistakes are the path to growth	Condemns, punishes mistakes
Don't need to be asked	Appreciate being asked and needed
Takes care of self and others	"Take care of me"
Sensitive and genuinely empathetic to other's pain	Insensitive to other's pain, needs
Is always there for friends, acquaintances, strangers, and even foes	Resists reciprocation of support, sacrifice
Seeks reconciliation	Seeks revenge
Seeks ways to provide help	Helpless: "I can't do it by myself!"
Goes out of their way	Just "too busy"
Performs well even under pressure	Tendency toward overwhelm
If it's not yours, respect it	"Take it and run"
Have learned the "secret" of contentment	"Make me feel good!" (food, money, attention, sex, religion, et al)
Seeks constructive, positive means to achieve goals through genuine dialogue and constructive conflict	Starts fights and perpetuates unrest but longs for "peace"
Always satisfied, but looking for new opportunities for growth	Never content, but unwilling to seek growth opportunities
Future-Oriented	Past-And-Immediate-Present Oriented
Words and promises have meanings	Words and promises can't be trusted
Keeps promises	"Intends" to keep promises
Direct	Indirect
Cooperative	Demanding
Sharing, Open	Controlling
Patient	Impatient
Mature	Immature
Sharing	Selfish
Approachable	Unapproachable
Love-driven	Fear-driven
Release everything to God's plan	If you can't control it, kill it!
What will be will be <i>good</i>	What will be will be (fatalistic)
Gospel-Driven	Law-Driven

Givers And Takers

Recognizing "Givers" and "Takers" can also make a remarkable difference in the world to the health of your church and your resulting style of leadership. Aside from the Holy Spirit's power working in

proclamation of the Gospel, selecting and encouraging "givers" to make a positive difference in your ministry may be the most important key to organizational momentum and renewal.

Givers are specifically blessed by their giftedness, energy, and faith to strengthen, build, and, with the power of God, transform the church. What makes givers so uniquely suited for this great task of renewal?

- 1) Givers provide and inject energy and enthusiasm.
- 2) Givers are positive thinkers with a vision for the future.
- 3) Givers have a capacity for risk, pain and enduring through the long haul.
- 4) Givers uphold, encourage and support others.
- 5) Givers trust leaders.
- 6) Givers are committed and accustomed to sacrifice, sometimes great sacrifice.
- 7) Givers are able to spot needs and fill them.
- 8) Givers require minimum support for maximum effectiveness.
- 9) Givers reciprocate trust and confidence.
- 10) Givers respect others and take relationships and people seriously.

Giver-Churches vs. Taker-Churches

Though the listing above is far from exhaustive, the greatest attribute of Christian givers is that they are a living incarnation of the greatest Giver, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "No man has greater love than this, than to give up his life for a friend." Jesus, the Grace-Giver, showed and gave us that greatest gift of undeserved love.

Called by Christ's grace in His Word and through Baptism, we are called to be "givers," sacrificers, lovers, forgivers...Christians. Churches blessed with givers rejoice in the Gospel, the growth of the church, and the one-by-one individual transformation of faith and servanthood which Jesus' gift of grace works in them.

On the other hand, churches dominated by takers may have all but snuffed out and smothered the presence of grace and the life-changing power of God in their presence. Conflict, infighting, subtle innuendo, distrust, and an on-going, chronic tendency toward ecclesiastical reductionism become nearly impossible for the preacher or any other leader to change.

A Warning To Givers Regarding Takers

Perhaps one of the greatest disappointments is falling into a "taker's trap." The giver, seeing the

taker's need, may cheerfully intervene. Very subtly a relationship between giver and taker can develop. Over time, the taker may become dependent on the giver's actions. The giver, enjoying the blessing of giving, may cross the line of giving into enjoyment.

It is when the giver enjoys giving too much that the danger arises. Ironically, the more the giver gives, the greater the disappointment the giver will receive. No matter how much counseling, intervention, help, support and teamwork one offers to the "nice" taker, the taker will eventually and inevitably reject the giver once the giver's gift is no longer wanted, needed, or deemed important.

Givers Can Be Taken

The "giver," bewildered, angered, confused, betrayed, and left "holding the bag," will feel they did something terribly wrong. Being givers, their first response is to look at what they gave. "Maybe I didn't give enough!" "Maybe I didn't give it right!" are just two of the main engines which propel the guilt of a "giver" taken by a "taker."

Using their own frame of reference of their willingness and repeated success at forgiving and reconciling, "givers" can hardly imagine just how great their unknown offense was that caused such a sudden, cold, irreversible, and unexpected "throw-away" response.

The toughest thing for the giver to accept is simply that they've been taken. Often the best thing the giver can hope for is simply to understand, forgive, move on, and be more careful next time. The worst thing is to allow the taker's action to destroy the giver's self-esteem. Remember, the "taker" is a "taker!" That's what "takers" do...they take everything including your self-esteem, your confidence, and your joy of receiving Christ's forgiveness.

The Vintage "Taker"

The "taker" on the other hand, generally will not reconcile. They'll avoid it, resist it, and distance themselves in any way possible to avoid it. To them, there's no need to reconcile, become accountable, etc. After all, they have taken all they want. Besides, if they were to reconcile, they would have to change into a "giver." "Takers" know it's so much easier, convenient, and less threatening to just find another "giver." There are, as any "taker" would admit, plenty of "givers" out there.

"Takers" can take all kinds of forms: disgruntled staff, pastors who resign or take a call in disgust at a congregation's dealings with them, leaders who betray others including the pastor, influential members who rebel against leadership, individuals who cry "unfair" or whine about being "victimized," members who suddenly join in on the tirade of rebellion against the church and leave for another congregation, et al.

The Most Important Thing About Givers

It is no surprise that the message of the Gospel is, in one sense, a message of converting "takers" into "givers." That hints at the most important thing about genuine Christian "givers." To paraphrase the Apostle John's epistolary words, "They give because He first gave to them." True, heart-felt giving is a reflection of the greatest Giver. The grace received is what "givers" pass on...from "grace to grace."

Living in the keen awareness of the Gift, they recognize how destructive legalism is. Givers know joy from the gift in Christ. Giving that joy to others perpetuates the experience of God's gift of joy in them. This continued practice of given and received grace is what helps them be so consistent, so supportive, so grace-driven in all their doings for Jesus Christ.

What Kind Of Givers?

The Givers vs. Takers distinction, however, is not so simple. Motivations for giving and taking are also an important consideration. One might ask, "Why do givers give?" By the same token one might also ask, "Why do takers take?"

The simplest way to answer this question is via the Johari window.

Givers Vs. Takers		Why They Do It	
		To Give	To Take
What They Do	Give	#1	#2
	Take	#3	#4

As this illustration demonstrates, not everyone gives or takes for the same reason. Instead, there are four basic combinations of "giver" and "taker" variables.

#1 Givers Who Give: The most altruistic of the four possibilities, givers who give are generous to a fault. No matter what they do, they just can't be paid back. Their value system, their faith, and their inclination is such that whatever they have they just want to give as freely, frequently and sacrificially as they can. It is what gives them joy.

#2 Givers Who Take: These include those who give for selfish reasons. They give to get. Whenever they give, they have strings attached. At first, recipients of their gifts, services, etc. may be enthralled, surprised, shocked or bewildered. But it doesn't take too long to see that the giving had a price tag attached. Often this can be a hideous, hypocritical sham of generosity. Their joy is not in giving. It is in controlling through often well-executed "bribes."

#3 Takers Who Give: This kind of taker is direct, appreciative and accepting of gifts, appreciation, honors, recognition, power, etc. They feel deserving of gifts, wages, bonuses and benefits. They will even fight tooth and nail to preserve their rights to receive what they have rightfully earned. However, once the rewards are in their possession, they give freely as #1's with no strings attached.

#4 Takers Who Take: This simply describes one as self-centered as #2, but who really cares very little (if at all) about anyone else's welfare, needs, etc. Taking all they can get, they hoard possessions, wages, services, et al. Of course, the more that is hoarded, the better it can be hidden behind a facade of very nice homes, cars, dress, jewelry, and other impressive titles, etc.

Insatiably driven to take more, the most sophisticated #4's seek and use anyone by any means possible to gain what they want. The more powerful and controlling they become, the more taking they do and the more people get taken and destroyed. Unfortunately in the Church, the more

powerful they become they greater the facade they need to hide their "taking" agenda. Of course, the greater the degree to which one's final objective is to take or give, one can expect greater use of taking or giving behaviors. Taking behaviors will also be characterized by a greater use of power plays or other controlling behaviors including intimidation, interrogation, poor-me, and/or aloof-ness. For more information see. *Ministry Health* article #153 "[Forty-Two Power Plays](#)" and #63 "[Four Types of Manipulators](#)".

The Gospel Converts Takers

The best prescription for transforming a "taking" individual church is simple: preach the Gospel. It sounds simple. Given their resistance, it is not as easy as it may sound. It's something that only God can accomplish.

Original sin is evidenced by the propensity of human nature to be a "taker." Human nature is full of those who cry "Gimme, gimme, gimme!" Takers, dominated by the Law use legalism, perfectionism, and judgmentalism to motivate givers. Givers, unawares of the boundary issues and Paul's prescription in Galatians 6:2-5 to help others so that they can carry their own burden, are easy prey.

Too often, pastors themselves are "takers." Thus they have difficulty doing anything less but preach from the security and comfort of their "taker" zone. From the disingenuous television evangelist to the defiant denominational leader, to the pastor who refuses to be unaccountable for impropriety, no one is immune. No matter how much we give, there is still a "taker" in all of us.

Givers Have New Life

The foremost calling for every Christian, especially pastors, is to proclaim the Giver whose greatest gift was taking away sin, guilt and the judgment of God. By taking this from us on the cross, He gave us a new life, a new nature, a new reason to live: to give as He has given to us.

Having received the fullness of grace, the believer experiences the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work of killing the "taker" and resurrecting a "giver." This new life is nothing less than faith. No, one does not give to "get" salvation. That's what "takers" do. Instead, the response of the grace-regenerated giver is an unmistakably joyous, free "giving." This desire to give hilariously is one of faith's most evident fruits. It is also one of the greatest sources of Christian joy.

Givers: The Most Obvious Proof

Are you a "giver" or "taker?" The familiar words of Paul to the Corinthians comes to mind.

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion [as a "taker" does], for God loves a cheerful *giver*."

(II Corinthians 9:7 NIV emphasis added)

Are you a "giver" or a "taker"? Do the "takers" get you down? Have they taken everything you have to give? Is the recovery from the hurt difficult? It is painful. It is heart-wrenching. But take note and learn. But don't let the takers take away your most priceless and valuable asset: your joy of giving to

others the joy that Christ gave so freely and generously to you.

After all, that's what God loves best about *you*. You know Jesus. You know His love. You have experienced the reality of the Great Giver in your life. That is why you are in ministry: to give...as Christ gave.

Your calling--and greatest joy--is realized in your cheerful, hilarious, uncontrollable passion to give to others--givers and takers--in the same healthy manner and conviction of grace that He has given to you in Christ. But even if you're an outright taker He still loves you. He's simply the most "reckless," indiscriminating and unconditional Giver we could have.

Take the gift He gives! Enjoy it! Cherish it! Bask in its joy! Now go out there, be a grace-giver--to givers and takers alike--and give them the greatest Gift, Jesus Christ.

Thomas F. Fischer

Faithfulness to God Leads to Greater Blessings

Faithfulness to God is a wonderful thing because of the strength and the blessing that it brings to so many. God and godly people are happy over souls that have stayed faithful in the church. It was shown in early Bible days that people can and must serve God faithfully. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2) Let us never be like the Jews of Old Testament days. They turned away from God and lost their blessings.

Our faithfulness to God is not an optional matter. When a man and a woman commit themselves to each other in marriage they must be faithful to one another. Fidelity must be a part of the marriage covenant. It is the same in our relationship with God. Faithfulness is not an option in our relationship with the Creator. God's desire is seen in 1 Samuel 2:35. He said, "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind..." Loyalty and love for God is shown by our obeying Him. God expects and demands allegiance from His servants. As Christians we should all desire to hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matthew 25:21)

Jesus is the great example of faithfulness. His single desire was that the Father's will could be done in His life. (Luke 22:42) We learn from Jesus that obedience does not come naturally. Obedience is learned. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Hebrews 5:8) We must learn to be faithful in all areas of our life. When we are faithful to God it has an effect on every aspect of our life. We must be unwavering in every situation that life brings our way. As a child of God our habit must be to obey God promptly and continually. God said, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." (Psalm 101:6) Set your goal to be someone that God can trust to carry out His instructions. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John 8:31) Determine to please God in your thoughts, your words and your every action. Let us observe what happens when we stay faithful:

When we stay faithful to our Lord the church gains members: Every member of the church is an important member. Each member is a part of all the other members of the church. "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." (Romans 12:4-5) The church of Christ is one body. All that believe in Jesus and obey from the heart the gospel are added to that one church. (Acts 2:36-47) Jesus is the head and the members make up this one body. (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 5:23-33, Colossians 1:18) In Christ we are all one. In Christ we are in partnership and fellowship with one another and with the Lord. Those that stay faithful help the local church stay strong and growing. The church grows only because God blesses the efforts of "the faithful" as they spread His word and serve others.

When we stay faithful to our Lord He has a true servant: The faithful brother or sister in Christ is a "servant." Jesus said, "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave -- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:27-28) Servanthood is at the heart of our salvation. Jesus taught us that to save our life we must lose it in service to others. (Matthew 16:25, Matthew 25:31-46) Jesus spoke of service when He said, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Greatness in God's kingdom comes through service. The Lord said, "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:11) Can the Lord correctly say to you "well done good and faithful servant?" At the Judgment Day the faithful will hear the Lord say, "Well

done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matthew 25:23)

When we stay faithful to our Lord other Christians gain a true brother or sister: Those that love and serve God faithfully are a blessing to other Christians. How wonderful to enjoy the sweet fellowship among brethren in Christ. Jesus said, "...Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:46-50) Those that stay faithful are true brothers or sisters to other Christians. Those that become Christians are in a new and wonderful fellowship with other believers. The key word for followers of Christ is "relationship." When Paul described brethren that had touched his life he used terms like "a beloved brother," "a faithful minister," "a fellow servant," "a faithful and beloved brother," "my fellow prisoner," or "a bondservant of Christ." Not many descriptions could be more touching than when Paul called Onesimus, "a faithful and beloved brother who is one of you." (Colossians 4:9) Onesimus was one of Paul's friends and brothers that sought to correct his past. Paul wrote to Philemon to encourage him to forgive and restore his repentant slave, Onesimus. Onesimus had become "one of us." He was a brother in faithful work and service of the Lord.

When we stay faithful to our Lord the community gains a powerful Christian influence: It is God's will that Christians shine as light in a world of darkness. Paul wrote to the Philippians saying, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." (Philippians 2:15) We must remember at all times who we are. We are children of God. You belong to God because you have been adopted into His family. When you go out into the world you are representing your heavenly Father. We must also remember at all times where we are. We are in a world of darkness and corruption. The darkness and corruption is often deep and ugly. Paul described it as "crooked and perverse nation." We are in this dark world to shine or to say it another way we are here to reflect the light of Jesus Christ! By shining brightly you glorify your Father in heaven in this world of darkness! Our mission is to accept the Word of God into our life and to shine brightly as we give out that same Word of God to this dark world! The very life of a Christian must be an honor to Jesus Christ and to His cause. If a Christian loses his influence he is good for nothing. (Matthew 5:13)

When we stay faithful to our Lord we save our own soul. Those who draw back, "draw back to perdition" or perishing. "But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul." (Hebrews 10:39) Those that stay faithful save their souls. One purpose in the writing of the Book of Hebrews was to urge Christians not abandon their faith in Christ. The difficulty come not in obtaining faith but in maintaining that commitment and dedication over the years. After conversion the real life problems are still there. You still have to deal with family, job, health and many other issues. Fellow Christians that in the beginning seemed refreshingly different from the world are now disgustingly the same as the world. Regardless of anything or anybody that we might be surrounded with the Hebrew writer wanted us to understand that Christ is superior to anything or anyone, so, therefore we must stay true to our conversion to the Christian faith. The faithful can pray the prayer of Psalm 86:2, "Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee." Our soul is at stake. Let us never be casual about our faithfulness to the Almighty.

If you are not a Christian you should become a Christian today. (Acts 2:36-41) If you are a Christian stay faithful to the Lord in daily Bible study, in your commitment to God and in daily living. The Christian that remains faithful is a blessing to others and will be blessed eternally. God's word says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) What a wonderful victory is ours through Christ! Think about your eternal home and stay faithful to God.

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10 Things Christ Promises to Reward

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58312

Our lives are filled with many choices of how to spend our time, energy, and resources. **Some live for money** and possessions, amassing as much as they can, while some invest their time in education or entertainment, hoping to find long-lasting value and enjoyment.

How do we make the best use of the choices we have in life?

Imagine that you are a stock trader at your office, researching the best stocks to invest. You feel a nudge on your shoulder and look up to see Jesus Christ himself standing beside your desk! He smiles, reaches into his pocket and gives you a sheet with the 10 best companies to invest your money in for the next 50 years. You can't believe what just happened! God has given you the winners you were trying to predict. You are astonished at the grace of God and are excited to go "all in" with your money into those companies. Anything less than going "all in" would be the waste of a lifetime.

God promises to reward us for how we serve him on earth.

The truth is, if you are a Christian, God has already given you the incredible opportunity of knowing the future so that you may be able to invest your life wisely in the light of it. The Scriptures tell us specifically about the things that Christ will reward.

As you read, make it your prayer and ambition to go "all in" for these investment opportunities. Here are 10 things Christ promises to reward:

1. Prayer and Fasting

But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you....But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:6, 17-18)

The first guaranteed winner is prayer and fasting. God desires that his children seek him through **faith-filled prayer** and fasting, and he promises to reward those who earnestly seek him (Hebrews 11:6). Prayer is one of the chief ways we show our reliance on God and are able to know him. Be sure to put your stock in what God values and rewards, and make sure you are living a life characterized by seeking God through prayer and fasting.

2. Compassion for the vulnerable

...Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:37-40)

The next amazing promise from God involves having compassion for the vulnerable. Compassion for our needy brothers and sisters by clothing, feeding, and welcoming them is seen by God as us clothing, feeding, and welcoming Christ himself. This is a magnificent picture of serving God and something God promises to reward.

3. Bearing insults and being excluded for the name of Christ

Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. (Luke 6:22-23)

It seems to be backwards for us to be told to “rejoice” and “leap for joy” when we are hated for being Christians. But that is exactly what Jesus says. He knows that **persecution in his name** brings promised blessing and rewards and glorifies the Father. The gospel of Jesus Christ is so great that, even when we are ridiculed on earth for it, we receive treasure in heaven.

What is your first reaction to persecution? If it is anything other than rejoicing, you have an incomplete view of who Christ is. Christ died for our sins to reconcile us to God and buy us eternal life, something that nobody and nothing can take away (Romans 8:38-39)!

4. Love for your enemies

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. (Luke 6:35)

Just as Christians receive blessing from God for being insulted for the name of Christ, they receive blessing and rewards for loving the very ones who insult them. When we love our enemies, we emulate the kind of mercy and grace that our Savior showed to those who were crucifying him when he said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Christ showed the grace of the Father by loving his enemies and gives us the opportunity to show his grace and gain eternal rewards by doing so.

5. Generous giving

...Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:38)

Giving to others is the fifth action God promises to reward. Every dollar you have, every material item you own, every skill you have is a gift from Almighty God. Knowing that all we have is a gift from God (James 1:17), why should we not seek to generously give to others, especially when we consider that this is an activity God promises to reward?

6. Hospitality that cannot be repaid

He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” (Luke 14:12-14)

There are many things in life that will not repay you here on earth, including the many times we are hospitable. But God does not overlook our efforts. He promises to reward us at the resurrection of the just for our hospitality in his name.

How does that change your attitude toward showing hospitality to others? How can you be more hospitable to in the future?

7. Endurance through pressures in ministry

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

If you have ever been discouraged in ministry, take heart. God promises to reward us for **how we serve him** on earth. Instead of falling into discouragement or depression, cling tightly to the promise that God will reward you for your trials and afflictions. Let that be fuel to propel you into a deeper trust and dependence on God as you serve him.

8. Quality work for your employer

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3:23-24)

The gospel of Jesus Christ does not just penetrate personal and spiritual lives of believers, it enters into the workplace as well. When we do our best work for our employer, we are doing our best work for Jesus.

Working heartily for the Lord is one way to show him your gratitude for the amazing things he has given you in Christ. God will not let your effort go unnoticed, but promises to give you a reward for your labor.

9. Faithfulness through trials

...In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

God desires that we walk by faith at all times, and keeping faith during trials is no exception. Fighting for faith during such times is tough! But pressing on will prove your faith genuine and bring promised rewards from God.

10. Faithfulness to the truth

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. (2 John 1:7-8)

God deeply desires our full commitment to his truth. Jesus said he *is* the truth (John 14:6), so that makes sense! Our commitment and **self-examination** honors God and secures the reward that we will receive.

These 10 actions are all great investment opportunities. God tells you what will be rewarded, so go “all out” in living your life!

The greatest loss that any person could experience would be to stand in the presence of God without Jesus Christ and his righteousness, and therefore be unable to participate in the resurrection to everlasting life. Knowing Jesus Christ as your Savior and serving him as your Lord is worth any cost, because nothing is of greater value.

What Do You Need to Serve the Lord?

- I. John 4:34-38 - Jesus told his disciples to serve the Lord by bringing others to Him
 - A. Mt. 28:19-20 - Commanded to go into all the world.
 - B. We all have this responsibility.
- II. Yet, many find excuses to not work.
 - A. "I'm not eloquent enough to be of any great service."
 1. Moses tried this excuse - Ex 4:10-12
 2. Excellency of speech has never been high on God's list in selecting servants.
 3. Paul was not concerned with how well he spoke - I Cor. 2:1
 4. The power is in the message, not the messenger - Rom. 1:15-16
 - B. Many feel unqualified to be of service because they lack education
 1. Somehow people feel that those with high degrees of learning are in a better position to be successful in serving God.
 2. Usually degrees are more a hindrance than a help. Far too often, the more learning a person has, the less faith he possesses.
 3. Learn of the example of the Apostles - Acts 4:13
 - a. They were ignorant and unlearned men
 - b. Their boldness came from being with Jesus
 - C. Some feel they could make an impact, if they just possessed great riches.
 1. Riches can be a blessing or a curse — more often the later. - I Tim. 6:9
 2. How did a poor widow win the notice of our Lord? Mk 12:41-44
 - a. Certainly it was not in the quantity that she gave.
 3. When God came to this earth, how did He live? Mt 8:20
 - a. The common people gladly listened to Him - Mk 12:37
 - b. It was the rich and mighty rulers that opposed Him.
 - D. Some use the excuse "I have nothing to wear" to not attend services.
 1. Yet these same people are able to go anywhere else that they wish.
 2. We usually do what we want to do.
 3. What did John, the baptizer, wear in his service to the Lord? - Mt 3:1-6
 4. God looks at our hearts, not our stylish clothing - I Sam. 16:7; I Pet. 3:3-4
 5. More brethren need to learn the lesson in James 2:1-9
 - E. Some believe their health is not good enough to serve God
 1. Gaius was not in as good in physical health as he was spiritually - III Jn

2

2. People use their health as a reason not to attend services, but they are able to go other places and do other things.
3. Paul had his torn in the flesh, but it didn't stop him - II Cor. 12:7-10
4. Gal 4:13-14 - The reason for the Galatians being Christians was Paul's illness!

III. It seems that people are only willing to serve the Lord if everything is convenient and opportune.

- A. Jesus spoke of such people in Lk 14:16-24
- B. Was it convenient to worship, sing, and teach while in prison? - Acts 16:25
- C. We need to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and not wait for a convenient time as Felix wished - Acts 24:25
- D. Deut 32:13-15 - It is when everything is going well for us that we tend to forget our Lord.

Serve to Be Great

by Dennis Stackhouse

Notice the statement made by Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:1: *"Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."* Be especially careful to recognize that Paul identifies himself and his fellow workers as "servants of Christ." Does that seem a bit strange? Is it right to think of one of God's apostles as being a servant? Shouldn't we expect Paul and his fellow preachers to be served by others? As a matter of fact, developing the heart of a servant is a completely Scriptural concept; there is no doubt that Christian people are encouraged to take on the role of a servant.

It all begins with our Lord and Savior. In Mark 10:45 Jesus said: *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* Jesus Christ, the Son of God left the glory and splendor of heaven, the adoration of the heavenly hosts to become a servant. Seems rather counterintuitive, doesn't it? The very One who, above all others, should have been served came to this world to provide the ultimate example of what it means to be a servant. Our Lord spoke about the typical ways of mankind in Mark 10:42, indicating that rulers and great men exercise authority over those living under them. But a further insight was given to the apostles in Mark 10:43-44 that likely astounded them: *"But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."*

This is certainly consistent with what we learn from other Scriptures in regard to how a Christian should view servanthood. The apostle Paul pointed to the contrast between living in the world and living as a Christian in Romans 6:18: *"And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."* Do Christians often think of themselves as "slaves of righteousness"? We should. Speaking about the different gifts or abilities Christians have and the fact that we should be exercising them, Paul went on to say in Romans 12:7: *"If service, in his serving."* Some people have a greater capacity to serve than do others and they should be using that ability to the utmost. Paul obviously recognized his obligation to function as a servant from his words recorded in Romans 15:25: *"But now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints."*

In Galatians 5:13 we read: *"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."* Christians are to be united *"For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ"*(Ephesians 4:12). Paul stated it plainly in Colossians 3:24: *"It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."* And in 1 Peter 4:10 we're told: *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."* Christians serve one another and by so doing they also serve God and Christ, furthering the Lord's cause and expanding the borders of the kingdom. If we truly have the desire to be great, our Lord gave us the one sure path by which greatness can be attained: develop the heart of a servant.