

On Being a Servant of God by Warren W. Wiersbe, Thomas Nelson Publishers
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(28 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Keep Going in Ministry the Way God's Word Tells Us.

No matter how difficult the work or how many times we feel like quitting, we can keep going and growing if we minister the way God tells us to in His Word. (p. 1)

2. Need Direction.

A Roman proverb says, "When the pilot does not know what port he is heading for, no wind is the right wind."
(p.2)

3. Principles Never Change.

Methods are many, principles are few;
Methods always change, principles never do.

Certainly we need methods to serve God, but we must remember that methods work because of the principles behind them. To adopt a new method just because it worked for somebody else, without first understanding the principles behind that method, is to abandon both the compass and the rudder and start drifting helplessly on the tempestuous sea of service. (p. 2)

3. Ministry by Incarnation.

God doesn't us to have "ministry by imitation." He wants "ministry by incarnation," what Paul wrote about in Philippians 2:13: "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." (p. 2)

4. Ministry Happens Through God's Loving Channels.

Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human need through loving channels to the glory of God.
(p. 3)

5. Minister the Way the Apostles Ministered.

God wants us to minister and the way the apostles ministered—we must (1) know the divine resources personally, (2) see the human needs compassionately, and (3) become channels of God's mighty resources so that (4) God alone is glorified. When God is

glorified, His Spirit can work to bring Christ to those who need to know Him. In reaching one individual, Peter was able to reach the masses.

Ponder this definition of ministry and examine your own heart. Do you know God personally and the marvelous resources that are available through Jesus Christ? Are you concerned about the needs of others so that you see them and want to help? Do you have compassion for those with needs? Are you willing to be a channel for God's glory? (p. 4)

6. We Are to be Distributors.

The trouble with too many of us is that we think God called us to be manufacturers when He really called us to be distributors. He alone has the resources to meet human needs; all we can do is receive His riches and share them with others. "Silver and gold I do not have," Peter announced, "but what I do have I give you" (Acts 3:6). When it comes to ministry, all of us are bankrupt, and only God is rich. Like Paul, we are "as poor, yet making many rich" (2 Corinthians 6:10). (p. 4)

7. Jesus Wanted the Disciples to be Distributors.

The disciples were trying to be manufacturers. They thought that it was their responsibility to come up with the money or the food or some clever way to solve the problem. But all the while, "He himself knew what He would do" (John 6:6). Jesus needed His disciples, not as manufacturers but as distributors. He took the lad's lunch, looked up to heaven, blessed the food, broke it, and put it into the disciples' hands for them to feed the hungry multitude. The multiplication took place in His hands; the distribution was the work of the disciples' hands. (p. 6)

8. Human Explanation, God Didn't Do It.

"If you can explain what's going on, God didn't do it!" Dr Bob Cook. (p. 6)

9. Channels of God's Resources.

You don't earn grace, and you don't deserve grace; you simply receive it as God's loving gift and then share it with others. In ministry, we are channels of God's resources, not reservoirs: "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" (Luke 6:38). It's a basic law of the kingdom of God that the servants that how poor they are become the richest, and those who give the most receive the most and therefore have the most to give. (p. 7)

10. God's Grace Is the Secret of Effective Ministry.

With all of his abilities and training, the apostle Paul knew that the secret of his effective ministry was the grace of God. "But by the grace of God I am what I am," he wrote to the Corinthians, "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). By God's grace, Paul was what he was, and Paul did what he did. (p. 7-8)

11. Draw on the Riches of God's Grace.

As God's children and God's servants, we can draw upon the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7; 2:7), the riches of His glory (Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 4:19) unsearchable riches (Ephesians 3:8), the riches of His mercy (Ephesians 2:4), the riches of His wisdom (Romans 11:33), and much more: "And 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" (2 Corinthians 9:8). (p. 8)

12. We Are Bankrupted and Receive God's Grace.

One of the first steps we must take before our service can be used of God is to confess our bankruptcy and receive by faith the grace that we need for acceptable service. Just as we were saved by grace, through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), so we must work by grace, through faith, as we seek to minister. Only then can God work in and through us for His glory. (p. 8)

13. Meeting Human Needs.

Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs. In ministry, we're called to live for others. Ministry is not just another way of making a living; it's a wonderful opportunity for making a life, a life that's lived for others. It's an opportunity to be like Lord Jesus Christ. When He was here on earth, He met human needs, all kinds of needs; and He wasn't always thanked or even appreciated. (p. 9)

14. True Servants Help God.

True servants of God help others whether they themselves get anything out of it or not. (p. 10)

15. Guarding Against a Hard Heart.

It's impossible for us as God's servants to do something about every need that we see or hear about; but we must never be thankful for a reason (or an excuse) to escape responsibility, and we must guard against the kind of professionalism that leads to a hard heart. (p. 10)

16. "Lord, What would you want me to do?"

The servant of God respond to the need by asking, "Lord, what do you want me to do? (Acts 9:6). We can't do everything, but we can do something; and we must do it as Jesus would so that He might be glorified. (p. 11)

17. Rightly Related to God and His Will.

The people God calls us to serve have all kinds of needs—physical, emotional, relational, financial—but at rock bottom their greatest need is to be rightly related to God and His will. That doesn't mean the Word of God and prayer will pay their bills or feed their stomachs. We don't quote a Bible promise to hungry people, pray for them, smile, and say, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled" (James 2:16). We do what we can to put food on the table. But unless we help people grow into a right relationship with God, whatever help we give will be only a stopgap measure, a quick fix until the next time they have a need; and then the cycle is repeated. (p. 11)

18. We Can Do Something.

The human needs in our world today are indescribable, innumerable, and (if you have a tender heart) almost unbearable. You and I can't do everything, but we can do something; and that something is the ministry God has called us to fulfill. (p. 12)

19. Christian Love is not Bind.

Christian love is not blind. Paul prayed for the believers in Philippi that their love might "abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment" (Philippians 1:9). Jesus loved the young man we call the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21), but that didn't motivate him to lower His standards and make it easy for the man to follow Christ. It isn't enough for us to merely love suffering people and want to help them. We must also love the truth that God has given us (Psalm 119:97; 2 Thessalonians 2:10). If truth and love contradict each other, something is amiss. (p. 14-15)

20. Holy Spirit Can Make You Adequate.

The Holy Spirit can make you adequate for any ministry challenge God brings to you. In fact, God often allows problem people to come into your life so that you'll learn to depend more on His power and not your own resources. (p. 15-16)

21. Too Soon to Quit!

Dr. V. Raymond Edman used to tell the Wheaton (Illinois) College students, "It's always too soon to quit." He wrote, "Remember always to keep chin up and knees down!" (p. 17)

22. Let God Use Problems In Your Life.

You'll meet problem people and problem situations wherever you go, so make up your mind to expect them, accept them, and let God use them in your life. The devil wants to use problem people as weapons to tear you down, but the Spirit can use them as tools to build you up. The choice is yours. If you stay on the job and trust God to work, you'll experience His grace in a wonderful way; and you'll be a better servant. One of the best ways to discover the divine resources that others need is to need them yourself and trust God to supply them. Paul wrote,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). (p. 17)

23. Prayer, Mediation, and Temptation Makes a Minister.

Martin Luther said that prayer, mediation, and temptation make a minister, and he was right. And Jesus was "in all points tempted as we are" (Hebrews 4:15) that He might be able to understand our needs and adequately meet them, and we sometimes suffer for the same reason. The prophet Ezekiel wrote, "Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat" (Ezekiel 3:15). I sat where they sat. That's the posture of a true servant of Jesus Christ who wants to be a loving channel of the grace of God. (19)

24. Religious Activity, not Ministry.

If our motive for serving is anything other than the glory of God, what we do will be only religious activity and not true Christian ministry. (p. 19)

25. When People See the Lord, God Glorified.

God is glorified when people see the Lord and not the servant: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). You have to decide whether you will be a servant or a celebrity, whether you will magnify Christ or promote yourself (Philippians 1:20-21). (p. 20)

26. Seeing the Master, God Glorified.

God is glorified when people see the Master and not the minister. The moderator of a Presbyterian church in Melbourne, Australia, gave J Hudson Taylor a flattering introduction. When the founder of the China Inland Mission stepped onto the pulpit, he quietly said, “Dear friends, I am the little servant of an illustrious Master.” The late A. W. Tozer was once presented to a congregation in a similar manner, and his response was, “All I can say is, God, forgive him for what he said—and forgive me for enjoying it so much!” (p. 21)

27. Concerned About Image?

When you find yourself more concerned about your “image” than your character and your work, you have stopped glorifying God. (p. 21)

28. Care about Man’s Heart.

On October 2, 1840, the young Presbyterian pastor Robert Murray M’Cheyne wrote this letter to his friend Daniel Edwards who was leaving for Germany to train for missionary service:

My dear Friend:

I trust you will have a pleasant and profitable time in Germany. I know you will apply hard to German; but do not forget the culture of the inner man —I mean of the heart.

How diligently the cavalry officer keeps his saber clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with greatest care. Remember you are God’s sword—His instrument—I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon the hand of God. (p. 39)