CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

OCTOBER232021

Scripture Story: Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 22:7-18, 24; John 13:1-17.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* or *Humble Hero*, chapters 70, 71.

may I help you?



Photo by Alden Ho

flashlight

"Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. . . . Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 638).

keytext

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' "

(Matthew 25:40, NIV)

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what do you think?

"Rate each of these statements from 1 to 5."

1 = strongly agree, and 5 = strongly disagree.

- When my church organizes a community project, I feel I need to help out.
  1 2 3 4 5
- People feel comfortable asking me to help them with things because I generally say yes.
  1 2 3 4 5
- When I agree to help out, it is normally because I feel pressured or guilted into doing it.
  1 2 3 4 5
- I think that people should help themselves and stop being a burden on those around them who do better than they do.
  1 2 3 4 5

did you know?

Community service is often used in U.S. and Canadian courts of law as a special condition of probation. While punishment is part of the reason for this measure, giving the person less free time to enjoy, benefits exist for the convicted individual, the victim, and the community. Community service may help the offender to atone for their crime. It can be used as a substitute for financial compensation if the offender does not have the funds available. It also can contribute to the offender's rehabilitation, instilling a work ethic and sense of pride in contributing to the community.

INTO THE STORY

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

(Matthew 25:31-40, NIV)

"He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'

"Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'

"'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'

"Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'

"'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'

"Jesus answered, 'Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.'

"'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.'"

(John 13:6-10, 13-15, NIV)

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OUT OF THE STORY

What kind of service is Jesus telling us to perform?

Whom should we be serving?

What is the result of serving others, both in our lives now and in the life to come?

How is serving others perceived by the secular society?

Whom do you think it would be easiest to serve? Whom would be the hardest, and why?

What would be the modern equivalent of foot washing from Jesus' day?

What kinds of service do we think are beneath us to perform?

punch lines

"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?" **(Matthew 5:46, NIV).**

"Whoever seeks good finds favor" **(Proverbs 11:27, NIV).**

"Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land" **(Ecclesiastes 11:2, NIV).**

"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love" **(Galatians 5:13, NIV).**

"For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves" **(Luke 22:27, NIV).**

further insight

"The Father from His throne numbers the unselfish workers among His most precious treasures."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 639

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Proverbs 11:27.

When we look for places to serve others, the person we help is blessed through our good deeds, and we are blessed in return. In order to reap that blessing, our hearts need to be in the right place. We can't enjoy God's rewards while we are trying to show off our "good works." If we are only trying to pad our résumés with community service in order to look more appealing to an employer, then our motives are tainted. Service to others is not about making ourselves look good.

What is your attitude toward service? How can you serve with unselfish motives? What benefits do you see in serving others?

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Sunday

Read John 13:15.

Jesus said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15, NIV). Not every person is easy to serve. Some people don't want help. Others are so difficult to be around that even to think about serving them makes us angry. Still others seem to be black holes of neediness, and no matter how much we do for them, they seem to beg for more. Which people do you find it hardest to serve, and why? How can we become capable of this kind of service? Where is the boundary line between serving and being taken advantage of?

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Monday

Read Matthew 25:40.

Who are "the least of these" mentioned in the *Key Text*? Many unattractive and "untouchable" people live in our communities. They make us want to cross the street to get away from them. They may be dirty, smell bad, or have a bad reputation. They may be unpopular, badly dressed, or have poor hygiene. Which of "the least of these" will you come into contact with today? How can you be of service to people who are least valued in your school or your community?

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Tuesday

Read Galatians 5:13.

Knowing what the Bible teaches isn't enough. We can read our Bibles every day, but if we don't put the Word into action, it isn't able to help us grow and change (see James 2:14-18). Although reading God's Word is important, people who may never have had the opportunity to read the Bible will go to heaven because they listened to the Holy Spirit and did what they knew was right. The Holy Spirit will guide you, telling you what is right and what is not, as you personally spend time in Christ's presence and with other believers. How can you make a point of listening closely to that inner voice today?

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Wednesday

Read Luke 22:27.

Position and prestige are important to people in the world. They are concerned about being "upwardly mobile" and looking successful. "The good life" is an expensive life. When we try to keep up with everyone else, all of our time can be used up pursuing the newest gadgets and clothes. But God wants us to see things differently. Jesus didn't come to impress people with His social standing. Instead, He devoted Himself to the people whom no one else wanted to deal with. Which of your priorities might be standing in your way of serving others?

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Thursday

Read Ecclesiastes 11:2.

Life is busy, and you have responsibilities. You might need to keep your grades up, earn money, or take care of family members. Life is not only busy, but it is demanding. There must be a balance between what you do for others and what you do to take care of your own needs. How can you serve others while you are busy going to school, working, and living your life? Must you dedicate time to community service, or are there less structured ways to serve others?

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Friday

Read Matthew 5:46.

When you serve another person, how do you think you grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, and morally? What does service do to your heart?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or *Humble Hero*, chapters 70, 71.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URIhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.

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