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Not Just Humility

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Many of us are familiar with the story of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples (Jn. 13:5). There is no question that this was a lesson on humility. Christ even stated here, *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."* (Jn. 13:15-15). Those who will not humble themselves will not be exalted by the Lord (Lk. 14:11).

However, there is another great lesson that is taught by considering what we read prior to Christ washing the feet. Earlier in the chapter, beginning in verse 3, it states, *"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."* (vr. 3-5).

The great lesson here might not be as obvious as the one on humility. But we must note that Christ and His disciples had gathered for the feast of the Passover (vr. 1). We also need to know that the supper had already ended (vr. 2). So, what does all this mean? It means that there was plenty of time for someone else to jump in and do what needed to be done. Godly people look for opportunities to do things and then they do it. They don't have to wait to be told.

This ought to remind us of Jesus' words to the Pharisee that invited Him into his home. After a sinful woman came in and washed the Lord's feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head (Lk. 7:36-38), the Pharisee thought to himself whether Jesus was a prophet for accepting the sinful woman's behavior. Christ quickly set this man straight. The Savior told him, *"Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in"* (Lk. 7:44-45).

There was plenty of time for that Pharisee to not only show His humility but to also jump in and do what should have been done. When the Lord rose to wash the feet of His disciples, not only would one think, "It should be me washing His feet", but what is also important to think, "Oh, I should have offered to do that earlier when I saw no one else had done it."

When it is announced someone is at home sick, do you check if they are okay or in need of something? If it is announced that we have visitors for church services, do you make it a point to make sure you welcome them? When you look at the list of duties for the men and notice someone is not there, do you quickly offer your services? This list can go on and on.

There is a direct link between being humble and jumping in and offering to do things that need to get done. But can doing things actually be the opposite of humility? I mean, was Jesus washing the feet to brag that He was being humble? No way. It's not like Jesus got up and said, "Well, since no one else is going to do this, I guess I will." This idea of going out of our way to do things that need to get done without complaining or thinking it is beneath us is a true sign of humility.

Let me close this article with one final thought. Let us not lose our humility when someone else is being humble. The worst thing we can do when we see someone jump in to do something is to belittle what they are doing, thinking, "Well, it was about time someone did that!" Think about it.

Attending to the Visitor

Bubba Garner

We've all been the visitor before. We've felt the awkwardness or even fear of walking into a new place for the first time. We know the difference between a friendly church and those assemblies where we didn't feel very welcome. The importance placed on the visitor is seen in many places we frequent. They may have a Visitor Center or offer Visitor Parking. Hospitals have Visiting Hours. Shouldn't the visitor be taken care of when they come to the house of the Lord?

We have a scriptural responsibility that extends beyond the borders of our brethren. In both passages that list the qualifications of elders, these men must be "hospitable" (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8). But this is not just the duty of the elders; it is for all the saints. In Romans 12:13, Paul says that the individual should be "contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality." The Greek word "hospitality" literally means "love of or to strangers." Why would God want His people to love strangers, sojourners, or aliens? "For you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22:21).

In Genesis 18, Abraham attended to the three visitors who came his way. We should imitate the father of the faithful in this regard.

He looked. Abraham was "sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day" (Gen. 18:1). This was apparently a custom of the day, to watch for travelers who might need food or drink or a place to stay. And he "lifted up his eyes and looked" and saw the three men (18:2). Nowadays, we're just the opposite. We get home and close the garage door. We put solar screens on the windows so nobody can see in. We do everything we can to make it look like we're not home when somebody rings the doorbell. We prefer to be isolated!

Why don't we look? We are too busy thinking about what else we have to do that week. We are focused on the "important" things we need to get to once worship is over. When we do that, visitors can walk right past us without us even noticing that they are there. Look! We are all too often involved only with the people around us. After services, we talk just to those who sit around us. What kind of impression does that make on a visitor? Is it an environment that makes them want to come back and be a part? Or cause them to say, "I'll never fit in there?"

He ran. Abraham was excited about this opportunity to serve. He "ran" to meet them (Gen. 18:2). He "hurried" into the tent (18:6). He told Sarah to "quickly" prepare the bread cakes (18:6). He "ran" to the herd to select the calf (18:7). His servant "hurried" to prepare the meal (18:7). These are indications of how important this was to Abraham, more so than any other item on his agenda that day.

We must show our visitors that same urgency. In the sports world, it's called "hustle." It shows a willingness to go above and beyond, giving your all, not just doing things out of duty. Let's run to attend to our visitors. Can you greet someone when they come into the building? Can you help someone find the Bible classes for their children? Can you ask them to sit with you? Can you invite them to eat lunch with you and your family? These are our best prospects. They have already demonstrated an interest in the things of God. They have come through our door. Hasten to attend to their needs.

He gave. This ended up being an expensive visit to Abraham's tent. Not only did he supply them with water, bread cakes, curds, and milk, he prepared a "tender and choice calf" (Gen. 18:7). This would have most likely been one reserved for a special occasion. Abraham could think of none better. He gave his best.

For us, the worship service happens several times a week. For some of our visitors, it is their very first one. We must give our very best every time we assemble, not only because God is worthy of such but because of the effect it has on the "unbeliever" (1 Cor. 14:22-25). "He will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you." What a gift!

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb. 13:2). By being a blessing to his visitors, Abraham became a blessing to all nations of the earth. Let us be so attentive for the Lord's sake. Especially when visitors come into His house.