

## Di121 Effective Communication

### *Lesson Di121-22 Attitude: Humility*

Did you ever wish you had your own servant? It would be great to have someone to do the jobs you don't like. What kind of character would this person need to have? They should, of course, be trustworthy, obedient, and willing to work. They certainly should be cheerful and complete their work on time. Perhaps you could think of other important qualities of a good servant.

Jesus came to earth not as a master, but as a servant. The Gospel of Mark tells us, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Today's lesson teaches several things. Our discussion will focus on the attitude of humility that Jesus demonstrated with others. A person with this attitude shows meekness in their relationships. Such a person is gentle in spirit, not promoting or elevating themselves. They are dependent on God for everything. They find value and reward by helping others, not themselves.

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus had instructed the disciples about where to prepare for the meal. Since this would be his last meal with the disciples, it came to be called the Last Supper. Since Jesus fully knew and understood God's plan, he was not afraid or diverted by his approaching death and return to heaven. He chose to illustrate a key concept, the humility of being a servant leader, by his actions.

The evening meal was in progress. The devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power. He knew that he had come from God and was returning to God. Therefore he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin. He began to wash his disciples' feet, one by one. This was a job reserved for the lowest of servants. With animals walking the dusty streets and men wearing only sandals, feet could get very smelly and dirty. He dried their feet with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Before long 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." He knew who was going to betray him. That was why he had said not everyone was clean.

Peter was not prepared for Jesus to wash his feet. Peter saw him as the Messiah, not a lowly servant. In Peter's mind, perhaps Jesus was yet going to lead them to victory over the Roman occupation. Jesus saw beyond what Peter was seeing. The washing Jesus spoke about was a spiritual one, a cleansing from the filth of sin. Peter was already cleansed by his faith in Jesus. He needed to understand that to serve Jesus, he also had to act as a servant to others. Sometimes believers need to have their spiritual "feet" washed because of the world's evil influence.

When he had finished washing the feet of Peter and the other disciples, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "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. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them (John 13:1-17).

Jesus illustrated what it meant to be a humble servant by washing the feet of the 12. If Jesus their Master took the place of humility, they needed to do the same. Jesus was their example and he is still our example today. We can never be greater or more influential than Jesus. We are simply messengers. We are at our best when we are most like Jesus, in both our actions and attitudes. Jesus offers a special blessing to those who would live a life of humility. Even if you are a pastor or reach a leadership position in a church, do not let pride take over your heart. Do not treat those who serve you as lesser people than yourself. Find ways to serve those you lead—just as Jesus did!

This story is **important** because it shows that Jesus, just before his arrest and crucifixion, took the place of humility by serving the disciples and washing their feet.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that as followers of Jesus we need to demonstrate humility in our relationships just as Jesus did.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did Jesus do at the Last Supper to demonstrate to the disciples true humility? [Pause]  
A. If you said that at the Last Supper Jesus served by washing the feet of the disciples, you answered correctly
2. What do the events at the Last Supper remind us concerning the purpose for Jesus' coming? [Pause]  
A. If you said that these events remind us that Jesus came as a servant and to give his life for many, you are correct.
3. Which of the disciples did not want Jesus to wash his feet? [Pause]  
A. If you said, "Peter," you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story several times, until you know it by heart. Then tell it to your friends and family. Think about a humble task you could do to help

someone who is in need. It does not need to be a great or important act. Be willing to help this person because of the love of Christ in you. Do this act of kindness to demonstrate for them that you have the heart of a servant—humility.