**MINDSET OF MINISTRY:**

**HUMILITY, FAITH, COMPASSION, HOPE**

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*“In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” (Phil 2:5)*

**Objective**

To learn the right mindset of a disciple in relationships with God, with others, and in ministry.

**Introduction**

God’s purpose and good will for His redeemed people is to transform them in the image of His Son (Ro 8:29). In all things, God works in believers’ lives for this end (Ro 8:28). This transformation (sanctification) comes through the renewing of our mind by the work of the Holy Spirit when we repent of our sins in obedience to the word of God. In a Christian’s life, therefore, being transformed in the image of Christ means growing to have Jesus’ mindset. When a Christian matures to have Jesus’ mindset, he/she is able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. When individual believers have Jesus’ mindset, the kingdom of God comes in them and their community that is the church.

**What Is Jesus’ Mindset?**

From the gospels, we can find Jesus’ attitudes that constitute his mindset as follows:

* Compassion
* Love
* Meekness
* Unselfishness
* Obedience to the Father
* Humility
* Thankfulness
* Prayerfulness

Among many elements of Jesus’ mindset, "humility" was most outstanding. Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Even though he is the image of the invisible God, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Furthermore, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Php 2:6-8) Taking the very nature of a servant, he embraced a life of weakness, poverty, shame, rejection, and pain. Jesus had lowliness of heart as a suffering servant that was prophesied in Isaiah 53.

When we are put in a humbling position, we wonder, “Why do people not recognize me?” We don’t feel good. We want to be recognized as important persons and we often take pride in human recognition. But Jesus became nothing during his life on earth, so that we may follow his example. Jesus didn’t put on humility to just accomplish the taskwhich he came to do on earth. Humility was an intrinsic part of his mindset. In his humility we find rest for our souls (Mt 11:29). When we imitate his humility as our intrinsic mindset, we can truly be his disciple and disciple-makers.

**Why Is A Mindset Important In Ministry?**

Jesus’ mindset is God-centered, God-glorifying, God’s kingdom-oriented with servantship toward people. During His earthly ministry, Jesus served God and people with this mindset. In practice, He preached the gospel (good news of the kingdom of God) which He fulfilled through His atoning death and resurrection. He also raised disciples who later were transformed to minister to people with His mindset. Christian ministry is continuation and expansion of Jesus’ ministry through His servants who imitate His mindset. When Jesus commanded; “*Preach the good news to all creation”* (Mk 16:15) and *“Make disciples of all nations”* (Mt 28:19), he wanted them to do so with his mindset.

Therefore, it is essential for the evangelists, missionaries, and ministers to have Jesus’ mindset, so that the kingdom of God Jesus came to bring and preached, may come and advance among the people they minister to. Disciple-making is possible through personal interaction between a mentor and his/her student(s). It is a reproduction process. Since the ultimate goal of discipleship is to transform the students to become Jesus’ disciples, who have the mindset of Jesus Christ, it is essential that the mentor himself/herself have the mindset of Christ. Without the example of the mentor, who demonstrates the mindset of Christ, a successful discipleship is almost impossible.

Moreover, without Jesus’ God-centered, God-glorifying, God’s kingdom-oriented servantship, a person cannot have the passion, joy, peace, perseverance, and power to carry out ministry in the long run. One can do ministry out of self-centered motives, but such a ministry can not bear good fruit. In the end, one who ministers in this way cannot receive praise and honor from the Lord, who will bring to light what is hidden in darkness, and will expose the motives of every man’s heart (1Co 4:5). Isaiah 26:3 says, *“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.”* A person whose thoughts are consumed with God and His kingdom will have perfect peace instead of anxiety and worry. When we find ourselves anxious or worried, we should check if we have lost a God-centered and His kingdom-oriented mindset.

Therefore, we should do our best not to conform to the pattern of this world , but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind by obeying the word of truth (Rom 12:1-2). Colossians 3:1-4 renders an excellent guide for setting our mind as gospel workers: *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”* We should set our hearts on things above—on Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God. We should set our minds on the eternal kingdom of God to come, not on earthly things. We should always remember that we died with Christ and so died to the world. We should also remember that we will be raised in His glorious resurrection body. We should follow the footsteps of the Lord Jesus until we enter into His glory, as we eagerly look forward to His Second Coming and the full advent of His kingdom.

**How Can We Practically Serve People With Jesus’ Mindset?**

Knowing Jesus’ mindset and putting it into practice is crucial to our discipleship ministry. By practicing it we can experience and participate in his humanity. Spiritual revival comes from emulating Jesus’ mindset. We can learn how to practically serve people as we consider Jesus’ mindset toward the Father, his disciples, and people.

**Christ’s Mindset Toward God the Father**

While Christ was carrying out his messianic task, his mindset toward God was always submissive and cooperative. In John 6:17,19 Jesus said, “*My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working…Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does*.” The Son could have worked based on his own plan and time schedule, but he always followed the Father’s hour (Jn 2:4; 7:6; 17:1;19:28). Christ often withdrew himself from the crowd and his disciples, and went to mountains to pray (Mt 14:23; Mk 1:35; Lk 5:16). Through his intimate fellowship with God the Father, the Son reaffirmed his messianic ministry and was recharged. Christ gave thanks to God the Father and expressed his union with God the Father before he fed five thousand with five loaves and two fish (Mk 6:41; Jn 6:11).

In John 17, the Son prayed to glorify the Father through the completion of his messianic task, which included crucifixion (Jn 17:1-4). Christ accepted his imminent arrest, trial, and crucifixion if only he could glorify God the Father through his obedient death on the cross. From birth to death, from the cradle to the cross, the Son Jesus showed his submission to God the Father in order to fulfill His will. Before his arrest, Christ prayed that he might take the cup which the Father provided. It was a fierce spiritual battle between obeying the Father’s will and submitting to his own will. But he surrendered to the Father’s will and determined to take the cup of the cross (Mt 26:46).

Christ’s humility and obedience came from his deep trust and love relationship with God the Father. Without a trust and love relationship, genuine obedience is impossible. Christ himself said to his disciples, “*Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching*” (Jn 14:23). Without such an intimate love and trust relationship with Christ and with others, practicing Christ’ mindset becomes superficial or even futile. Hebrews 5:8,9 says, “*Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*” Christ, even though he was the Son of God, humbled himself and learned how to obey God the Father through suffering. Before practicing Christ’s mindset toward others, we must learn this mindset from our hearts. Christ Jesus is our perfect example and role model whom we should follow.

**Christ’s Mindset Toward His Disciples**

From the initial stage of his messianic ministry, Christ called his disciples and let them stay with him (Mk 3:14). He knew the importance of raising disciples who would take over his ministry as responsible gospel workers and shepherds for God’s flock. The twelve disciples were chosen, not from social elites or religious celebrities, but from the rank of ordinary men. They were unschooled folk. But Jesus saw God’s vision for world salvation through them. When Jesus called them, they were full of earthly messianic dreams and selfish ambitions. Their knowledge about Christ was shallow and their relationship with him was weak. But Jesus saw the establishment of the Father’s kingdom through these social commoners. Jesus saw his chosen with the eyes of hope.

Christ often encouraged the Twelve and disciplined them to share his faith and vision. Christ kept them to be with him and gave them authority and power to drive out demons and to heal the sick (Mt 10:1; Mk 3:15; 6:12; Lk 9:1;10:1). His disciples experienced the power of God in their mission journeys when they simply trusted in Jesus and obeyed him (Lk 10:17). Jesus opened their spiritual eyes to see the work of God and experience his power (Mt 10:22; 26:19; Mk 4:41; 6:12,37,51; 7:37; 9:2; Jn 2:11). Jesus also helped them to see the world with God’s redemptive perspective. After converting a Samaritan woman, Jesus helped them to see the townspeople as ripe for harvest (Jn 4:35). To the eyes of the Twelve, the crowd was only groups of the needy and poor. But to the eyes of Jesus they were ripe for harvest (Mt 9:37,38).

Hope and faith go together in raising disciples of Jesus. Christ saw his disciples with the eyes of hope because he had faith in God the Father. Jesus believed that the disciples were those whom God the Father sent (Jn 17:6,7). He believed that God the Father would make them one as he was one with God the Father (Jn 17:11). While they were arguing among themselves about who would be greater, Jesus had faith that they would follow his sacrificial servantship and share his mindset toward each other and toward other people (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45). Jesus often challenged their faith in the time of persecution and in the midst of storms (Mt 12:10; 14:31; Mk 4:40). Even at the time of his trial, Christ encouraged them to love one another and to become one in doing the work of God (Jn 13:34; 15:17; 16:33). Above all, he promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with them as their Counselor and Helper, so that they might carry out world mission (Jn 14:16,18,26; Ac 1:8).

Christ saw Simon Peter, who was struggling with his empty net (Lk 5:5). Jesus restored Peter from his failure, and helped him to find himself as a sinner before the Holy God. Jesus blessed Peter to be a great fisher of men (Ac 2:41). Jesus called a selfish tax collector, Levi, and changed him to become Saint Matthew (Mt 9:9; Mk 2:14). Christ was patient with him until Levi’s value system was changed. Christ opened Levi’s spiritual eyes to see the kingdom of heaven and to understand the secret of the kingdom of God.

Christ understood the disciples’ earthly dreams and their selfish ambitions. But he did not rebuke their human ambition and desire to become great. Rather, he taught them how to become truly great in the sight of God through his servantship (Mk 10:15, 43-45). Christ humbled himself and washed their feet, and commanded them to wash other’s feet, as he did for them (Jn 13:14). After his resurrection, he visited his disciples, who had run away during his trial. At the Sea of Galilee, Christ forgave Peter and reinstated him (Jn 21:1-19). Christ’s servantship toward his disciples was an example of faith and hope. Apostle Paul mentioned three components of Christ’s mindset—faith, hope, and love (1Co 13:13). These should be our mindset toward disciples of Jesus under our care.

**Christ’s Mindset Toward People**

Christ Jesus saw people with the eyes of compassion. Jesus’ heart was broken when he saw suffering people under the power of Satan. Jesus wept when Mary and Martha were mourning before the power of death (Jn 11:35). The following cases in John’s gospel show how Christ demonstrated his messianic compassion, faith, and hope for suffering people:

* Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-20)
* Jesus’ conversation with a Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-26)
* Jesus’ healing of an invalid (Jn 5:1-11)
* Jesus’ healing of a man born blind (Jn 9:1-26)
* Jesus’ counseling for Mary and Martha (Jn 11:43)

**Conclusion**

Jesus emptied himself, taking the very nature of a servant, and obeyed the Father’s will and appeared as a man. He saw a vision for world salvation through his handful of disciples. Above all, he served God’s flock of sheep one by one with great compassion, faith, and hope. The young generation in this post-modern world needs good shepherds with Jesus’ mindset. May we grow in humility and obedience toward God, and in compassion, faith and hope toward people after the mindset of Jesus Christ. Humility is not only practiced toward God, but toward others in the body of Christ.