

## [The Call to Discipleship as Catholic Men](#)

December 9th, 2008 by [Maurice Blumberg](#)

*Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have only done our duty" (Luke 7:7-10).*

*If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (2 Corinthians 5:13-15).*

*By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples (John 15:8).*

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At first glance, Jesus' call to discipleship in the parable of the "unprofitable servant" (Luke 17:7-10) may seem daunting. Essentially, he said that if we just do what he commands, we are "unprofitable servants." So was he expecting us just to work even harder? Was he telling us that if we did just a little bit more, we'd be "worthy" servants or disciples who have merited his pleasure? No. God isn't indebted to us. We owe God everything, even our very lives. We were created for him, not he for us.

Jesus' parable does shine a light on the kind of discipleship that he is calling us to, not the amount of work he's looking for. We can choose to be disciples responding to him like slaves, or we can follow him as disciples in love and gratitude like friends. Jesus wants to call us his friends, not his slaves (John 15:15). He wants us to know him as our brother, as the most loyal companion we will ever have.

As Catholic men, who tend to be action-oriented, it is very easy to fall into the trap of working for the Lord, yet never really knowing him? We could undertake all sorts of projects for our parish or the poor, either out of a sense of duty or out of a desire to ensure our place in heaven. But if we respond to God this way, we've missed the point. He is calling us to a relationship of love, not one of slavery.

Those who think that being a disciple is the same as being duty-bound slaves miss out on a wonderful experience of life in the kingdom of God. They won't know that the call to discipleship is a call to a personal relationship with Jesus that will fill them so deeply that they desire to give everything back to him. St. Paul said it was "the love of God" that "compelled" him to serve the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:14). He had come to know and experience God's great love and mercy, and he loved him in return. It was this that drove Paul to the point of even laying his life down for the Lord. It is this that should drive us as well.

Of course, there are things we must do as his disciples. Jesus has told us to obey his commandments. But there are also things that we do just because we have experienced Jesus' love and we love him-things like turning our hearts to him during a busy day or going out of our way to help one of his little ones.

As his disciple, how can you respond to Jesus out of love today? Maybe a good way to start is by asking the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with God's love so that his love will awaken in you a deeper love for him and others-and a deeper desire to serve him as his disciple.

"Lord Jesus, thank you for laying down your life for me out of your great love and mercy. I praise you because of what you did on the cross. Now I say yes to your call to be your disciple and freely give my life back to you. I ask for a fresh infilling of your Holy Spirit, and the grace to serve you and give your love to others."

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[Many thanks to **The Word Among Us** for allowing us to adapt material from daily meditations in their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.]

### **Questions for Reflection/Discussion by Catholic Men**

- 1. Take a few minutes to read and meditate on the Scriptures above as it relates to our call to be disciples. What do you think God is trying to say to you through them?
- 2. The article talks about being a disciple and serving the Lord just out of duty vs. through a personal relationship with the Lord. What is the difference?
- 3. What is your understanding of 2 Corinthians 5:13-15, as it relates to being a disciple?
- 4. The article poses this question: "As his disciple, how can you respond to Jesus out of love today?" What steps can you take, individually, and as a group to respond?
- 5. If you are in a men's group, take some time at the end of your meeting to pray for one another to accept the call to be the disciples Christ has called you to be. Use the prayer at the end of the article as the starting point.

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