

## 22Y01 Serving God

Hello my friends. From America Hello. I hope you are doing well today. I know some of you know us, but for those of you who don't. We are PUNLA Christian Ministries. My name is Kip. We have been very blessed to be part of what God is doing in Bicol. I'm so very thankful that God has allowed someone like me, a broken, messed up sinner, to be part of His Bigger, Better Story in many of your lives in Bicol.

Let me read 1 John 3:18 (KJV) *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.* In deed and in truth. Other translations say not merely or only in words and speech. In modern language it might be said this way, stop talking about it and start doing something.

Let's pray.

**Heavenly Father. We know You made all things from the stars and planets to the microbes in the depths of the sea, to every grain of sand on the beach. I know you know my name and know the very number of hairs on my head. You alone are worthy of my praise. All honor and glory are yours. Help us to follow you and allow your will to be done in our lives and in the places we live. I'm so very thankful to have the opportunity to share the words you have giving us to speak. I pray for everyone listening that I might hear what you need them to hear. Use me anyway you choose. I trust and love you Lord Jesus. I pray all these things in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

If you have ever seen us when we are in the Philippines, you may have seen the scripture I just read on the back of our T-shirts. It is under this graphic which says, "Don't thank me, Thank Jesus who sent me."

Our Mission in the Philippines is one of the things we do "serving God". But serving God is just as important in the small things as it is in the big. Being faithful and true to God in every moment or every day. Not just special occasions or church on Sunday.

It is really the principle of putting God first in Everything. This is the only way we can truly be faithful and true in Serving God.

But what does this really mean, what does it look like. And more importantly why should I put God first in Everything I do. Every moment of every day. That sound hard, huh.

Let's talk about why first. Why put God first in everything? Why should we be serving God in everything we do?

Well, God made you. He knows the best way for you to live. Jesus put it this way in John 10:10 (KJV) *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* The New Living Translation says it this way, *"My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."*

Jesus is not talking about getting rich or acquiring lots of stuff in this world. Jesus is telling us that if we live life the way He wants us to live, then our life will be satisfying and full. I know this because I tried living my own way. I once looked for fame and fortune, and I have tasted a little bit of both. I have made large amounts of money millions of dollars and lost large amounts of money. There is no security in money, and I can tell you money does not fill the God shaped hole in your soul. When I was young, I played American Football, I got a lot of attention. TV interviews, I was recognized on the street. Fame does not fill the God shaped hole in your soul. My career has taken me around the world to more than 70 countries on every continent. I have been revered and praised. I am considered one of the best at what I do anywhere in the world. The prestige and honors don't fill the God shaped hole in my soul. I have a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering and I did research for NASA. But none of this was truly satisfying. So, neither money, nor fame, nor prestige or anything else fills that void. Only God can fill that empty spot in our heart, soul and mind. And I've tried it the other way, from my experience God knows better than me. That I can promise you.

But how do we fill that void. Well Jesus told us, **“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”** (Mark 12:30-31 KJV). Most of us know this as the golden rule, to treat others the way we want to be treated. But, Jesus calls us to a much higher standard as His followers, **“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.** (John 15:12 KJV). God wants us to love others the way He loves them.

We must love others as God loves people. This is bigger love than we even have for ourselves. We have to be willing to do things for others even when it is inconvenient or can even hurt us. Loving others the way Jesus does means sacrificially serving others the way Jesus did. But how and why we still need to explore.

Let's start with the Why? Well God told us too.... Okay, I know that does not seem to address our question but doesn't it really. Being a Christian. Being a follower of Jesus means we do what our master does. We try to emulate our King, king Jesus. Jesus is asking us to care about people. Care about people the way He cares about people. It's not about how good or bad someone is. It's not about what that person does for us. Even bad people love those close to them. This is not why we love people. We love people because that is what Jesus wants us to do. This is how we show the world we are a follower of Jesus. We offer love to the unlovable. This is a life of service to others. Putting others ahead of our needs just like Jesus did and does. We are to love God and love people because God loves us even though none of us are worthy. But despite how unworthy we are, the Apostle Paul has encouragement for us. Paul says, **“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Romans 8:38-39 ICB).

So, okay we love people because God told us to. Because He loved us even though we were unworthy of His love.

But how do we do this. How can we love the unlovable? If I don't like someone how to I love them? This is really the question we wrestle with. I can love God, well He's God. But there are people I just don't like. God says love them. How.?

First you don't need to like someone to love them. This is not the mushy hugs and kisses kind of love. We love people by treating them fairly even if they cheat or lie about us. We love people by being kind to them even if they hurt us or insult us. We love people by doing for them what Jesus wants for them and for us. In fact, Jesus puts it this way, *"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.* (Matthew 5:43-48 NLT).

Jesus' words have a way of piercing our heart and soul. We claim to be Christian, yet only love those who love us. Then how are we different from Non-Christians. Jesus prayed for His enemies. So we should pray for blessings for our enemies. When someone treats you badly, don't retaliate. Example would be, you are at the store buying something and the cashier is rude and mean to you. Maybe says something bad to you. Jesus is telling us to resist fighting back. Don't return evil with evil instead be kind. The reason is we don't know what has been going on before we showed up. That person might just have been spoken to rudely or maybe something is happening at home. As Christians, we figuratively turn the other cheek. Hey, I see you are having a bad day today, is there anything I can do for you. That is going an extra mile. But be prepared, sometimes the situation is going to get worse. But sometimes, that person might really need you to listen. Give them the time they need, Treat them with kindness. Speak Jesus into their life with your behavior. Be different because you are a Christian. We don't do this because it is easy. Quite the contrary. This is against our nature. But it is in God's nature. Every time we choose to act like Jesus instead of how we might like too, We grow closer to God.

So, why do we love people. Because God loved us even though we did not deserve it. We serve God by loving God and loving the people God loves. That's everyone on earth folks. The only way we can faithfully and truly serve God is by loving other people So, how do we love people. By being kind. We resist our nature to retaliate and show love with our actions and words. Not the mushy hugs and kisses kind of love. The love that points the world to Jesus. Treat others like Jesus wants us to treat them.

In March of 2021, I was sick with COVID-19. I was in the Hospital. I was not getting enough oxygen, so I was fading in and out of consciousness for several days. I

honestly expected to die and was at peace with whatever God had planned for me. It was then, while I spent hours talking with God, that I realized the most important thing in life is to love people the way Jesus loves them. You have to stop putting yourself first. The world does not revolve around you, it is all about Jesus. For me my selfishness and arrogance faded away with every struggling breath I took, until I said yes to God. Okay, Lord. I'm gone, do whatever you want with me. And God spoke to me, "love people", "feed my sheep", "do something". And not just anything, do what I tell you to do. My answer was simply Yes Lord.

Love not merely or only with words, get up and do something in the name of Jesus. God has already put it on your heart, you only need to say "Yes Lord" then leave everything else up to God. It will be hard work, not everyone will like what you are doing. But I can tell you, that serving others. Loving people the way God loves them in His name is the greatest, most rewarding, most satisfying thing you can do.

Now do you have to be in the ministry to serve God. Certainly not. I'm not a pastor, I am an engineer, my wife Judy is a nurse, her sister Joy is an engineer. We work real jobs in the secular world. I'm paid to be a fulltime engineer, I'm a professional engineer. I'm also a fulltime father of three, a fulltime husband to my wife, a fulltime brother, a fulltime son, a fulltime friend, a fulltime homeschool teacher. But I am first and foremost a fulltime follower of Jesus. I am serving God as an amateur Missionary. Amateur meaning, I don't get paid to be missionary. We actually pay to be on mission for God. God gave us much and from the things God has trusted us to steward, money, time, energy, we use those things to serve God by loving the people the way God loves them.

So, what does it look like to be faithful and true in serving God? Put God first in everything. Surrender everything to Him. He already owns it, you are just acknowledging the facts and surrendering control to the one who is already truly in control of everything. This is how we can live right now in the Kingdom of God. By showing others what a citizen of the Kingdom looks like. Look in the mirror fellow Christians, it's you. It's a truly abundant life, a satisfying life with the only true riches in this world, the people God puts in your life to show His Love to.

I want to leave you with one last thing. God is not telling us not to get jobs. It does not matter where you were born, who your parents are, if your poor or rich. God will use you wherever He puts you. It might be working a regular job, it might be as a student, a mother or father, sister or brother or a friend. Serving God means loving people. Loving people means doing what is right in God sight regardless of how other people see it. Be kind when they need kindness. Serve when they need service. Correct when they need instruction or rebuke. And help when what is truly needed is help. What an honor to serve God and be part of His Bigger, Better story.

Let's pray.

**Heavenly father thank you. Thank you for this time. Thank you for everyone listening. You are God and we are not. Help us to remember you are the most**

**important and we must put you first in everything we do, if we are to have the satisfying life you have promised us. Help us to resist our nature and focus on the things and people you want us to focus on. Give us the strength to say, “yes Lord” and do what you are calling each of us to do. We trust you Father God. And we know you will guide our steps if we only surrender control of our life to you. I pray Lord for everyone listening. Speak to their hearts. Guide their steps. And if there is anyone who wants to know more about how to serve you, help them to contact me or someone at this local church how will pray with them and love them. You are my savior, Lord and friend. And I pray these things to you in your, my Lord and King, Jesus. Amen.**

I am so blessed to have this opportunity to share with you today. All of us at PUNLA Christian Ministries greet you from halfway around the world, in Houston Texas. Know without a doubt God loves you. My family knows the struggles you go through. Judy and Joy grew up right there in Bicol. They know how tough it is to be poor, to be hungry. Be certain, you are blessed in so many ways, you don't understand right now. But God cares for you. I'm proud of you. Surrender to God and let his Joy and Hope and Peace and Assurance wash over you like a waterfall. I look forward to hearing your stories in heaven someday or before.

We miss you and God Bless...