

2. Focus on developing a spirit of service in all things.

“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so 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 and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. . . . When he had finished washing their feet, 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. I tell you the truth, 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’ ” (Jn.13:3-5, 12-17, NIV ’84).

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Ph.2:5-7, NIV ’84).

The most basic element found in every successful business is service—meeting the needs of others efficiently, happily, and to their satisfaction. Thus, every position at every level should develop a spirit of service within our companies. All employees should be taught to view them- selves as servants.

First, how can we develop a spirit of service within our companies? How can we inspire every employee to adopt the attitude of a servant? In John 13, Jesus shows us the most effective way for owners, executives, or managers of companies to achieve this lofty goal. We are to set the

example of service ourselves. We need to view ourselves as servants and demonstrate a servant's attitude to everyone else. This is exactly what Jesus did. He taught His disciples to serve by serving them. He, the very Son of God Himself, their Lord and leader, washed their feet—the lowest task of the lowest servant of a household (Jn.13:3-5, 12-16). Just as Jesus did, we should model the attitude of a servant toward every employee and every individual with whom our companies do business. We are to take on the very nature of a servant, embody it, and illustrate it on a daily basis (Ph.5:7).

Second, obviously, we should display a spirit of service toward our clients or customers. Our customers keep us in business, and we need to view ourselves as their servants. This should be what sets us apart from our competitors, the very quality that makes Christian-led businesses stand out. The majority of truly successful businesses are known for their excellent customer service. To achieve this enviable reputation, they go beyond the normal standard of service and usually surpass customers' or clients' expectations. They are not only willing but also eager to do whatever can be done to assure satisfaction. This means going a little further, giving a little more, providing a little extra, all while doing it happily and gratefully. This same spirit of service should permeate your dealings with everyone who is critical to your success—suppliers, vendors, and contractors as well as clients and customers—all with whom you interact as you go about the course of your work. Make their experience with your company outstanding, the very best they have ever had.

Another one of our major responsibilities as business leaders is to serve our coworkers in many ways. We serve them by providing fair, livable wages and helpful benefits, by compensating them as generously as we reasonably can. We serve them by providing the best working conditions possible, by understanding and accommodating their needs as much as possible, by caring about them and their families. In addition, we serve them by supplying what

they need to be successful on the job—effective training, the best and most efficient tools, a positive and productive environment, practical and emotional support.

We can also find ways to serve them personally, by giving each employee individual attention, support, and help. If your business is small, you can easily do this yourself. However, if your business is large, then you will need to train your executives and managers to serve those under them in a personal way.

When you, the leader, model the spirit of Christ—the spirit of service—it will spread throughout your company. Your coworkers will not only seek to provide your customers and those with whom you do business with an excellent experience, but they will also seek to meet one another's needs, to help one another at every turn.

Third, Christ makes a firm promise: if we lead our businesses to follow His example and focus on service, we will be blessed (Jn.13:17). We will be blessed as the natural result or outcome of our attitude and actions. When we focus on serving others, we will be blessed with their loyalty. Clients or customers will come back repeatedly. Even more significant, we will gain new customers as satisfied individuals give us outstanding reviews and referrals. Employees will want to stay with us longer, and they and we will enjoy and benefit from the long-term relationships with one another as well as with our many other business clients and contacts. The Lord will shower His favor on us for obeying His command to serve others. And we will be blessed personally, with a sense of joy that money cannot buy. Serving others yields a measure and depth of joy that nothing in this world can match.

Remember what Jesus taught: the way to success is not through position, power, or authority, but through heartfelt service to others (Mt.20:26-27). We will be successful in life, in business, and, above all, in Christ's kingdom when we walk in our Lord's humble footsteps of service.

