

## RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 24)

THE SERVANT PRINCIPLE. "And there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest" (Luke 21:24). Unfortunately many Christians think this way. They see ministry as something that will make them great or prove their greatness. The disciples weren't interested in doing something great. They weren't interested in being something great. They were interested in being "considered" the greatest. That represents the thinking of the world. Success in the eyes of the world is recognition. "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But no so among you? (Luke 22:25). This is described by John as "the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Whoever has the most authority accounted the greatest benefactor. A disciple should not desire to be compared with the world, but to be contrasted with it. People of the world want to be lords. Lordship is not Christian leadership. Being first should never be a radical disciple's first concern or any concern. There is One who is first, and He is Lord (Ephesians 4:5). The Servant Principle is the greatness test of whether a person has what it takes to be a radical disciple. "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11). The Servant Principle reveals what is great in God's eyes. The word for servant used here is "diakonos" which is one who renders any kind of service. It is used in Acts 6:2 for serving tables. A radical disciple is interested in what is great to God and concentrates on becoming that. Jesus told His disciples, "He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. The very next words of Jesus were addressed to Simon Peter: "Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:26, 31). Peter was being influenced by a lust to be great. Perhaps he considered himself Christ's greatest disciple and wanted to be recognized as such. Maybe he was just extra-competitive to be the top man. The ensuing collapse of Peter's faith was necessary for him to see his unworthiness. He was anything but great. What happened to Peter should serve as a warning to any of us who consider ourselves to be disciples of Jesus. A desire for greatness is the most hazardous motivation for a disciple. Being great for Jesus seems noble. The problem is that we are not always able to discern our own motives when it comes to greatness for Jesus. In short, many desire to be disciples without being servants. To them Jesus' answer is: "You cannot be my disciple." They aren't radical. They are fundamentally flawed at the level of motivation. They are rooted in success rather than service. "If you want to be great in God's kingdom, learn to be the servant of all."