Character Over Accomplishment March 17, 2024

*1 Timothy 3:8-13 Series: How the Church Falls off the Rails*

There are too many needful things to be done to wait around for someone to feel gifted. – Kent Hughes

Intro: Who’s that making the waffles?

1. Humble heroes don’t write biographies
2. Deacon is a Greek word that just means servant

Philippians 1:1 *To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons …*

John 2:5 *His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”*

Ephesians 3:7 *Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.*

Romans 13:4 *for [the governing authority] is God's servant for your good*

1. The “wives” here are probably female deacons

v. 11 *Their wives likewise must be dignified …*

Romans 16:1 *I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae*

1. Deacons were probably patterned after “the seven”

Acts 6:1 *when the disciples were increasing in number … widows were being neglected*

Acts 6:2 *And the twelve … said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.”*

Acts 6:3 *pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty*

* What does the quote from Kent Hughes at the top of the handout mean? How do you feel about that?
* What do you learn about serving from Acts 6:1-3?
* How would it change what we think about service if instead of deacons, ministry leaders, and volunteers, we just called people servants?
1. Humble heroes make character their superpower
2. Influence with your character

v. 8 *Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.*

v. 10 *And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.*

v. 11 *Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.*

v. 12 *Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.*

1. Your character is born from humility applied to theology

v. 9 *They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.*

Isaiah 66:2 *But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

* Surely, anyone can serve. Why does it matter that we work on our character so much?
* What does it mean to “hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience”?
* One of our values as a church is “attend one-serve one.” What’s wrong with attending without serving? What’s wrong with serving without attending?
1. Humble heroes know the path to true reward
2. Quiet faithfulness brings its own recognition

v. 13 *those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves*

Matthew 25:21 *His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”*

Matthew 20:26 *whoever would be great among you must be your servant*

John 12:26 *If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

1. There’s assurance you can only develop with a mop in your hand

v. 13 *those who serve well as deacons gain … great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus*

Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.*

Acts 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*

2 Corinthians 3:12 *Since we have such a hope, we are very bold.*

* Why would a humble person want to “gain a good standing”?
* Why would Jesus call people “great” for serving Him?
* Why would faithful service develop a person’s spiritual confidence?
* What might the next step of service be in your life?

Study ahead: In two weeks, we’ll study Luke 24:15-27.

Notes