

Date : 16th November 2025
Theme : Servanthood in Mark's Gospel
Topic : 7 questions on how we should serve.
Key passage : Mark 12
Key verse : *So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury... Mark 12:43 nkjv*

Introduction

Mark 12 demonstrates Jesus' authority to set the standards of His Kingdom. Through parables and face-to-face dialogues with religious people who were recognised as representing God to the community, Jesus laid out clearly the principles by which His servants would be assessed with. In His life and ministry, our Lord had modelled the 4 aspects of servanthood, being preaching, teaching, healing and casting out demons.

However, Kingdom servants are not merely judged just by what they do but with what kind of attitudes they attend to Kingdom business. The Lord sets out 7 criteria by which we may assess ourselves.

1. The servant stands in faithful relation to the Owner.

Parable of Landowner and His tenants Mark 12:1-11

Question 1: What will the Owner do to those who despise His messengers? *Mark 12:9*

God is the Sovereign Owner of every good thing we ever possess.

All our benefits have come from His hand.

- **leased** *Mark 12:1 nkjv (rented niv)*

God has left us with His "vineyards" of gifts, talents and charisma.

He leased these gifts and talents to us to use for His glory.

- **collect of the fruit** *Mark 12:2 niv (received nkjv)*

The parable is not about a land and violent people of long ago. It is about us who have received the resources of freedom, opportunities and blessing in God's garden.

Does He now find worship or entitlement, resistance and pushing Jesus out of our lives or obedient faithfulness.

Have we been using what He has *leased* to us for His glory or for ours?

As tenants of His property, every one of us is required to:

a) Return a portion of our produce to God in due season.

By this act of returning to God, we acknowledge His ownership over our life, time and resources.

b) Welcome His messengers and the message conveyed by them.

To reject both God's messengers and message is considered a rejection of the Owner.

The rejection of God's Son, sent by God, carries severe consequences.

2. The servant is submitted to God and civil authority.

God or Caesar Mark 12:13-17

Question 2: Do we pay or not pay taxes? *Mark 12:15*

- Problem with the tax to Caesar

At time of Christ, emperor worship already been initiated. The Romans believed in the deification of their emperors. The Jews then hated paying this tax to Caesar.

- Caesar's image on the coin

— pay your tax to Caesar.

- God's image upon our lives
— live our lives to show God is Owner.
In this ownership comes God's supreme right to claim our life and everything in it for His own — liberty, possessions and affection. It is our duty to God. What is due? It is our faithful attention to worship, service and obedience to Kingdom rules.

3. The servant has practical knowledge of God's word.

Misunderstanding about Resurrection Mark 12:18-27

Question 3: Whose wife will she be? *Mark 12:23*

If we depend on social media for spiritual realities we will always be in error. Ignorance of the Word of God will lead to error. Every servant must master the Word of God to combat error.

Problem with the questioner

- The Sadducees were ignorant of truths about the resurrection, as a result they entertain superstitious beliefs about it.
- Aristocratic, well-educated but unable to discern spiritual truth.

Today, many call themselves naturalists and only accept truths about the material world. Hence, they doubt the fact of the resurrection of all people, some to eternal life and some to eternal death.

(i) Jesus called out their error. ...*you are in error...* *Mark 12:24*

Sadducees' questions mirror our times — everyone is right in his own eyes.

But ignorance of spiritual truth, truth only found in Scripture, carries irreversible and painful consequences.

Hosea 4:6 declares ...My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

(ii) Servants of God must have hope. The resurrection is our hope. Because He arose, we will also — for those who believe in Him and follow Him. We worship a living God, not a dead one.

4. The servant delights in Kingdom rules to love God and neighbour.

Which is the greatest Commandment? Mark 12:28-34

Question 4: Which is the greatest Commandment? *Mark 12:28*

- The Great Commandment is two-fold:
 - To love the Lord our God with all our hearts,
with all our soul,
with all our mind
with all our strength
 - Love our neighbour as ourselves.

God loves us first, returning our love for Him is the only way to seal our relationship with Him.

- Every other command in the 10 Commandments are expressions of love. Although we are not saved by fulfilling them, we cannot have any relationship with God if we do not have love.

5. The servant must acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

The Son of David is also the Lord Mark 12:35-37

Question 5: If David calls Him Lord, now can He (Jesus) be his son? *Mark 12:37*

Kingdom rules tell us what to obey.

Jesus as Lord tells us who to obey.

Jesus is the Lord to whom we pledge our allegiance. His commandments are not grievous.

He said that the evidence of our love for Him is shown by having His commandments and obeying them.

The servant is not trying to become good on his own, he is seeking to stay in relationship with the perfect One. King David himself hid God's Word in his heart. Deuteronomy 6:6 which commands *these words which I command you today shall be in your heart*, follows Deuteronomy 6:5 which is the Great Commandment to love God wholly.

6. The servant is motivated by God alone, not public honor.

Warnings against hypocrisy Mark 12:38-40

Question 6: Do motives matter to God? *Mark 12:38*

In our day of live religious services and podcasts, we are exposed to preachers whose motives we do not know. Many of them are so persuasive that whatever they say seems to be the truth. They usually pick a verse of scripture and apply it to suit their motive. Unless we know their background it is not safe to listen to them regularly. Religious scammers are a plenty.

We too must keep check of our motives when we serve God. God's Word requires that everything we do must be for His glory. Selfish ambitions are devilish *James 3:16*. While man only looks at the outward appearance, God looks at our hearts.

The consequences for trying to grab glory for ourselves are disastrous. God says He will not share His glory with another. But He does honour His servants in due time.

7. The servant is evaluated by his giving.

The widow's offering Mark 12:41-44

Question 7: Who have given more? *Mark 12:43*

We are also evaluated by how much we put into our service. "Have I done my best"?

Using a monetary example, the Lord is saying that it is not how much we put in, but the percentage of what we have. While a rich man may be able to pour huge sums of money out of his great wealth, it may still seem paltry compared to the widow who gave her ALL, albeit two small coins. This is a measure of sacrifice. For a man of wealth to give sacrificially, the quantum of his offering would have to be very much greater to commensurate with his plenty.

To whom much is given, much is expected.

A servant of God does not need to have much to please the Lord. Those who have little can please the Lord by giving sacrificially. So a one talent servant can do just as well as a multi-talented person. But the one talent man who despises his single talent and does nothing about it will surely receive a severe rebuke.

Application

A. Evaluate your attitude as a servant of God (choose 1)

1) In relation to the Owner of my time, gifts and resources, I am (choose one or more)

boss ☐

lessee ☐

recipient ☐

owner ☐

lessor ☐

investor ☐

2) In my submission to God and civil authority, I have problem paying my taxes willingly. ☐

3) I have problem discerning spiritual truth. How do I avoid being scammed? ☐

4) I love God but my neighbour? I find it hard. ☐

5) In my relationship with the Lord Jesus, I want to love the Lord by being loyal to Him and to His church. ☐

6) My motive in church is to learn to fear God and not seek public honor. ☐

7) I want to be evaluated by the Lord Jesus as one who has given my all. ☐

B. What will you do about the one attitude you have chosen?