

**MCD Just Checking In #62 Three Rules of Servanthood May 1, 2009 *Pilgrim's Process*  
Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."**

**2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.**

I love 2 Corinthians. I am so grateful it is part of the canon of scripture. It's Paul's most autobiographical letter, teaching us so much about personal suffering (chapters 4 & 12), stewardship (chapters 8 & 9), salvation (chapters 4 & 5), and especially service (the entire letter!)

**You can't serve God if you won't serve people!** Taking up the cross also includes taking up the basin and towel. And you won't survive long as a servant if you don't understand some of the rules of servanthood.

**"Not that we lord it over your faith"**

**Rule #1 Servants of Christ are not lord's over men... even men they serve in His name.**

Ministry is influence. We serve Christ effectively as we influence others with truth (sharing God's commands, principles and promises) and grace (showing God's compassion, patience and integrity.)

We get into trouble when we start thinking we are responsible to "lord it over" others (for their own good, of course)!

Have you considered what "lord it over your faith" looks like? *It includes an assumption of control:* "If I do this or say that, then they'll get in line and do what's right." Manipulation, even for all the right motives, is still wrong. We are not in control (lords) over the choices others make. We are not in control of what others believe. We are powerless to "FIX THEM!" We are responsible to believe, live and *speak the truth in love* to everyone. We exemplify, exhort, encourage, explain, and warn... but we are not lords. We must always remember that their ultimate accountability is to God. And pointing people back to "Him to Whom we must give account" is our role as an influencer. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

**"but we work with you for your joy"**

**Rule #2 Servants of Christ have as their goal the joy of those they serve.**

Seeking to influence others to follow and obey Christ flows from the realization that God desires our joy and joy is found in following Christ. Why are you and I working with people? What is our goal? What is our aim? To be honest, sometimes we'd have to say...

"we work with you to attempt to fix you"

"we work with you to get the job done"

"we work with you because there's no one else to work with"

"we work with you even though we wish we didn't have to"

Your goal, outlook, attitude and motivation cannot be hidden from those who know you well. One of the most amazing things about Christ was His steadfast love for and delight in His disciples. He was determined to give them His joy! (John 15:11; 16:22; 16:24; 17:13)

**"because it is by faith you stand firm"**

**Rule #3 Servants of Christ are confident in God's work of faith in others and are not anxious and fearful.**

Faith in the promises of God and the person of Christ results in steadfastness of progress in the lives of those who possess it. The Corinthian church was beset by innumerable problems, but Paul continually expressed confidence that they would grow, they would change, they would make progress. As servants of Christ, our confidence in others based on our confidence in God's great, saving work is a great encouragement for new believers to grow and change, as they know they should.

Consider the statements of confidence found in these verses: Phil 1:6; Philem 1:21; 2 Cor 2:3, 7:16, 8:22; Gal 5:10; 2 Thess 3:4

These three rules of servanthood are liberating and invigorating. Jesus calls us to lay our lives down to serve imperfect people. We do this by the power of influence. As we ourselves are transformed by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and empowered by the Spirit, we will exert powerful influence upon others "for their joy." Take heart, fellow servant; this work is of God, and it will succeed in His time.

**For further study:** Philippians 2:1-13; John 13-16; 1 Corinthians 4 (take this chapter apart verse by verse)

Lord, I am so blessed to be Your servant. I freely acknowledge this calling to see lives changed is an impossible one, humanly speaking. But You have given Your life, Your word, Your Spirit and Your promise to enable this servant to succeed. Forgive me for taking on the role of Lord+far too many times. I confess that these bitter fruits of frustration, disillusionment and cynicism all come from my refusal to accept my role as a servant. Lord, I want to work for You, with others, for their joy. Please give me back the joy of your servantsō the joy of influence, patience and confidence that You will change lives, and that You will do it even through imperfect vessels like me. Glorify Your Name, O Changeless Life-Changer, Amen.+

**Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually. A Blessed 2009 be yours...**

**Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 *Ron & Val***

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.