

Stay Determined

It is always important to maintain and to develop the right attitude. When I was growing up my mother had all three kids wash dishes on a rotation. My brother, then me and then my sister. She explained that she shopped for the food, she prepared the food and cooked it. We enjoyed the food for dinner and the least we could do as a part of the family was to help with clean up.

Made sense, especially since she took the time to explain. She always dried the dishes with us. Rather than growing up feeling that it was a burden to wash dishes, mom taught us that it was part of our responsibility to serve the family. She joined us in the process and we talked all the while we did dishes. She did this with making beds, doing laundry, cleaning floors and dusting furniture. We had a relationship with meaning and understanding. She also stressed that doing the job was not the only thing, but doing it the best it could be done and with an attitude of always seeking to do it better, was important.

Years later, when mom had a heart attack and couldn't shop, prepare, cook or even dry dishes, we did those things and it was beyond a responsibility. It was our turn to pay her back for her love in raising us to understand our familial responsibility and to do it in a way so that we did not develop a negative attitude about doing chores.

Little did we know that mom was creating in our hearts, minds and character the willingness to be determined to do a job well and with the right attitude. Throughout our lives, my brother, sister and I always strive to do everything with excellence. More importantly, we try to do everything with a servant's heart. We don't consciously start out by saying, "I will do this to be a servant." It is actually our make up as a person. It's kind of built in. Mom, as well as dad, did that with our upbringing.

This was very beneficial when I was an athlete and when I was a coach. When I coached baseball, I told the parents at the beginning of the year that I had several rules. If you can abide by those, I will coach your child. One of the rules dealt with trophies as the end of the year. I told the parents that if we won the championship at the end of the year, every child would get a replica of the winning trophy. If we did not win, we would have great satisfaction in the fact that we put forth our best effort and learned to enjoy the gains we made throughout the year. I have never believed in giving a trophy to every child just because they showed up. God gives a trophy, called heaven, to those who run the race and cross the finish line according to His design for salvation. Those who follow God's commands, finish first in their personal race. They get the trophy. Those who think they get to heaven just because they are good people do not receive a trophy. God has a design for joining Him in heaven. He wants us to do our best, not be perfect, but strive for perfection.

Jesus wants us to have that sort of attitude and character. He wants us to grow up with each thought being about service toward others. The service could be washing dishes, listening to

others with problems or concerns, sending cards or making phone calls of encouragement and most of all sharing the greatest gift in the history of the world, the Gospel about Jesus Christ.

He gave us that great gift by dying on the cross at calvary and taking the sins of the world on His shoulders. His blood washes away those sins. All we have to do is accept Him as our Savior, repent of our sinful nature and submit to be baptized for the remission of those sins. That begins our journey in becoming the most righteous servant we can with the help of the Holy Spirit. The closer we are to Christ, the more content we are in life and the more lives we can touch with the message about our glorious Savior.

His design is simple: We must hear the truth about Jesus Christ, believe in Christ as the Savior, acknowledge and confess our sins, repent of those sins before men, we must be baptized by full immersion and then live a life serving the risen Savior. It is important to know that I Peter 3:21 says, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Luke: 9:23 – 24 “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

Questions:

1. Do you get to heaven by washing dishes?
2. Should you do everything with joy in your heart?
3. Are the chores your parents ask you to perform ridiculous or acceptable to help you build character?
4. Why did Jesus die on the cross?
5. Does God have a design for those who want to go to heaven?

Next Steps:

Make a list of things you can do to show you are determined to follow Jesus. How can you be a servant for the Lord?