

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
GGGG. Adopting God's View Of Christian Service Duty
(Luke 17:7-10)

I. Introduction

- A. Anyone who becomes involved in serving the Lord soon learns that the spiritual demands that are placed on him due in part to the angelic conflict along with the burden of dealing with sin in people in general makes the service efforts sometimes see impossible for one to handle.
- B. In the context of Luke 17:7-10, Jesus addressed this issue and explained God's will for His servants in such circumstances. We thus view the passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Adopting God's View Of Christian Service Duty, Luke 17:7-10.

- A. After Jesus had denounced the Pharisees' idea of equating the love of money with loving God but then warned His disciples not to despise the Pharisees (Luke 16:14-31; J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 340-341), Christ directed His disciples not to hate the errant Pharisees, but not to offend them in being gracious to them in case they might repent (Luke 17:1-4).
- B. The stunned disciples then asked Jesus to increase their faith so they might be able to accept this teaching of His about being gracious to such blatantly errant parties as the Pharisees (Luke 17:5; Ibid., p. 341-342), and Jesus told His disciples to rely on God for the power to treat the Pharisees so well (Luke 17:6; Ibid., p. 342)!
- C. Jesus knew that His disciples considered that being so gracious to the dreadfully errant Pharisees seemed too demanding a requirement in serving God, so He explained the huge demands that God placed on those in Christian service in Luke 17:7-10. We view that instruction for our insight, application and edification:
 - 1. Christ asked His disciples that if they had a servant who was plowing or feeding cattle, performing hard labor in the field, if they would tell him when he came in from the field to sit down and eat, Luke 17:7.
 - 2. Indeed, such was not the calling of a slave, and it was typical for the master of such a labor-weary servant to direct him to work to prepare the master's supper that he might eat, and for the servant to gird himself with the washing towel to wash his master's feet so the master might sit down and eat, Luke 17:8a.
 - 3. After the master had finished eating, then the servant could eat and drink and rest from his day's hard labor and also from his service to his master for the master's supper meal, Luke 17:8b.
 - 4. Jesus asked His disciples if the master would thank his slave for doing the things he had told him, and Christ answered His own question by claiming that He supposed the master would not do so, Luke 17:9 NIV. The role of a slave required that he perform whatever his master required of him for service with no thought of expecting any relief or thanksgiving from his master due to the slave's role.
 - 5. Christ then applied this illustration to His stunned disciples who were amazed that God expected them to continue to be gracious to grossly disobedient Pharisees to leave the door open for them to repent. Jesus stated that like the slave in His illustration, after they had performed all those things that the Lord expected them to perform, including the super-human duty of treating the errant Pharisees graciously, they were to say that they were unprofitable servants, that they were merely doing their duty, Luke 17:10.

Lesson: *Christian service for the Lord involves a believer's being God's actual slave! Thus, anything God requires of us servants of the Lord, even if it involves superhuman effort, we are expected of the Lord to rely on Him for the power and attitude to perform not for God's expected thanksgiving or compliment, but as our mere duty. We must never forget that we are unprofitable slaves, people who can never repay the Lord for His gracious redemption of us, that we are thus privileged to be His slaves!*

Application: *(1) Though we are free from human slavery as American citizens, as believers in Christ, we are God's slaves! (2) As such, any demand that God makes of us in Christian service, be it seemingly mundane or even super-human, we are obligated to perform by relying by faith on God for the power and the will to perform. (3) As slaves of God, our duty is to perform the will of God above the will of ourselves, of our marital partners, of our family, of other Christians and of every other human being or institution on earth, cf. 2 Timothy 2:3-4. (4) As slaves of God, our duty is to perform our service for God in Biblically sanctioned ways if we would gain His approval, 2 Timothy 2:5. (5) Finally, as God's slaves who are owned by the Lord and thus for whom the Lord provides our spiritual nourishment as our Master, it is our duty to heed and apply God's Word for our spiritual nurture as 2 Timothy 2:6 teaches. As laboring slaves of God, we must work hard at reading, interpreting and applying Scripture for our nurture in our labors if we would expect to handle the super-human demands we face.*