



The Good News

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Characteristics of True Servants of God

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There are many ways in which servants of God are described in the New Testament. The apostles are referred to as “ambassadors” in **II Cor. 5:20** and “witnesses” in **Acts 1:8** and **Acts 4:33**. There are numerous places where different adjectives are used to describe the apostles as well. But what about everyone else? Interestingly enough, there are several places in the New Testament where servants of God (non-apostles) are described as something other than people. Study with us as we consider these:

We are “salt” – Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:50 – As Jesus speaks to His disciples, He tells them that they are the “salt of the earth” and warns against the salt losing its flavor. What does Jesus mean by calling His disciples, and us, salt? Salt has two purposes: one is to flavor food and the other is to preserve it. We find that as servants of God, our purpose is to do the same for the world. The “flavor” that we are to provide for the world is that we bring with us the example and influence of what God expects from those that would serve Him. The “preserving” comes by the effect of that influence: hopefully, as we provide a proper example and influence, others will be influenced and saved as a result.

We are “light” – Matt. 5:14 – Connected by context to the “salt”, we find similar meaning in the understanding that the servants of God are to be lights to the world. The “light” is to be the manifestation of our character through our example and teaching. Jesus mentions that as men see our “good works” they may come to glorify the Father in Heaven. “Good works” are defined by God and they are generally designed to raise the spiritual awareness of others. Teaching and providing a godly example are two ways that we can influence others to glorify the Father.

We are “branches” – John 15:1-5 – Jesus says that He is the vine and we are the branches. We are to bear fruit as such, and if we do not bear fruit we will be cast away. Bearing fruit and good works can be used synonymously, showing that in order to be saved we must continue to live faithfully. As branches, we are to exhibit the same characteristics as our Vine, Jesus Christ, and produce fruit worthy of that Vine. This obviously includes our example, but we also find in John 15:10 that good works include our obedience to God’s commands. We also learn from II Pet. 1:8 that bearing fruit requires continual growth.

We are “vessels” – II Tim. 2:20-21 – We learn from Paul that in God’s house there are two kinds of vessels: vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. The vessels of honor purge themselves from the vessels of dishonor, maintaining their purity and preparedness to serve the Lord.

All of these examples help us to understand what kind of characteristics we are to have as servants of God. Each of us may serve in different roles, but, whether that role is one of leadership or support, we all must serve, having the characteristics of a true servant of God.