

### **The Object Lesson of John 13: (part two of a four part study)**

The primary practical point within the foot washing object lesson of John 13 is that of humbly serving one another. Jesus exemplified it in a manner that undoubtedly made a lasting impact upon His disciples. Its influence was much needed in light of Christ's soon departure from this present world, as well as in bringing their selfish debate to a halt. There would prove to be a third reason for this illustration in selfless service, revealed by our Savior later that evening.

But for now, let's consider the example which He set, the admonition in following it, and the promise of blessing in fulfilling it (John 13:13-17). It seems as if Jesus knew the example which He provided for His disciples, and their participation in it, would be much more difficult for them to follow and fulfill. Here's why. It is our pride, coupled with the resulting prejudice, which serves as the greatest obstacle to humble service on behalf of others. Even when we are motivated by what Jesus did in John 13, and are ready to do the same, pride and prejudice interfere; pushing back, and preventing us from following through.

This is confirmed for us by the apostle Paul in his magnificent epistle to the church at Rome. The demarcation between doctrine and practice is clear cut. Paul develops doctrine in chapters 1-11, while emphasizing its application for everyday life in chapters 12-16. The transition occurs by means of the most profound and powerful exhortation to a dedicated Christian life, found in Romans 12:1-2, where Paul writes this –

**“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”**

This is followed by how we should live as fellow members in the body of Christ (12:4-21). Then, the apostle provides guidelines for how the Christian should interact with human government (13:1-7), with warnings about attitudes which can be divisive, as well as encouragement toward that which promotes unity (14:1-10; 15:5-13; 16:17-20). But sandwiched in between these important passages is a statement by Paul which has been greatly neglected. Perhaps the reason is obvious. It deals directly with the mind-set of pride and prejudice which has proven to be a hindrance for fellow Christians in humbling serving one another throughout Church history. In next week's segment, it will be overlooked no longer!