

**Look At Me**  
**Luke 14:1,7-14**  
**August 29, 2010**

It seems to me that many today hunger for recognition. Their message to the world is "Look at me!" The expression that everyone wants their fifteen minutes of fame couldn't be more accurate.

Jan and I knew a person who was always asking friends and relatives to "look at me." She lived in a small town and was retired. Virginia knew everybody and had the time and energy to serve many of the shut-ins in the community. Taking care of others became her full time job. Virginia was named volunteer of the year several times in her town. She was recognized in many ways and usually noted by the local newspaper.

She deserved the recognition and honors, but somehow it wasn't quite enough. To make sure we appreciated her service and to ensure that we knew all that she had done, Virginia would write long letters detailing who she cared for in a given week. Included in her letters were the newspaper clippings publicizing her awards and honors. Occasionally, she would call us and most of the conversation was about her.

What she really wanted was for us and everyone else to look at her!

The guests who came to dinner the night Jesus was invited were making the same plea. He noticed how they picked the places of honor at the table. They schemed and jockeyed for position. The closer to the host the better. Everyone should recognize their importance and where they stood in relationship to others. It was a "Look at Me" occasion.

The downside to this game, was that you might overestimate your own importance and suffer a status demotion when another invited guest of greater standing entered the room. How humiliating it would be for the host to tell you to get up because you are in the wrong seat. To protect yourself you move to the least honorable position so that won't happen again.

The wisest decision is to begin in the least important place. You can only move up from there. Motivated by humility to move to the least prominent place can only result in honor and exaltation.

This account though is not simply about the pecking order of life. It is about being secure enough in your relationship with God that genuine humility follows and recognition by others is not sought.

Genuine humility is not being a door mat for others to trample on. It does not mean that you loathe yourself and have a destructive self image. Genuine humility is not self conscious.

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Genuine humility is a gift of God and is validated by such actions as serving those who cannot or will not pay you back. How many times have you heard someone tell you, "You owe me big time!" When someone tells you this, it usually means that whatever they did for you was difficult or took up a lot of time. He or she is exhausted, but whatever needed to be done, was accomplished.

Jesus' point was that when we are servants of others and act with humility, we are not looking for paybacks. It is enough to serve others and know that God approves. That is sufficient. If God's approval is sufficient then our acts of love, sacrifice and grace towards others can be kept to ourselves. We need not publicize our deeds in order to justify ourselves.

The perception used to be that pastors only worked two to three hours a week. Pastors showed up on Sunday morning and then had the rest of the week off. Most people know that characterization of our work load is naive at best.

However, it is tempting for pastors to detail how many hours we spend in sermon preparation, how much time is spent at the hospital in a given week and what sacrifices we make in our daily lives in order to serve God and the congregation. To serve with humility and to trust our Sovereign and All Knowing Lord is to serve as Christ would have us to serve. Pastors and Christians don't need to drop hints. God knows and appreciates us and that is enough.

Think how freeing this approach can be. You and I are not looking over our shoulders hoping that someone will notice and appreciate us. You and I can serve sacrificially and be content with the knowledge that God sees our faith and is pleased.

We also serve sacrificially when we help people and they don't make the most of it. There are times when I can be heard lamenting the fact that some people are "takers" in life, and don't give back. Most of us know individuals who are chronically needy and even sabotage the progress they do make in life. I question why I even tried helping these "takers" and the perpetual needy. I can only wonder why some of those I help don't seem to appreciate the care they receive, but instead seem to feel they are entitled to the assistance.

Believe me. This really bothers me. It violates my core values. However, these are some of the people who are to be invited to God's banquet. A banquet of love, hospitality, grace and faith. They can't pay me back with appreciation and praise. They may not have the inclination or the means to reciprocate.

Notice though that we are pointing our fingers at others and yet before we came to believe in Christ we were needy and had little knowledge and appreciation of God. If we are honest with ourselves, we who are recipients of God's undeserved favor and love

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who have come to know him through faith in Christ; we are the ones who are also invited to the banquet.

The humbling truth is that we can't fully pay back God for his love. You and I have who have accepted his love and grace are debtors as well. Therefore we must serve and love as Christ would have us to do.

To serve humbly and to please Christ, our attitudes, actions and words must point to Christ rather than ourselves and our egos. When we are secure in our knowledge and faith that God's approval is our true reward and satisfaction, then we are able to serve humbly and sacrificially. We are not hoping to be noticed, we are hoping to make a difference. Instead of pleading "Look at me," we are stating that we look to Christ.

In all that we seek to do in the name of Christ, lets look to him and be his humble servants. Then someday, we will hear the commendation "Well done, good and faithful servants. That means everything. Amen.