

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As moral creatures, we humans have an *obligation* to live our lives as “good and faithful servants” (Matt 25:23). And although we are truly to be **servants** of God, we nevertheless remain *free servants*. And thus, we have the great paradox of what it means to be a Christian; for it is only by **servicing** God and His people, in an **authentic love**, that we are even capable of **true freedom**. You might say, then, “That’s all well and good, but I don’t even know where to start, in order to find the right path toward this kind of love and freedom!” I therefore propose to you, that the only way to begin this walk, is to throw away that old self which makes decisions based predominantly on one’s desires and opinions, and instead, live a life according to PRINCIPLES—not principles which are fleeting and untenable in some (or many/most) circumstances, but those which are absolutely universal, and thus applicable in EVERY circumstance, whether we want them to be or not. And so, I offer to you the following BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES that will help jumpstart you onto a more perfect path of LOVING and SERVING God:

OBEDIRE (Latin infinitive: *to obey*)

“Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:17)

Every true leader knows, that one cannot be an effective leader, unless he first learns how to be a good follower. Learn to LISTEN *first*. You will learn far more by listening, than you will by exerting constant opinions, or by being heard. People tend to get tired of hearing those who clearly like to talk all the time, specifically, whenever such constant chatter is about themselves, or something always relating to themselves. Such people tend to either be lacking in self-confidence (which explains why they constantly seek approval from people by their words), or they have over-confidence in what they know. Either way, such disposition has little place among saintly people.

AMARE (Latin infinitive: *to love*)

“Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy . . . he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation . . . he who prophesies edifies the church . . . he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues.” (1 Cor 14:1-5)

From a practical standpoint, what might this mean for those of us whose primary vocation is that of being a Father/Husband or Mother/Wife? What is of greatest importance here, is **speaking** and **acting** toward my spouse and children, in such a way, that I manifestly prove to all, that NOTHING is more important than them—with God being the exception here, of course—but I really do not make a practical distinction here; for God entered in and remains in a Christian marriage and family. Even if this means NOT being the most successful student, or NOT being the most revered of teachers, or of NOT winning that perfect attendance award, or of NOT gaining that promotion. What God has entrusted me with is my family. They are irreplaceable and immeasurably valuable to me and to God. Jobs and opportunities are fleeting, and can always be found again.

DOCERE (Latin infinitive: *to teach*)

“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim 2:1-3)

Consider this: if Christ’s teaching has been entrusted to me, is it right and just to keep a hold of this teaching, as if it was so personal, that no one else should have it? Is this teaching even mine to hold onto and never share? Is this teaching just opinions that, even though I agree with, I should not help others to understand and believe as well? If you hold to certain truths, yet do not live out those truths, or are in some way ashamed of those truths when confronted about them with others, are you then not engaging in hypocrisy (c.f., Romans 2:21-23)? Let us live out our faith to the fullest, and teach not only our loved ones, but also people of ALL nations, the TRUTH and LOVE of Christ!

May God be with all of you!

In Christ through Mary,
Mr. Andrew M. Steele