

Luke 22:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Analysis

But ye shall not be so (ὐμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, hymeis de ouch houtos)—Emphatic contrast: "But you, not like this!" Kingdom leadership inverts worldly values completely. **He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger**—The younger (νεώτερος, neoteros) held the lowest social status, expected to serve elders without demanding honor. **He that is chief, as he that doth serve** (ὁ διακονῶν, ho diakonon)—The root of "deacon," meaning one who serves tables, performs menial tasks.

Jesus establishes a radical leadership paradigm: authority is authenticated by servanthood, not vice versa. True greatness in God's kingdom is measured by sacrifice for others, not accumulation of power. This directly confronts the disciples' argument about status—the question isn't who is greatest, but who serves most humbly.

Historical Context

Ancient Mediterranean cultures were rigidly hierarchical. Age, birth order, social class, and gender determined fixed status. Younger sons served older siblings; servants existed to elevate masters. Jesus's teaching would have sounded culturally absurd—asking leaders to voluntarily take the position of household slaves. Yet this is precisely what He modeled.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What would it look like practically for you to take "the younger" position in your family, church, or workplace?
2. How does the pursuit of leadership titles and recognition in ministry contradict Jesus's command here?
3. In what ways do you resist serving roles that seem beneath your status or gifting?

Interlinear Text

ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὗτως ἀλλ' ὁ μείζων ἐν
ye But shall not be so but G3588 he that is greatest among
G5210 G1161 G3756 G3779 G235 G3187 G1722

ὑμῖν γενέσθω ὡς ὁ νεώτερος καὶ ὁ ἡγούμενος ὡς
you let him be as G3588 the younger and G3588 he that is chief as
G5213 G1096 G5613 G3501 G2532 G2233 G5613

ὁ διακονῶν
G3588 he that doth serve
G1247

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Mark 9:35 (Parallel theme): And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Luke 9:48 (Parallel theme): And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

1 Peter 5:3 (Parallel theme): Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Romans 12:2 (Parallel theme): And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
