


2020-2-2



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Community Group Discussion

- In Jesus' day, it was the job of the **lowest** household slave to wash the feet of masters and guests. This stinky job (...open sandals, dirt roads, mule excrement...) was reserved for the **lowest slave**. Read John 1:26-27. John said he **was too low, not good enough** for that stinky job (v. 27)! Is that making a statement about John—or about Jesus? Explain.

Read John 13:3-8. What was Jesus revealing about himself by **taking** the role of foot-washer?

Where was Jesus from (v. 3)? What does that reveal about what it takes to be a servant?

The only passage in which Jesus describes his own attitudinal make-up is Matthew 11:29. Jesus describes himself as “gentle” and “humble”. What does each of those words mean?

Every other occurrence of the Greek word translated here as “gentle”:	Every other occurrence of the Greek word translated here as “humble”:
<p>Matthew 5:5 & 21:5 1 Timothy 6:11 1 Peter 3:4</p>	<p>Luke 1:52 Romans 12:16 2 Corinthians 7:6 & 10:1</p> <p>James 1:9 & 4:6 1 Peter 5:5</p>

- Review Pastor Doug's five observations about those who serve, yet without having a servant-heart. Which of those are you most susceptible to?

How, practically speaking, do you think a person changes unChristlike attitudes? What motivates us to **even want to** change those attitudes?

Even when we want to change, we often lack the resources to do so. What resources are required?

Application-Challenge

Do you have those resources? How can we help each other?

- Develop the habit of service by determining to **be** a servant.
- Assume a servant's role here at TCC. (TCC.org ▷ Serve ▷ TCC Ministry)
- See “**Digging Deeper**” section to improve your motives in serving.

Sermon Summary

Key Text: John 13:1-17

As Christ-followers, our destination is to become more like Jesus Christ. We really can become more like our savior as we learn to practice the spiritual disciplines or habits that Jesus himself practiced and which he taught to his disciples. One of these spiritual disciplines is the habit of service. When it comes to being a servant, Jesus is our supreme example. We don't have to guess what true servanthood looks like because Jesus fleshed it out for us.

In John 13:3-5, Jesus and his disciples had gathered to celebrate the Passover meal. Later that evening Jesus would be betrayed by Judas, and the following day he would be crucified. Jesus was aware of what was about to take place, and in the midst of his impending betrayal and death, he took the occasion to teach his disciples a powerful lesson on servanthood. In Jesus' day, hospitality demanded that when travelers came into your home you provide water with which to wash their feet. The one with the least status in the home washed the travelers' feet. That is how things were done in that society. It wasn't questioned; it wasn't challenged. That is how it was.

And so, when Jesus broke out the towel and the wash basin, it was shocking. Peter questioned Jesus' actions with bewilderment. In Peter's world, and in ours, there is a pecking order in life. You serve those who are above you, but not those below you. Those who are below you, serve you. Peter was comfortable with that pecking order. Peter finally did allow Jesus to wash his feet, but not without an argument. You see, we stubbornly hold to our cultural views of status and authority, and who serves whom, especially if we think that we have some status.

Jesus abolishes that pecking order. He is saying, "Greatness in God's kingdom is not defined by our position or status, but rather by our willingness to serve, especially by our willingness to serve those whom we believe to be beneath us." To become the kind of servant that God desires, we have to adopt a servant's mindset. And that doesn't come naturally. There is a difference between choosing "to serve" and choosing "to be a servant." They are miles apart. God wants us to choose to take on the mindset of a "bond-servant": a person who out of love for his master freely gives up his individual rights in order to give full devotion to his master. That is the kind of devoted, humble servanthood that Jesus beckons us to enter into.

Now how do you know whether or not you have made that decision, to go beyond choosing to serve, versus choosing **to be** a bond-servant? **[1]** One who merely serves picks and **chooses whom he will serve**. A bond-servant is no discriminator of persons. He stands ready to serve all, regardless of race, economic status, or place in the organizational pecking order. **[2]** One who merely serves picks and **chooses when he will serve**. He serves when it is convenient. A bond-servant is willing to serve whenever he sees a need that he believes God is calling him to meet. He expects God to interrupt his planned day with service opportunities. He is flexible and available. **[3]** One who merely serves **requires external rewards**. He serves to be noticed. He seeks human applause. His staying power is dependent upon the recognition and gratitude of others. A bond-servant is willing to serve in hiding. It is not that he doesn't appreciate recognition. We all want to be encouraged. We all like to be thanked. But a true servant doesn't require human approval to remain faithful to his ministry. For him, the approval of his Master, the Lord Jesus, is sufficient. **[4]** One who merely serves **is impressed with the "big opportunity"**. The bigger the challenge, the more public the service, the grander the scale, the better the fit. The bond-servant is just as ready to serve in the small things as he is in the big things. He just wants to be faithful in whatever task he sets his hand to. **[5]** One who merely serves **is affected by moods and whims**. He serves when the spirit moves him. If he doesn't feel good, or didn't get enough rest, he opts out of service. The bond-servant ministers faithfully because there is a need to be met, and a commitment to be kept.

The exercise of no other spiritual discipline will cause you to have to die to self like this one will:

- The habit of service asks us to be willing to labor in anonymity. It asks us to seek God's will at all costs.
- It asks us to be willing to set aside our agenda, our plans, when love of God or of neighbor demands it.
- It asks that we be willing to live for others, rather than for ourselves.

And none of these things come naturally. To take on the habit of service is to die to self, but in that death, Jesus tells us that we will find true life and fruitfulness. We will find what we were born for (John 12:24-26).

What help does the Bible give us regarding motives for service? Let's see...

Monday—Motivated by Obedience: Read Deuteronomy 13:4

- In this verse, God is called “The LORD _____ God.” He **already is** our God; we don't do these things **in order to become** his people. What is the significance of this truth?
- List the six things this passage teaches us to do; “You shall...” Which of those are easier for you to do? Which ones are harder? What role does obedience play in doing those things that we find more difficult—or even distasteful?
- God commands angels to do a variety of things—some of them delightful (as in announcing Christ's birth; see Luke 2:8-14), some of them repulsive (such as investigating the depth of Sodom's sin; see Genesis 18:20-21; 19:1-5). Can you imagine one of those angels refusing to serve? It's unthinkable! (That's what Satan did.)
- How then do you think that Christians can ever think that it's OK to refuse to serve? How often do you decline to serve when asked or needed?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **obediently**.

Tuesday—Motivated by Gratitude: Read 1 Samuel 12:24

- The word “for” at the mid-point of this verse means “because”—therefore the second half of this verse gives us our motive for serving. What is it?
- List the two things we are to do **because** of the great things he has done for us.
- What do you think it means to “serve him **in truth**”?
- What do you think it means to “serve him **with all your heart**”?
- What is the **greatest** thing God has ever done for you? **In what ways** is that greater than everything else he's done for you? Have you ever served him with that great blessing as your conscious motivation? Why or why not?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **gratefully**.

Wednesday—Motivated by Gladness: Read Psalm 100:1-3

- What emotion permeates this passage?
- Are you surprised that serving is an out-flow of that emotion? Why or why not?
- When was a time you were tempted to serve resentfully? Did it occur to you to correct your motive? Why or why not? Did you succeed in correcting your motive? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Emotions are not under our **direct** control—but we can change our emotions by choosing to dwell on certain things (and not others). What does the psalmist choose to think about, in order to produce genuine joy and gladness within himself?
- Are you serving the Lord with gladness? Why or why not? What will you do now?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **gladly**.

Thursday—Motivated by Forgiveness, not Guilt: Read Isaiah 6:1-8

- Put yourself in Isaiah's sandals; what was he likely feeling in v. 1?
- It's pretty clear what he was feeling in v. 5, as a result of what he observed the events of v. 2-4. What was it?
- Besides fear, Isaiah also clearly was feeling guilty (v. 5). Then, with the pronouncement of v. 7, what was he feeling?
- As Isaiah was feeling the relief and hopefulness of forgiveness, God asked a question (v. 8a). What was it?
- What was Isaiah's immediate response (v. 8b) to God's question?
- Why do you think that the relief of absolute forgiveness before a holy God motivated him for service?
- Do you **more often** serve out of a sense of guilt (“Others are serving—I guess I need to, too.”) or out of forgiveness?
- Has your forgiveness ever motivated you to serve in a difficult, demanding, or distasteful role?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him, **mindful of your forgiven status**.

Friday—Motivated by Humility: Read John 13:13-16

- Have you ever been asked to do something, but thought, “That's below my dignity!” ?
- Is **anything** actually below your dignity? Why or why not? Defend your answer biblically.
- How does Jesus' example and exhortation in John 13 correct our pride?
- In what areas of service are you currently chafing? Choose now to humble yourself in that area.
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **humbly**.

Saturday—Motivated by Love: Read 2 Corinthians 5:15 and Galatians 5:13

- What would you be willing to do out of love for Christ that you would **not** be willing to do for mere money?
- What would it take for love to turn an otherwise repugnant task into a delight for you?
- Is your love for Christ sufficient to motivate you to distasteful or unappreciated service? Why or why not?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve **as a love response to him**.