



4

Serve

?

WHEN
HAVE YOU
RECEIVED
EXCELLENT
SERVICE?

The
POINT > Seize the opportunity to serve.

> GALATIANS 5:13-15; 6:1-5,10

¹³For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself. ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another.

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¹Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. ²Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

³For if anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴Let each person examine his own work, and then he can take pride in himself alone, and not compare himself with someone else. ⁵For each person will have to carry his own load.

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¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

In 2012, a customer was placed on hold for 5 hours, 40 minutes, and 1 second by an Australian Airline.¹



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is endowed with a spiritual gift to be used to serve the church.

We've all had experiences with customer service we'd like to forget, but I prefer to remember the ones that make me smile rather than frown. For example, a man booked a last-minute trip on a well-known airline to see his dying grandson one last time. Traffic and long lines at the Los Angeles airport caused him to arrive at the gate 12 minutes after the plane's scheduled departure, but the airline had been informed of this man's tragic situation. Imagine the man's surprise when the pilot himself was standing there waiting for him. The pilot said, "They can't go anywhere without me, and I wasn't going anywhere without you. Now relax. We'll get you there. And again, I'm so sorry."

Good customer service is not about making a sale or even earning loyalty. It's about doing what's right to serve the customer in a meaningful way. In our session, we're not talking about customers and good business—we're learning about relationships, and the principle still applies. We strengthen our relationships when we serve the other person, not because of some hidden agenda or because we want something in return. Serving is a tangible way we're called to reflect the love of God to others in our lives.

GALATIANS 5:13-15

1 What is the connection between freedom in Christ and the command to serve?

2 How have others served you in meaningful ways?

GALATIANS 6:1-5

3 How can we help others see blind spots in a way that strengthens relationships?

4 Why is a gentle spirit important in the process of restoration?

5 What does carrying one another's burdens look like?

GALATIANS 6:10

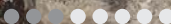
6 What keeps us from serving those in the church? People outside the church?

7 How can we structure our lives to be ready to serve others?

8 How does service act as a witness to lost people?



*Life is difficult,
and there are
times when we
all need help.
#BSFLRelationships*





LIVE IT OUT



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is endowed with a spiritual gift to be used to serve the church.

Scripture teaches that, when we come to faith in Christ, we receive a spiritual gift that is to be used in serving others. We are to exercise our gifts as an expression of the love we have for our brothers and sisters (1 Cor. 13:1-3; 14:1). Spiritual gifts without love are meaningless. However, when we genuinely love others, we'll be naturally inclined to use those gifts as a blessing to them. If we'll simply pay attention, we'll find that God gives us many opportunities to serve others in meaningful ways. We should intentionally choose to serve.

> CHRIST

Many times we talk about serving God as if He needs our service. However, the truth is God doesn't need our service—instead, He is happy to serve us. Though we may be tempted to believe God is pleased with us according to our works, the truth is that we have God's favor because of Jesus' service to us.

Read Acts 17:24-25.

9 When are you tempted to think God loves you based on your works and the ways you serve Him?

10 This week, how will you engage with God in allowing Him to serve you? Receive this as an expression of His love for you.



> COMMUNITY

Acts 17 is not all there is to the story. The children of God served their brothers and sisters when they were in need. Jesus said that, through these acts, they had served Him. We serve God through the ways we serve the people whom He loves.

Now read Matthew 25:31-46.

11 How is God calling you to use your gifts to serve others this week as an expression of love for Him and others?

> CULTURE

We live in a world where people expect to be served. We strive to put ourselves in the position where others work to meet our needs, and not the other way around. So when we live like Jesus, it will stand out, and we'll have the opportunity to point others to Him.

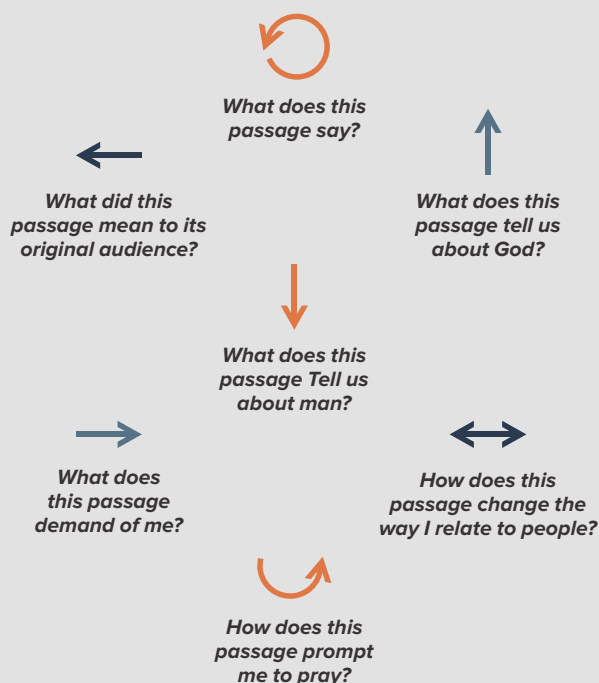
12 How did Jesus serve lost people? What stories or Scriptures come to mind?

13 How will you serve people who don't know God? Make it a point to share why you relate to them in these ways.

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One **MARK 10:41**

James and John had approached Jesus and asked for special positions of honor once He'd established His kingdom. The other disciples caught word of this, and they became very upset about what the brothers had done—*How could they go behind our backs like this?* Except their anger was hypocritical. Every one of the disciples coveted this special honor, and they'd argued about who would be the greatest in the kingdom in the past (Mark 9:33-34), and this wouldn't be the last time the disciples argued over this point (Luke 22:24). They were angry with James and John because they'd been beaten to the punch. James 1:20 teaches that human anger—that is, selfish anger—never accomplishes God's right purposes, because instead of focusing on what God wants, we focus on ourselves with no regard for His desires.

- **Why were the disciples so upset with James and John? When have you felt like this?**
- **What kinds of things do you generally become angry about?**

Day Two

MARK 10:42



In Luke 12:48, Jesus taught that “from everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be expected.” The disciples wanted the Lord to give them a position of honor and authority, yet they hadn’t indicated that they could handle it. Throughout generations, many with great power and influence have misused their position—the rich oppressed the poor, the Gentile leaders took advantage of their subjects, and even Israel’s leaders (kings and religious leaders alike) misled God’s people. And given the nature of this conversation, the disciples hadn’t proven that they would use the desired position any more honorably.

- **Why does God expect so much from those whom He has blessed?**

- **How has God blessed you? What does He expect from you?**

Day Three

MARK 10:43

The nature of the kingdom of God is often quite the opposite of what we would expect according to human nature. For instance, we must die to ourselves to live eternally. We must become weak in order to be strong. And to be great, we must become a servant. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send a Messiah to rescue His people, and they had one thing in mind—this rescuer would be a great political leader and military conqueror. He would overthrow any nation who would oppress God’s people. But they were wrong, and Jesus taught His disciples very clearly that for someone to be truly great, he had to be willing to lower himself in humility, serving others in love.

- **In what ways does the kingdom of God operate opposite of the ways of the world?**

- **Why must we serve others to be great in God’s sight?**

Day Four

MARK 10:44

To be a member of God's kingdom is to follow Christ—this means we are to live as He lived. Despite the fact that Jesus is fully deserving of the highest glory and honor—He is first among all people—He emptied Himself by leaving heaven and becoming a man, and He became a servant to all by suffering death on the cross. We are called to live toward others in the same way. Following Christ requires that we take up our cross, sacrificing our own fleshly desires to serve others in our lives. As we live this way, others see God's sacrificial love reflected through us, and God draws people to Himself. Jesus served others, allowing us to see the character of God on display. We are called to serve others as He did.

➤ **How did Jesus make Himself a servant to all?**

➤ **How are you called to reflect Jesus' sacrificial love in the ways you live?**

Day Five

MARK 10:45



Jesus is the King of kings, and He is worthy to be served by all people. When He came to earth, He didn't come demanding our service. Instead, He lowered Himself, becoming a servant to all people. Today, our churches are to be a picture of Jesus' nature of serving. The Spirit has given us gifts to serve one another, and when we all have a heart to serve, everyone is served well. However, if we all expect to be served, no one is giving because everyone is looking to receive. As Jesus serves us, we should in turn look to serve others in our lives. This is one of the most powerful ways the world sees the nature of God.

➤ **How have others served you in ways that allowed you to see Jesus working in them?**

➤ **How will you commit to serving someone else this week?**