



**Main Idea:** Serving others will help us grow in our faith.

**Scriptures:** John 13:1-17, Philippians 2:3

Hey everyone! It's so good to be with you, as we finish up our series "Holy Habits," talking about spiritual disciplines. Each week, we've talked about some practice or habit that we should be growing in as we mature in our faith. We've talked about spending time in God's Word, repentance, and tonight, we're looking at one last spiritual discipline, and that is the discipline of service; putting the needs of others ahead of our own.

This can be a hard one to practice, because naturally, we're all self-centered. And we live in a culture that is all about living for ourselves and doing the things that make us the happiest. But Jesus calls us to push back against that mindset and to live our lives to serve others. We're going to be looking in the Gospel of John chapter 13 tonight, and I'd like you to turn there in your Bible. As we read, we're going to see Jesus give one of the most beautiful examples of serving others in all of Scripture. And we'll spend a few minutes thinking about what the passage teaches us about serving others. So, if you're there, read along with me in **John 13:1-17 (ESV)**:

*"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, do you wash my feet?' Jesus answered him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my*

*head! Jesus said to him, 'The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'*

*When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.'*

[Pray after reading.]

### **Point 1: Serving requires an outward focus (Verses 1-3)**

I love the picture of serving this story presents, and as we think about the spiritual discipline of serving others, I think that there are a few lessons we can draw from this story. **The first of those lessons is that serving others requires an outward focus.**

To truly serve others, we have to look outside ourselves. Read verses 1-3 with me again: *"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper."*

Now, we have to think about the context of these verses for it to really be amazing. This story took place while Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the Passover meal together, on the night Jesus would to be arrested, beaten, and then crucified the following day. And the amazing thing is that Jesus knew all of this. Verse 1 tells us that Jesus *knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father*. Jesus knew all the things that were about to be done to Him. And this is how He chose to spend His final night, by serving His disciples by washing their nasty feet.

Imagine if tonight was your last night on Earth, and that at some point in the middle of the night, you knew you were going to be arrested and falsely accused of a crime, and then executed for it. What would you do with your last night? How would you feel? Probably pretty stressed out, right? Here, Jesus had every right to be focused on what was about to happen, to be pacing around the room, not paying much attention to His disciples who were with Him. But He didn't do that. Instead, verse 1 tells us that He loved His disciples until the very end. Until his last breath, Jesus was focused on others.

And that's the same attitude that's required of us if we're truly going to serve other people. Because if we're focused on ourselves, we won't be able to see the needs of other people. Or, even worse, if we're focused on ourselves, we'll serve other people with the wrong motivations, to look good. We'll look for opportunities to serve others, but only so that other people will see how kind we are, or how selfless we are. And if that's the case, we're only serving ourselves and our pride. Truly serving like Jesus requires looking outward at others. But how do we do that? How do we become better at that?

Well, **Philippians 2:3 (ESV)** tells us, *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”*

We need to change the way that we see the other people around us. We need to consider them more important than us. Because when you're at school, and you're hanging out with your friends, and you view them as way more important than you, their needs will become more important to you than your own. When you see your friends as more important than you, you'll be a better listener, because you'll genuinely care about what they have to say. This passage isn't telling us that other people have more value than us, or they're worth more than us. But it is saying that when it comes to our relationships with others, we should be so focused on serving them, and loving them, that we don't even think about ourselves.

## **Point 2- Serving requires sacrifice (Verses 4-11)**

Not only does serving require an outward focus, **but it also requires sacrifice**. Serving others often means doing things we don't really want to do. And we can see this idea in the way that Jesus served His disciples.



### **Icebreaker**

- What’s been a high and a low from your week?

### **Observation — What’s in the text?**

- Read Psalm 119:9–16 together. What are some of the different ways the author describes their relationship with God’s Word?

### **Interpretation – Why does this matter?**

- Verse 11 reads, “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” How does knowing God’s Word help us fight temptation and sin?
- What do you think it means to “delight” in God’s Word (v.14, v.16)?
- Have you ever actually enjoyed reading the Bible? Why or why not?

### **Gospel Connection**

- The message reminded us that spiritual disciplines don’t earn God’s love; they’re a response to it. How does knowing that Jesus obeyed God’s Word perfectly in our place change the way we approach reading the Bible?

### **Application**

- Which of these three challenges stood out the most to you tonight?
  - Delight in God’s Word
  - Dwell on God’s Word
  - Do God’s Word
- What’s one practical step you want to take this week to grow in that area?

[Leader Note: Close by having students share prayer requests and pray for one another.]

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