Growing Wise
The Servant Heart of God

Lesson 10

TEACHER TO TEACHER

Have you ever sensed or thought that we live in a culture that is obsessed with doing? I think I see signs of that kind of obsession. It seems to me that too many of us are constantly hurrying from one activity or task to another. Our calendars and agendas are full. Our watches and PDAs alert us when it is time to do the next thing. My friend Terry Hershey says that people are too busy “doing” to “be.”

Church people are not exempt from culture’s obsession with doing so that they forget about the importance of being. For example, some forget that before setting out to “do” God’s will they need to pause and “be” God’s will. Don’t forget, the Pharisees were rebuked severely by Christ for doing the right things without being godly men.

I think, generally speaking, that the American church has focused too much of its theology of service on “doing” rather than “being.” Again generally speaking, too many churches seem to imply that members in the Body exist to do service for the church. The result has been “shaming” people into “volunteering” their time in some area of ministry so that slots on the organizational chart can be filled. Of course, a church depends on volunteers to help carry out the work of the church. The church needs volunteers in order to “do” church.

My contention is that we need to help people “be” before we ask them to “do.” You see, one can say, “I serve; therefore, I am a servant,” or one can say “I am a servant; therefore, I serve.” The latter expression is more indicative of where I think we need to be in our teaching and practice.

This unit of study contains four lessons about being servants who subsequently do the work of serving. The underlying premise is simple. Jesus is Servant. If we are to accurately reflect His glory we also must be servants. In the same way that seeing Jesus as a disciple-maker helps me understand that I too am (be) a disciple-maker, seeing Jesus as servant helps me understand that I too am (be) a servant. If I understand the “being” issues of a servant, I can be confident that the “doing” will follow in an authentic rather than a contrived sort of way. Said another way, if I understand God’s will for my “being,” His will for my “doing” suddenly will become much less mysterious.

Before beginning your preparation, say with me, “I be Servant.” Are you comfortable with that name? Does Servant fit you well? Does it feel like a pair of comfortable blue jeans or does it feel more like a stiff pair of new shoes that will require “breaking in”? If you are at ease with saying “I be Servant,” how does that practically work out in your life? Who do you serve? How does your service bring advantage to them? How does your service to them reflect the heart, nature, personality, and action of Christ?

Let the voice you find in the answers to these questions find expression in your teaching.

Helping People Close the Gap Through the Sunday Morning Experience
To Teacher 10-1
Helping People Close the Gap Through the Sunday Morning Experience

Notes

STUDYING THE WORD TOGETHER

John was my close friend. We shared season tickets to college basketball games and served as directors on two boards. Every time we had a board function, John, without being asked, arrived early to make certain that the meeting room was set up properly and to brew a pot of coffee, making certain it was ready when everyone else arrived.

My stepson Greg was injured in a horrible accident that resulted in a long hospitalization. One afternoon I told John that I had to hook up the evaporative air conditioner on our roof before we could bring Greg home. He smiled and said, “I did that for you yesterday afternoon.”

John has the spiritual gift of service. Not everyone has that gift, nor should they. That is not the way the Body of Christ works. The Spirit gives the gifts He chooses to each believer for the benefit of the church (1 Cor 12: 4-11). However, developing a servant’s heart is another matter. Every maturing believer needs a heart for service.

We can think about this from two viewpoints. First, as Image Bearers of Christ we must reflect His servant heart to those around us. Next, we know that no one becomes a spiritual mother or father without developing a servant’s heart. From either perspective, we must affirm that serving is central to being a child of God and a disciple of Christ.

Regarding the servant heart of God, Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary reports that:

God’s servant heart is primarily revealed in His saving ministry on behalf of His people. God’s heart to serve His people is often described in the Old Testament in terms that apply to Jesus. Christ is upheld and chosen by God; He delights in God; He receives God’s Spirit. He is holy, just, and righteous. He will bring Jacob back to Him and will be a light to the nations since He is an offering for sin (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 53).  

Writing in the Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, R. W. Paschal says,

“For Jesus and the Evangelists [the Gospel writers] service can characterize the essence of Jesus’ ministry and the nature of discipleship. Jesus’ ultimate service is seen in his obedience to God and death for others. His disciples are likewise to serve God with undivided loyalty and, on the social level, serve one another — especially the helpless — rather than themselves.”

This lesson is about seeing Christ, and ultimately God, as a servant. Now in some respect, that feels incongruent. After all, God is God and we are His servants. Christ is the Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev 17:14) and we are His servants. Yet we find in Mark 10, Jesus saying to His disciples:

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:42-45

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2 R. W. Paschal, Jr., Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, copyright © 1992 by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA. All rights reserved. R. W. Paschal, Jr., Ph.D. is Director, Beeson International Center for Biblical Preaching and Pastoral Leadership, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, USA.
Jesus As a Servant

The Mark 10 passage quoted above speaks to many issues. Certainly, Jesus is speaking to the Twelve who soon will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to make disciples and establish the church. This passage can address the issue of leadership and exercising authority as a leader. It can deal with the issue of true greatness. It also can be seen as a passage that speaks to Christ’s view of Himself.

I want to look at the referenced verses in light of what they say to us about the servant heart of Jesus and, therefore, of God. There are several words and phrases in the passage that will help us in this objective. So let’s look at them together.

True Greatness

Reread the Mark 10 passage on the previous page. Notice the phrases “whoever wants to be great” and “whoever wants to be first.”

The word great (NT 3178) in verse 43 is part of a word group that literally means large and often particularly applies to physical magnitude. However, it is used figuratively in verse 43 to mean great in power, dignity, or authority. In other places it is rendered as ruler (Matt 20:25); king (Matt 5:35); high priest (Heb 4:14, 10:21); God (Tit 2:13; Rev 19:17). It also can mean distinguished (Matt 5:19; Mark 10:43).

First (NT:4413) in verse 44 is used in parallel to verse 43’s great. It is intended to shed additional light upon great. It literally can mean foremost, hence “first” or “the first.” When used figuratively, as it is here, it refers to rank or dignity, meaning chief or most prominent.5

Jesus clearly is speaking here to those who might want to be the distinguished leader of the disciples after He returns to the Father. And He is placing a requisite service upon their leadership. Logically, we next must ask how such an indispensable requirement dimensions leadership. The answer lies in our understanding of servant and slave as well as in Jesus’ statement concerning Himself in verse 45. Let’s discuss each in turn.

Servant

The word servant (NT:1249) appearing in verse 43 can refer to a minister (anyone who ministers, not necessarily clergy), to a servant, as well as to a deacon or deaconess who works to tend to the needs of another. The derivation of the word is uncertain. According to some it comes from a family of words meaning “in the dust laboring,” or “running through dust.” Others derive it from a word group meaning “to hasten” or a related word meaning “to pursue.”4 Whatever its derivation, it seems to carry the idea of diligently laboring to minister to the needs of the one being served.

A servant can be simply a waiter at a meal (John 2:5, 9) or a servant of a master (Matt 22:13[NASB]). Figuratively, the word also can be used to refer to a servant of “spiritual power” (e.g. servants of Satan, 2 Cor 11:14-15; servant of the Gospel of Christ, Eph 3:6-7).5

Slave

In the same way that first parallels great, slave parallels servant and brings some clarification to meaning. The word slave in verse 44 (NT:1401) comes from a word group that refers to one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of the other (Matt 8:9 [NASB]; 20:27; 24:45-46). When used in a literal manner, it suggests one serving, one bound to serve, or one in bondage (Rom 6:16-17). This is the same group from

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4 Ibid.
which we get the term bond-slave—one who forfeits his rights to serve another in order to pay off a debt.

When used figuratively or metaphorically it connotes voluntary service, implying obedience or devotion (John 15:15 [NASB]; Rom 6:16); implying modesty (2 Cor 4:5 [NRSV]); and in praise of modesty (Matt 20:27; Mark 10:44).6

It seems clear that Jesus is speaking to His disciples that servanthood:

♦ Is humble
♦ Voluntarily forfeits its rights in order to serve another
♦ Is based upon devotion
♦ Is associated with the obedience of a disciple
♦ Diligently works to meet the needs of the one being served

For example, as devoted Christ-followers, believers voluntary obey Jesus, their True Master; they obediently serve Him by compassionately ministering to the needs of others according to His example. Greatness is marked by such servanthood. And, remember, “Service is the essence of… the nature of discipleship.”7

(As an aside, I want to point out that in our subject passage Jesus is using servants and slaves in reference to leaders. The disciples first must be obedient to their True Master, Christ. Then, they must recognize that their leadership serves the need of those entrusted to them. As leaders they are responsible for leading their “flock” to the needed green pastures and still waters in a way that restores souls and guides them into paths of righteousness for the sake of Christ [Ps 23:1-3; John 21:15-18]. While the essence of our lesson is about service rather than leadership, we conclude that the leader-servant will minister to the real needs of those he/she leads, rather than to their selfish desires.)

Now let’s focus our attention upon verse 45.

“…even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

In this verse, Jesus tells the disciples that He is different and that they must be different from the Gentile rulers. He tells them and us that He was not sent by God to the earth so that His followers could minister to Him. Rather, He came:

♦ To serve
♦ To give His life

There is a strong relationship between serving and giving. We will talk about that in the next lesson. For now, let’s discuss the meaning of to be served and to serve. Both infinitives contain the same verb form of the noun servant (NT 1249) discussed in a previous section. The verb (NT 1247) literally means to voluntarily serve or wait upon, with emphasis on the work to be done rather than the relationship between lord and servant. Generally it means to do anyone a service, care for someone’s needs (Matt 4:11, 25:44; Mark 1:13; Luke 8:3), and is an inferred service rendered, bringing advantage to others, to help. When this word for serve (also rendered “helping,” “attending,” “ministering to,”) is used, then helping someone directly is involved (Luke 22:27; John 12:26; Acts 19:22; 1 Tim 3:10, 13; Philem 13).8

With this in mind, we can say that Jesus came, not to have people serve Him in a way that would bring advantage to Him, but to voluntarily serve people in a way that would bring advantage to them. Certainly, the work He did on the cross was the ultimate picture of One with a heart to serve and it brought us great advantage—eternal life and relationship with the Triune God.

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6 Ibid, Spiros Zodhiates.
7 Ibid, R. W. Paschal, Jr.
8 Ibid, Spiros Zodhiates.
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Jesus Taught His Disciples to Serve One Another

The early verses of the thirteenth chapter of John’s Gospel also present us with a stirring picture of the servant heart of Christ. The language of the original text is dramatic. The inspired writer did not want anyone to miss the significance of the passage, neither to our understanding of Jesus nor to its formative influence upon our role as His disciples.

[1] It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

[2] The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. [3] Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; [4] so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. [5] After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him….

[12] When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. [13] “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. [14] Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. [15] I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. [16] I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” (John 13:1-5, 12-17)

Edwin A. Blum describes this Upper Room scene by saying that Jesus and His men are reclining on couches or pillows around a low table or mat spread on the floor. Customarily, they would have been leaning on their left elbow so that they could reach in to get the food. Their feet were extended so that Jesus could have easily reached each man’s feet. It is probable that the food is being set on the mat and that the disciples had not yet eaten when Jesus got up. Foot-washing most likely would have occurred before the meal rather than after.

Before He rises for the foot-washing, Jesus is depicted by John as reflecting on the revelation that the time for His death is at hand. It is time for Him to leave this world and return to His Father. So Christ purposes to demonstrate the extent of His love to those who mean so much to Him, even to Judas who He knows will soon betray Him. The original Greek suggests that Jesus always has loved the Twelve, loves them still, and will continue to love them (v. 1).

Love Leads to Service

Verse 4 gives us a clue to how Jesus might demonstrate His love for the Twelve; verse 5 makes it plain:

...he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that he poured water into a basin [pitcher] and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:4-5)

Deliberately, Jesus removed His outer garments which were appropriate for a
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The disciples surely knew that the most obvious answer was incorrect. There had to be a deeper meaning to Jesus’ actions.

Perhaps some of the group in that Upper Room realized that the foot-washing was intended to be metaphorical. Perhaps a few of them understood that in the same manner in which Jesus had served them by washing their feet, He soon would serve them by giving His life as a ransom for theirs, securing their eternal destiny.

Choosing Servanthood or Idolatry

It seems that Jesus wanted to leave nothing to chance, because He explained His actions without hesitation. He effectively said through His example, “I am Your Lord and Teacher. That makes you my disciples. As my disciples, you should follow my example and serve one another as I have served you.”

Disciples were expected to teach what they learned from their teacher. Similarly, disciples were expected to do the same things their teacher did! Otherwise, they failed to be accurate reflections of their teacher.

What Jesus said next must have been startling for the Twelve and should be startling for us! Look at verse 16 again:

I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. (John 13:16)

When Jesus tells them this, He is saying, “When you fail to serve others as I have served you, you are setting yourself above me; you, as my ambassador, are making yourself greater than the One who sends you out with His Gospel. In setting yourself above me, you make an idol of yourself.”

We must pause here for a moment. Could it be that, as Christ’s disciple, I make an idol of myself if I fail to humbly minister to the needs of others? I believe the answer to that question is Yes. To be a...
Christ-follower, I must be a servant who obeys my Lord and serves those whom the Lord loves—and consequently those whom I love. If I wish to follow Christ, I must choose servanthood rather than idolatry. How sobering! But knowing this truth can lead to blessing:

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

(John 13:17)

It is possible to miss the blessing out of ignorance. However, if we act on this life-altering revelation, we have Christ’s Word that we will be blessed or happy.

Image Bearers of Christ Reflect His Glory

Before we think about the practical application of this lesson, let’s summarize the key points that lead us to our final conclusion. We began with a brief discussion of God’s heart to serve His people. In Christ we have our clearest picture of God’s servant heart. Jesus’ heart is a reflection of His Father’s heart.

Jesus’ servant heart resulted in loving obedience to His Father as well as humble and sacrificial service to those whom His Father entrusted to Him. Loving service characterized the essence of Jesus’ ministry. But service was not for Him alone to do. He also taught His disciples to serve—and service became the distinguishing characteristic of their ministry, as well.

Finally, we said that service is such an expression of love that Jesus equated a failure to serve others as disobedience and idolatry. This leads to a final conclusion for this lesson: If we are to be Image Bearers of Christ who fully reflect His glory, we must allow the Holy Spirit to develop within us the servant heart of Christ.

Application Ideas and Questions

At issue in this lesson is both the individual’s and the fellowship’s perspective of Christ as a servant, as well as the essential nature of servanthood to discipleship. A failure to obey Jesus’ teaching to serve one another is tantamount to disobedience and idolatry.

The first step in application, then, is for the individual believer to compare Christ’s teaching by both word and deed with his own heart-attitudes and behaviors. This might involve looking at the biblical evidence of Christ’s love for those He came to call unto Himself and His actions of service or ministry that flowed to those from that love. The next step might be for the individual Christ-follower to think about how his/her love for others motivates his/her actions to meet their needs through humble service or ministry. If a lack of desire to minister to the needs of those a believer claims to love is apparent, then the issues of disobedience and self-exalting idolatry must be confronted and confessed.

A Christian community or fellowship can wrestle with similar issues. Believers often refer to those of their more intimate fellowships or communities as “brothers and sisters” in Christ. Such references suggest a familial relationship. So the questions for a fellowship might be: Does our love for one another motivate us to humbly minister to one another’s needs? Is our care for one another so obvious that outsiders looking in would be forced to conclude that we are disciples of Christ (John 13:34-35)? Or might outsiders conclude that we are more self-serving than other-serving? The fellowship ultimately must ask the same questions regarding disobedience and self-exalting idolatry as those asked by the individual believer.

These kinds of questions can “get under our skin” pretty fast. Honest reflection can cause gratitude to well up in our hearts because we recognize that Christ has done an amazing work of conforming us to His Image. That same honest reflection can also take us to a place of Godly sorrow that leads us to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). That is also a wonderful reason for gratitude and joy!
Notes

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There are two topics or ideas in this lesson that seem to beg for additional explanation: the cultural practice of foot-washing, and the implication of idolatry in John 13:16-17. The following material is excerpted from accepted credible sources and is presented as an addendum to the Bible study.

Foot-Washing

Excerpted from the Bible Knowledge Commentary:

John 13:15-16. The foot-washing was an example (hypodeigma, “pattern”). Many groups throughout church history have practiced literal foot-washing as a church ordinance. However, present culture in many lands does not call for the need to wash dust from the feet of one’s guests. Whereas the Lord’s Supper was practiced by the early church as an ordinance, it apparently did not practice foot-washing as an ordinance in church gatherings. This passage emphasizes inner humility, not a physical rite. A Christian widow’s practice of “washing the feet of the saints” (1 Tim 5:10) speaks not of her involvement in a church ordinance but of her humble slave-like service to other believers. Not to follow the example of Jesus is to exalt oneself above Him and to live in pride. No servant is greater than his master (cf. Jn 12:26).

Excerpted from the Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels:

The foot-washing scene of John 13 has enjoyed a long and lively discussion among scholars. In general, the critical arguments have centered around the two interpretations given the foot-washing within the chapter: (1) a soteriological/Christological interpretation in 13:6-10 and (2) a moral interpretation in 13:12-17. A persistent question has been whether the former…or latter…interpretation was the earlier and more original of the two, or whether the Evangelist found both interpretations in his sources and wove the two together.

It is not clear that a simple distinction between two interpretations—one Christological and the other moral—is justified. On the one hand, the sayings of Jesus in John 13:12-20 can themselves be understood on two levels: (1) the obvious example of practical service focused on the menial needs of others and (2) the deeper type of service and personal sacrifice that Jesus models when the foot-washing is viewed in light of the cross and Easter. The servant sayings of Jesus in John 13:12-17 have Christological implications that we should not miss: the Lord of the disciples is also the obedient Son and Servant of the Father (cf. John 14:10-12; 17:1-5).

Jesus’ words, “If I do not wash you, you will have no part in me” (13:8), point not only to the meaning of Jesus’ obedient death on the cross, but also to a humble acceptance by faith of the gift of Christ’s sacrifice. The foot-washing is a drama of Jesus’ act of sacrifice on the cross, and Peter’s response represents the reaction of believers. The disciples are made “clean” (13:10) by their acceptance of Jesus and His death for them. Where we find the vertical dimension of the gracious act of service of Christ in His death for us, we also tend to find an emphasis on loving and caring for the community (e.g., Mark 10:41-45; Philip 2:1-11; 1 Pet 2:21-25).

The example Jesus gives the disciples in washing their feet (13:12-20) is the pattern
of sacrificial and costly service. The key word for this service is *agapé*, given in the command that disciples should “love one another” (13:34-35) and thereby witness to the world. The Johnnine writings are not concerned with specific ethical actions and make no reference to the care of the poor and the outcast. This is in part because John writes to a community which is itself being cast out of the synagogue and is already dispossessed (cf. 9:22; 12:42-43; 16:1-2). But it is also because John is content to paint the big picture and only imply the details. Christ served His disciples and others in utter humility—even at the cost of the cross—so His disciples’ lesser deeds of love and sacrifice for those in need are fitting witnesses to the Master (13:35).

**Idolatry**

Excerpted from *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*¹

In general, idolatry is] the worship of something created as opposed to the worship of the Creator Himself. Scores of references to idolatry appear in the Old Testament. This shows that idolatry probably was the greatest temptation our spiritual forefathers faced.... So serious was this sin that the prohibition against the making and worshiping of images was included as the second of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:4-6).

The captivity of the people of Israel at the hands of the Babylonians produced a permanent cure for the sin of idolatry. Never again has Judaism succumbed to idolatry. In the gospels there is virtually nothing about idolatry, but in the letters of Paul and the other New Testament books Christians are frequently warned against idolatry. The Christians lived in a world filled with idols. Both the Romans and the Greeks used them. Paul’s observation about Athens in Acts 17:16 tells it well: “He saw that the city was given over to idols.”

In the New Testament period the term idolatry began to be used as an intellectual concept. Idolatry became not the actual bowing down before a statue but the replacement of God in the mind of the worshiper. Colossians 3:5 points in this direction: “Put to death...covetousness, which is idolatry.” (See also Eph 5:5.) At this point the modern believer must understand the vicious nature of idolatry. While we may not make or bow down to a statue, we must be constantly on guard that we let nothing come between us and God. As soon as anything does, that thing is an idol.

In addition to material objects such as houses, land, and cars, idols can be people, popular heroes, or those whom we love. Objects of worship can even include things like fame, reputation, hobbies, pride, and deeds [ministry] done in the name of the Lord. Idolatry is a dangerous and deceitful sin. No wonder prophets preached against it so often and so strongly.

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SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

NOTE TO TEACHER: This suggested lesson plan contains many elements that, if employed, will help maximize learning for life-change in your Bible Fellowship. If you are an experienced teacher, you have freedom to create your own plan based upon the “Studying the Word Together” section. If you are less experienced, we suggest that you “stick to the plan.” However, even less-experienced teachers should feel free to modify the plan based upon the needs of your Bible Fellowship. This plan is designed to be presented in 45 minutes. It is important, therefore, that you carefully plan your presentation so that you communicate the main points with brevity and clarity.

Important Scripture References:
- Mark 10:42-45
- John 13:1-5, 12-17

Teaching Goals:
- **Learn:** Bible Fellowship members affirm that serving is central to being a child of God and a disciple of Christ.
- **Experience:** Each person identifies someone they believe Jesus would have them “step in the yoke” with Him and serve out of love. They then plan to “wash his/her feet” during the coming week by meeting a specific need that the one being ministered to would count as an act of love or ministry.

Before Class Begins:
- Distribute handouts.
- **Optional:** Enlist a helper to write names of God on your marker board during Step One.

STEP ONE: GETTING READY TO LEARN (5 MINUTES)
- Invite your class to list several names for God. Tell them there are four names on their handout to help “jump start” their thinking. List each name mentioned on your marker board without comment or evaluation.
- After you have a reasonable-sized list, circle *Servant,* if someone has mentioned it. If no one has suggested the name *Servant,* add it to the list and tell the class that you wish to begin today’s lesson by having them think of God as Servant.
- Explain that God’s heart to serve His people is seen in the Old Testament in language that describes Christ, who was sent to help us know and understand God.

STEP TWO: JESUS AS A SERVANT (5 MINUTES)
- Refer your class to Mark 10:42-45. (They may use their Bibles or their handouts.) Have someone read the passage. Next, quickly define *servant* and *slave* using word study information from Studying the Word Together, pages 10-3 to 10-4. Summarize servanthood by listing the five characteristics found on page 10-4.
Helping People Close the Gap Through the Sunday Morning Experience

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Notes

Lesson Notes Blanks, Steps Two (2nd Bullet) and Three

♦ Jesus came not to have people serve Him in a way that would bring advantage to Him, but to voluntarily serve people in a way that would bring advantage to them.

Jesus taught His disciples ...

♦ Jesus demonstrated His love for the Twelve (including Judas!) by serving them.

♦ Jesus taught His disciples that when they failed to serve others as He has served them, they were setting themselves above Him—and in so doing, they made an idol of themselves!

♦ If we are to be Image Bearers of Christ who fully reflect His glory, we must allow the Holy Spirit to develop within us the servant heart of Christ.

Choosing Servanthood or Idolatry:
♦ Ask someone to read aloud verses 13 through 17 (from Bible or handout).
♦ Direct fellowship members to choose a discussion partner from those sitting nearby. Ask the discussion partners to share their OPINIONS of what Jesus is trying to communicate to the disciples in this passage.
♦ After a few moments, interpret this passage for your classmates using the information on pages 10-6 to 10-7. Be sure to carefully lead them to an understanding of how we make idols of ourselves if we fail to follow Christ’s example of serving others out of love. Fill in Lesson Notes.

Image Bearers of Christ Reflect His Glory:
♦ Reinforce what we have learned in this lesson thus far by reviewing the key points (page 10-7) and making certain they have information to complete blanks on Lesson Notes.
♦ Remind your class that faithful disciples are Image Bearers of Christ. Explain that in our journey to become spiritual mothers and fathers at any cost, we must allow Jesus to develop in us a servant’s heart that accurately reflects His heart to serve out of love. Help them fill in Lesson Notes.
♦ Use Application Ideas and Questions to suggest appropriate applications by your department members—both individually and corporately.

Step Three: Jesus Taught His Disciples to Serve One Another (30 Minutes)
♦ Refer your class to John 13:1-5 (from their Bibles or on the handout). Read verse 1 aloud and point out that what is to follow was intended by Jesus to be a demonstration of His love for His disciples.

Love Leads to Service:
♦ Next, read verses 2 through 11. Use the information on pages 10-5 to 10-6 to properly set the scene and interpret Jesus’ actions. This is a good time to share the cultural information on foot-washing from the Commentary, pages 10-8 to 10-9, if you desire.
♦ Then read verse 12. Point out to the class that it is appropriate for all of us to respond to the question just as if Jesus were present in this moment asking us “Do you understand what I have done for you?” This is a great place to vulnerably and humbly share your own personal response to the question.
♦ After sharing your own response, ask two or three in your class what they imagine their response to the question would have been had they personally experienced the foot-washing with the Twelve.
♦ Fill in the next blank on Lesson Notes.

Choosing Servanthood or Idolatry:
♦ Ask someone to read aloud verses 13 through 17 (from Bible or handout).
♦ Direct fellowship members to choose a discussion partner from those sitting nearby. Ask the discussion partners to share their OPINIONS of what Jesus is trying to communicate to the disciples in this passage.
♦ After a few moments, interpret this passage for your classmates using the information on pages 10-6 to 10-7. Be sure to carefully lead them to an understanding of how we make idols of ourselves if we fail to follow Christ’s example of serving others out of love. Fill in Lesson Notes.

Image Bearers of Christ Reflect His Glory:
♦ Reinforce what we have learned in this lesson thus far by reviewing the key points (page 10-7) and making certain they have information to complete blanks on Lesson Notes.
♦ Remind your class that faithful disciples are Image Bearers of Christ. Explain that in our journey to become spiritual mothers and fathers at any cost, we must allow Jesus to develop in us a servant’s heart that accurately reflects His heart to serve out of love. Help them fill in Lesson Notes.
♦ Use Application Ideas and Questions to suggest appropriate applications by your department members—both individually and corporately.

Step Four: Experiential Closing (5 Minutes)
♦ Invite each person to think of someone whose feet Jesus might enjoy helping him/her wash by meeting a specific need for the one being served. (Continued on next page.)
Notes

♦ Now ask them to imagine themselves along with Jesus, standing before the one to be served, dressed as a humble servant. Have them invite Jesus to reveal to them the act of service that He desires to help them perform.

♦ Finally, invite them to prayerfully respond to Jesus’ request with a commitment to complete the act of service in humility and love.

♦ Close with a prayer, asking Christ to implant in each member His heart for serving others in love. Ask the Holy Spirit to defeat self-centeredness that leads to idolatry and bring blessings for each of you as you serve others.

♦ Remind them of Reflections on their handouts for use during the coming week. Invite all to return next week for Lesson 11, “Loving and Serving.”
Growing Wise

Today in My Department

Here are four names for God: God Almighty (El Sabaoth), Lord (Jehovah), God my Maker, King of glory. Working in small groups, see how many more you can list.

1. ______________________  7. ______________________
2. ______________________  8. ______________________
3. ______________________  9. ______________________
4. ______________________  10. ______________________
5. ______________________  11. ______________________
6. ______________________  12. ______________________

♦ This lesson is about seeing Christ, and ultimately God, as a ________________

Jesus as a servant:
♦ In the Mark 10 passage, Jesus teaches the disciples that servanthood
  1. Is ______________________
  2. Voluntarily forfeits its ______________________ in order to serve another
  3. Is based upon ______________________
  4. Is associated with the ______________________ of a disciple
  5. Diligently works to ______________________ the ______________________ of the one being served

♦ Jesus came not to have people serve Him in a way that would bring advantage to ________________, but to voluntarily serve people in a way that would bring advantage to ________________.

Jesus taught His disciples to serve one another.
♦ Jesus demonstrated His ______________________ for the Twelve (including Judas!) by ______________________ ______________________.
♦ Jesus taught His disciples that when they failed to serve others as He has served them, they were setting themselves ________________ Him — and in so doing, they made an ________________ of themselves!
♦ If we are to be Image Bearers of Christ who fully ______________________ His ______________________, we must allow the Holy Spirit to develop within us the servant heart of Christ.

Today’s Scriptures

Mark 10:42-45: Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

John 13:1-5: It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

John 13:12-17: When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Next Week’s Lesson: Loving and Serving
Begin each daily reflection by meditating a few minutes on the suggested Scripture passage. Seek to listen to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to you. Then, consider the comments and questions about the passage. Be aware of both your thoughts and your feelings. Respond to God through both.

**Monday:** ...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. (Mark 10:43-44)
Reflect for a moment upon the paradox created by Jesus’ teaching. Greatness requires one to be a servant. Prominence requires one to be a slave. The “great” and the “first” are servants dedicated to voluntarily meeting the needs of those over whom they exercise influence. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you about your state of “being” as a servant. Be aware of your heart response to His revelation to you.

**Tuesday:** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)
As you meditate on this passage, imagine Jesus speaking these words directly to you through His Holy Spirit. What does this passage suggest to you about Christ’s heart for you? As you experience His heart to serve you, respond to Him with heartfelt gratitude.

**Wednesday:** Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:3-5)
Mentally picture this scene in the small upstairs room where Jesus and the disciples had gathered. See Jesus dressed as a menial slave, moving from one disciple to the other and washing each one’s feet—beginning with Judas and ending with Peter. Now imagine Him washing the dust from your feet. Does the water feel refreshing as it flows over your feet? Let His eyes meet yours as He wipes your feet dry with the soft linen towel. Tell Him what you are thinking and feeling. Listen carefully to His response.

**Thursday:** When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. (John 13:12)
Let Jesus’ question to the disciples penetrate your heart. Prayerfully give Jesus an answer to the question just as if He had asked it directly of you. How do you sense that He is responding to your answer?

**Friday:** ‘You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (John 13:13-17)
Interact with these verses in a very personal way. What example has Jesus set for you? What form of service does “foot-washing” take in your life? Have you ever thought that there were certain acts of service or ministry that were beneath your dignity? If yes, confess your act of placing yourself above your Lord and experience His forgiveness. If no, express your gratitude for His example of service and your pleasure in serving Him by serving those He loves.