



The Christian life means signing up to be an apprentice of Jesus. In living this out, we are called to serve and bless others as God has done for us. In living this way, the love of God has a cascading effect of hope on the world around us, pointing back to Jesus the one who laid down His life for all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [DISCUSSION #1: Follow Jesus in Serving Others](#)
2. [DISCUSSION #2: Freedom to Serve](#)
3. [DISCUSSION #3: Give It Away](#)
4. [DISCUSSION #4: When You Feel Like a Servant](#)

DISCUSSION #1: FOLLOW JESUS IN SERVING OTHERS

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In this discussion we will discover that, In serving others, the apprentice of Jesus follows in Christ's steps and methodology.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Share a time that you did something for people you love and, looking back, you're really proud of.

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:3-8

Identify the godly and ungodly values (anti-values) in the above passage.

How does God transform our motives, values, and actions by looking at Jesus?

How does looking to Jesus, as the model for how we should live, affect you? Is it daunting, inspiring, or something else?

How can people truly examine their own hearts to be sure they are not acting out of selfish ambition or conceit?

After mentioning the heart, Paul says, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.” How are the mind and heart different? How do they impact each other? Which of the two do you favor?

The Philippians verse goes on to explain the reward that awaited Jesus for his humble service to humankind (Philippians 2:9-11). If we imitate Christ in the way Paul suggests, what do you think our reward will be? Is it alright to be motivated by reward? What should be our ultimate motivation as we serve others?

What is the greatest barrier to you serving people in the beautiful simplicity in which Jesus requires?

Additional verses to explore: Mark 10:42-45; Matthew 23:11; Mark 9:35; John 13:1-17

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Read John 13:1-17 together. How can you apply such a beautiful heart of service to your group, family, or intimate friends?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Pick a day this week to live with your “eyes wide open” to the people around you. Find tangible ways to simply give yourself away in service to people God puts in your path.

DISCUSSION #2: FREEDOM TO SERVE

The Christian life means signing up to be an apprentice of Jesus. In living this out, we are called to serve and bless others as God has done for us. In living this way, the love of God has a cascading effect of hope on the world around us, pointing back to Jesus the one who laid down His life for all. In this discussion we will explore how the follower of Christ lives out the freedom and hope found in Jesus by serving those around him/her.

MY STORY | Starting Place

If you had to share one person who has consistently loved you selflessly, who would it be and why?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13

Jesus sets people free and gives them new hope for their lives. Is the author saying it's wrong to enjoy some of the freedom we find in Christ for ourselves? Explain your response.

The context of this verse is somewhat complicated. Read the verse in the whole section of Galatians 5:1-14. What observations do you make from the larger context, especially in regard to the Galatians' legalism?

How does his encouragement to "serve one another" fit within the context of fighting legalism?

What other freedoms do we have that God might want us to leverage for the sake of others?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Sometimes personal freedom gets in the way of unity and God's love. How can your group safeguard yourselves from some unique expressions of freedom that might cause others to stumble?

How can we intentionally serve people in ways that are meaningful to them, especially in their unique areas of freedom?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

We often use our freedom to primarily serve those who are close to us. Think of a person outside of your normal crew and intentionally serve that individual in a creative way.

DISCUSSION #3: GIVE IT AWAY

The Christian life means signing up to be an apprentice of Jesus. In living this out, we are called to serve and bless others as God has done for us. In living this way, the love of God has a cascading effect of hope on the world around us, pointing back to Jesus the one who laid down His life for all.

Followers of Christ all have unique gifts and abilities and are called to joyfully meet the needs of others with their giftedness.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Brag on yourself a little bit: What are you so good at you don't even have to think about it when you're doing it?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10

Read this verse in the larger context of 1 Peter 4:1-11.

There is a sharp contrast between self-centered darkness and other-centered service in verses 1-7 and 8-11. Discuss the challenges to our faith as described in the first section, and the practice of our faith in the second section.

Identify the "action steps" Paul encourages followers of Jesus to embrace.

Based on the context of their world (and ours), what is the value of his admonition in regard to using our gifts in verses 9-10?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

According to 1 Peter 4:10, each of us has received gifts and abilities for the purpose of serving others. Discuss your S.H.A.P.E. and how God has uniquely equipped you for service.

S- Spiritual Gifts: Something you believe God has uniquely made you good at (possibly at the time of becoming a follower of Jesus).

H- Heart: Something you have a unique passion or interest in.

A- Abilities: Similar to spiritual gifts, but something that you likely don't see as "spiritual," but rather just something you're good at .

P- Personality: Understanding your temperament and relational style. Do you thrive working with others, solo, structured environments or spontaneous settings?.

E- Experiences: What unique past experiences qualify you to serve others in unusual ways?

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MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

As you ponder your S.H.A.P.E., where might God want you to spend some focused energy in serving others? Make a plan to try something creative in the next couple weeks!

DISCUSSION #4: WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE A SERVANT

The Christian life means signing up to be an apprentice of Jesus. In living this out, we are called to serve and bless others as God has done for us. In living this way, the love of God has a cascading effect of hope on the world around us, pointing back to Jesus the one who laid down His life for all.

Often when you are truly serving others people treat you like an indentured servant. How do you keep a good attitude and focus while becoming a servant? We will explore that in this discussion.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Share a time when you were serving others and were taken advantage of. (Hopefully it's funny now).

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Read Ephesians 6:7 in its context of verses 5-9.

A bondservant is an individual who has committed, for life, to work for an individual. They were former slaves who voluntarily committed themselves to staying with their former masters. In this regard, they were more like employees who had chosen a life-long commitment to their employer.

In light of this biblical context, what is the significance of Paul's encouragement to see ourselves as "bondservants of Christ"?

Next Paul addresses the role of masters (or bosses) in this relationship.

How does leading others under Christ radically reshape our approach to care for our employees?

How does the role of being an employee change for one under Christ?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Open up with your group about times you served others and were taken for granted, overlooked, or felt worse afterwards. Based on this passage and personal experience, share practical ways to protect yourself from being exploited, and keep your service pure.

Talk about positive experiences "leading up" (making your boss or company better) and leading down well (helping those who work for you thrive).

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Think of a person in your life you don't particularly like or with whom you don't get along with. :) Consider a tangible way you could serve that individual this week.