

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

STUDY GUIDE

God Calls Us To Serve

WRITERS

Jennifer Carson

Judy Hughes

Janet Roberts

BAPTISTWAY PRESS



Dallas, Texas



baptistwaypress.org

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

God Calls Us to Serve

Copyright © 2017 by BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

All rights reserved.

First edition: May 2017

Permission is granted for a church to make as many copies of this publication as needed for use within its ministry. Copies of this publication are not to be sold, distributed, or used in any other manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New Life Bible, Copyright © 1969, 1976, 1978, 1983, 1986 by Christian Literature International. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Abbreviated as NLV.

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English is published by BaptistWay Press. These quarterly studies follow the same curriculum plan as the BaptistWay Adult Bible Study curriculum.

Teachers may wish to purchase BaptistWay Adult Bible study materials as additional resources. These may be ordered through your church or directly:

Order online at: baptistwaypress.org

Order by phone: (U.S. toll free): 1-866-249-1799

Mon to Fri, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Central Time)

Order by email: baptistway@texasbaptists.org

Additional contact information:

Baptist General Convention of Texas

7557 Rambler Road, Suite 1200

Dallas, TX 75231-2388 (888) 244-9400

Twitter: [@texasbaptists](https://twitter.com/texasbaptists) Facebook.com/texasbaptists

The New Life Version (NLV) is accessed free online at www.biblegateway.com and at www.studylight.org, so it is easily available to your students via their tablet or phone in class.

The entire NLV is available as a download purchase as Kindle or ePub at www.barbour.publishing (search for “New Life”). The New Testament only is available for free download as Kindle or ePub at the Barbour Publishing site.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Executive Director

Baptist General Convention of Texas

David Hardage

Director, Great Commission Team

Delvin Atchison

Publisher, BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

Scott Stevens

LANGUAGE MATERIALS TEAM

Study Guide Writers

Lessons 1-5: *Jennifer Carson*

First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Lessons 6-8: *Judy Hughes*

First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Lessons 9-13: *Janet Roberts*

Hunter's Glen Baptist Church, Plano, Texas

Study Guide Editors

Lessons 1-5: *Emily Martin*

Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

Lessons 6-8: *Cindy Dake*

First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Lessons 9-13: *Amy Barker*

First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Director

Office of Intercultural Ministries

Baptist General Convention of Texas

Patty Lane

*Made possible by your gifts to
the Mary Hill Davis Offering®
for Texas Missions*

God Calls Us to Serve

Introduction



About 50 years ago, gas stations were called *service stations*. A driver never had to get out of his car when he pulled up to the gas pump. Men in uniforms would run to the car and begin their work: filling up the gas tank, washing the windows, checking tires, and checking the engine's oil. This was a *full service station*. But then *self-service stations* became popular. Drivers paid less for their gas, but they got less service. Drivers pumped their own gas and washed their own windows.

Have you ever had a job where you served customers every day? You have to put aside your own feelings and think about the customer. You look for ways to meet the customer's needs.

In this unit, we will learn about service through Old Testament and New Testament

examples. The greatest example of service is Jesus. He taught us that serving others requires **sacrifice** (giving up something that you want to keep because you want to help someone).

Serving others helps us put our faith into action. It gives us a way to share the message of Jesus with a world that needs His forgiveness and love.

About the Writers

Jennifer Carson wrote Lessons 1-5. She and her husband, Mark, and their six children attend First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas. Jennifer is a homeschool mom for three of her children and teaches English part-time at a private school.

Judy Hughes wrote Lessons 6-8. For years, Judy has taught English to internationals and trained teachers and other trainers. She and her husband, a retired pastor, live on a farm near Moody where they offer a ministry called Shepherd's Rest Ministry. They attend First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas.

Janet Roberts wrote Lessons 9-13. She has taught ESL since 1976 and trains teachers in Plano, Texas. She has four children, two granddaughters, and one grandson. She attends Hunter's Glen Baptist Church in Plano, Texas.

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson Overview

Lesson 1	Willing to Serve in Hard Times	1 Samuel 3
Lesson 2	Showing Kindness to the Weak	2 Samuel 9
Lesson 3	Meeting the Needs of Others	2 Kings 4:8-20, 27-37
Lesson 4	Serving When People Work Against You	Nehemiah 6:1-16
Lesson 5	Leading by Example: The Suffering Servant	Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12
Lesson 6	A Humble Servant	John 13:1-17
Lesson 7	Serve Like Jesus	John 15:9-17
Lesson 8	Serve and Be Blessed	Matthew 25:31-46
Lesson 9	Serve Using Your Gifts	1 Corinthians 12:4-13, 27-31
Lesson 10	Serve as Missionaries	2 Corinthians 5:11-21
Lesson 11	Serve by Giving Generously	2 Corinthians 8:1-15
Lesson 12	Serving Shows Our Faith	James 2:14-26
Lesson 13	The Attitude of Service	Philippians 2:1-11

God Calls Us to Serve

Word List

Lesson 1

attitude: the way you think and feel about something

encourage: to make someone more hopeful or confident

judgment: a decision made about what is good or right in a certain situation

obedience: willingness to do what someone tells you to do

punish: to make someone suffer for a crime or for bad behavior

submit: to accept or to agree with something without fighting against it

Lesson 2

crippled: permanently injured

humble: not proud or thinking you are better than others

inspired: moved to action for a special reason

loyalty: strong support for someone

random act of kindness: a kind thing done without a plan or pattern or explanation

Lesson 3

hospitality: kind, generous treatment of visitors

miracle: unusual event caused by God's power

respond: to act as a reaction to something that has happened

prophet: someone who delivers a message believed to have come from God

tragic: something very sad or serious

Lesson 4

cupbearer: a high official in the king's court who protected the king from being poisoned

distractions: things that keeps you from staying focused

focus: to direct attention or effort on something

ignore: to do nothing in response

lure: causing someone to go in a certain direction by offering something desirable

restored: returned to its earlier condition

vulnerable: weak; easily hurt or harmed

Lesson 5

describe: to tell how something looks, sounds, smells, or what someone is like

disgrace: a feeling of shame

humble: not proud or thinking of oneself as better than others

milestones: an important event in one's life

opposite: completely different

resurrection: return or rising from death

temporary: lasting for a limited time

victory: success in defeating an opponent or enemy

Lesson 6

bother: to cause someone to feel troubled, worried, or concerned

confess: admit that you did something wrong

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

Passover: a holiday to remember when God brought the Jews out of slavery in Egypt

suffering: pain from injury, illness, or loss

God Calls Us to Serve

Word List

Lesson 7

constant: happening all the time

distracted: unable to think about or give full attention to

insider: a member of a group who has special knowledge about it

sacrifice: giving up something that you want to keep because you want to help someone

Lesson 8

authority: the power or right to make decisions

blessed: enjoying happiness, favored by God

famine: when many people do not have enough food to eat

judge: to decide, to form an opinion

satisfied: content, not lacking anything

Lesson 9

divided: not agreeing about something; holding different ideas that do not agree

purpose: the reason why something is done or used; an intention or plan

solve: to find the right answer to a problem

unite: to agree or to be together about something; to work together for one purpose

Lesson 10

creation: everything that is made by God; anything made new because of the work of Jesus

example: a person or way of acting that should be followed by others

representatives: people who act or speak for someone else

Lesson 11

force: to make someone do something that they do not want to do

generously: freely giving or sharing money and other things (time, home, help) in more than the amount that is needed or is normal

tithe: one-tenth part of the money earned by a person that is given back to God

Lesson 12

confused: unable to understand or think clearly;

rescue: to save from danger, harm, or death

Lesson 13

attitude: a feeling or a way of thinking that affects what we do in a good way or a bad way

relationship: the way in which two or more people talk to and treat each other

selfish: taking care of and showing love for yourself only; ignoring the needs or feelings of other people

God Calls Us to Serve

Memory Verses

Lesson 1

“Then the Lord called Samuel, and Samuel said, ‘Here I am.’” (1 Samuel 3:4)

Lesson 2

“Then David said, ‘Is there anyone left of the family of Saul, to whom I may show kindness because of Jonathan?’” (2 Samuel 9:1)

Lesson 3

“For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Lesson 4

“You are happy when people act and talk in a bad way to you and make it very hard for you and tell bad things and lies about you because you trust in Me. Be glad and full of joy because your reward will be much in heaven.” (Matthew 5:11-12)

Lesson 5

“But He was hurt for our wrong-doing. He was crushed for our sins.” (Isaiah 53:5a)

Lesson 6

“If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.” (John 13:17)

Lesson 7

“I have loved you just as My Father has loved Me. Stay in My love.” (John 15:9)

Lesson 8

“Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

Lesson 9

“The Holy Spirit works in each person in one way or another for the good of all.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Lesson 10

“We are Christ’s missionaries. God is speaking to you through us. We are speaking for Christ and we ask you from our hearts to turn from your sins and come to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Lesson 11

“They gave as much as they could because they wanted to.” (2 Corinthians 8:3)

Lesson 12

“A man becomes right with God by what he does and not by faith only.” (James 2:24)

Lesson 13

“Nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself. Think of other people as more important than yourself.” (Philippians 2:3)

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 1: Willing to Serve in Hard Times

Bible Text

1 Samuel 3

Memory Verse

“Then the Lord called Samuel, and Samuel said, ‘Here I am.’” (1 Samuel 3:4)

Word List

attitude: the way you think and feel about something

encourage: to make someone more hopeful or confident

judgment: a decision made about what is good or right in a certain situation

obedience: willingness to do what someone tells you to do

punish: to make someone suffer for a crime or for bad behavior

submit: to accept or to agree with something without fighting against it

Randy Draper is a successful businessman in Texas. He runs a large company that sells jewelry. Randy is also a man who follows Jesus. He honors God in his business. He works hard to serve people. His way of working is shown in the Bible.

In Philippians 2:3, Paul told Christians, “Think of other people as more important than yourself.”

Randy teaches his workers that service to others is important. His company’s website says: “the key to happiness in life is found in doing something for someone else expecting nothing in return.”¹ He wrote a book called *Happy to Do It*, which tells about his way of working. The title of the book shows Randy’s heart for serving others.

Everyone loves excellent service. But how often do we try to serve others with excellence? The truth is, God calls Christians to a life of service. This is different from the way the world lives. It is not an easy way to live. The world **encourages** people to live for their own desires. The world encourages people to do what is best for themselves. The world encourages people to choose the easy way of living. Putting others first can be hard.

Service is even more difficult when we go through hard times. It becomes harder to meet people’s needs when we have our own troubles. It is easier to focus on our own struggles than to focus on serving others. In the Old Testament, Hannah, Samuel, and Eli all faced big problems. In fact, the whole nation of Israel was living in dark times. But all three willingly served God even when it was hard for them.

¹Randy Draper’s website: ww.h2doit.com/about#section2

Ready to Obey (1 Samuel 3:1-10)

Samuel's mother, Hannah, prayed for a child (1 Samuel 1:1). God answered her prayer and gave her a son. As she had promised, Samuel's mother gave him to the Lord as a special servant (1 Samuel 2:11). She willingly obeyed all that she had promised the Lord. When Samuel was three years old, she brought him to the special place of worship in Shiloh. She left her young son there to serve God with Eli, the religious leader of Israel.

Samuel's mother set an example of willing service. The young boy followed her example. He served Eli, the religious leader, with a willing heart. It was natural then, for Samuel to serve God with the same kind of willingness.

These were dark days in Israel (v. 1). God's people did not often hear His voice. In fact, these were dark days for Eli's family, too. Eli's sons did not honor God (1 Samuel 2: 1). God had promised to **punish** Eli's family for their sinful ways of living (1 Samuel 2:27-36). It was a troubled time.

One night, the Lord called Samuel's name. Samuel's answer showed he had a heart for service. He said, "Here I am" (v. 4). Samuel's words were more than just an answer to hearing his name called. In Hebrew, these words meant he was ready to obey. Even at a young age, Samuel had a heart that was willing to answer and obey God. He was

willing to act on God's words. He did not just hear what God said. Samuel wanted to hear and obey God's instructions to him.

Service begins with listening. But it is completed by acting on what one hears. This is true in serving people. We must listen to understand people's needs. And we must act to meet their needs. The same is true in serving God. Service needs ears that hear and a heart that is willing to obey. In simplest terms, a servant is one who hears God's voice and obeys His command.

The Price of Obeying (1 Samuel 3:10-18)

Obedience comes with a price. It did for Hannah. For years, she longed for a child. Her obedience to the Lord meant she lost the chance to raise her son. After three short years with her baby Samuel, Hannah sent him to serve Eli. It was a hard thing for her to do. She had waited so long for this precious child. Keeping her promise to God meant Samuel would grow up away from her. This was the high cost of Hannah's obedience.

Samuel also found it costly to obey the words God spoke to him. God gave Samuel a message for Eli. It was not a good message. God's message was one of **judgment**. God told Samuel that He would soon punish Eli's family. This is something God had already promised to do (1 Samuel 2:27-36). But this

would not be an easy message for Samuel to give Eli. Samuel was afraid. What would Eli say about this message? Would he act in angry ways toward Samuel?

Eli made many mistakes. His sons made many more mistakes. But Eli still loved serving God as Israel's special religious leader. In his heart, He still knew it was right to honor God. When Samuel shared God's message with Eli, Eli accepted it. God's punishment would cause Eli's family much pain. But Eli **submitted** to God's words. He said, "Let [the Lord] do what is good in His eyes" (1 Samuel 3:18). Eli accepted God's power over his life. This is what a servant of God does. This was an important example to Samuel. He always remembered it.

The Rewards of Serving

(1 Samuel 3:19-21)

Obedience can be costly, but it comes with real blessings. Samuel heard and obeyed God's voice. Because of his willingness to serve God, Samuel grew. God was always

with Samuel. He honored Samuel. Everyone in Israel knew that Samuel was a man who served God. With Samuel's obedience, the people of Israel were once again able to see know that God was with them. Samuel's obedience blessed not only his life but also the life of all Israel.

Things to Remember

A servant is one who hears and obeys God's words. A life of service is God's call to every Christian. But a life of service is never easy. A willingness to serve God does not always lead down a smooth road. However, a heart that is willing to serve God will find many blessings along the way. A life of service brings blessings to the servant. Those blessings often reach out to others, too. Follow Samuel's example. Prepare your heart to hear God's voice. Choose a life of service to God!

Things to Think About

1. Has there been a time for you when obeying God has come at a great cost? How did you respond?
2. How did Hannah, Samuel, and Eli respond to God's voice? Why should we follow their example?
3. Read 1 Samuel 2:18-21. In Hannah's life, what were the benefits of her willingness to serve God?
4. How would you explain what it means to serve God?

1 Samuel 3

1 Now the boy Samuel was working for the Lord with Eli. There were few words from the Lord given in those days, and there were not many special dreams.

2 At that time Eli was lying down in his own place. His eyes had become weak and he could not see well.

3 The lamp of God had not gone out yet. And Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord where the special box of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and Samuel said, "Here I am."

5 He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call you. Lie down again." So Samuel went and lay down.

6 The Lord called again, "Samuel!" So Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Lie down again."

7 Now Samuel did not know the Lord yet. And the Word of the Lord had not been made known to him.

8 The Lord called Samuel again for the third time. He got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the boy.

9 Eli said to Samuel, "Go lie down. If He calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Then the Lord came and stood and called as He did the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."

11 The Lord said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do a thing in Israel which will make both

ears of everyone who hears it feel strange.

12 On that day I will do all I have said I will do against the family of Eli.

13 I have told him that I will punish his family forever for the sin he knew about. Because his sons brought the sin upon themselves, and Eli did not stop them.

14 So I swear to the family of Eli that the sin of his family will not be paid for with gifts given on the altar forever."

15 Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. But Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the special dream.

16 Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And Samuel said, "Here I am."

17 Eli said, "What did the Lord tell you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more, if you hide anything from me of all He said to you."

18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And Eli said, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what is good in His eyes."

19 Samuel grew. And the Lord was with him and made everything he said come true.

20 All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had become a man of God.

21 The Lord came again to Shiloh. For the Lord made Himself known to Samuel at Shiloh, by the Word of the Lord.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 2: Showing Kindness to the Weak

Bible Text

2 Samuel 9

Memory Verse

“Then David said, ‘Is there anyone left of the family of Saul, to whom I may show kindness because of Jonathan?’” (2 Samuel 9:1)

Word List

crippled: permanently injured

humble: not proud or thinking you are better than others

inspired: moved to action for a special reason

loyalty: strong support for someone

random act of kindness: a kind thing done without a plan or pattern or explanation

A man ordered food at the drive-thru of his local fast food restaurant. Suddenly, he realized he had forgotten his wallet. He had some cash money, but not enough to pay for his order. When he got to the pick-up window, the cashier handed him the order. She said, “Here is your receipt.” The man replied, “But I did not pay yet.” The cashier told him that the driver in the car ahead of him had paid for his order. He noticed the

driver in front of him looking back in the rearview mirror. The driver smiled, waved, and drove off.

The man in the car was grateful. This was the first time he ever experienced a **random act of kindness**. This kind act **inspired** the man. He looked at the money he had in his wallet. He asked the cashier how much the meal for the driver behind him cost. When she answered, the man discovered he had enough money to pay the amount. So the man paid for the driver behind him. Then he smiled and waved to the driver behind him before leaving.

Christians can serve others through acts of kindness. The world expects people to be kind to those who are kind to them. But Christians can show God’s kindness to everyone. We can show God’s kindness to the poor, the weak, and even to our enemies. Serving others through acts of kindness reflects God’s love for all people.

Kindness Honors Relationship

(2 Samuel 9: 1-2)

King Saul and David became strong enemies of each other (1 Samuel 20:14-17). Saul was jealous because the people in Israel loved David so much. Saul believed David might take away his power. Saul even tried to kill David. Still, David formed a close and special friendship with Jonathan, Saul’s son.

Jonathan knew God chose David to be Israel's king. So he asked David for something important. Jonathan asked David to promise to show kindness to Jonathan's family when David became king. This was not a small thing to ask. After all, Jonathan was from the family of David's enemy. In those times, rulers usually destroyed the entire family of his enemy. In this way, a ruler made sure his enemy could not overthrow him.

But David and Jonathan had a strong **loyalty** to each other. And David promised to be kind to Jonathan's family. Things happened as God planned. Jonathan and two of his brothers died in battle. Saul was badly wounded in battle and later took his life in grief (1 Samuel 31, 2 Samuel 1). David became king of Israel and defeated all his enemies. He became a strong leader for Israel.

David began to rule Israel. He remembered his promise to Jonathan. David looked for a way to keep his promise. Saul and his sons had died in battle. Now David looked for any relative of Saul's. He wanted to show any kindness he could to Jonathan's family. In doing this, David showed honor to his loyal friend, Jonathan.

Serving Extends God's Kindness (2 Samuel 9: 3-7)

David knew that showing kindness to Jonathan's family would honor God. David

knew "the faithful love of the Lord" (1 Samuel 20:14). God's loving-kindness never fails. David knew this because God had helped him in many hard times. This is the type of kindness David had promised Jonathan. This type of kindness would show others what God's love was like.

People in David's time believed Saul's entire family were David's enemies. They believed David feared his enemies in Saul's family. They would expect David to kill all the people from Saul's family. But David did something surprising. He sought to show God's loving-kindness to them instead. David chose not to fear. He chose to trust God for safety from his enemies.

Ziba was a servant from Saul's house. He told David that a **crippled** son of Jonathan's was still alive. So David sent for Mephibosheth. David said to Him, "Do not be afraid. For I will be sure to show kindness to you because of your father" (v. 7). David gave back to Mephibosheth all the land that had belonged to his grandfather, Saul. And David welcomed Mephibosheth to eat at his table.

Receive Kindness with Humility (2 Samuel 9: 8)

Mephibosheth understood that David's kindness was strong and deep. He believed he did not deserve David's kindness. He understood that things might have turned out

much differently when he was called to come before the king. His answer was a **humble** one. He showed that he was thankful for King David's power and goodness.

Mephibosheth's response is a good example for us to follow. He was thankful for David's goodness and power. We should also be thankful for God's goodness and power. We should remember God's loving-kindness to us. We should be humble and thankful to God for saving us from the punishment of sin.

Kindness Is Good for Many (2 Samuel 9:9-13)

Many people saw David's act of kindness toward. Saul's servant Ziba had many sons and servants. They were all helped when David gave back Saul's land to Mephibosheth. Now they could work the land for food. They must have been amazed to see the kindness that David showed.

Things to Think About

1. How would you tell about the kindness of David? How did it show God's loving-kindness?
2. What happens to you when someone is kind?
3. What are some ways you have benefitted from the kindness of others?
4. What are some ways you have shown kindness to others?
5. How is God leading you to do acts of kindness?

Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica whom David also helped. Since Mephibosheth was crippled, he could not provide for his young son. So David welcomed Mica to his table, too. In fact, he welcomed all of Mephibosheth's servants from the house of Ziba to his table. David gave food and safety to the whole household of Mephibosheth. A single promise of kindness to Jonathan was good for large numbers of people.

Things to Remember

God's loving-kindness goes out to people at all time. The Bible says, "For the Lord is good. His loving-kindness lasts forever. And He is faithful to all people and to all their children-to-come" (Psalms 100:5).

David understood this important truth. How can you share this truth with people who need to know it? Show and tell about God's goodness through acts of kindness to others.

2 Samuel 9

1 Then David said, “Is there anyone left of the family of Saul, to whom I may show kindness because of Jonathan?”

2 Now there was a servant in Saul’s house whose name was Ziba. They called him to David, and the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?” And he said, “I am your servant.”

3 The king said, “Is there not still someone of the family of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?” And Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan who cannot walk because of his feet.”

4 So the king said to him, “Where is he?” Ziba answered the king, “See, he is in the family of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.”

5 Then King David sent men to bring him from the family of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 Mephibosheth the son of Saul’s son Jonathan came to David and fell on his face to the ground in respect. David said, “Mephibosheth.” And he answered, “Here is your servant!”

7 David said to him, “Do not be afraid. For I will be sure to show kindness to you because of your father Jonathan. I will return to you all the land of your grandfather Saul. And you will eat at my table always.”

8 Again Mephibosheth put his face to the ground and said, “Who am I? Why should you care for a dead dog like me?”

9 Then the king called Saul’s servant Ziba and said to him, “I have given to your owner’s grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family.

10 You and your sons and your servants will grow food on the land for him. You will bring in the food so your owner’s grandson may eat. But Mephibosheth your owner’s grandson will always eat at my table.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do all that my lord the king tells your servant to do.” So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table as one of the king’s sons.

12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba’s house were Mephibosheth’s servants.

13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he always ate at the king’s table. Both his feet had been hurt and he could not walk.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 3: Meeting the Needs of Others

Bible Text

2 Kings 4:8-20, 27-37

Memory Verse

"For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me." (Matthew 25:40)

Word List

hospitality: kind, generous treatment of visitors

miracle: unusual event caused by God's power

respond: to act as a reaction to something that has happened

prophet: someone who delivers a message believed to have come from God

tragic: something very sad or serious

We see people with needs every day. Some needs are easy to meet. A child needs help in tying her shoe. A customer is a few cents short in paying a bill. A neighbor needs help with meals while he is sick with the flu. A friend from out of town needs a place to sleep for the night.

But other needs are so great that we don't feel like we can help. A poor country

does not have enough food. A family needs comfort after a **tragic** loss. Homes are destroyed in a terrible storm. Someone loses a job and cannot pay for food or bills.

Whether the need is great or small, God calls Christians to **respond** in love. He asks us to give, to share, to love, to feed, to clothe, and to care. Sometimes we can meet all of someone's need. Sometimes we can meet part of someone's need. Either way, we are called to serve others by meeting their needs.

The story of Elisha and the woman from Shunem has many examples of service. This story is a great encouragement. It encourages those who have small and large needs. It encourages those who are serving the needs of others, too. Even when a need seems very great, God can meet that need through the faithful service of His people.

Serving Through Hospitality

(2 Kings 4:8-10)

The **prophet** Elisha traveled to the town of Shunem. He went there as a servant of God. There he found a woman who was honored to serve him. Many times, she gave him food to eat. Finally, she wanted to make a place for him to sleep when he came to Shunem. So she built a special room where he could stay when he was serving God in Shunem. This woman served Elisha well. She knew he was a holy man of God. She met his

needs in the best way she could. In doing this, she honored both Elisha and God.

Jesus spoke about meeting the needs of others. He said this was a way to serve God. He asked his followers to remember this. He said, “I tell you, because you did [service] to one of the least of My brothers, you have done [service] to Me” (Matthew 25:40). Serving others truly comes from a heart of service to God. This is what the woman from Shumen did when she met Elisha’s needs.

Returning the Service

(2 Kings 4:11-17)

Elisha was grateful and thankful. He wanted to return her kindness, so he asked what he could do for her (v. 13). Elisha was an important man in Israel. He offered to speak well of her to the king so that she might have favor. He offered to speak well of her to the captain of the army that she might be protected. But the woman said no.

Still, Elisha wanted to show her kindness because of her service to him. Elisha’s servant told him that the woman had no son. This was a serious problem in Elisha’s time. Only a son could keep a family’s land and money. Only a son could carry on the family name. Only a son could make sure the family’s future was safe. So Elisha promised the Shunammite woman a **miracle**. He promised her she would have a son. Her

husband was old, still Elisha prayed to the Lord to give her a son. In one year, the woman from Shunem had a son. Elisha blessed her greatly in return for her service. The woman met Elisha’s needs. In return, Elisha met her needs, too.

This is how service works. When others serve us well, we respond by serving someone else. This is often how God works things in His kingdom. God wants to use His people to meet the needs of others. Who has served you in a time of need. How have you responded?

A Cry for Help

(2 Kings 4:18-20, 27-37)

Some time later, the woman from Shunem faced a tragedy. Her son died. But the woman from Shunem knew the greatness of Elisha’s God. She placed her faith in God and went looking for His servant, Elisha. She knew God could meet her need. She believed God could use Elisha to do so. When she found Elisha, she “took hold of his feet” (2 Kings 4:27). This was not a good thing for her to do. Elisha’s servant tried to pull her away. But Elisha saw her deep sadness. He understood her need and was ready to help her. Elisha sent his servant first, then Elisha went to the boy. God used Elisha to heal this young boy. Elisha returned this much-loved son to his mother. The woman from Shunem fell at Elisha’s feet in thankfulness to God.

Things to Remember

Both the woman from Shunem and Elisha set examples for us to follow. The woman met Elisha's needs. Elisha responded with thanks and worked to return her service. We can meet the needs of others all around us. We can respond in the same way when we receive service from others.

We can ask God for help when our needs are very large. This is what the woman from Shunem did when her son died. And when others come to us in deep need, we do not have to rely on our own abilities to help. We should depend on God's power to help us serve others when we see their needs. God is able to meet every need for the one in need *and* for the one who serves. He is the greatest servant of all!

Things to Think About

1. Why did Shunammite woman try so hard to serve Elisha?
2. How did her service show her faith in God?
3. How do you respond when you receive service from others?
4. What ways—big and small— do you see to serve others in God's name?
5. How does the size of a need affect your willingness to serve someone? To ask for help? What can you learn about this from Elisha and the Shunammite woman?

2 Kings 4:8-20

- 8 One day Elisha went to Shunem. An important woman was there, who talked him into eating some food. So every time he passed by, he would turn in there to eat food.
- 9 She said to her husband, "Now I see that this is a holy man of God who is always passing by.
- 10 Let us make a little room on the second floor. And let us put a bed there for him, and a table and a chair and a lamp. Then when he comes to us, he can go in there."
- 11 One day Elisha came there and went into the room on the second floor, and rested.
- 12 He said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." When he had called her, she came and stood in front of him.
- 13 Elisha said to Gehazi, "Now tell her, 'See, you have done much for us. What can I do for you? Should I speak to the king or to the captain of the army for you?'" And she answered, "I live among my own people."
- 14 So Elisha said, "What then is to be done for her?" Gehazi answered, "She has no son, and her husband is old."
- 15 Elisha said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood at the door.
- 16 Then he said, "At this time next year you will hold a son in your arms." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God. Do not lie to your woman servant."
- 17 Later she was going to have a child and she

gave birth to a son at that time the next year, as Elisha had told her.

18 When the child was grown, he went out one day to his father who was with those gathering grain.

19 He said to his father, “O, my head, my head!” The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.”

20 When he was brought to his mother, he sat on her knees until noon. Then he died.

2 Kings 4:27-37

27 When she came to the mountain to the man of God, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came near to push her away, but the man of God said, “Let her alone. For her soul is troubled within her. The Lord has hidden it from me. He has not told me.”

28 Then she said, “Did I ask you for a son? Did I not say, ‘Do not lie to me’?”

29 Elisha said to Gehazi, “Get ready to travel. Take my walking stick and go. If you meet any man, do not greet him. If anyone greets you, do not answer him. Then lay my stick on the boy’s face.”

30 The mother of the boy said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So Elisha got up and followed her.

31 Gehazi went on before them and laid the stick on the boy’s face. But there was no sound or anything to show that the boy was

alive. So Gehazi returned to meet Elisha, and told him, “The boy is not awake.”

32 When Elisha came into the house, he saw the boy lying dead on his bed.

33 So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the Lord.

34 He went up and lay on the child. He put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. He spread himself out on him, and the child’s flesh became warm.

35 Then Elisha got up again. He walked from one end of the house to the other. Then he went up and spread himself on the child again. The boy sneezed seven times, and opened his eyes.

36 Elisha called Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. When she came to him, he said, “Take up your son.”

37 She came and fell at his feet and put her face to the ground. Then she took up her son and went out.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 4: Serving When People Work Against You

Bible Text

Nehemiah 6:1-16

Memory Verse

“You are happy when people act and talk in a bad way to you and make it very hard for you and tell bad things and lies about you because you trust in Me. Be glad and full of joy because your reward will be much in heaven.” (Matthew 5:11-12)

Word List

cupbearer: a high official in the king’s court who protected the king from being poisoned

distractions: things that keeps you from staying focused

focus: to direct attention or effort on something

ignore: to do nothing in response

lure: causing someone to go in a certain direction by offering something desirable

restored: returned to its earlier condition

vulnerable: weak; easily hurt or harmed

During the time of Nehemiah, the people of Israel were ruled by the king of Babylon. Nehemiah, an Israelite, served the king as **cupbearer**. This was a job of high trust. Nehemiah was an important man in the king’s service. In his job, he knew about

important events happening in the world. He received sad news about the people of Israel. The city of Jerusalem was in “much trouble and shame” (Nehemiah 1:3). Their city was in danger because its walls were broken. The walls around a city were the main way to keep the people safe by keeping enemies out.

Nehemiah was shocked and worried when he learned the news about his home in Jerusalem. He wept and prayed. (Nehemiah 1). But Nehemiah was over 800 miles away in the king’s palace. He did not let distance keep him from serving his people. He knew Jerusalem’s walls must be rebuilt. When the king said he could go, Nehemiah went to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2).

Nehemiah knew what to do. The Israelites knew he was a strong leader. They joined Nehemiah in his plan. Nehemiah served the people of Israel by leading them to rebuild Jerusalem. The Israelites followed him, but their enemies worked against Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:17-19).

Staying Focused on Serving

(Nehemiah 6:1-4)

Nehemiah worked fast, and the people followed his leadership. At the beginning of Nehemiah 6, the wall was **restored**. Only one thing was left to do. The gates to the city were completely destroyed and needed to be replaced (v. 1). Without gates, a city was not

safe. It could not close out its enemies. It could not keep invaders from entering the city.

The enemies of Jerusalem were not happy about this news. They knew that if Jerusalem became a strong city again, it would not be good for their own cities. They made a plan to keep the gates from being finished. They knew Nehemiah was a strong leader for Jerusalem. If they killed Nehemiah, they knew the people would lack leadership. This could keep the gates from being finished. So they made a plan to **lure** Nehemiah away from his work. They planned to kill him.

But Nehemiah's **focus** was on the work of serving God's people. And Nehemiah understood what his enemies were trying to do. He did not answer them when they asked to meet with him. He knew that his work in leading and serving the people was important. He knew what could happen if he didn't finish the job. He also knew his enemies wanted to harm him. He did not leave his work in serving God's people.

Nehemiah's enemies did not give up easily. They came back to him again and again. Still, he did not allow **distractions** from his enemies to get in the way of his work. Each time, Nehemiah **ignored** what they asked him to do. Serving God requires that one stay focused on the task. As a strong leader, Nehemiah did just that.

Overcoming Lies with Truth

(Nehemiah 6:5-9)

Nehemiah's enemies did not give up easily. Since Nehemiah ignored them, they thought up a new plan. Maybe Nehemiah did not care about what his enemies thought about his work. But they believed Nehemiah might care more about how his own people thought of him.

Sanballat did something very tricky. He wrote a letter. In that time, when a king wrote a letter, it was sealed up in a special way. After all, a king's messages were important. A king did not want his enemies to learn what he was thinking or doing. But Sanballat sent Nehemiah a different kind of letter. His letter was not sealed. He did this on purpose.

Sanballat wanted people in Jerusalem to read his letter. He wanted them to read the lies he had written about Nehemiah in his letter. He wanted people to believe bad things about Nehemiah. He wanted to turn people against Nehemiah. Nehemiah read the lies Sanballat was spreading. He must have been very angry at this. But Nehemiah did not let his anger stop him from finishing his work.

Nehemiah wanted people to know the truth. He wanted to clear his name among the people. But he did not put his own desires first. Instead, he put his service to God's people first. He answered Sanballat's lies in a simple way. He said Sanballat's words were

not true. However, Nehemiah did not waste time trying to explain the truth to all the people. Instead he kept working. Nehemiah stayed focused on finishing the gates that would protect God's people in Jerusalem.

Overcoming Threats with Courage (Nehemiah 6:10-16)

Though Nehemiah was faithful, things became even harder for him in serving. Israel's enemies had gone against him. But soon, even some Israelites turned against Nehemiah. Shemaiah was a priest from the family of Delaiah (1 Chronicles 24:18). Nehemiah's enemies paid Shemaiah to trick him (v. 12).

Shemaiah tried to trick Nehemiah into entering the house of God. Then he would be trapped by his enemies. But Nehemiah knew the special rules about entering the house of God. He knew that entering the house of God without following those rules was a sin. He would not go in even if he must face an angry mob (v. 10). He safely avoided his

enemies' plans because he had the courage to do what was right.

Nehemiah faced danger with courage and finished his service to God's people. The gates of Jerusalem were built. The city was strong again. And the nations around Jerusalem were afraid because they knew God helped Nehemiah.

Things to Remember

When we commit to serving others, we can expect some people to work against us. But God can use these problems to make us stronger. He can teach us to rely more fully on Him. The next time you face people who work against you, ask God to give you wisdom. Act with courage. And trust God to help you serve with His power and strength.

Things to Think About

1. How do you think Nehemiah felt when his enemies worked against him?
2. What do you think made Shemaiah's tricks so hard for Nehemiah?
3. What made Nehemiah successful in serving God's people?
4. What do you think God can teach you during times when others work against you?

Nehemiah 6:1-16

1 I was told to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and to the rest of those who hated us that I had built the wall again. They were told that the wall had no more open places, but I had not yet set up the doors in the gates.

2 So Sanballat and Geshem sent word to me, saying, “Come, let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono.” But they were planning to hurt or kill me.

3 So I sent men with word to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”

4 They sent word to me four times in this way, and I gave them the same answer.

5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same way for a fifth time, with an open letter in his hand.

6 In it was written, “It is said among the nations, and Gashmu says that you and the Jews are planning to turn against the king. This is why you are building the wall again. It is said that you wish to be their king.

7 You have also chosen men who tell what will happen to speak to the people in Jerusalem about you, saying, ‘A king is in Judah!’ Now this will be told to the king. So come now, let us meet to speak with each other.”

8 Then I sent word to him, saying, “No such things as you say have been done. You are

making them up in your own mind.”

9 For they all wanted to make us afraid, thinking, “Their hands will become weak and the work will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

10 When I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was at home said, “Let us meet together inside the house of God, and close the doors of the Lord’s house for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you at night.”

11 But I said, “Should a man like me run away? And could a man such as I go into the house of God to save his life? I will not go in.”

12 Then I understood that God had not sent him. He had spoken these words against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had paid him to do it.

13 He had been paid to try to make me afraid and to do as he said and sin, so they would have sinful things to say about me and put me to shame.

14 O my God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat by these works of theirs. And remember Noadiah and the rest of the men who tell what will happen who were trying to make me afraid.

15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul, in fifty-two days.

16 When all those who hated us heard about it, all the nations around us were afraid and troubled. For they saw that this work had been done with the help of our God.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 5: Leading by Example: The Suffering Servant

Bible Text

Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12

Memory Verse

“But He was hurt for our wrong-doing. He was crushed for our sins.” (Isaiah 53:5a)

Word List

describe: to tell how something looks, sounds, smells, or what someone is like

disgrace: a feeling of shame

humble: not proud or thinking of oneself as better than others

milestones: an important event in one's life

opposite: completely different

resurrection: return or rising from death

temporary: lasting for a limited time

victory: success in defeating an opponent or enemy

My oldest child blesses our family in a special way. He is the first of six children. He was the first to give his life to Jesus. He was the first to go to summer camp. He was the first to play team sports. He was the first to go to school. He was the first to drive a car. And he is the first one to go to college. His

brothers and sisters really look up to him.

They want to do the things he does. They look forward to reaching the **milestones** he has reached. They look to him as an example of what their lives should be.

They have good reason to look up to him. He is a wonderful kid! While no one is perfect, he is consistently loyal, respectful, kind-hearted, hard-working, and dependable. His teachers, coaches, and friends all think highly of him. He is a strong model for his brothers and sisters. They will do well to copy the pattern of his life. He clearly leads others by the example he sets.

Good examples are always a blessing. It is far better than learning from the mistakes of a poor example. The power of a good example is even greater than the power of strong words. It is better to *show* someone what to do than to *tell* them what to do. Watching a good example leaves a strong impact. A good example can change a life.

Jesus is the best example of service. He did not just tell people how to live a life of service. He showed people a life of service by the way He lived. God gave Isaiah words to **describe** Jesus. Jesus' life was full of service. But it was also full of suffering. Jesus suffered many things in order to serve people. In fact, His suffering on the cross changed all of history. His death and **resurrection** made a

way for people to be free from the punishment of sin. Jesus was a suffering servant. His example is one all Christians can follow.

An Unexpected Servant

(Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-2)

In Isaiah's time, things were hard for God's people. They were beaten by the Babylonians and the Persians. They were made to leave their homes in Jerusalem. They needed hope for the future. God gave Isaiah words of hope for the people. God told how He would send His special servant to bring safety and peace to His people. God described His servant to Isaiah. Isaiah wrote down God's words for the people.

Jesus was God's special servant. God sent Jesus to free people from the punishment of sin. God sent Jesus so their sins could be forgiven. But Jesus would not be the kind of servant that people expected. Isaiah's words tried to show people what Jesus would be like.

God planned for Jesus to be a great servant (v. 13). He planned for Jesus to have **victory** over sin. But Jesus would not look like a victorious servant. In fact, He would look like the exact **opposite**. His face and His body would bear ugly marks (v. 14). He would not be handsome like Saul or well-loved like David. When people saw Jesus, it would be hard to believe He was God's favored servant.

Isaiah's words teach us that the ways people look on the outside are not as important to God as they are to people. God often chooses the least of men to be the greatest of His servants. Jesus was an example of this truth. Jesus was not strong or beautiful (v. 2), but He was the Chosen One of God.

Undeserved Suffering

(Isaiah 53:4-9)

The people of Israel expected God to win over their enemies in ways they could see. They thought God's servant would be strong and would win many times in battle. They could not understand that God's servant would suffer greatly and die in **disgrace**. This was not the victory they hoped for. It was hard for them to understand Isaiah's description.

God's special servant would face hatred, suffering, troubles, and sorrows (v. 2-4). In Isaiah's time, suffering was considered as judgment from God (v. 4). This was hard for the people to understand. Yet Isaiah's description was very true. Jesus' life was marked by suffering and sorrow. But his suffering and sorrow was not a personal punishment from God. Instead, Jesus suffered as a punishment for the sins of God's people (v. 5). In fact, Jesus suffered as punishment for my sins and yours, too (v. 6).

Jesus did not deserve this kind of suffering (v. 8). He was without sin (v. 9;

2 Corinthians 5:21). Yet God's special servant accepted strong suffering in a humble way. He went along with God's plan. He did not cry out because of his suffering (v. 7).

Jesus' example shows us what it truly means to serve. It means to humble oneself. It means to face suffering for the sake of others. It means putting the good of others ahead of your own comfort. God's special servant showed us how to do this.

Victory Through Suffering **(Isaiah 53:10-12)**

The Israelites did not understand, but God knew what was needed. He knew that Jesus would be the final, perfect sacrifice for sin (v. 10). God understood that the terrible suffering of Jesus was **temporary**. He also knew that the rewards would last forever (v. 11). Jesus' suffering would destroy the power of sin. Through Jesus, God would have victory through suffering.

Things to Think About

1. In what ways was Jesus different from the special servant people expected God to send?
2. Why did Jesus suffer so greatly?
3. Do you know someone who serves like Jesus did in the face of suffering?
4. What do you find hardest about the example Jesus set?
5. What are some ways you can sacrifice for the good of someone else?

God does not do things the way people would. Jesus' life is an example of this. God's people hoped for a strong savior to destroy their enemies. God's plan was different. Instead, God's special servant destroyed sin through His own suffering, death and resurrection.

Things to Remember

Jesus was not the special servant God's people would have expected. But He was the special servant God's people needed. Jesus, the suffering servant, paid the price for our sins. He faced punishment for those sins on the cross. Through faith in Jesus, we can have the victory He won for us.

Jesus goes before us. He makes a way for our sins to be forgiven. His suffering for our sins gives us new life with God. His suffering can take away our punishment. God often chooses the weak things in this world to bring His strong purposes. Follow Jesus' example of service. Ask God how you can serve Him today.

Isaiah 52:13-15

13 See, My Servant will do well. He will be high and lifted up and honored very much.

14 Just as many looked in wonder at you, My people, so His face was marked worse than any man, and His body more than the sons of men.

15 He will surprise many nations. Kings will shut their mouths because of Him. What they had never been told about Him, they will see. And what they had never heard about Him, they will understand.

Isaiah 53:1-12

1 Who has believed what we told them? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been shown?

2 He grew up before Him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground. He has no beautiful body and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

3 He was hated and men would have nothing to do with Him, a man of sorrows and suffering, knowing sadness well. We hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was hated, and we did not think well of Him.

4 For sure He took on Himself our troubles and carried our sorrows. Yet we thought of Him as being punished and hurt by God, and made to suffer.

5 But He was hurt for our wrong-doing. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so we would have peace. He was beaten so we would be healed.

6 All of us like sheep have gone the wrong

way. Each of us has turned to his own way.

And the Lord has put on Him the sin of us all.

7 Men made it very hard for Him and caused Him to suffer, yet He did not open His mouth. He was taken like a lamb to be put to death. A sheep does not make a sound while its wool is cut and He did not open His mouth.

8 He was taken away as a prisoner and then judged. Who among the people of that day cared that His life was taken away from the earth? He was hurt because of the sin of the people who should have been punished.

9 They gave Him a grave with the sinful, but with the rich at His death, for He had done no wrong, and there was nothing false in His mouth.

10 But it was the will of the Lord to crush Him, causing Him to suffer. Because He gives His life as a gift on the altar for sin, He will see His children. Days will be added to His life, and the will of the Lord will do well in His hand.

11 He will see what the suffering of His soul brings, and will be pleased. By what He knows, the One Who is right and good, My Servant, will carry the punishment of many and He will carry their sins.

12 So I will give Him a share among the great. He will divide the riches with the strong, because He gave up His life. They thought of Him as One Who broke the Law. Yet He Himself carried the sin of many, and prayed for the sinners.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 6: A Humble Servant

Bible Text

John 13:1-17

Memory Verse

"If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them." (John 13:17)

Word List

bother: to cause someone to feel troubled, worried, or concerned

confess: admit that you did something wrong

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

Passover: a holiday to remember when God brought the Jews out of slavery in Egypt

suffering: pain from injury, illness, or loss

We have been studying God's call to service. In the first unit, we looked at people who served God before Christ came. We saw how we can answer God's call even as children. We can serve by being kind and meeting the needs of others. We must serve God even when people are against us. And we learned that serving Jesus includes **suffering**.

In the next three lessons, we will look at Jesus' call for us to serve. Jesus sets the

example for us.

On May 5, 2011, *The China Post* ran an amazing story. Something wonderful happened in a prison in Hualien, Taiwan. Eight prisoners washed the feet of their mothers while 770 people watched. Mothers wept to see their sons bowed in **humble** service. Sons were sorry for the pain they had caused their mothers. People wept as strong men bowed to serve their mothers.

Where did this idea come from? Jesus was their example. He is our example, too.

Humble Enough to Serve

(John 13:1-5)

In Jesus' time, everyone's feet got dirty. The roads were dusty, and everyone wore sandals. But there were rules about foot washing. Slaves washed the feet of guests before dinner. A Jew could never be asked to wash someone's feet. Only slaves who were not Jews did this job. Women or children could be told to wash the feet of guests.

Jesus and His followers were preparing to eat the special **Passover** dinner together. But there was no one to wash their feet before dinner. There was a wash pan, water, and a towel. But no servant. None of Jesus' 12 special followers wanted to serve the others. No one tried to wash his own feet either. So everyone entered the room and sat down at the table with dirty feet.

Jesus loved these men who had walked with Him. He wanted to show them an important lesson before His death. So Jesus got up from the table and took off His coat. Maybe they all wondered what He was doing. Then Jesus put a towel around His body. He was taking on the job of the servant.

It didn't **bother** Jesus to be the foot washer. He knew who He was. He knew that everything in heaven and earth belonged to Him. Jesus had laid down His royal robes in heaven; He had taken the humble body of a man. He did this out of love and service.

Jesus started washing feet. No one said anything. Jesus washed the feet of one man and then the next. Maybe the men were wishing they had taken up that towel to do this job. Maybe they thought about how selfish they had been. Maybe they were ashamed for Jesus to wash their dirty feet.

Judas was eating with them that night. He had already decided to betray Jesus. But Jesus loved Judas. We don't know what happened when Jesus came to Judas. But Jesus must have washed his feet, too. Jesus would not pass by Judas.

Humble Enough to Be Served **(John 13:6-11)**

Finally, it was Peter's time to have his feet washed by Jesus. Peter always asked questions. He didn't want to serve the other

men. But he did not think washing feet was a job for his Lord and teacher.

Jesus was always full of grace and truth. The *truth* was more than Peter could take in at that moment. The *grace* was that Jesus was willing to wait for Peter to understand His ways. But Peter did not understand yet. He said that Jesus would *never* wash his feet.

So Jesus explained again: We can never be clean from sin unless Jesus washes us clean. There is no other way for us to be a part of God's kingdom. When Peter understood that, he was willing for Jesus to wash all of him.

Jesus explained one more time: A person who has had a bath only needs to wash their feet. Once we have come to Christ, we don't have to be saved again and again. Christ's work has made us clean. Each day, we need to **confess** the sins of that day so Christ cleans us and restores us to Himself.

Everyone in that room had come to believe that Jesus was the Son of God. All but Judas. Judas let Jesus wash his feet, but he refused to let Jesus make his heart clean.

Have you ever been like Peter who was unwilling to be served? It is humbling to receive help from our friends.

What if you were sick for a long time? Would it be okay for a hired person to clean

your house? Probably so. But what if your good friend wanted to clean your house? Or what if your pastor wanted to? That would be hard to let happen!

But Jesus showed that serving others is full of blessings. We cannot know the blessing of Jesus if we turn away from Him. We rob ourselves of blessings when we don't let other people serve us. But we also rob them of the joy of blessing someone!

Humble Enough to Be Like Jesus (John 13:12-17)

Jesus washed the feet of every man in the room. Then He put His coat back on and sat down. Everything Jesus did was a lesson for His followers. They waited for Him to explain what this meant. They knew that Jesus expected them to serve the poor and sick. But this time, Jesus said they should serve each other!

People in Jesus' day thought it was a sign of weakness to be humble. Men thought

they had to demand respect. They were too proud to do the dirty jobs. But Jesus turned everything upside down! Jesus showed His followers how to be a humble servant. Being a humble servant became a good thing after this night.

By the next day, Jesus would lay down His life when He died on the cross for our sins. This was the most important way He could serve us. We could not clean away our own sins. Jesus was the only one who was holy enough to pay for our sins.

Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve. He didn't wash the feet of these men to make them feel bad. He washed their feet to set an example. He washed their feet to teach them — and show them — how to love others by serving them.

Jesus is our master. We are His servants. Yet Jesus served us in the most important way possible by dying for our sins. We don't have to serve someone by dying for their sins. Jesus did that! But we can follow Jesus' example by serving others. We will bless them and we will be blessed.

Things to Think About

1. Look at your life. Are there areas in which you are too proud to serve others?
2. Have you ever tried to tell Jesus what you would not ever do for Him?
3. Have you ever done what Jesus said, even when you didn't understand it fully?
4. Has someone served you in the name of Jesus? What kinds of things have others done for you?

Things to Remember

The men in that Taiwan prison will never forget the day they washed their mothers' feet. Their mothers will never forget that day either. Blessings flowed for both the men and their families. Everyone saw Jesus

in what the prisoners did. Even the newspaper said that Jesus was their example. Others see Jesus in us when we are humble enough to serve and be served.

John 13:1-17

1 It was before the special religious gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt. Jesus knew the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had loved His own who were in the world. He loved them to the end.

2 He and His followers were having supper. Satan had put the thought into the heart of Judas Iscariot of handing Jesus over to the leaders of the country.

3 Jesus knew the Father had put everything into His hands. He knew He had come from God and was going back to God.

4 Jesus got up from the supper and took off His coat. He picked up a cloth and put it around Him.

5 Then He put water into a wash pan and began to wash the feet of His followers. He dried their feet with the cloth He had put around Himself.

6 Jesus came to Simon Peter. Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You going to wash my feet?”

7 Jesus answered him, “You do not understand now what I am doing but you will later.”

8 Peter said to Him, “I will never let You wash my feet.” Jesus said, “Unless I wash you, you will not be a part of Me.”

9 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, do not wash only my feet, but wash my hands and my head also.”

10 Jesus said to him, “Anyone who has washed his body needs only to wash his feet. Then he is clean all over. You are all clean except one.”

11 Jesus knew who was going to hand Him over to the leaders. That is why He said, “You are all clean except one.”

12 Jesus washed their feet and put on His coat. Then He sat down again and said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you?”

13 You call Me Teacher and Lord. You are right because that is what I am.

14 I am your Teacher and Lord. I have washed your feet. You should wash each other’s feet also.

15 I have done this to show you what should be done. You should do as I have done to you.

16 For sure, I tell you, a workman who is owned by someone is not greater than his owner. One who is sent is not greater than the one who sent him.

17 If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 7: Serve Like Jesus

Bible Text

John 15:9-17

Memory Verse

"I have loved you just as My Father has loved Me. Stay in My love." (John 15:9)

Word List

constant: happening all the time

distracted: unable to think about or give full attention to

insider: a member of a group who has special knowledge about it

sacrifice: giving up something that you want to keep because you want to help someone

Betsy makes a beautiful pie. She makes the pie crust herself. She doesn't buy it in the store. Once, a lady asked Betsy, "Will you show me how to make my pie crust look and taste just like yours?" Of course, Betsy was willing to share what she knew. So the lady came to Betsy's home to learn how to make pies. Betsy began to mix the pie crust. The lady said, "I don't want to do all this work. I just want my pie crust to look and taste like yours." Betsy's pie crust comes from making

it Betsy's way. It's not easy, but it's worth the effort.

We all want the joy and love of Jesus in our lives. We want to live our lives with God like Jesus did. And we all want lives full of the fruit of Christ. But many of us are like this lady. We want the *reward* without doing the *work*. Christ's joy, love, and fruit come from doing things His way. It's not easy, but it's worth the effort.

Stay with Jesus and Find Joy

(John 15:9-11)

What would you say if you knew you would never see a good friend again? Would you want your friends and family to know how much you love them? Would you want to tell them the secret to a happy life?

Jesus knew this would be the last time He would be with His followers. For three years, He showed them His love by living with them. They could see and feel His love every day. They were happy while Jesus was with them. What would happen to them when He returned to His Father?

Jesus knew the secret to real joy came from staying close to His Father. Jesus always knew how much His Father loved Him. God's love made it possible for Jesus to love us.

It is the deepest desire of our hearts to be with God. God made us that way. We have complete joy when we are with God.

Sometimes we get **distracted** from God's love. Our joy fades when we move away from God. Jesus knew the only way to be happy: To remember how much God loves us all the time. The most important thing in our day is our time with God. We feel God's love when we spend time with Him.

Some people tell us that God's love comes only when we follow His rules. But He doesn't love us only when we obey; God loves us all the time. The beautiful thing about God is that He *is* love. When we spend time with God, we know we are loved. We know God's joy. When we get distracted from our time with God, we miss out on God's love. We miss out on true joy.

God's love comes to us because of who He is. He is eternal, so His love for us is **constant**. He does not give His love some days, but keep it from us on other days. His love never ends.

Jesus spent time with God in prayer. Jesus knew what true joy was. We also can know this same joy by following Christ's example.

Friends of Jesus Show His Love (John 15:12-15)

Jesus said they should love each other the way God loves. He explained God's love like this: Jesus laid down His life for our sin. We are expected to put aside our selfishness to

love each other. God's love is unselfish love. He does what is best for those He loves. God's love **sacrifices** for those He loves. Jesus is God's best expression of His love. Jesus paid the debt for our sin that we could not pay.

Most of us will never have to die for someone else. But all of us are called to lay aside our selfish lives to bring others to Christ. This might mean sacrificing time, money, our attention, or comfort for someone who needs to feel God's love.

It is not easy to follow someone that you don't like or someone who is cruel. But it's easy to follow the lead of someone that you love. It's never hard to follow God's call when we know how much He loves us.

Jesus' followers would have said that He was their Master and Teacher. They were His servants and followers. They were willing to follow Him because they knew He loved them. It must have surprised them when Jesus said they were His friends.

In the Roman world, *friend* meant something very special. Servants obeyed their masters without knowing why. The master did not explain his reasons. If a person was a "friend of the emperor," he was an **insider**. He knew what the emperor was planning and helped him do what he wanted.

It was an even greater honor to be a servant of King Jesus. Surely these men were

glad to be among Jesus' closest followers. But they still thought of themselves as servants. Many times they did not understand why Jesus did the things He did. Now, Jesus called them His friends! He said they were insiders — they were in His closest circle. He told them His plans, His purpose, and His mission. They would help Him share the Good News of His love with the world because they were His friends.

Be Like Jesus and Bear Fruit

(John 15:16-17)

I cannot say I am someone's friend unless they also call me a friend. But friendship with Jesus is different. He chooses us first. We could not be friends with Christ unless He reached out to us first.

Jesus chose these men to spread the Good News. He was handing over His work to them. They had seen the fruit of Jesus' life.

Things to Think About

1. Is there something in your life you would like to have but are unwilling to work for it?
2. How does joy come from staying with Jesus?
3. What can you do now to sacrifice for and serve your friends and family?
4. In today's world, what would it mean for us to lay down our lives for a friend?
5. Look at the list of the fruit of the Spirit. Which one or ones do you need to ask God to add to your life?

Now they would work for Him and have that same lasting fruit in their lives.

The fruit of the Spirit shows the world what a mighty and merciful God we serve. Galatians 5:22-23 lists the spiritual fruit we can expect when we live like Christ lived:

Love

Joy

Peace

Not giving up

Being kind

Being good

Having faith

Being gentle

Being the boss over our own desires.

Do you give up too easily? Are there times when kindness is not your first thought? Jesus said if we ask for any of these fruits, the Father will give them to us. The place to start is by loving each other. Then ask God to give you God's fruit in your life. Those around you will see the change in your life and want to know the One who did it!

Things to Remember

We cannot have the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control of Christ unless we do things His way. The first thing is to spend time with God every day. Read God's Word every day. Pray every day. This reminds

us how much He loves us. Then we will want to share His love with others. As we stay in His love, we will become more like Christ. Our joy-filled, fruitful lives will draw others to become friends of Jesus, too.

John 15:9-17

9 I have loved you just as My Father has loved Me. Stay in My love.

10 If you obey My teaching, you will live in My love. In this way, I have obeyed My Father's teaching and live in His love.

11 I have told you these things so My joy may be in you and your joy may be full.

12 "This is what I tell you to do: Love each other just as I have loved you.

13 No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends.

14 You are My friends if you do what I tell you.

15 I do not call you servants that I own anymore. A servant does not know what his owner is doing. I call you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from My Father.

16 You have not chosen Me, I have chosen you. I have set you apart for the work of bringing in fruit. Your fruit should last. And whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you.

17 "This is what I tell you to do: Love each other.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 8: Serve and Be Blessed

Bible Text

Matthew 25:31-46

Memory Verse

“Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’”

(Matthew 25:40)

Word List

authority: the power or right to make decisions

blessed: enjoying happiness, favored by God

famine: when many people do not have enough food to eat

judge: to decide, to form an opinion

satisfied: content, not lacking anything

It is easy to **judge** which answers are right and wrong on a math quiz. It is not so easy to judge a piece of art. If we like the way the artist painted, we might judge it better. If the art is hard to understand, we might give it a lower grade.

Judges need to be wise. They need **authority** to make decisions about what they judge. Not every judge is wise or has that authority. But Jesus is the perfect judge.

All Are Judged (Matthew 25:31-33)

One day Jesus will come in all His heavenly glory. We will see Him like He is in heaven. Everyone will know that Jesus is Lord on that day. We will all know He has the right and the authority to judge us. Every angel in heaven will come with Him. He will sit down on His throne in all His shining greatness. Every nation on earth will come before Him. There will be no one left out on that day. Then Jesus will separate His own from those who have rejected Him.

Everyone in Jesus’ day understood about separating goats and sheep. Shepherds often kept both goats and sheep in the same flocks.

But sheep and goats need different things. Goats want new leaves and twigs. They are brush eaters. Sheep want grass. Goats enjoy climbing over rocky cliffs. Sheep do not. Sheep have heavy wool to keep them warm. Goats do not want to be cold at night. So shepherds separate the goats from the sheep. In Israel, most sheep are white and most goats are black. So it is easy to tell the sheep from the goats.

People who believe in God and love Jesus live in the same world with people who have rejected God. We can’t tell who is a follower of Jesus just by looking at them. But Jesus sees and knows the hearts of everyone.

He can separate His followers from unbelievers because He knows the lives we have lived. So when that final day comes, Jesus will have no trouble separating us. Unbelievers will go away from God. Believers will all be together with God in heaven. That's a promise we can depend on.

The Blessed Are Blessed Again (Matthew 25:34-40)

In Lesson 6, we read John 13:17. Jesus told His followers, "If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them." Another way to say this is, "if you know God wants you to serve others, you will be **blessed** if you do it."

The blessed were surprised when Jesus blessed them again. They did not understand that they had been serving Jesus. But Jesus said that even the smallest act of kindness is service to Him. Serving the least important person is the same as serving Jesus.

What are some ways we serve Jesus by serving others?

- Feeding the hungry in our city
- Giving clothes and blankets to people in need
- Sending food when **famine** comes to a country
- Digging wells to help poor people have clean water to drink

- Giving water filters to make dirty water clean.
- Building orphanages and children's homes to take care of children whose parents have died
- Working in hospitals or clinics to serve sick or hurting people
- Helping people in prison to learn new ways to live and to learn of God's love

When we serve people in these ways, we are really serving Jesus. The blessed have been called by God to serve and have obeyed that call.

The blessing in heaven is that we will be with God forever. From the very beginning of time, God prepared heaven as a place for His children to live with Him. When we see God face to face, we will be **satisfied**. We will not want anything more than to be with God forever.

The Guilty Are Sent Away (Matthew 25:41-46)

Finally, those who have rejected Jesus will be judged and punished. They refused to believe His Word and obey Him. Jesus will not judge them for the evil things they have done. He will judge them for what they did *not* do. They rejected Jesus and the forgiveness He offered them. They did not see Jesus in those around them; they refused to

serve others even in the simplest ways.

This does not mean we can work our way into heaven by serving others or doing good things. No, the most important thing is that we trust God to forgive us of our sins because of Jesus' death on the cross. That is the only way to get into heaven and have life that lasts forever with God. He wants us to share this truth with others by the way we live and love.

How we live shows *who* we are following. Can others see that you are following Jesus in what you do?

If we refuse to help those who are hurting, we do not have the heart of God. When our hearts are cold toward God, they are cold toward others, too. We live selfishly and want more and more for ourselves. We are never satisfied because what our souls really want is to be with God. What our heart really needs is to know God's love and joy.

People who reject God cannot be with

Things to Think About

1. What if Jesus came today to judge your church? Would He see you serving the "least of these?"
2. When you look at a stranger in need, do you ever think, "*He or she may be Jesus?*"
3. How does the way you live prove you have answered God's call to serve others?
4. Who can you serve this week with simple acts of kindness and love?
5. What are some simple ways you can serve others?

Him in heaven. Life away from God is always punishment; instead, it is life with the devil, the one who is all evil. Jesus explained that the devil's place is full of fire and suffering that lasts forever. That place of fire was not made for people. It was made for the devil and all who follow him.

But heaven? Heaven is a place of satisfaction and happiness with God forever.

Things to Remember

True service to God is simple. We offer simple things: a cup of water, a warm coat, a place to spend the night, a visit to the sick or someone in prison. We do not have to do great, amazing things to serve Jesus. These are the things God wants us to give others. Every follower of Jesus is called to be the servant of others. We do not leave these jobs to the pastor or teachers. All of us can serve in some small way.

Our reason for serving is not to win points with Jesus. The blessed were not aware they had been serving Jesus. Their hearts had been changed by their love for Jesus. Their changed hearts moved them to service. They were not trying to earn heaven as a prize.

Imagine how eagerly we would offer Jesus our coat or a drink of water. When we see the image of God in everyone we meet, we are eager to serve Jesus in them.

Matthew 25:31-46

31 “When the Son of Man comes in His shining-greatness, He will sit down on His throne of greatness. All the angels will be with Him.

32 All the nations of the earth will be gathered before Him. He will divide them from each other as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

33 He will put the sheep on His right side, but the goats He will put on His left side.

34 “Then the King will say to those on His right side, ‘Come, you who have been called by My Father. Come into the holy nation that has been made ready for you before the world was made.

35 For I was hungry and you gave Me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me water to drink. I was a stranger and you gave Me a room.

36 I had no clothes and you gave Me clothes to wear. I was sick and you cared for Me. I was in prison and you came to see Me.’

37 “Then those that are right with God will say, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You? When did we see You thirsty and give You a drink?

38 When did we see You a stranger and give You a room? When did we see You had no clothes and we gave You clothes?

39 And when did we see You sick or in prison and we came to You?’

40 Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’

41 “Then the King will say to those on His left side, ‘Go away from Me! You are guilty! Go into the fire that lasts forever. It has been made ready for the devil and his angels.

42 For I was hungry but you did not give Me food to eat. I was thirsty but you did not give Me water to drink.

43 I was a stranger but you did not give Me a room. I had no clothes but you did not give Me clothes. I was sick and in prison but you did not come to see Me.’

44 “Then they will ask, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger? When did we see You without clothes or sick or in prison and did not care for You?’

45 Then He will say to them, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

46 These will go to the place where they will be punished forever. But those right with God will have life that lasts forever.”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 9: Serve Using Your Gifts

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 12:4-13, 27-31

Memory Verse

“The Holy Spirit works in each person in one way or another for the good of all.”
(1 Corinthians 12:7)

Word List

divided: not agreeing about something; holding different ideas that do not agree

purpose: the reason why something is done or used; an intention or plan

solve: to find the right answer to a problem

unite: to agree or to be together about something; to work together for one purpose

Have you ever wanted to do something but did not really understand how? I have. I remember crying in Science class because I did not understand how to do what the teacher told us to do.

This problem happened in the church in Corinth. Many of the believers in the church were new Christians. They were trying to learn how to live as followers of Christ. But

they did not know how to do it. They had many questions about how to live for Jesus. Paul wrote them a letter to answer their questions. One of their questions was about how to work together. Paul wrote to tell them how to serve one another well.

The Holy Spirit Gifts the Church (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

The church in Corinth had many different problems. The New Testament books of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians are Paul’s letters to them to help them **solve** their problems. The answer to how to serve each other well starts with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the One who brings everyone together as one. They all had the same Holy Spirit. Today we also have the same Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives each of us special strengths or abilities. We call these “gifts.” The Holy Spirit helps us to know what our gifts are. Then He helps us know how to use them.

Everyone who is a believer has at least one gift. There are many gifts, and Paul used three different words to tell about them. One word simply means “gift.” Another word means “service,” and the last one means “working.” When we put all these meanings together, we can see God’s plan for our gifts. They are gifts. We do not earn them or

deserve them. And they are not for us. We use them to serve others and to work for the Lord.

We all have different gifts, but we have the same God. This should **unite** us. But the church in Corinth was not united. Some people thought they were better than others. They thought their gifts were more important than others' gifts. This kind of thinking was a problem. The church was **divided**.

The Purpose of God's Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

What are these gifts that should unite the church? Paul did not name all the gifts, but he did name nine of them. They are all important. There is not one that is more important than others. Every believer should be willing to help wherever help is needed. But each believer will have a strength that comes straight from God. God gives us these gifts so that we can work together. We use our gifts to serve one another.

This list of gifts begins with teaching wisdom. The next is teaching what you know to be true. One believer can have the gift of faith and another the gift of healing. One gift is doing powerful works, and another is speaking God's Word. One member of the church can tell the difference between the Holy Spirit and false spirits. Another member can speak in special sounds that others cannot understand. However, the church is united

when another member can tell the others what these special sounds mean.

Paul wanted to make sure everyone knew the truth about the gifts. The **purpose** of our gifts is not to make us feel better than others. There is no reason to be proud of your gift or to want the same gift as someone else. The purpose of God's gifts is to make us servants. We are commanded to serve the church and make it the best that it can be.

Do you know what your gift is? Do you know how to use it to help others? Do you know how to use it to help the church? We have a great God who gives good gifts to all His people. There is no reason to want something you don't have. But there is a good reason to find out what your gift is.

The Church Is the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27-31)

Paul used the body as a picture of the church. Every part of the body has something it does well. Every part of the body has things it does not do well. For example, an eye sees, but it does not hear. There are many different parts of the body. When a body is healthy, it works together in a very special way. When all the parts of the body are united, it works the way it was made to work.

The church is the body of Christ Jesus. Every person in the church is a part of His body. Every part has something it does well.

Every part has things it does not do well. There are many different parts in a church. If it is healthy, the church works together in a very special way. When all the parts of the body of Christ are united, the church works the way it was made to work. The one body is given gifts by the same Holy Spirit.

Most believers have followed Jesus and been baptized. This is also a picture of being united together. Paul talked about baptism here, but he was talking about becoming one in the Holy Spirit. No matter who we are in the world, the Holy Spirit makes us one body, the body of Jesus.

In verse 28, Paul gave a second list of servants in the church. This second list includes missionaries, preachers and teachers. The rest of the list is almost the same. But it also includes church members who help others who are in need. Every person in the church has one of these gifts. Do you see

Things to Think About

1. What things do you do well as a believer in Jesus? What things are very hard for you?
2. Tell about your gift from the Holy Spirit. How do you know this is your gift?
3. In what ways do you serve God and others? How are you helping the body of Christ, the church?
4. In what ways do you help the church to be united as a body?
5. Do you see God's gifts in others? How do you help them to see and use their gifts without wanting what they have?

yourself in this list? All believers have gifts to use to help the church.

Being united does not mean we all do the same thing. What would happen to the church if everyone was a missionary or a preacher? What would it sound like if everyone was a teacher? What would it look like if everyone could do powerful works? Who would serve the church if everyone was doing the healing? Who would be teaching? It is very important that every part of the body does what it was made to do. It is very important that every member of the church knows and uses his or her own gifts. Everyone must work together. This is how the body will work together and stay healthy.

Things to Remember

When we are saved through faith, the Holy Spirit shows us the gifts God has given us. These gifts are for us to use to help and strengthen the church. As each person does his or her own work, the church grows and is very healthy. If we do not use our gifts, or if we want the gifts that others have, we become divided. When we are divided, the body of Christ is not healthy. It does not work well, and the church suffers.

It is important to know and use your own gift the best way you know how. Pray and ask God to show you your gift and the best way to use it to help the church.

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

4 There are different kinds of gifts. But it is the same Holy Spirit Who gives them.

5 There are different kinds of work to be done for Him. But the work is for the same Lord.

6 There are different ways of doing His work. But it is the same God who uses all these ways in all people.

7 The Holy Spirit works in each person in one way or another for the good of all.

8 One person is given the gift of teaching words of wisdom. Another person is given the gift of teaching what he has learned and knows. These gifts are by the same Holy Spirit.

9 One person receives the gift of faith. Another person receives the gifts of healing. These gifts are given by the same Holy Spirit.

10 One person is given the gift of doing powerful works. Another person is given the gift of speaking God's Word. Another person is given the gift of telling the difference between the Holy Spirit and false spirits. Another person is given the gift of speaking in special sounds. Another person is given the gift of telling what these special sounds mean.

11 But it is the same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, Who does all these things. He gives to each person as He wants to give.

12 Our own body has many parts. When all these many parts are put together, they are only one body. The body of Christ is like this.

13 It is the same way with us. Jews or those who are not Jews, men who are owned by someone or men who are free to do what they want to do, have all been baptized into the one body by the same Holy Spirit. We have all received the one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:27-31

27 You are all a part of the body of Christ.

28 God has chosen different ones in the church to do His work. First, there are missionaries. Second, there are preachers or those who speak for God. And third, there are teachers.

He has also chosen those who do powerful works and those who have the gifts of healing. And He has chosen those who help others who are in need and those who are able to lead others in work and those who speak in special sounds.

29 Are they all missionaries? No. Are they all preachers or those who speak for God? No. Do they all do powerful works? No.

30 Do they all have the gifts of healing? No. Do they all speak in special sounds? No. Are they all able to tell what the special sounds mean? No.

31 But from your heart you should want the best gifts. Now I will show you even a better way.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 10: Serve as Missionaries

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Memory Verse

“We are Christ’s missionaries. God is speaking to you through us. We are speaking for Christ and we ask you from our hearts to turn from your sins and come to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Word List

creation: everything that is made by God; anything made new because of the work of Jesus

example: a person or way of acting that should be followed by others

representatives: people who act or speak for someone else

As a little girl, I was in a program at my church called Girls in Action. It is for girls from first to sixth grade. In Girls in Action, I learned about missions and missionaries all over the world. I heard about people moving to and living in places that I had never heard of before. I learned many Bible verses about telling others about Jesus. I dreamed of becoming a missionary, too. I prayed that God could use me when I grew up

to tell others about Him.

But I did not have to wait until I was grown up. In middle school, I met Sylvia, a girl my age from Germany. She was new to our country, but she was learning English quickly. We became good friends.

One day she invited me to come and spend the night with her and her family. I did not think my parents would allow me to go because they had not met her family. To my surprise, they said “yes!” This was the first miracle of the day.

After dinner, we went to the basement of her home where she had her room and a large area of her own. We began talking about what we believed, we talked most of the night. She did not know anything about Jesus because her family had never been to church.

I do not remember much of what we said that night, but I do remember the feeling that God was speaking through me. I was being used by Him to tell Sylvia about Jesus. Before we fell asleep, she put her trust in Jesus Christ. It was a great miracle! And I knew it was part of God’s plan for Sylvia!

Our Reasons for What We Do

(2 Corinthians 5:11-15)

The word *missionary* has different meanings to different people. Some people in some countries are taught that missionaries are bad. It is important that we make the

meaning clear here. A missionary is a person sent by God to tell others about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This is what all followers of Jesus Christ have been called by God to do. Some of us are gifted in this, but we all have been told by Jesus to do this. Jesus said, “Go and make followers of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19). All followers of Jesus are His **representatives** in this world.

What are our reasons for speaking about Christ? The most important reason is obedience. We tell about Jesus because He told us to. We do it to please God. We love and respect God. First Peter 2:17c says, “Honor God with love and fear.” We are not to be afraid of God, but to honor Him, knowing how great He is in every way!

Another reason we share the Good News is because of love. We love others because Christ loves us. It is important for us to care about their hearts. We are to love them from the inside out. This is what God does!

Lastly, we know the truth. This is a great reason to share the Good News. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that Jesus died for everyone! He died, and He rose again from the dead for us. He did this so that everyone who believes the truth about Jesus can live with Him forever. Everyone needs to know this! That is why we do what we do.

New Creation People

(2 Corinthians 5:16-17)

What happens when a person trusts in Christ? God makes him or her a new person. In the beginning, God created people. Then sin brought death and ruin to God’s good **creation**. But when someone trusts in Christ, He creates him or her again, like a new person on the inside. Believers in Jesus are new creation people.

During Jesus’ life, many people only looked at how He seemed from the outside. Many people did not understand Him. As His followers, we must not do that. We must not judge what others are like by looking at them. This is wrong thinking.

God makes people new on the inside, which we cannot see. But we can see the changes He makes in them. We can see their joy. We can see their peace. We can see their love for others.

Paul knew all about being changed on the inside. Paul’s story of change is in the book of Acts. In his old life, Paul thought that Jesus was a bad person who was telling lies about Himself. When Paul became a follower of Jesus, he changed. He became a new man. Everything changed for Paul. He had a new purpose in life. He loved Jesus and wanted to live like Jesus. And he had new work to do. He wanted to tell everyone about how God had changed his life.

Bringing Others to Jesus

(2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

Jesus changed Paul's life when Paul hated Him. Jesus gave Paul a strong love for others. He gave Paul a love for those who do not know Him. Jesus gave Paul a love for people who were not like him. Now Paul's work was to bring these people to Jesus.

This is the work of all of us who follow Jesus. This work is about telling and showing as many people as possible that God loves them. He wants everyone to come to Him. He wants to forgive everyone. He wants to give everyone a new and changed life. It is our work to love others enough to tell and show them this truth.

Christians: Missionaries for Christ

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

Paul was a Christian, a follower of Jesus. He was a missionary. Paul represented Jesus in every place that he went. His love

Things to Think About

1. How do you show your love to others?
2. Do you serve God? How and why?
3. If you are a follower of Jesus, does anyone know that about you? How do they know?
4. How are you a new creation in Christ? What changed in you?
5. How can you serve God as a missionary this week?
6. Do you know someone like Sylvia who does not know about Jesus? Will you serve Christ and them?

was an **example** for the church at Corinth.

They were also called to represent Jesus in their church and in their community.

To represent Jesus, they needed to be united and not divided. They needed to be made right with God. There was sin in the church, and Paul told them to turn away from their sins and go back to God. God would forgive them. Paul wanted them to remember that Christ died so that they could be made right with God. He would help them serve as the Christian missionaries He had called them to be. They could tell and show everyone what Jesus had done for them.

Things to Remember

The need for Jesus today has not changed. The world needs a change of heart. The world needs to be changed from the inside out. There is so much hate and fear everywhere. The world and all of us need Jesus more than ever.

So many people have not heard the name of Jesus. They do not know that there is a God who loves them so much that He became a man and died for their sins. It is a hard truth to understand, but it changes lives. As believers, we all need to be missionaries to tell the world about Jesus. If we all share Jesus with those who do not know Him, the whole world could be changed. May it be so!

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

11 Because of this, we know the fear of God. So we try to get men to put their trust in Christ. God knows us. I hope that your hearts know me well also.

12 We do not want to sound as if we think we are so important. Instead, we are making it easy for you to be proud of us. In that way, you will be able to tell them about us. They always talk about the way people look, but do not care about their hearts.

13 Are we crazy to talk like this? It is all because of what God has done. If we are using our minds well, it is for you.

14 For the love of Christ puts us into action. We are sure that Christ died for everyone. So, because of that, everyone has a part in His death.

15 Christ died for everyone so that they would live for Him. They should not live to please themselves but for Christ Who died on a cross and was raised from the dead for them.

16 So from now on, we do not think about what people are like by looking at them. We even thought about Christ that way one time. But we do not think of Him that way anymore.

17 For if a man belongs to Christ, he is a new person. The old life is gone. New life has begun.

18 All this comes from God. He is the One Who brought us to Himself when we hated

Him. He did this through Christ. Then He gave us the work of bringing others to Him.

19 God was in Christ. He was working through Christ to bring the whole world back to Himself. God no longer held men's sins against them. And He gave us the work of telling and showing men this.

20 We are Christ's missionaries. God is speaking to you through us. We are speaking for Christ and we ask you from our hearts to turn from your sins and come to God.

21 Christ never sinned but God put our sin on Him. Then we are made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 11: Serve by Giving Generously

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Memory Verse

“They gave as much as they could because they wanted to.” (2 Corinthians 8:3)

Word List

force: to make someone do something that they do not want to do

generously: freely giving or sharing money and other things (time, home, help) in more than the amount that is needed or is normal

tithe: one-tenth part of the money earned by a person that is given back to God

I know Christians who give **generously**. One person I know helps a missionary pay for his airplane trips. Another gives money to others. When she hears about someone in need, she prays. She asks God how He wants to help her. Then she obeys. God is pleased when we give generously to others in need.

I know a missionary couple who lives on the other side of the world. They have

made it their goal to grow in their giving. Every year they give one percent more than the year before. They started with the normal 10 percent that the Bible tells believers to give. This is called a **tithe**. Now they give 15 percent. They plan to continue giving more and more until God tells them it is enough.

There are 2,350 verses in the Bible about money. Jesus spoke more about money and how to use it than He did about heaven and hell. How we use our money and all that God has given us is important to God. We obey Him when we gladly share with others.

The Example of the Macedonian Churches (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

Paul wanted to teach the church in Corinth how to give generously. He wanted them to know that God owns everything. They needed to understand that when they gave to needy people, they were obeying God. He taught them by using an example. He told them about some very poor churches who gave generously. These churches were in an area called Macedonia.

Paul first went to Macedonia after he had a dream. In his dream, a man asked him to come to Macedonia to help (Acts 16:9-10). Paul told the Good News to the people of three different cities in the area of Macedonia. Many people decided to follow Jesus. And

churches were started in those cities.

The churches of Macedonia had many troubles, but they were not sad. They had joy. They were very poor, but they were not unhappy. They gave generously with joy. They wanted to give to the churches in Jerusalem who were in need. They wanted to do everything they could do to help them.

Paul used this example to teach the church of Corinth. The first step in giving generously is to give yourself to the Lord. Trouble is not a sign that God is angry or unhappy. Jesus said, “In the world you will have much trouble. But take hope! I have power over the world” (John 16:33b). These churches knew that they could trust the Lord even in their troubles. They gave their worries to God and trusted Him with their lives.

The next step was for them to give themselves to the leaders, like Paul. They asked for help to do what the Lord wanted them to do. Paul knew what they could do. He was happy to show them where the need was. He knew how their gifts could help. They gave because of their great love for God and for other Christians.

The Lesson for the Corinthian Christians (2 Corinthians 8:6-12)

Paul stopped talking about the Macedonian churches and started talking to the church at Corinth. He had several lessons

he wanted to teach them. He wanted them to take a close look at themselves. Had they given generously? What did they need to do now? What was left to be done?

Titus was another worker who traveled with Paul. Titus was the one who had started putting the money in one place to take to the churches in Jerusalem. But the gift was not finished. We do not know why this gift was not finished. Now Paul asked Titus to go back and finish what he had started. Paul told him to help them finish giving out of love.

Paul gave them lots of praise for the many things that they had done well. He called them rich in their faith. They were rich in preaching, learning, and their strong desire to help. They were also rich in their love for Paul and the other workers. They needed to learn to be rich in their giving, too. They had so much to give.

Paul was not going to **force** them to give generously. He wanted them to want to give. He wanted them to give because they loved others. He wanted them to give as a way to prove their true love for others.

He had given them the example of the churches in Macedonia. There is another example of giving, the example of Jesus. Jesus showed His loving-favor by leaving the riches in heaven to come to earth and be poor. Because of His love for us, He became poor for our good. When we have Him, we have

everything we need.

The church in Corinth was the first one to want to give money for this need. Paul said now they needed to finish it. It had been a year. That was too long! It would take a long time to get the money where it was needed. And the need was great. The church needed to finish what they had started. It is a good lesson to learn to finish what you start.

Paul wanted them to give generously with joy, not sadness. He told them to give only from what they had. It is not a good idea to give from money that you hope to have later. It is a good idea to give the best that you can from what you have now.

Generous Giving (2 Corinthians 8:13-15)

In an earlier letter, Paul told them that the church is like a body (see lesson 9). In a healthy body, all the parts do what they were made to do. The body only works well when each part does its job well. This is true of

people, but it is also true of churches.

Different churches do not do the same work. Each church is important. The body of Christ works the best when each church does its part.

Paul wanted this church to know that their help for the church in Jerusalem could one day help them. Someday the church in Jerusalem might have enough to share with others. The church in Corinth might someday need help from the church in Jerusalem. Just like the body, each part needs the other more at one time than at another.

One more example would help them to have a good reason to finish giving. Paul told a story that they all knew from the book of Exodus (16:17-18). God had given the people of Israel bread to eat while they were in the desert. Some got more and some got less, but everyone got what they needed. The gifts from each of the churches would be only what they could give. But it would be the right amount for the needs of the church in Jerusalem.

Things to Think About

1. Have you heard church leaders preach about giving? How often?
2. Why do people not want to hear about how they should give? Is this a difficult lesson for you?
3. Why do you give to people in need and to the work of God?
4. How do you show your love for God through your giving? How else can you serve God through giving?
5. What part of the body of Christ do you feel you are? What does this mean for your giving?

Things to Remember

We should give because it is what we want to do. We should give with joy because we know that Jesus gave everything to us. We should give for the right reasons. We can show our love for God and for the body of Christ, the church, as we give to those in need. And we should give generously because God has been generous in His love for us.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

1 Christian brothers, we want you to know how the loving-favor of God has been shown in the churches in the country of Macedonia.

2 They have been put to the test by much trouble, but they have much joy. They have given much even though they were very poor.

3 They gave as much as they could because they wanted to.

4 They asked from their hearts if they could help the Christians in Jerusalem.

5 It was more than we expected. They gave themselves to the Lord first. Then they gave themselves to us to be used as the Lord wanted.

6 We asked Titus to keep on helping you finish this act of love. He was the one to begin this.

7 You are rich in everything. You have faith. You can preach. You have much learning. You have a strong desire to help. And you have love for us. Now do what you should about giving also.

8 I am not saying that you must do this, but I have told you how others have helped. This is a way to prove how true your love is.

9 You know of the loving-favor shown by our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, but He became poor for your good. In that way, because He became poor, you might become rich.

10 This is what I think. You had better finish what you started a year ago. You were the first to want to give a gift of money.

11 Now do it with the same strong desires you had when you started.

12 If a man is ready and willing to give, he should give of what he has, not of what he does not have.

13 This does not mean that others do not have to give and you have to give much. You should share alike.

14 You have more than you need now. When you have need, then they can help you. You should share alike.

15 The Holy Writings say, "The man who gathered much did not have too much. The man who did not gather much had enough."

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 12: Serving Shows Our Faith

Bible Text

James 2:14-26

Memory Verse

“A man becomes right with God by what he does and not by faith only.” (James 2:24)

Word List

confused: unable to understand or think clearly;
rescue: to save from danger, harm, or death

I graduated from high school in 1974. In 2014, a friend I had not seen since high school sent me a surprise message on Facebook Messenger: “Dear Janet, I want to thank you, and tell you about something I saw in high school. I saw in you something that made me want to be a better Christian; I wanted to have that light that shone through you of Christ Jesus. Thank you for living your life as a Christian in high school. It has made me a better woman. Love, A....”

What a beautiful gift she gave me in sharing this with me 40 years later. I had no idea that she saw Christ’s light in me. I did

not know how God used me in her life. This message came during a time of trouble for me. It was a wonderful way for God to show His love to me and to teach me the lesson that what we do is as important as what we say.

James wrote this book to help a Jewish church learn this lesson. He wrote about many lessons. He taught about being thankful for everything, about not doubting, and about remembering that life is short. But most readers of the Bible think about his lessons on faith and doing right when they think of the book of James.

Faith Without Doing (James 2:14-17)

James taught that serving means doing the right thing for those who are in need. He also talked about faith. James asked questions about faith and doing. He wanted his readers to think about what faith is. What if a person does not serve or do anything to prove that he or she has faith? Is that kind of faith real? Does it save the person from the punishment of sin? If people have true faith, can it be seen in what they do? If they do not do the things that they should, does that mean that they do not have faith? These are great questions for us to think about.

James gave an example. Imagine a person who does not have clothes or food. This person is a Christian and is looking for help. We can tell the person to keep warm and

eat well. But that does not help the person. They need food and clothing. What does it say about you if you do not give that person food or clothing? What does it say about your faith if you do not help? Is a faith that does not show action, a real faith? James said that this kind of faith is a dead faith.

What is a dead faith? James wrote this letter to true followers of Jesus. He was not saying that they were not true believers. He was not saying that they would lose their faith. (The Bible teaches that this is not possible). He was saying that those with true faith will prove their faith by what they do.

Faith with Doing (James 2:18-26)

James taught that what we do tells others something about us. People are watching us. What do they see? Do they see a person of faith? What we do proves that we have faith. James tells us that if we do nothing good with our lives, then there is no way to prove that we have faith.

Let us not be **confused**. We do not get faith by working for it. And we are not saved by doing good deeds. Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by His loving-favor you have been saved from the punishment of sin through faith. It is not by anything you have done. It is a gift of God. It is not given to you because you worked for it. If you could work for it, you would be proud.” Faith is a gift from God.

Faith saves us. We do not work first and earn our faith with our actions. Instead, it works the other way around. First God gives us faith. And then we do good. Faith makes us able to do what we do. James taught that it is very important to show our faith with actions.

Paul also taught that God has given us good work to do. “We are His work. He has made us to belong to Christ Jesus so we can work for Him. He planned that we should do this” (Ephesians 2:10). It is important to obey God and do the work He has given us to do. This is why we are here. God could take us home to heaven after we believe in Him, but He has work for us to do here.

James gave examples to help us understand. He gave three examples. The first example is of those who believe in God but do not do good. James said this belief was not the same as faith. Faith is not only about believing in God. James proved this truth in a very surprising way. Demons believe in one God! Do they do what is right and good? No! They shake because they know what they do is evil. They know God will punish them forever. So simply believing in God does not mean you have saving faith.

James gave a second example to help us understand the relationship between faith and good works. Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel, was given a test by God (see Genesis 22). God gave him a miracle son when he was

old. Abraham loved this son that God had promised him. He had waited so long for a son. Then God told Abraham to kill his son. What did Abraham think? What would you think? Yet Abraham obeyed what God told him to do.

We learn more about Abraham's faith in Hebrews 11:19: "Abraham believed God was able to bring Isaac back to life again. And so it may be said that Abraham did receive him back from death." God stopped Abraham from killing his son that day and gave him a sheep to kill on the altar. Abraham's faith grew stronger. He learned to show his faith by trusting and obeying God. Other people saw his faith and called him a friend of God. Abraham proved his faith with his right actions.

James gave a third example of how faith is proven by good works. This example is also surprising. Rahab was a foreign woman who sold herself to men. A person

Things to Think About

1. There is a saying that actions speak louder than words? Do you think this is true. Why or why not?
2. Does doing good give us loving-favor with God and give us eternal life? Why or why not?
3. Does James teach us that, like most other religions, we must do good things to prove we are good enough to be with God? If not, why should we do good?
4. Why are James' examples of faith and doing good so surprising? Which one surprised you the most?
5. How does what you do help or hurt others?

might not look at her life and think that she had faith. She believed in and trusted the God of the nation of Israel when she heard the stories of what God had done. When the spies came, she knew that God was with them. She hid them and kept them safe. She trusted God so much that she asked them to **rescue** her and her family when they came back to take the city (see Joshua 2). We know that they did rescue her and she went with them because she is listed as part of the family of Jesus (see Matthew 1:5). We can know that Rahab had faith because she proved it with her actions.

Things to Remember

When James taught about faith with doing the right things he was teaching about a living faith. Without doing good, faith becomes dead. Like a body that was once alive but dies, faith without doing good becomes of no use. Doing good cannot help us get to heaven. Only God's loving-favor through faith can do that. But doing good may help others to become followers of Jesus and go to heaven. Jesus said, "Let your light shine in front of men. Then they will see the good things you do and will honor your Father Who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Let us prove our faith by what we do. If we do, others might be urged to turn to God and seek a faith of their own.

James 2:14-26

14 My Christian brothers, what good does it do if you say you have faith but do not do things that prove you have faith? Can that kind of faith save you from the punishment of sin?

15 What if a Christian does not have clothes or food?

16 And one of you says to him, “Goodbye, keep yourself warm and eat well.” But if you do not give him what he needs, how does that help him?

17 A faith that does not do things is a dead faith.

18 Someone may say, “You have faith, and I do things. Prove to me you have faith when you are doing nothing. I will prove to you I have faith by doing things.”

19 You believe there is one God. That is good! But even the demons believe that, and because they do, they shake.

20 You foolish man! Do I have to prove to you that faith without doing things is of no use?

21 Was not our early father Abraham right with God by what he did? He obeyed God and put his son Isaac on the altar to die.

22 You see his faith working by what he did and his faith was made perfect by what he did.

23 It happened as the Holy Writings said it would happen. They say, “Abraham put his

trust in God and he became right with God.”

He was called the friend of God.

24 A man becomes right with God by what he does and not by faith only.

25 The same was true with Rahab, the woman who sold the use of her body. She became right with God by what she did in helping the men who had been sent to look through the country and sent them away by another road.

26 The body is dead when there is no spirit in it. It is the same with faith. Faith is dead when nothing is done.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Calls Us to Serve

Lesson 13: The Attitude of Service

Bible Text

Philippians 2:1-11

Memory Verse

“Nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself. Think of other people as more important than yourself.” (Philippians 2:3)

Word List

attitude: a feeling or a way of thinking that affects what we do in a good way or a bad way

relationship: the way in which two or more people talk to and treat each other

selfish: taking care of and showing love for yourself only; ignoring the needs or feelings of other people

“Watch your **attitude**, young lady!”

This is a common sentence spoken in many homes all over America. It is often said by a parent to their teenage daughter. The parent is asking her to change her attitude from bad to good. I may have heard this a time a two myself. I may have said it a time or two to my own daughters. It is the same for sons as well.

Parents understand that a child’s attitude guides how he or she acts. And Paul

believed that attitude is important, too. He wrote to the Christians in the Philippian church to teach them about attitude.

Our Attitude (Philippians 2:1-5)

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul taught how important it is to be united in the church (see lesson 9). Paul wrote this same teaching in his letter to the Christians in the Philippian church. He wrote, “Live your lives as the Good News of Christ says you should.... I want to hear that you are standing true as one. I want to hear that you are working together as one, preaching the Good News” (Philippians 1:27). How can followers of Jesus be united and work as one?

Paul began by asking four questions. The questions teach us what our attitude should be and how we should live. The answer to each of the four questions should be a very strong “Yes!” If we can all answer this way, we are united.

First, we should always remember that we are strong because we belong to Christ. We are united with Jesus. We need to know Him better to know how to live. As we grow to know Him, He makes us stronger. And He gives us the same kind and loving attitude that He had. A deep **relationship** with Jesus makes us strong.

Second, we should always remember how much Jesus loves us. We should feel

comfort in knowing and feeling His love. The simple children's song, "Jesus Loves Me" reminds us of how Jesus showed His love for us long ago. He died for us. It also tells how He shows His love to us every day. He walks with us. And it reminds us of how He will love us in the future as well. He will stay with us all the way. Jesus loved us then, He loves us now, and He will love us forever. We can rest in His love. (See the words to this song on the last page of this lesson.)

Third, we should always remember that all who know and love Jesus are united as one people. We all have the Holy Spirit. This knowledge should give us joy. We should not try to live our lives in our own power. The power to live comes from the Holy Spirit. We also should not try to live life without help from other believers. We have a "family" of other believers to help us when we need help.

Fourth, we must love each other in the same way that Jesus loves us. Jesus said, "...You must love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Matthew 22:39). He called this the second most important law. Our neighbors may or may not know Jesus. Yet we are told to love them. Then, how much more should we love our Christian family? If we love our brothers and sisters in Christ in the same way Jesus loves us, we will be united.

So, we can be strong in Jesus, feel His love, have the power of the Holy Spirit

helping us, and love each other well. Together these qualities give us purpose. They unite us in thought, love and actions.

But Paul also taught about some things believers should not do. We should not do anything with an attitude of pride. We should not do anything in a **selfish** way. Both of these attitudes put ourselves first. We should care about others. The right attitude is to put **Jesus** first, **others** second, and **yourself** last. This right attitude spells "Joy." This right way of living gives joy to all.

Jesus is our example. We are to think as Jesus thought. We are to have the attitude that Jesus had while He lived here on earth. So what attitude did Jesus have?

Jesus' Attitude (Philippians 2:6-11)

Jesus should be our example in all things. To follow His attitude example, we need to know more about His thoughts and attitudes. We need to understand what He did and why He did it. Paul carefully explains who Jesus is and what He did. When we look at Jesus' example, we learn an important truth. Everything Jesus did was guided by the way He thought, by His attitude.

First, Jesus is God who became man. He has always been God. But He put aside all His rights as God to become a man. He came to earth as a human baby boy. His attitude was

not proud, or He would not have come as a helpless baby. He put Himself last.

He grew to be a man, but He did not become a king. Instead, He was a servant to many. He helped and healed many people. He put others before Himself, and many people loved Him. He was important to them. But once again, He gave up that important place, too. He did not become the king that the people wanted Him to be. He died on a cross. He died so that we could live. He paid for our sins on the cross. He put Himself last.

Jesus had the attitude of a servant. Because He put Himself last in all these ways, God put Him above everything else. He raised Him from the dead. He brought Him back to heaven and gave Him a place of honor. He will bring Him back in honor, too.

God made Jesus very important. His name is so great that someday when He

returns, everyone will bow to Him. People from every tribe will call Jesus their Lord. They will speak His name in every different language. Many people from all around the world will know and love Jesus. This will bring honor to God the Father.

Things to Remember

We should have the attitude of a servant, like Jesus did. We should have the attitude that Jesus is the most important, others are very important and we are the least important. This does not mean that we do not take care of ourselves. We should remember that Jesus died for us. We are very important to Him. But we follow His example when we serve others. We should not be proud. Instead, we should think about the needs of others.

Jesus loves us. He loved us so much that He gave up heaven to come to earth as a baby. He loved us so much that He died to pay for our sins. He loves us so much that He wants us to live with Him forever. Have you trusted Jesus to be your Savior? Do you want to be a follower of Jesus? Do you want to have a strong relationship with Him? Trust Him today. Ask Him to forgive you and to be the Lord of your life. Tell Jesus that you want to follow Him. Then have the same attitude of a servant that Jesus had. Then you will know the joy of life with Jesus.

Things to Think About

1. What does it mean to be united with other followers of Jesus?
2. What four questions help us live our lives as the Good News of Christ says we should?
3. How can you put yourself last? What would that look like? What will you do this week to put others before yourself? What attitude will you have?
4. God honored Jesus because of His servant attitude. Do you think God will also honor us when we follow His example? Why or why not?
5. What will we all do someday when Jesus returns?
6. What kind of relationship do you have with Jesus?

Philippians 2:1-11

1 Are you strong because you belong to Christ? Does His love comfort you? Do you have joy by being as one in sharing the Holy Spirit? Do you have loving-kindness and pity for each other?

2 Then give me true joy by thinking the same thoughts. Keep having the same love. Be as one in thoughts and actions.

3 Nothing should be done because of pride or thinking about yourself. Think of other people as more important than yourself.

4 Do not always be thinking about your own plans only. Be happy to know what other people are doing.

5 Think as Christ Jesus thought.

6 Jesus has always been as God is. But He did not hold to His rights as God.

7 He put aside everything that belonged to Him and made Himself the same as a servant who is owned by someone. He became human by being born as a man.

8 After He became a man, He gave up His important place and obeyed by dying on a cross.

9 Because of this, God lifted Jesus high above everything else. He gave Him a name that is greater than any other name.

10 So when the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before Him.

11 And every tongue will say Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone will give honor to God the Father.

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.

Chorus:

*Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.*

Jesus loves me! This I know,
As He loved so long ago,
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, "Let them come to Me."

Jesus loves me still today,
Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give
Light and love to all who live.

Jesus loves me! He who died
Heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let His little child come in.

Jesus loves me! He will stay
Close beside me all the way;
He has bled and died for me,
From now on, I'll live for Thee.*

*Words written by Anna Bartlett Warner. (The words in the final verse are simplified.)