

## Radical Service

### *Washing the Feet of the Saints*

*“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,  
and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

– Mark 10:45



***El que no sirve - ¡No sirve!***

*“The one who doesn’t serve – serves for nothing!”*

**Ministry = Service:** The word, “minister,” means literally, “to serve.”

**Our Goal** in this lesson is to learn to cultivate a mentality of servant hood in all we do: *“How to be radical servants!”*

**We consider...**

- ***How service and spiritual authority go together***
- ***The profile of a radical servant***
  - *Humble*
  - *Happy*
  - *Faithful*
  - *Daring*
- ***Practical ways to be a servant in daily life***

### ***The Servant Heart – The child and the cup of water***

*There once was a young boy who lived with his family in a small country house alongside the Appalachian Trail. Every day dozens of travelers would pass by as they walked along this nature trail, often in the blazing heat of summer. This child would entertain himself on sweltering summer afternoons by setting up a lemonade stand along this trail and giving away cold drinks to the hikers who passed by, free of charge. It never occurred to him to profit from this service, since “the fun of it” lay in the joy of giving something special that would refresh others.*



*As an adult believer in Christ, this man began to receive special revelations from God – “prophetic words” – from God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he receives personal messages to share with people that would bless and “refresh” their weary souls!*

Consider how the heart and motivation of a person connects to their spiritual “anointing.” This man had a true “servant heart.” He enjoyed giving to others and refreshing their spirit. God used this heart of love as a vehicle through which the Spirit would give prophetic words – cups of cold water – to encourage and satisfy the souls of His thirsty people.

## ***The Radical Servant Wields Spiritual Authority***

### ***Who wants to be boss?! Why?***

On various occasions the disciples argued amongst themselves as to who would be the greatest; who would take charge when the master had passed on! (Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48) Even at the Last supper, sitting at table in one of the most sublime moments of human history, a squabble broke out as to who would be the greatest! (Luke 22:24) Consider this example of power-plays and infighting among the apostles.

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”<sup>2</sup> He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them.<sup>3</sup> And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. **Matthew 18:1-5***

In this context in particular, what does it mean “to become a child?”

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### ***What do we seek – the crown or the cup? Read Mark 10:35-34***

What is the request of James and John?

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Is it wrong to desire to exercise authority in God’s kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_.

Mention some positive motivations to seek to exercise authority?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



What could be some wrong motivations?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

James and John asked for the “crown” of authority; the right to sit on thrones and exercise authority. Instead of a crown, Jesus offered them “a cup” and “a baptism.” What do these symbolize, in your opinion? (See Mark 14:36)

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Jesus seized the moment to teach them about the true nature of *spiritual authority*, as opposed to *worldly authority*. What is the difference between authority from a worldly perspective, and that which characterizes the kingdom of God?

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How does Jesus give a perfect example of spiritual authority? (Mark 10:45)

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## The Profile of the Radical Servant

### 1. Humble

- *Renounces his privileges*
- *Takes the “lower place” in relation to others*

### 2. Happy

- *Serves all, and especially the “least,” as if he were a King!*
  - .... *As if he or she were the president*
  - .... *As if he were an angel in disguise*
  - .... *As if he were Jesus himself, in disguise*
- *Feels privileged to serve*
  - .... *With a smile!*
  - ... *Always eager*



### 3. Faithful

- *Executes what they have promised*
- *Serves with actions and not only words*

### 4. Daring

- *Extravagant – Goes the “extra mile”*
- *Takes chances*
- *Does not make excuses*





## **1. The Radical Servant Humbles Him or Herself**

### **a. The “radical servant lets go of privileges and rights**

**Example: The Incarnation of Jesus Christ!**

*The greatest becomes the least!*

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. <sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature<sup>[a](#)</sup> God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature<sup>[b](#)</sup> of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>1</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2:3-11***

Mention some typical “boasting points” for people in our contemporary society.

(Example: Physical beauty...etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

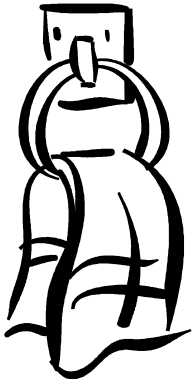
What are some of the ways that Christ “emptied himself” to become human? (humbled himself)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**b. The Radical servant takes the “lower place”**



**The Ministry of the Towel – Jesus washes the feet of the disciples**



<sup>1</sup> It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

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

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. <sup>13</sup> “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. **John 13:1-5; 12-15**

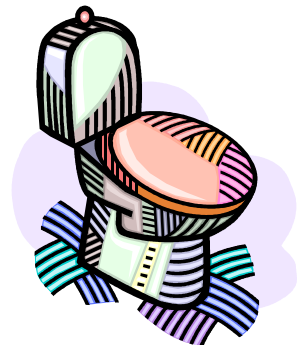
The radical servant “*values others above himself.*” How does Jesus put this principle into practice in this context? Why does Jesus use the act of washing feet to demonstrate what it means to serve others?

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In your household (or workplace), what are some “feet-washing” type tasks? (What no one wants to do!)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



***Self Denial does no = Self Hatred! -- Jesus did not suffer from a low self esteem!***

*<sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God.... he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ....You have called me "teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am..." (John 13:3, 5, 13)*

How do we observe his *self assurance* in these verses?

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Jesus was *secure* in his own sense of identity and authority. Why do you think it could be difficult for an *insecure* person to serve others with humility and self denial?

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## ***2. The Radical Servant is Happy and Attentive***

***Serves each one as if he or she were "the president"***

The radical servant considers "*each one to be more important than him or herself.*"

*If the President of the United States were to visit your house tonight. How would you receive him? What type of meal would you prepare? How would you prepare the bed and room where he would sleep? In what state would you leave the bathroom? What would be your attitude towards him? Would you do all this reluctantly?*



Every human being we serve is much more important than the President of a merely human nation. The Bible teaches that they are *angels* – or better yet, *Jesus himself* – dressed in disguise!

### ***Illustration of the Foolish Worker***

*One day a young man was painting a wall in the factory where he worked. A stranger stood by, observing him work for a while. The young man, annoyed by being observed, said to the stranger – "What are you looking at?"*

*The quiet stranger replied, "My wall."*

*He was the owner of the factory! If the young man had known the true identity of this stranger, he would have treated him with more attention and respect.*

**a. Serve each one as if he or she were Jesus himself in disguise!**

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ **Mat. 25:34-40**

Based on this text, what should motivate us to serve others in practical ways?

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**c. Serve others as if they were “angels in disguise.”**

<sup>1</sup> Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. <sup>2</sup> Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. ...” **Hebrews 13:1**

In Genesis 18:1-16 we read about Abraham serving three “visitors” with lavish Middle Eastern Hospitality. Little did he know, at first, that they were two angels – and the Lord Himself!

Some “people” we serve could be disguised angels!

**b. Serve especially the “least” as if he or she were royalty!**

**Read Mark 10:46-52** - Bartimeaus

Why do the disciples rebuke Bartimeaus? How do they view him?

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In contrast to the disciples, how does Jesus treat this man?

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*The name – Bartimeaus = Son of Honor!*

Ironically, this man's true identity lay in his "noble" lineage – "son of honor." And yet he had been degraded to the point of utter humiliation and "dishonor." All human beings bear the image of their creator, and as such, deserve the utmost honor and respect, regardless of how this world and the enemy have degraded them.

Mention some examples of "Bartimeaus" in our context – those who have been degraded and could be treated with "dishonor" rather than the respect they deserve as image-bearers of God?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

***c. The Radical servant feels privileged to serve – with a smile!***

If we view each person as if he or she were the president, or an angel, or our Lord himself – with what attitude would we serve them? Of course, we would be eager, excited and thrilled to do the most menial task in his service!!

***"Service with a Smile" -- Don't be a "grouchy waiter!"***

Have you ever had a grumpy waiter or waitress? Their demeanor and facial expressions betrayed reluctance at the very least, and perhaps even annoyance as they fulfilled their tasks in a perfunctory fashion. How did you feel? Did you enjoy the meal? Did you leave a big tip?



Most of us feel uncomfortable, or even guilty, when people serve us in this way. We feel as if we are burdening or inconveniencing them by allowing them to serve us. In contrast, consider the feeling when someone seems genuinely happy and grateful for the opportunity to serve you ... as if you were doing them a favor by allowing them to do so!

Let us serve with a smile that comes from within as we view each person as if he or she were inestimably precious. What a privilege to make them happy or help them in some way!!

Mention a certain task that is difficult for you to do with joy.

\_\_\_\_\_.

How can you adopt a better attitude in this particular task?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



**d. The Radical Servant is eager to anticipate the needs of others**

Jesus asked Bartimaeus, “What would you like me to do for you?” Like a good waiter, he asks, “How can I serve you today?” Consider using this simple motto as a mission statement with each person we encounter through our days:



*How can I serve you?*

Mention the name of a family member or friend with whom you live: \_\_\_\_\_.

Very simply, how can you discover a need this person has and a specific way to better serve this person?

\_\_\_\_\_.

**3. The Radical Servant Follows Through! - Serves with actions and not mere “talk.”**

**a. Follows through on commitments**

**Read 21:28-32** – Good intentions v. Good deeds



What is the difference between the two sons?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*How easy it is to promise, and how difficult to deliver!* Who cannot identify with this truth? Note down a couple contexts in your own life in which you have not fully executed on commitments you have made. Be specific.



1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**b. The Radical Servant serves with actions and not mere words**

<sup>16</sup> This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup> Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. **1 John 3:16-18**

What could be a comparable example from our own context?

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*“Put your money where your mouth is”*

#### **4. The Radical Servant is Daring**

**Read Luke 10:25-37 – The Example of the Good Samaritan**

***a. The Radical Servant is extravagant and at times imprudent – Goes the “extra mile”***

Mention three ways in which the Samaritan goes “above and beyond” the type of help which would be “normal” in society?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

***b. The Radical Servant takes chances to serve***

Mention two specific risks which the Samaritan took in order to serve the needy man

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

***b. The Radical Servant overcomes obstacles and does not make excuses***

There are always reasons not to serve. Obstacles. Note three specific obstacles – three “excuses” the Samaritan could have used to avoid serving the way he did.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## Let's be Radical Servants!

### *Examples!*

Think of three people you know who are good examples for you of radical service. Note their names and, in each case, the specific way they express this ethic of servant hood.

**Example – Brother Bob** ----- An usher who brings Kleenex to people with sincere concern

**Example – My Wife** ----- Cares for the kids with phenomenal patience

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ---- \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ---- \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ---- \_\_\_\_\_

### *New Opportunities to Serve*

Let's consider our daily lives. Note some new, practical ideas of how you can serve others. Please do not put down something you already do consistently, but something different, new or beyond the norm for you!

*Note down a new act of service for....*

A family member: \_\_\_\_\_

A neighbor: \_\_\_\_\_

A brother or sister from church: \_\_\_\_\_

A co-worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Testimony: What did you do differently this week? How did it go? \_\_\_\_\_

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***Service begins at home! Brainstorm!***

***Think of a person close to you, who you see virtually every day...***

Note down the name of a person with whom you live (spouse, child, friend, etc.) If you live alone, note down the name of someone you see regularly (friend, co-worker).

\_\_\_\_\_.

***Brainstorm***

Note down 10 specific, *new* ways you can serve this person in daily life!

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_