

## Week 8: Service

“As the cross is the sign of submission, so the towel is the sign of service...In some ways we would prefer to hear Jesus’ call to deny father and mother, houses and land for the sake of the gospel than his word to wash feet. Radical self-denial gives the feel of adventure. If we forsake all, we even have the chance of glorious martyrdom. But in service we must experience the many little deaths of going beyond ourselves. Service banishes us to the mundane, the ordinary, the trivial” Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, pg 126-127.

“The Christian discipline of service is the way the world discovers the love of God. We are the way God blesses the earth...God intends to bless the nations through us and our lives of service. Christians are the very presence of God to others. We become God’s vehicle of blessing on planet earth. We will never really serve others unless we see that the needs of our neighbors are as real and important as our own. This may seem obvious. But the truth of the matter is many of us look right through others and never see them, let alone care about what they need. When we are preoccupied with our own concerns, much of the world is simply invisible to us. Service is rooted in *seeing* - in seeing others as God does. God cares about productive and nonproductive people, poor people and rich people, educated and uneducated people. God cares about everybody. And if we harbor hatred that breeds neglect of any of God’s people, we are hindering the spirit of Jesus. The Spirit of Jesus is a compassionate, serving Spirit that always works for the good of others. Jesus maintains that radical love for others demonstrates whether we know God or not” Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, pg 167.

Try one or more of these (taken/adapted from Foster and Calhoun):

### Putting Others First

Every morning for the next two weeks ask your spouse, roommate, colleague, etc., “What can I do for you today?” Then do it. Talk to God about what this is like for you. What do you see about yourself?

### Using Your Gifts for Others

Ask those who know you to give you their take on what your spiritual gifts are. Also take the free spiritual gifts surveys found [here](#) and [here](#) (comparing results from two different tests can help you better discern what your strengths are). Plan a way of using your gifts to benefit and serve others over the next three months.

### Three Columns

Divide a paper into three columns. Above the first column write, “For Me.” Above the second column write, “For Others.” Above the third column write, “For God,” Review the past week or month. Jot down in each column the things you have bought and done for yourself, others and God. What does this inventory reveal about your life? Take time to read Luke 23. Gaze at Jesus on the cross. What has God given because he loves you? How would you like to see the answers in your columns change over the next months? Listen to your longings and God’s promptings.

If you'd like to learn more about spiritual transformation and various ways to invite Holy Spirit to work in and through you, these are great places to start:

[\*Sacred Pathways: Nine Ways to Connect with God\*](#) by Gary Thomas

[\*Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation\*](#) by Ruth Haley Barton

[\*Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth\*](#) by Richard J. Foster

[\*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us\*](#) by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

[\*Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus, Become Like Him, Do as He Did\*](#) by John Mark Comer