

Thriving Through Serving

Lesson 01 of the series, "Thrive"

I. Jesus came to give us new life so we can thrive.

"My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." John 10:10 (NLT)

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10 (NIV)

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly." John 10:10 (NKJV)

"I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."

John 10:10 (MSG)

Note: God doesn't define "thriving" the same way our culture does. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'" Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

II. We thrive when we serve others.

"You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you, it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:42-45 (NLT)

a. We thrive when we serve where we are gifted.

"...to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)

"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen." 1 Peter 4:10-11 (NLT)

b. We thrive when we serve where we are needed.

"Our people must learn to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be unproductive." Titus 3:14 (NLT)

"Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, 'Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well'—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless." James 2:15-17 (NLT)

Note: Thriving Christians see what needs to be done and do what needs to be done.

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth; slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:12-17 (NIV)

c. We thrive when we serve where we are right now.

"For God, who said, 'Let there be light in the darkness,' has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves." 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 (NLT)

"Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior (good deeds), and they will give honor to God when he judges the world." 1 Peter 2:12 (NLT)

- d. We thrive when we serve together.

“Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.” Philippians 2:2-5 (NLT)

“All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27 (NLT)

- e. We thrive when we don’t quit.

“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.” Galatians 6:9-10 (NLT)

“So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.” 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Describe a time in your life when you felt like God used you to help someone else. Why did you do it? How did the experience impact you?
2. Read Titus 3:14. What urgent needs are there in your neighborhood? ...at your workplace / school? ...in your city? What difference can you make?
3. Read Mark 10:35-45. Why do you think the other ten disciples were offended by the request James and John made to Jesus?
4. Read Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Peter 4:10-11. What spiritual gifts do you think God has given you? How can you use your gifts to serve at Centerpoint?
5. How/where have you served in churches in the past? Why?
6. Read Galatians 6:9-10 and 1 Corinthians 15:58. Discouragement is often referred to as the most valuable tool of the devil. How do you deal with discouragement in your life? How can you help someone else who is ready to give up?
7. Discuss the following quotations:

“Never allow the thought — ‘I am of no use where I am’; because you certainly can be of no use where you are not.” Oswald Chambers

“You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” John Bunyan

“Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.” James the half-brother of Jesus in James 4:17

“Obviously, I’m not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ’s servant.” The apostle Paul in Galatians 1:10