



ADULT CONNECTION



JUNE 2017



The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear FBC family and friends,

As we enter the month of June, our theme is “Serving.” I am reminded of the words from an old chorus we often sang. “I will serve Thee because I love Thee; You have given life to me.” Paul stated it this way: “The love of Christ compels me.” If Christ’s love for you does not motivate you to serve Him, then what will? It is a privilege to serve the Lord in and through His body—the local church.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God’s Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

The Psalmist David penned the words: “Serve the Lord with gladness and come before His presence with singing” (Psalm 100:2). May this be our testimony as we serve the Lord here at FBC.

-Blessings
Pastor Don



Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

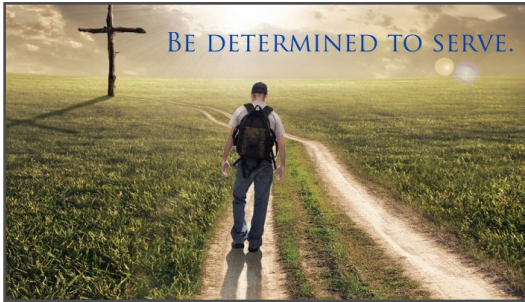
Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

Contents
June Lesson Plan

3



June 4, 2017

Serving the Master

[Mark 10:32-45](#)

19



June 11, 2017

Serving on Mission

[1 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#)

35



June 18, 2017

Serving as the Man

[Ephesians 5:22-33](#)

53



June 25, 2017

Serving in Ministry

[1 Timothy 1:12-20](#)

June 4, 2017

BE DETERMINED TO SERVE.



Serving the Master

Mark 10:32-45

Focal Verse:

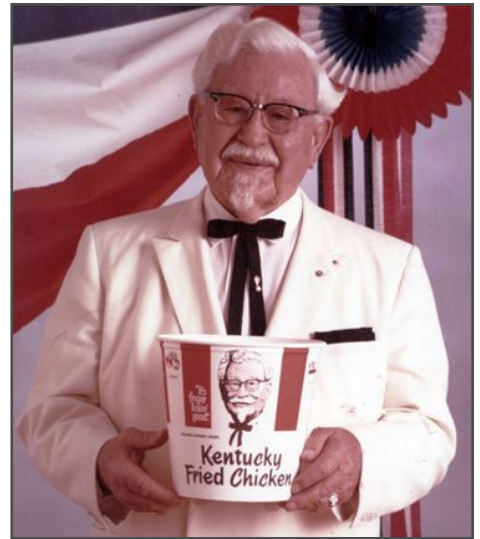
“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

Introduce

In college, I held a part-time, work-study job in the computer lab to subsidize my tuition and be able to afford a degree. My boss, a middle-age gentleman by the name of Ted, had an office two doors down from the computer lab in the basement of the library. His office was filled with aquariums housing tarantulas for a research project which would help him write his thesis for a Masters in Science. Striking a friendship with Ted, I often sat in his office during less busy times in the lab and listened to the fascinating tales of his life and what had brought him to the stage where he wanted to study the molting (i.e. shedding of their outer shell) habits of tarantulas.

One day, Ted reminisced about one of the most famous Kentuckians that he had met in person—Colonel Harland Sanders. While living in Louisville, Kentucky as a young man, Ted met Colonel Sanders and developed a friendship with him while he was beginning to open more of his KFC franchises outside its original location in the small southeastern Kentucky town of Corbin. Taking a fatherly interest in Ted, the Colonel began investing in him and showing him the basics of the restaurant business.



Soon, Colonel Sanders offered Ted a position as a fry cook in one of his new Louisville locations. Flabbergasted at being offered such a menial position in a burgeoning restaurant, Ted turned down the opportunity—to which the Colonel never offered him another position.

Introduce

Years later, Ted realized the opportunity that he had been given. Colonel Sanders had actually offered him that job as a means of training him from the ground up; as soon as Ted would have learned that position and all its responsibilities, he would have been steadily promoted to advance in the company. The Colonel wanted to train him beginning at the bottom so that he would know how the company worked on every level; eventually, Ted would have become a Vice President in the company. With a sigh, Ted lamented that if only he hadn't been prideful and would have taken the fry cook position then he would have likely been in upper management at a multi-million-dollar company rather than stuck in a basement surrounded by tarantulas studying for a Masters degree.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, the disciples often understood things in terms of their human perspective; they desired notoriety and security. In the verses that we will study this week, James and John seek prestige by asking to sit at the right hand of Jesus. Ironically, Jesus had just finished teaching: "But many who are first will be last, and the last first" (Mark 10:31). Yet, acting selfishly, the disciples sought a position of authority for themselves rather than seeking a position of service which glorifies the Father. Fortunately, Jesus came to set an example of what true service should look like; even as the King of this universe, He came not to be served, but to serve. May we follow His example and live as unselfishly as He did!

Key
Question

What does true service look like in a Christian's life?

Mark 10:32-34

THE SACRIFICE OF THE SAVIOR:

The story begins with Jesus and His disciples **on the road to Jerusalem** to celebrate the Passover, but this would be no ordinary Passover for it would end in the death of the Messiah on the cross (v. 32). Throughout the latter part of His ministry, Jesus tried to prepare His disciples for His impending death and resurrection, but they still failed to grasp the significance of these events. Twice already in [Mark 8:31](#) and [9:31](#), Jesus clearly explained that He would be “killed” at the hands of the Jewish leaders and the Gentiles. **Now**, with His fate in death certain, Jesus leads His disciples boldly **to Jerusalem**.



Although it was typical for a teacher in that day to lead his followers on a journey, what was out of the ordinary was Jesus’ determination to arrive in Jerusalem—despite knowing that He would be killed there. For this reason, His disciples **were** both **amazed** and **afraid** as they **followed** Him. First, **they were amazed** because Jesus had a mission to get **to Jerusalem** and He didn’t allow anything to stop or distract Him—not even the fear of violence and death. Second, **they were** also **afraid** because even though they did not fully understand Jesus’ teaching they still recognized that something would happen that would endanger His life. Therefore, because they did not fully understand, Jesus begins again **to tell them the things that would happen to Him**.

In-Depth Information



Out of all the Gospels, [Luke 9:51](#) best captures Jesus' determination to go to Jerusalem and face crucifixion. Luke writes, "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He **steadfastly set His face** to go to Jerusalem." The phrase "steadfastly set" comes from the root word to make like stone—Jesus set His face like stone. In other words, Jesus had one purpose in going to Jerusalem and nothing could distract Him from accomplishing it. Today, we can use the more modern expression: **it was set in stone** to indicate how determined Jesus was.

What are some things that prevent us from serving and completing our mission of service today? How can we overcome these things?

Question
1

Again, Jesus plainly spells out why they **are going up to Jerusalem** and what will happen to Him in detail (v. 33). First, He mentions that He **will be betrayed**; later, we learn the identity of this traitor as Judas Iscariot who betrays Him for thirty pieces of silver in collaboration with the **chief priests** and **scribes** ([Matt 26:14-15](#)). Then, the Jewish leaders in turn will **condemn Jesus to death** with the charge of blasphemy or making Himself equal to God ([John 19:7](#)). However, they did not want to risk an insurrection among the people because of Jesus' popularity so they would ultimately **deliver** Him to the Gentiles, namely Pilate, to be sentenced and put to death. For the first time in the Gospel of Mark,

Jesus details how violent His death would be: **they** would **mock Him**, **scourge Him**, **spit upon Him**, and **kill Him** (v. 34). To alleviate their fears, Jesus continues to explain that His fate won't end in death, but **on the third day He will rise again**—something which the disciples will still struggle to understand. Our Savior has become a sacrifice for our sins; the primary reason that He made Himself man and was born of a virgin was to lay down His life on our behalf and pay the penalty of our sins which we could not do. Jesus knew the cost of His service; He didn't look at it as too much or too inconvenient, but He saw it as a way to honor the Father, to provide eternal life for those of us who would accept His gift, and to set an example for us to follow in obedient service to God.

What sacrifices does God call us to make so that we can serve Him by serving others so that they might learn how to have a relationship with Him?

Question
2

Mark 10:35-37

THE SELFISHNESS OF MAN:

To understand how James and John's request for a position of honor shows total disregard and lack of comprehension of Jesus' teaching, we must examine what Jesus had just finished teaching in [Mark 10:17-31](#). Answering a question about how to have eternal life, Jesus explains to an individual that God must receive priority in his life ([Mark 10:17](#)). The man had claimed to have kept all the commandments pertaining to other humans (i.e. lying, stealing, etc.), but He had not kept the ones pertaining to serving other gods—for money, not God, had the most prominent place in his life ([Mark 10:19-20](#)). Therefore, as an object lesson, Jesus

Instruct

instructs him to go and sell all his possessions and follow Him, but the man left sorrowful ([Mark 10:21-22](#)). Jesus then turned to His disciples and began to teach them how impossible it is to have a worldly perspective and enter the kingdom of God. As humans, we struggle to have the most money and to get ahead in life by any means possible; this struggle often leaves out God and He takes a back seat to all our other ambitions; yet, to have a relationship with God through Christ we must give up all our human ambitions and put Him first after we confess our sins and accept the gift of salvation through His finished work on the cross. Consequently, Jesus proclaims, “But many who are first will be last, and the last first” ([Mark 10:31](#)).



How can money and power distract us from serving?

Question
3

Even in light of Jesus’ teaching on wealth and positions of power immediately prior to this section, **James and John** now have the audacity to demand that He **do for** them **whatever** they **ask** (v. 35). Instead of following Jesus’ teaching to serve God humbly so that He may receive the glory, this duo of brothers selfishly and brazenly want to have a position of honor in the kingdom of God—even with Jesus’ statement that the “first shall be last” still echoing in their ears. Without any hint of

indignation, Jesus asks them: **What do you want me to do for you** (v. 36)? To this, they reply, **“Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory”** (v. 37). These brothers, along with the rest of the disciples, still had an earthly perspective of Jesus’ teaching and did not fully grasp its spiritual meaning yet. They were more concerned with making a name for themselves and having a share in His authority than understanding that Jesus has called them to follow His example of serving the Father so that they may impart the gospel to those who have never heard.



In-Depth Information



*Notice that James and John request to **sit** on either side of Jesus rather than recline such as the verb generally used when having a meal together. To **sit** has the connotation of power and authority—i.e. to sit at a throne and rule; whereas, to recline has more of a connotation of honor and glory—i.e. receiving an honored position at a meal next to the host. In essence, James and John still envisioned Jesus’ kingdom as an earthly one in which He would give positions of power to those who carried the most favor.*

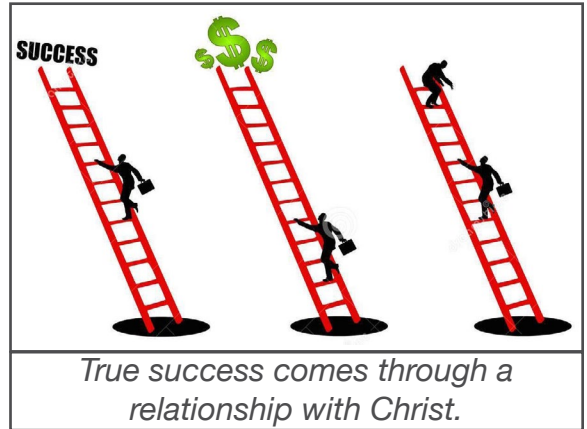
What types of earthly perspectives hinder us in our service to the Lord?

Question
4

How many times do people do something selfishly with the wrong motives because it benefits them? Apart from Christ, people are

Instruct

completely selfish even when it may appear that they have no tangible gain from serving or helping someone. Without Christ, people often serve with the wrong motives: 1) they get recognition for their charity and kindness, 2) they receive tax write-offs, 3) they have a guilty conscience which they need to appease, or 4) it gives them joy or satisfaction and makes them feel good—yes doing something purely to attain joy is



selfish. All these motives focus on the individual and not the glory of God to draw people into a relationship with Him. In fact, the only true reward that one receives by serving selfishly without God is becoming tired and more disgruntled.

Even when we have a relationship with Christ, we still struggle with selfish motives with serving Christ. Certainly, God will bless our service to Him and has promised to do so; however, our motivation should not be to receive a blessing, but to glorify and honor Him. Unless we consistently seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and remain in God's Word, we will oftentimes have both the wrong perspective and the wrong motivation. Participation in God's kingdom is not a competition in which one seeks to garner the most rewards or climb the proverbial ladder to have the highest possible position. On the contrary, participation in God's kingdom means that we minimize our personality and align our goals with His so that people may see less of us and more

of Him. Just as John the Baptist rightly exclaimed, “He must increase, but I must decrease” ([John 3:30](#)).

In what ways do we need to align our goals and ideas of success with God so that we can serve with pure motives?

Question
5

Mark 10:38-40

THE SHARING OF CHRIST’S MINISTRY:

In response to their question, Jesus basically tells them that they **don’t know what** they’re **asking** (v. 38). As typical, Jesus then responds by asking the brothers another question designed to help them have a spiritual perspective. He inquires, “**Are you able to drink the cup I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**” Remember that Jesus is speaking to them in the context of His impending death, so these references to **drinking the cup** and **baptism** refer to His suffering and death respectively; thus, Jesus is asking them if they can share in His suffering and death. In [Matthew 20:22](#), Jesus states it more concisely, “Are you able to drink the cup that ***I am about to drink.***” In Matthew, Jesus clearly refers to the suffering He would soon endure through His upcoming trials and crucifixion. The disciples, however, don’t fully realize to what Jesus refers and they answer: “**We are able**” (v. 39). To which Jesus replies, “**You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized.**” In other words, James and John, along with the disciples, would face persecution and suffering, and all of them, except John, would face death as martyrs for the sake of Christ ([John 15:18-20](#); [John 21:14-23](#)).

In-Depth Information



Through his ministry and experience, Paul understands what Jesus says here to His disciples about following His example. In Phil 3:10, Paul writes, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and **the fellowship** [i.e. participation] **of His sufferings**, being **conformed to His death**.” He also regards baptism as symbolically sharing in Jesus’ death, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into His death**? Therefore we were buried with Him through **baptism into death**, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” ([Rom 6:3-4](#)). In essence, Paul recognized that we should share in Christ’s ministry—not seeking persecution and suffering, rather enduring it and remaining faithful despite any obstacles that may arise. Service requires dedication!

Why should we expect suffering and opposition when we serve Christ?

Question
6

Jesus further explains to James and John that **to sit on His right and left is not His to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared** (v. 40). This seems ironic for Jesus to say, but it actually underscores His point that power and prestige is not earned, but distributed by grace; hence, the brothers cannot advance their position in God’s kingdom by undergoing persecution or even martyrdom for Jesus’ sake because they have already inherited their positions through God’s grace displayed in

Jesus' sacrifice. Our concern as Christians should not be what we get in return for our service because everything we have is based on God's grace and not our righteousness; just as we don't earn our salvation, we cannot earn favor with God by doing good works and performing acts of service.

Why should we view our service in terms of God's grace?

Question
7

Mark 10:41-45

THE FOCUS ON SERVING:

The other disciples began to complain **when they heard it** and directed their displeasure toward **James and John** (v. 41). Based on what Jesus says next about the Gentile **rulers** in verse 42, it seems to indicate that the **ten were displeased** with **James and John** not because they ignored Jesus' teaching, but because they were trying to get ahead of them and have positions over them. Knowing the disciples' intentions, Jesus calls **the ten** over to **Himself** and explains the human desire for authority in contrast to God's perspective. Using the **rulers** and **great ones** who **exercise authority over the Gentiles** as examples, Jesus exposes their true motives; they seek power as a means to **lord it over** people—that is to exploit and oppress people for their own benefit



Instruct

(v. 42). They don't lead by example, but through the fear of demands and threats; rather than acting benevolently toward their constituents, they have a self-centered perspective which leads to authoritarian rule. Jesus commands the disciples **not** to have this secular attitude **among** themselves (v. 43). Along the lines of what He has already taught in [10:31](#), Jesus once again sets forth God's perspective which directly contrasts and contradicts man's thinking: **whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant and whoever desires to be first shall be slave of all** (vv. 43b-44). Our main purpose as Christians, therefore, is to serve God by serving others in such a way that it points to Him. Fortunately, God has given us the greatest example to follow—**the Son of Man** (Jesus). In verse 45, Jesus provides the model which we ought to follow; He explains His purpose here on earth is **not to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many**. Jesus' entire ministry is indeed characterized by serving others whether through physical healing, physical provision such as food, forgiving of sins, and teaching the true intention of God's Word; the greatest example of service, however, comes through Jesus' death on the cross in which He paid our penalty (the **ransom**) for our sin so that we may have life. If the King of glory came as a means to serve mere human beings and provide life through the Father's purpose, how much more should we follow His example and serve others sacrificially so that we can introduce them to the One who can transform their lives and give them life?

What specific ways can we serve God by serving others?

Question
8

In the introduction, we met Ted who turned down a gracious offer from Colonel Sanders because he had to start at the very bottom of the company. Like Ted, many of us may have succumb to the human perspective in which the ambition to get ahead in life has consumed us. We may work so hard to advance in our jobs, extracurricular activities, and even in our communities that we miss the opportunity to serve God. God does indeed place Christians in high positions so that they may have great influence, but He places them there to be servant-leaders. During His ministry, Jesus had a position of authority and power unlike any other, but He used that position to act benevolently and point others to the Father by modeling servant-leadership.

How specifically can we be involved in serving others in a way that honors God and fulfills His purpose for our lives? Without mentioning specific programs within the church, there are many principles that should help guide us. First, we can invest in the lives of others by sharing the gospel with them—this is the most important way that we can serve God by serving others. Second, we can take time to disciple others in training them how to live and how to make wise choices; however, it's not merely teaching them verbally, but also living according to these principles in our own lives. Third, we can serve in the community to meet the physical needs of people; however, this needs to be accompanied by the first principle of sharing the gospel. What good does it do if we meet the physical needs of people and then they never hear the message of salvation and are cast into Hell? Fourth, lead by example; do the tasks that no one else wants to do. Many of the most important tasks in the

Inspire

church are those done behind the scenes, but they help focus the work of the church so that the body may run smoothly to equip its members and reach the lost. Are you a servant leader? How are you serving in this body and in the community to impact others by pointing them to Christ? It takes every one of us to serve to make the body strong to accomplish that which God has purposed for us to do.

Incorporate

Evaluate your life. Jesus has made the ultimate sacrifice through His death on the cross for us, so what sacrifices do you need to make so that serving Him becomes a priority in your life (if it's not already)?

Incorporate

What are some ways that we as a church can continue to share the gospel by actively serving in the community? List some ideas here and share them in your Connect Classes. If your Connect Class has a way to serve the community, please share it with the staff so that we can pray for you and support you.

In what ways have you seen people in our church model servant-leadership? How can we effectively disciple more people to follow the pattern established by Christ and emulated by the people that you've listed here?

June 11, 2017



Serving on Mission

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Focal Verse:

"So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us."

1 Thessalonians 2:8

Introduce

This week we have eight people from our church serving on mission in Padre Carvalho and Janaúba, Brazil in a partnership with Project 70 which seeks to evangelize communities without an evangelical presence, plant churches, and train pastors to continue the work once the team leaves. Certainly, the mission requires a significant financial investment to participate, but the greater investment comes through the devotion of Christians to share the gospel through their verbal testimonies and the way they live to those who have never heard it. To share the gospel effectively with devotion, we must live with integrity—representing God righteously always. By learning about their culture, knowing a few Portuguese phrases or Scriptures, and genuinely taking an interest in developing cross-cultural friendships, it gives us an advantage in being able to share the gospel. More than anything, however, being authentic in the way that we live among people gives even more credence to our testimony to point others to Christ. Consequently, we must ask: what good does it do if we do not abide by our own teaching—saying one thing and doing another?



Today, living with integrity plays an ever-more pivotal role since many people around the world already have stereotypes not only about Americans, but also about Christians. Because of television, the Internet, and social media, cultures all over the world have a preconceived idea about how we live. In Brazil, matters were made worse during

Introduce

the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio when Ryan Lochte and a cohort of American swimmers became drunk and disorderly, terrorizing a gas station and ultimately destroying a bathroom. To make the situation worse, the swimmers went on international television and lied about being harassed and robbed at gunpoint. Whether we like it or not, people will project that poor image of Americans on the rest of us; therefore, it becomes incumbent upon us to overcome this negative image by living lives that reflect the character of Christ. It's not enough merely to fly to Brazil for two weeks and share the gospel, but it requires dedication to live the gospel both there and here in the United States so that others may see the transformation that God has produced in our lives.

In [1 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#), false teachers attempted to sway the Thessalonians' opinion of Paul by disparaging his character and criticizing his motives to keep them from responding to the gospel. Paul, however, had an advantage because he had lived faithfully among the people and they had first-hand knowledge of his lifestyle. In fact, Paul asserts, "You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe" (2:10). When the false charges came he could point to the pattern of his life which contradicted of what others had accused him. Like Paul, we must live as Christ and uphold His reputation so that we might serve on mission effectively so that no one can blame us unjustly for living as hypocrites.

Key
Question

Why is it important to live out our faith in front of people?

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3

SPEAK BOLDLY DESPITE CONFLICT:

Because of the **conflict** Paul and his missionary team endured not only in **Philippi** but also in Thessalonica, he wanted to reassure the church that his **coming to** them **was not in vain** (2:1). In [1 Thess 1:5-10](#), Paul gives thanks in prayer that the gospel was received by them “in power and the Holy Spirit” so that they “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1:5, 10). Therefore, in 2:1, Paul reminds them that the gospel had truly transformed their lives and saved them from their enslavement to sin. God defines success differently than humans; success to Him means that we have accepted the gift of His Son who changes our lives from ones characterized by sin to ones that exhibit holiness. According to the human perspective, on the other hand, success often entails the absence of **conflict** by following the standards of the world. As Christians, this definition of success often places us at odds with the world because it differs radically from their motives and exposes their sinful disobedience. For this reason, the church in Thessalonica can be assured that the gospel came to them successfully rather than in vain because by their own testimony they had seen a dramatic change in the way that they lived which brought them into conflict with the world.



Jail in Philippi in which Paul and Silas were imprisoned.

Instruct

As a result, Paul reminds the Thessalonians as an example of how much that he and Silas **suffered** and **were treated spitefully at Philippi** (v. 2). During their stay in Philippi, the pair initially had success with converting Lydia and the women who were praying by the river and they even cast out a spirit from a demon-possessed girl who could foretell the future. After casting out the demon, however, the girl's owners became incensed because they had made much money from her ability so they forced Paul and Silas to appear before the court and accused them of making trouble and teaching strange doctrines. This incited a mob to act so they beat and whipped the two and had them thrown into prison in chains ([Acts 16:16-24](#)).

Why does conflict and persecution sometimes lead us to question our faith?

Question
1

Instead of causing the missionaries to withdraw and cease spreading **the gospel**, the opposition only caused them **to speak** more boldly (v. 2). In verse 3, Paul gives three reasons why they can be **bold** in their proclamation (**exhortation**) of the gospel. First, he has been faithful to maintain the message that he has received directly from God (see [2:4](#)); therefore, the gospel did **not** come to them through **error** or delusion, but rather Paul has given them the information first-hand which eliminates the chance that someone has defrauded them by misinterpreting God's Word (see [Gal 1:11-12](#)). Second, they did not share the gospel in **uncleanness**; in other words, they did not share it with impure motives in which they were trying to seek financial or other types

of gain (see [Phil 1:15](#)). Finally, they did not proclaim the gospel with **deceit**; thus, they didn't use trickery to convince them to accept their message, rather they spoke the truth. Because we know the truth, we ought to be empowered to share the gospel more freely and boldly—not worrying about what others may say or do. We shouldn't fear retribution for sharing the gospel, but those of us who have the Holy Spirit should rely on His power to guide us. As



Paul states to his young disciple Timothy, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” ([2 Tim 1:7](#)).

In-Depth Information



*In verse 2, Paul literally states that **we were free in our speaking to you about the gospel of God**. The phrase **we were free**, therefore, carries with it the idea of confidence and boldness. Ironically, though Paul and Silas had been incarcerated, they still shared the gospel even more freely.*

Why do we not need to fear sharing the gospel?

Question
2

1 Thessalonians 2:4-6

SPEAK GENUINELY TO PLEASE GOD:

After describing how God empowered the mission team **to speak** boldly despite **conflict**, Paul addresses the proper perspective and motives for

Instruct

-serving on mission. Because of **the conflict** that the mission team had in **Philippi**, some had called into question Paul's motives for sharing **the gospel**. He responds literally by saying: **But as we have been tested by God to be faithful with the gospel in this way we ought to speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts** (v. 4). In verse 4, the phrases translated **we have been approved** and **tests** are the same Greek word. Paul, therefore, emphasizes by the repetition of this word that his mission team has been **tested by God** and found worthy (i.e. having pure motives



and a righteous heart) for sharing the gospel. Through this statement, we can learn two principles about how we ought to serve on mission. First, we should have pure motives for sharing the gospel because **God tests our hearts**. As humans, we frequently have the tendency to do things for selfish reasons which often promotes a spirit of competition which glorifies the victor rather than the Lord. For some, sharing the gospel becomes a matter of pride because it demonstrates how hard they are working for the Lord which they use to shame or guilt others; it also promotes a sense of competition and rivalry where quantity supersedes quality and the training and equipping of the saints is omitted and disciples are left as infants. For others, it causes boasting and competition rather than cooperation; it's not about the church that

that has the most people or even the Connect Class with the highest attendance—instead, we need to work together to expand the kingdom by allowing God to use us to make disciples from children to senior adults. In others, it instills within them a feeling of notoriety or superiority because they have shared the gospel, produced results, and now they believe that people owe respect and gratitude toward them—having a desire to be recognized and applauded for their efforts. A whole host of problems exists with this attitude: 1) we all are saved by God and participate in ministry through His grace; we may have different gifts, but they all are just as important; 2) God produces the results; we are merely His vessels; and 3) the gratitude and focus should be toward God and not the messenger.

For this reason in verses 5 and 6, Paul reinforces having pure motives with two examples. Not only did the team not use **flattering words** (i.e. telling them what they wanted to hear), but also they did not have **a cloak of covetousness**. In other words, they did not mask their true intentions for sharing the gospel, but displayed their love openly for them. Secretly, they did not have motives to profit from the gospel monetarily nor did they covet praise and notoriety, but rather they shared the gospel with pure motives—**God is their witness** (v. 5). Moreover, he stresses that neither **did they seek glory from men, either from the Thessalonians or from others**. Our job as ambassadors to Christ is to point others to Him so that they might know how to have a relationship with Him and for which He will receive glory, honor, and praise.

What motivates you to share the gospel?

Question
3

Instruct

Although **as apostles of Christ** they **might have made demands**, Paul and his team avoided anything that could potentially distract from the gospel (v. 6b). Based on the context, Paul refers to not asking for money or taking a salary for his ministry even though full-time ministers have the right to receive pay for their work (see [1 Cor 9:3-14](#); [1 Tim 5:17-18](#)). In the first-century, itinerate teachers and philosophers would travel from city to city to seek students who would pay money to sit under their instruction. Often, these teachers would teach principles that sounded attractive to these students and use deceptive methods in their training to extort money from them. Paul, however, did not come to the Thessalonians with the pretense of being paid for his services, rather he worked his trade as a tentmaker to support himself and not to be a burden to them—distracting from the presentation of the gospel. Likewise, we must rid ourselves of anything that hinders the spread of the gospel and be willing to do the little things in life that don't receive the notoriety of others, but make an eternal investment in their lives by pointing them to a relationship with Christ.

What are some things that hinder the spread of the gospel? Why should we be willing to do the small or menial tasks to present the gospel?

Question
4

Second, we must recognize the responsibility to share **the gospel** faithfully which has been **entrusted** to us (v. 4). This faithfulness occurs in two primary ways. For example, we should be faithful in sharing it accurately and truthfully. We live in a world in which the exchange of

ideas flows freely, but this can also obscure the message because people will pick and choose the parts that sound most appealing to them; therefore, some unscrupulous preachers and missionaries will tailor the message to the people in such a way that they want to hear it rather than telling them the truth (see [2 Tim 4:3-4](#)). Thus, Paul emphasizes that they spoke the truth to them rather than using **flattering words** (v. 5). Moreover, some will relate it in such a way that the simple message of the gospel becomes distorted and combined with other erroneous sets of beliefs. This leads to both a divided and convoluted message which loses its power because it fails to focus on the transformation brought about through the crucifixion and resurrection. For this reason, Paul relates that they speak in such a way **to please God** rather than **men** (v. 4).

What does it mean to share the gospel faithfully?

Question
5

1 Thessalonians 2:7-9

SPEAK CONSISTENTLY WITH THE WAY YOU LIVE:

Rather than preaching the gospel for notoriety or monetary gain, Paul develops a relationship with them and shares it out of love (v. 7). Paul uses the illustration of **a nursing mother** who cares greatly **for her own children** to describe the affection with which he presented the gospel to them. Sharing the gospel requires dedication and devotion; in some cases, it takes patience and persistence just like the raising of **children**. Not to discount street or door-to-door evangelism—but the most effective tool to share the gospel is by developing a personal relationship with people so that they not only can hear the message, but they can also see it lived out.

Instruct

Think of it in terms of raising **children**. If parents seldom and sporadically reinforce a lesson that they desire their child to learn and they themselves fail to live by those same principles, what will the outcome be for the child? Most likely, the child will not apply those principles to his or her life. On the other hand, if parents reinforce a lesson daily every chance they get and live it out in their own lives, how much greater a chance of success in molding the behavior of the child will there be?

So it is with the gospel. The more opportunity that we have to discuss it and live it out among the people to whom we witness the greater the chance that they will see and accept it. To be effective in our teaching, therefore, we must be consistent in the way that we live so that our teaching matches our lifestyles lest they see a contradiction and hypocrisy in us.

Not only does Paul demonstrate his **affection** for them by **gently** nurturing them as a **mother** with **her own children**, but he also displays it by being **pleased to impart to** them both **the gospel of God and their own lives** (v. 8). What does it mean that Paul and Silas **imparted their own lives** to the Thessalonians? First, it shows their dedication to share the gospel at all costs; they made it a priority and didn't let political correctness, persecution, inconvenience, or laziness stop them. Second, it highlights the sacrifices that they made to share the gospel. In verse 9,



Paul reminds the Thessalonians of their **labor and toil** among them so as **not to be a burden**. In other words, they sacrificed to pay their own way and risk their lives facing opposition and persecution to share the gospel to them (see [Acts 17:5-10](#)). Finally, the **impacting of their lives** indicates familiarity with Paul; he and Silas lived among them and established a relationship with them. They had seen how they had conducted their lives. Not only did they hear the gospel, but they saw Paul and Silas live it. For this reason, he can call them as **witnesses** in [verse 10](#) to the mission team's character which Paul will explain next (v. 10).

How important should it be to you to make it a priority to build relationships and share the gospel?

Question
6

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

SPEAK BLAMELESSLY FOR GOD'S GLORY:

To share the gospel effectively, we must exercise integrity and live in holiness in front of people—not to be pretentious, but to **glorify** God and point others to Him. Paul and Silas lived out their faith in front of the Thessalonians who were **witnesses** to their character and that it matched their teaching. Paul employed three adjectives to describe how they lived: **devoutly** (i.e. holy), **justly**, and **blamelessly** (v. 10). They lived as examples of God's radical transformation to encourage the church in Thessalonica to emulate their character. It becomes imperative not only to be consistent in what we teach but how we live because it can cause irreparable harm if we continue to live in sin and talk about the transformation of Christ; thus, when we become like the world around

Instruct

us and change in our lives cannot be observed, people will wonder why they would need a relationship with Christ if they are no different from us.

Why is it important to live blamelessly in front of others when sharing the gospel?

Question
7

Using another metaphor involving the family, Paul indicates that they taught the Thessalonians by example just as **a father** would teach and **comfort his own children** (v. 11). The content of that teaching was to walk worthy of God for His glory (v. 12). The team invested their lives in sharing the gospel with the Thessalonians; they didn't merely stop when a person began a relationship with Christ, but they continued to invest in their lives so that they may be discipled and grow in their faith—especially so that they can learn to invest in the lives of others in the same way. In the twenty-first century, sharing the gospel requires the same dedication and sacrifice through the willingness to build relationships with the primary goal of leading others into a relationship with Christ.

Why is it important to continue to teach people after they begin a relationship with Christ?
What happens if we fail to disciple them?

Question
8

Serving on mission means that we ought to be willing to invest our lives in cultivating relationships where the gospel is a priority. We must be intentional to show in God's Word about how to have eternal life as well as to demonstrate the change in our lives by living it out so that people may see the power of God through us. When we would build relationships, we need to cultivate them to maturity. We don't merely bring someone to the point of salvation and then drop them, but we continue to teach them the principles by which to live just as a father and mother would their own children. Just as a parent would, we must demonstrate love and speak the truth boldly. In addition, we must live the truth so that someone isn't confused but they can clearly see the power of God at work in us. To live the truth, we must know God's Word and have a daily relationship with Him that guides us to live according to His boundaries so that we might have an abundant life.

Our world today is hungry for genuine relationships in which love and concern can be expressed through authentic connection. Because we are bombarded on all sides with a multitude of views, we need to make sure that new believers understand and live the truth. Authentic relationships can only be found in God through the family and the church when we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us. In addition, we must seek to connect them to our church where they can develop more genuine relationships, but we as a church must be willing to be involved in one another's lives more than just a couple of hours on Sunday or Wednesday. We must be in the

Inspire

community sharing the gospel and discipling others, but we also need to take others along and invest in them so that when difficult times may come we can remain faithful. Let us live as Christ who invested His life in others by developing relationships that broke cultural barriers and overcame the stigma of sin to bring the truth; yet, not being Christ we must make sure that we don't subject ourselves to temptation where we could sin and bring harm to the reputation of the gospel, but live blameless lives before others. Therefore, let us surrender our lives to sharing the gospel in all our relationships in both word and deed.

Incorporate

Spend time in prayer this week and ask God to help you evaluate your relationships. Is the gospel a priority in your relationships? If not, what would you characterize as the priority in your relationships?

Incorporate

As you pray, also ask God to help you identify people with whom you can develop a relationship to share the gospel. Write their names here. If no names come to mind, think of opportunities or ministries in which you could be involved to share the gospel.

In your own words, describe what it means to be devout, just, and blameless. How does that help to produce genuine relationships?

Finally, in whom can you invest your lives in order to mentor them to help them grow in Christ and become mature believers? Remember that it takes every one of us to help make disciples—this just doesn't occur on Sunday morning but it's an on-going relationship in which you grow together.

June 18, 2017



Serving as the Man

Ephesians 5:22-33

Focal Verse:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."

Ephesians 5:25

Introduce

Much of our perception of current trends, culture, and even individuals comes from television whether the news or fictional programs. Some of the sitcoms from the 1950s and 60s, like *Leave it to Beaver*, *Father Knows Best*, and *The Andy Griffith Show*, seem unrealistic and even laughable at their portrayal of life in how the fathers led their families, raised their children, and dealt with problems; however, it depicts a much better way to way to be involved in their families than many shows portray today. A father, like Ward Cleaver on *Leave it to Beaver*, was actively involved with his wife and sons. He worked together with his wife, June, to develop a home that produced two young men who lived with integrity. He and his wife set boundaries and disciplined their sons when they broke them. It wasn't merely physical punishment, but he sat them down and they worked through their decisions so that they would learn a lesson from their bad choices and not repeat the same mistakes. He was proud of his sons and was involved in their extracurricular activities as much as possible, taking time to invest in their lives so that they knew beyond a doubt that he loved them. All the fathers on these sitcoms, however, weren't perfect, but they still displayed love, forgiveness, wisdom, and concern.



Today, the media often portrays men in general, but including fathers, as ignorant, unconcerned, self-centered, and sexually-focused. Even in

Introduce

families, like that portrayed by Tim Allen on *Last Man Standing*, the man leads a dysfunctional family. After watching the earlier episodes of the sitcom, I had to stop watching because they demonstrated exactly what is wrong with society when a wife and husband cannot agree on boundaries and the children have no moral compass. In one episode, Mike Baxter (Tim Allen) talks



to his middle teenage daughter about remaining abstinent until marriage; the Baxters already have one teenage daughter who became pregnant in high school and bore a son. Although using innuendo and presenting it in a joking way, Mike was serious about all three of his daughters being abstinent. While discussing abstinence with his middle daughter, Mike's wife, Vanessa, stood behind him shaking her head 'no' that she didn't have to remain celibate, but rather she mouthed the words "just be safe." Later, she even covers for the daughter who comes in late from a rendezvous with a boy. Although neither of these examples, either from the 60s or from current television, provide the best way to lead our families as fathers, they do depict how far we have departed from biblical standards and how dysfunctional many families have become due to a lack of unity and focus on Christ.

As fathers, we must seek to lead our families by biblical standards which

is our burden as men. We aren't to be dictators setting down an authoritarian list of rules, but we should seek to lead our families to become closer to God who would then influence the way we live. We should lead by example and provide the environment that fosters spiritual growth in our wives and children. In [Ephesians 5:22-6:4](#), Paul uses the relationship between Christ and the church to describe how we ought to live in relation to our families. Husbands should lead in a godly manner, love their wives sacrificially, live in unity, and participate in raising their children in a way that honors God.

Key
Question

What qualities of a godly father make a home the most effective environment for spiritual growth for the family?

LEAD YOUR HOME IN A GODLY MANNER:

From the beginning of the world, God created order out of chaos and confusion; part of this order is expressed through the different roles that He assigned in the family so that it could function properly to point successive generations to Him. To have a functioning family, each member should have a relationship with Christ and “be filled with the Spirit” ([Eph 5:18b](#)). In fact, this phrase “be filled with the Spirit” governs the entire section from [5:17-6:9](#) in which Paul outlines what a Spirit-filled life looks like: 1) in the church, 2) between husbands and wives, 3) between parents and children, and 4) between masters and slaves (employers and employees, today). To “be filled with the Spirit” simply means that we submit to His leadership and follow His guidance



in everything that we do. Without the Spirit’s guidance, our families will never function exactly the way that God desires and we will almost always imitate the world around us rather than imitating Christ.

Paul begins the section on Spirit-filled relationships in the family by admonishing **wives** to **submit to** their **own husbands as to the Lord** (v. 22). At one time, I had begun to write my dissertation for a PhD upon this single Greek word, but here is neither the time nor the place to discuss all the implications. However, the way the word is constructed in the Greek entails voluntary submission in which the **wife** allows Christ to lead the family through her Spirit-filled **husband**. Therefore, if the **husband** seeks

Christ and displays His character it becomes natural for a **wife** to follow her husband's lead and respect Him if she too allows the Holy Spirit to guide her life. For a family to function properly, both husband and wife must be submitted to Christ in addition to fulfilling their God-given roles with respect to the proper exercise of leadership in the family.

Why is it natural for a wife to submit to her Spirit-filled husband when he imitates Christ as he leads the family?

Question
1

Paul explains why the **wife** ought to **submit** voluntarily because God has designated the **husband** as the **head** of the home just **as Christ is the head of the church** (v. 23). In the twenty-first century, misunderstanding of the concept of headship has resulted in it being redefined, often incorrectly, in a number of ways; however, the context is clear that **the head** guides, protects, and provides for the home just **as Christ** does for **the church**. The husband, as **the head**, is not a cruel dictator who micromanages everything and demands unconditional service, rather through prayer, Bible study, and consultation with his wife he discerns the best course of action that benefits his family and draws them into a closer relationship with the Lord and by consequence one another as well. Even when the decision may seem unpopular in the household, God has ordained the Spirit-filled **husband** to lead—and this can't be stressed enough Spirit-filled—for he is the one whom God ultimately judges for the decisions made on behalf of his family.

What characteristics does a good leader possess? Compare those characteristics with Christ.

Question
2

Instruct

Although each family dynamic differs and leadership may be expressed through various styles, **husbands** must still be involved with their families and sensitive to what's happening so they can be effective leaders. Today, with technological advancements, it can be very easy to isolate oneself from the rest of the family—and this can be said of any family member not just the husband. Lack of involvement can come in many forms: 1) being overburdened with work to make extra-money rather than investing in the family, 2) being overly passionate about recreational activities or hanging out with friends at the expense of spending time in the family, or 3) coming home from a long day's work and assuming it's the wife's sole responsibility to manage the family. The family needs a leader who is both available to listen and communicate as well as one who is visible and leads by example—not one who is absent and uninvolved.

Imagine a CEO who sits in his office isolated from the daily operation of his business and the needs of his employees; for the most part he can't manage the business well, especially if he has no advisors, because he has no clue about the needs of his company. A series, such as *Undercover Boss*, often highlights how out of touch with reality most CEO's are when they receive menial tasks to perform. Frequently, they will comment that they had no idea about the



Joseph DePinto, CEO of 7-11, appears on *Undercover Boss*.

conditions their employees faced, the outdated systems being used, the waste of both product and time, and even the personal struggles of their employees. Most CEO's after experiencing the problem firsthand often make changes in policy for their company, offer additional training, streamline production, or give personal benefits to help their struggling employees. CEOs often change and act with compassion when they experience the problem firsthand which allows them to lead with conviction and certainty.

Why is it important for the father to lead the home by example through his availability rather than his absence?

Question
3

Similarly, God has called the husband as the **head** of the family to lead in a way patterned after Christ. Christ is intimately involved in the life of the church so ought the husband be involved in the life of his family—regardless of how busy he or the family may perceive itself or how hectic they have chosen to make their schedules. Part of being a good leader, therefore, is recognizing the needs of individuals within the family. This requires intimacy and interaction with each member of the family to know their personalities and to understand the way that they communicate. Problems often arise between individuals when communication becomes unclear, resulting in expectations not being met or when non-verbal communication is misunderstood. After years of marriage, we may be able to anticipate our spouses' needs and how they will respond in particular situations, but nonetheless it still requires

Instruct

clear verbal communication. Expecting our spouses to know our expectations and meet our needs without communicating them can lead to conflict and, at the very least, it sets a bad model for our children because they will learn and follow how we communicate with our spouses and to them. Therefore, take time to share your needs, expectations, and frustrations with one another; take time to listen and assess the situation before responding. As **the head of the church**, Christ desires us to communicate our needs to Him through prayer and in the same way the father as the **head** of the home ought to create an environment in which each member can communicate intimately with one another.

How can we create an environment so that we can have good communication in the home?

Question
4

Ephesians 5:25-29

LOVE YOUR WIFE SACRIFICIALLY:

After establishing the functional order of leadership within the home, Paul instructs **husbands** to **love** their **wives** (v. 25). He qualifies the depth of this **love** by comparing it to the way that **Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her**; thus, this depicts sacrificial **love** in which the husband places the needs of his wife and family above his own. Sacrificial **love** is not just an abstract concept that expresses an ideal which cannot truly be obtained, rather it is an action to be demonstrated and practiced in practical ways through relationships. Paul lists three ways that husbands

can demonstrate sacrificial love to their wives: 1) establish a godly environment in the home where she can grow in the Word (vv. 26-27); and 2) love her unconditionally (v. 28); and 3) provide for her needs—physically, emotionally, and spiritually (v. 29a). Although we will cover each of these areas sequentially in the following paragraphs, keep in mind that each of these principles contains many more facets than can be explored in this lesson thoroughly, so this provides only a basic overview of what it means to demonstrate sacrificial love in the home.

First, Paul explains that Christ expresses His **love** to the **church** by **sanctifying and cleansing her with the washing of water by the word** so that she may **be holy and without blemish** (vv. 26-27). To **sanctify** means



to cleanse or purify and set apart for a specific purpose; therefore, once we have a relationship with Jesus, He works within us as we read His Word to help us become more holy like Him each day and keep us from succumbing to temptation which gives birth to sin. When we have a pure and holy relationship through Him, He will use us to minister in His kingdom the way that He has gifted each of us specifically. Although only Christ can purify and cleanse our hearts, as husbands we still must establish an environment in which our families can become more like Christ through the reading and application of His Word. Consequently, husbands need to lead their families in worship by creating an environment in which the family has devotions, prays together, and gives thanksgiving to God for what He has done whether through song

Instruct

or testimony. Most importantly, however, husbands should lead their families by example through their own personal growth in the Lord so that each member can visibly see the change that Christ has brought about within him.

Why is it important to have a family devotion?
What are some creative ways that you can have family devotions even amid a busy schedule?

Question
5

Second, Paul notes that **husbands** should **love their own wives as their own bodies**, for **he who loves his wife loves himself** (v. 28). At first, this may seem like it reflects a selfish **love**; on the contrary, Paul is comparing it to how we love ourselves unconditionally and provide for our basic needs. Christ loves the church unconditionally even when we did not return that love to Him and rebelled against Him. The best way that we can express our unconditional love is through acts of service to our wives. Remember that Christ, who is the sovereign God who created this universe, washed His disciples' feet as an example of service to be followed, so if our Lord humbled Himself to do such a menial task then nothing should be too menial for us to do as well (see [John 13:15](#)). Not only should we set an example of



service, but we should also be willing to ask for forgiveness and initiate reconciliation even if we think that we are in the right. In any relationship, disagreements will arise from time to time so we need to be willing to be flexible and compromise—not on issues of faith or doctrine, but on the things that are issues of personal preference. Being flexible means that we know that we each have idiosyncrasies and personal preferences, but we are willing to look past them rather than attempt to go into a relationship and think that we can change them. Unconditional love means that we look past our circumstances to see our spouse as Christ sees them and be willing to love them as much as He has demonstrated His love to us.

What specific ways can you express unconditional love in your relationships?

Question
6

Third, Paul contends that **no one ever hated his own body, but nourishes and cherishes it** (v. 29). In other words, we care for our own personal needs—whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. Again, Christ cares for the needs of His **church** as detailed through the Sermon on the Mount when He informs His audience not to worry about their needs because their Father in heaven will care for them even in a greater way than the birds of the air and lilies in the field ([Matt 6:25-34](#)). Certainly, we ought to meet our wives' physical needs by working hard to provide a home which has ample shelter, clothing, and food; hence, when Paul says **nourishes**, he means that we ought to create a stable environment in which the family has what it needs physically, but not necessarily all

Instruct

that it desires in the flesh. In addition, the word that he uses for **cherishes** is the same one that we encountered in [1 Thess 2:7](#) last week which means to nurture as a mother with her own children; therefore, husbands should provide for their wives' emotional and spiritual needs. We must provide her the protection and security by living with integrity and demonstrating our love to her alone; hence we must base our relationship with her upon the true Rock, Jesus Christ, who ultimately gives that hope and security. Though it may be difficult for some of us, we ought to also provide the comfort, compassion, and, at times, reassurance she needs when difficult times may come; therefore, help bear her burdens and ease her load, especially if she tends to worry. Offer her praise when she needs it as well as loving advice when she seeks it. This only begins to scratch the surface of the ways in which we should provide for our wives so that our home can grow spiritually in the Lord.

In what ways should husbands meet the needs of their wives?

Question
7

Ephesians 5:30-33

LIVE IN UNITY IN YOUR HOME:

In the introduction, we met Tim Allen's character Mike Baxter who led a dysfunctional family in which their three girls received conflicting advice from their parents. This highlights the most important aspect of leading a God-centered family: being unified as a couple. In marriage, we must be unified as a couple to do God's will and bring honor and glory to Him.

Paul transitions to the theme of unity by describing the church as being **members of God's body, of His flesh and bones** (v. 30). Not only do we need to live in unity with a single purpose to glorify God in all we do in the church, but that must be our sole purpose in each of our families.

To illustrate this, Paul appeals to [Gen 2:24](#) which we studied on March

14 of this year for Mothers' Day: **For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined**

to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh

(v. 32). The church consists of people with different backgrounds, different skills, different personalities, and different interests—so is the



disparity between the husband and wife. We even have a saying that opposites attract; as a result, because of the diversity of the couple in the marriage, we need to be more unified and singular in purpose than ever. Consequently, Paul reiterates that the **husband is to love his wife as himself** and the wife is to **respect her husband** in the decisions that he makes and the way that he leads the family as guided by the Spirit (v. 33). A successful marriage requires the husband and wife to work as a team with the single purpose of honoring God with every decision that they make, including the raising of their children. For example, the couple should work harmoniously to set boundaries for their children based upon biblical principles and agree on the methods of punishment when

Instruct

the boundaries are broken. Moreover, they must work together not only to enforce the boundaries and enact punishment, but both should live as examples who model righteousness for their children. In addition, the husband and wife should always talk about major decisions together because God will always direct the couple rather than one individual. For instance, God will not call one of the couple to become a missionary and not the other; sometimes it takes time for God to prepare the other half for such a monumental decision. Don't become rushed, but wait upon the Lord to speak to your spouse about something that He may have already spoken to you. When we are unified as a couple, it will cause less friction and disagreements in our marriages and allow each individual to function in the role that God intended him or her.

In what other areas of marriage should unity be a priority?

Question
8

This week we have examined what it means to serve as a man in the home. To be an effective leader, men should submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and lead their families to develop a closer relationship with the Lord. As the head of the home, men must lead their families intentionally by being an example that points to Christ. Men, therefore, have the obligation ordained by God to establish a spiritual environment in which their families can flourish through worship, the reading of Scripture, and prayer. Functional families which point to Christ begin with men who have a solid relationship with the Lord and bear His image in the way that they relate to their families.

Men should imitate Christ in several ways. First, they should love their families unconditionally and sacrificially. This means that you must be actively involved in your families—spending time doing the things that they enjoy, teaching them godly principles in life to follow, and spending time talking about and listening to their needs. You should be intentional about spending time and communicating because these things don't come naturally for most of us. Second, set an example of service. Not only are you to lead your family to serve faithfully in church, but also you are to serve them in the little ways at home that indicates your love and devotion. Finally, promote unity in your marriage and family by glorifying God by applying His Word and seeking Him in every decision that you make. When we do these things as men, we have a greater chance that our families will follow God and not stray from Him in both the good times and the bad.

Incorporate

What are some practical ways that you can communicate better with members of your family so that you can know and understand their needs?

How often does your family have a time of devotion together?

Daily	Never	Seldom	Few Times per Week
Few Times Per Month			Few Times Per Year

To have a strong family which grows in the Lord, priority must be given to the study of God's Word, so if you don't have a daily devotion time with your family what are some things that you need to reprioritize?

What are some examples of ways that you can personally serve members of your family?

Incorporate to Impact



If you don't regularly meet together as a family for a time of worship and prayer, purposefully set aside time this week to have a devotion. This may mean that you may each need to make sacrifices as family members, but remember that Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice by giving His life for ours. Begin with a time of prayer and then spend quality time reading through Scripture. If you don't have any idea where to begin, start with the [Gospel of John in chapter 1](#) and read through each section successively in your devotions. Faithfully spend time with God and see how much He will transform your lives!!

June 25, 2017



Serving in Ministry

1 Timothy 1:12-20

Focal Verse:

“However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”

1 Timothy 1:16

Introduce

Over the course of our lives, someone has likely invested in us and inspired us by his or her faithful service in ministry. Certainly, we can look around us and see many people in this church who continue to serve the Lord faithfully and even remember some of those who have gone home to be with the Lord. Perhaps, one of those who made the greatest impact upon people had one of the least glamorous and most underappreciated positions of service in the church—a greeter. For those who have attended FBCFW for a while, the name Titus Rexroat brings fond memories of a committed servant who found joy in serving the Lord even in the small things that most of us take for granted. Until his death in June of 2003, Titus greeted people as they entered church with a smile, handshake, and a reminder: “This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

Not only was serving as a greeter a great commitment for Bro. Titus, but even his journey to get to church often required a great sacrifice. Titus lived in Rhome some twenty miles from church, but he was unable to drive. Neither the distance from the church nor his inability to drive stopped him from serving the Lord. He would often take a bus from Rhome to 35W and 820 where he would walk the rest of the way. If he happened to miss the bus, Titus would begin walking the twenty miles to church in all types of weather conditions—torrential Spring rains, Summer heat, and Winter snow and ice. Although some



Introduce

people from time to time would stop and give Titus a ride, he sometimes walked entirely to church to serve as a greeter.

Despite the distance, Titus always arrived at church before 8 am every Sunday dressed in his best suit to stand at his spot in the foyer, open the door, assist people, and greet them as they entered. After morning services, he would stay for the evening service to once again greet people before heading home. Members would typically take him downtown to catch a bus where even once he was brutally assaulted in an attempted robbery even though he had nothing of value for them to take. Yet, each week regardless of life's circumstances—whether he had been assaulted, if the weather were bad, or whatever may have gone wrong—Titus came to church with a smile and a gentle spirit to serve his Lord and Savior faithfully.

Bro. Titus should certainly be an example to every one of us in how to serve the Lord joyfully. Many of us have far less challenges in life than he did, but we don't engage in faithful service each week because we perceive the cost as too great, we let life's circumstances dictate how we feel, or we don't make it a priority. Today, we will examine Paul's advice to his youthful student, Timothy, whom he encouraged to follow his "faithful" service in the Lord which was given to him by "grace." Like Paul, Timothy should become an "example" to others by remaining persistent not only in teaching the correct doctrine, but also in the way that he lives.

Key
Question

What does it require to serve faithfully in ministry and be an example to others?

1 Timothy 1:12

SERVE IN MINISTRY FAITHFULLY:

We should regard serving in ministry of any kind in the local church as an honor and privilege rather than an odious chore to be dreaded. For this reason, Paul offers spontaneous thanksgiving unto God for **counting** him **faithful** to serve in **ministry** (v. 12). We ought to be grateful that we have a sovereign Lord who loves us so much and desires an intimate relationship with us that He wants to involve us in His work. As children, perhaps some of our most fond memories occurred when our parents or grandparents took time to involve us in their work. At the time, it didn't seem like laborious work, but it instilled joy within us to work alongside of them. As a child, I can remember helping my grandfather in the garden; working in the scorching heat of summer, we would pull weeds, hoe the dry, caked ground, and carry buckets of water to bring nourishment to the wilted plants. Now, however, laboring in the garden, and especially mundane yardwork, has become a chore and I dread going out in the heat. Why? Because I no longer view it as a privilege to work and serve, but I see it as grievous work that makes me sweat and hurts my back so these days the weeds can grow as tall as my



tomato plants and I am happy to sit in my air-conditioned home waiting for the fruit to ripen while doing nothing else. We ought never to treat ministry with such contempt and bitterness, but must realize it is a gracious gift and privilege from the Lord.

Why should we view ministry as a privilege?

Question
1

When God calls us into a relationship with Him through His Son, He also equips us for **ministry**. Part of Paul's thankfulness centers around the fact that God has **enabled** him and assigned him (i.e. **putting**) a specific role in **ministry**. God never calls us to a ministry without first giving us specific directives about what to do as well as preparing and equipping us for success; thus, He never sets us up for failure. Although **ministry** does require learning and growth as we mature, God never places us in a **ministry** for which He hasn't equipped us spiritually. If we excuse ourselves as being inadequate or ill-prepared, then either the enemy has deceived us into looking at **ministry** in terms of a human perspective or we haven't actively responded to God's call of service in the first place and we sit idly rather than being proactive. Even though we must be faithful and committed in addition to being responsible for our personal spiritual growth, God remains the one who calls and **enables** us to minister.

In-Depth Information



Jesus called Paul on the road to Damascus and gave him a specific task to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Jesus was specific about the ministry to which He had called Paul; He didn't merely tell Paul to go out and find himself,

In-Depth Information—continued

*but rather He gave him specifics. When we pray and seek God, He will move us toward specific ministries while at the same time helping us to grow spiritually and with maturity so that we would be **enabled** and equipped by Him to do them **faithfully**.*

In what ways does God enable us and prepare us for ministry within the church?

Question
2

1 Timothy 1:13-15

SERVE IN MINISTRY WITH GOD'S GRACE:

God **counted** Paul **faithful** not because he earned the right, but because He was saved by **grace** through Jesus Christ. Paul highlights the transformation that Jesus had brought to his life from a man characterized by sin to one where he is considered **faithful** for **ministry**. He begins by describing his former life in three ways (v. 13). First, Paul sees himself as a **blasphemer**—one who rejected the true Messiah, Jesus. Anyone who rejects the conviction of the Holy Spirit is called a **blasphemer** (see [Luke 12:10](#)). Second, Paul regards himself as a **persecutor**. From [Acts 9:4](#), we know that Paul, as a Pharisee without Christ, did persecute the followers of Christ and was on his way to Damascus with a letter to remove them forcibly them back to Jerusalem. Third, Paul identifies himself as an **insolent man**. The word **insolent** means violent which he expressed through his abhorrence and utter rage toward Christians. In fact, Scripture notes that Paul was “breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” ([Acts 9:1](#)). Before his encounter with Jesus, Paul lived a life of misguided belief in which he

Instruct

sought to make a name for himself by being religiously zealous which led not only to pride, arrogance, bitterness, discontentment, and anger. If anyone should have been disqualified and unworthy of **ministry**, it should have been the Apostle Paul for he opposed the things of God thinking that he was doing Him a favor. After his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul realized that he had acted **ignorantly in unbelief**, but now God's **mercy** has transformed his attitude and perspective completely. No longer is Paul a blasphemer, but now he proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ; no longer is he a **persecutor**, but now he remains **faithful** to God even though he himself has become persecuted; no longer is he **an insolent man**, but now he is filled with God's **love** and seeks patiently to serve others through the **ministry entrusted**



to him. Because of His **mercy**, God took away His wrath from Paul and through His **exceedingly abundant grace** sent Jesus **into the world to save sinners**, thereby extending **love** and **faithfulness** (vv. 14-15).

Like Paul, none of us deserves salvation because we are all **sinners**. Yet, here, Paul sets himself up as an example of the power of transformation by God when he exclaims that he is the **chief** of all **sinners** (v. 15).

Literally, Paul says **Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first (chief)**. In other words, Paul is saying that he is the worst, most

disreputable and vile person who has disobeyed God and if God can **save** and change him then He can **save** and change anyone. This also highlights that we are not saved through our works or by being a good person because our sin is grievous toward God. Each one of us is saved by an act of **grace** and **mercy** from God who sought us in our rebellion and made a way that we could have eternal life through His Son when we repent of our sins and turn to Him. Therefore, like Paul, we ought use our own spiritual journey as an example to encourage others and point them to the transformative power of Christ. By consciously remembering our former lives, it also helps to ensure that we are growing in our faith and that we are allowing the Lord to transform us daily because it becomes a tool with which we can measure our maturity.

Since you began your relationship with Jesus, what changes have you noticed in your life that you can use to encourage others?

Question
3

We can also relate our salvation in terms of **grace** to ministry as well because every one of us participates in ministry only through **grace**. When we view ministry as a gift of **grace**, then it helps us to remain humble, knowing that God is working through us to accomplish that to which He has called us. It keeps us from getting prideful and thinking that we know everything which not only causes friction in relationships in the church, but it pushes God's leadership aside so that we rely merely on our human power. When we view **ministry** as a gift of **grace**, it helps us to work cohesively together in all areas of the church because we understand that one area of service is not more important or more

Instruct

valuable than others. We need greeters in the church as much as we need teachers; we need deacons who serve widows as much as we need those who sing in the choir. By viewing **ministry** as a gift of **grace**, we are willing to do the small things which don't receive as much recognition—and sometimes none at all—as much as we are to do the big things which are more frequently noticed and recognized by others. God has given each one of us a measure of **grace** and **mercy** so we ought to serve Him diligently in any way that He calls us and equips us so that we can see the Kingdom grow through this local church and impact the community so that we may see people begin a relationship with Christ daily.



Why must we view ministry in terms of God's grace? What can happen if we don't have a perspective focused on grace?

Question
4

1 Timothy 1:16-17

SERVE IN MINISTRY AS A CHRIST-LIKE EXAMPLE:

Not only does Paul set himself up as an example of God's transformation, but he also sees himself as a **pattern** for Christ's patience (v. 16). Paul states that he **obtained mercy** so that **Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering to those who are going to believe**. Through His offer of salvation, God extends patience toward us in that He desires us not to

perish, but to have a relationship with Him. As you think about your lives, think about the many opportunities that you had to hear and accept the gospel before you gave your life to Christ. In some cases, like mine, God patiently waited and continued to offer those opportunities for us to turn to Him for several years. In the same way, He also gave the people of Israel numerous chances to repent and turn to Him. [Exodus 34:6-7](#) describes God as: "Merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Consequently, God's patience with us should be reflected in our lives and the way that we serve in **ministry** so that others may see a visible expression of what Christ has done for us.

When we serve in **ministry**, we should reflect the character of Christ within us so that those who don't have a

relationship with Him yet may be drawn to Him instead of repelled.

Others should see Jesus in us rather than our own personalities. By reflecting Christ in our service, it brings glory and honor to God who rightly deserves it rather than we who are tokens of God's grace and benevolence. For this reason, Paul breaks out into spontaneous praise for his salvation, transformation, and ministry: **To the King eternal,**

immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen (v. 17). Our sole purpose in ministry should be



Instruct

to glorify Christ by letting others see Him in control of our lives so that He receives the **glory** and **honor** and others may be drawn to Him for salvation—for only He can **save**. We must point others to Christ not only through the way that we live and imitate Him, but also through His Word and faithful adherence to its teachings—to which Paul will turn next in his discussion.

In what ways should we reflect a Christ-like character in ministry, especially in terms of patience?

Question
5

1 Timothy 1:18-20

SERVE IN MINISTRY PERSISTENTLY:

Regarding Timothy as his spiritual **son** whom he has mentored and guided, Paul issues a serious **charge** or command which he should follow diligently as an example for the Ephesians (v.18). This **charge** contains three parts which Timothy should put into practice: 1) use his spiritual gifts to wage war on the enemy (v. 18); 2) exercise integrity through holy living (v. 19a); and 3) remain faithful to teach God's Word accurately and truthfully (vv. 19b-20). First, Paul reminds Timothy that he should live according to the **prophecies made concerning** him so that he might **wage the good warfare**—or colloquially we would say “fight the good fight.” In [4:14](#), Paul explains further to Timothy what he means by the **prophecies** when he asserts, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by **prophecy** with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” In this case, **prophecies** do not refer to foretelling the

future as much as making a declaration and affirmation about how God has gifted him to serve in ministry; therefore, Timothy is not merely to sit idly, but to use his God-given gift to glorify the Lord.

Each one of us has been given a gift by God at the moment we were saved when the Holy Spirit came to indwell us. We are to use that gift within the local body to serve the Lord by evangelizing and ministering to those around us who don't have a relationship with Christ and by discipling or mentoring others in the church to grow in their relationship with Him so that they too may become an active and productive member of the community. Consequently, it takes each one of us to serve together in ministry—not just the staff, deacons, or Bible study teachers, but every one of us. In the body, we need each other because we are battling an enemy not of flesh and blood, but a powerful spiritual enemy. To remain faithful and focused on our task, we need each other for encouragement and strength united together for one purpose of resisting evil and exalting God.

Why is it important for every member of the church to use his or her spiritual gift that God has granted? What happens when only a few members use their gifts?

Question
6

Second, Paul encourages Timothy to have **faith and a good conscience** (v. 19a). Because character is so important in ministry and a charge of hypocrisy can repel others from trusting in Jesus, we need to act with faithfulness and integrity. To have faith, means that we are personally committed to Jesus Christ which is borne out in the way that we live which represents Him faithfully to the rest of the world. To live faithfully

Instruct

as a believer, we must possess a **good conscience** whereby we can differentiate between choices which are morally right or wrong. The **conscience**, however, is not so much the little voice inside of us where we debate whether to do something right or wrong; thus, it's not like the cartoon where an angel and devil appear in one's thoughts tempting him to do evil or challenging him to do good. Instead, the **conscience** gives us the ability to differentiate between right and wrong when we know the correct standard by which to judge our actions—in our case the Bible. Today, unbelievers, and even some believers, have been deceived by society to reject absolute truth so this skews their judgment on many actions because they are based on an imperfect society's standards rather than God's perfect standard. As believers, therefore, we must follow God's perfect standards and allow the Holy Spirit to guide our consciences so that we can differentiate between that which is right and wrong.

What does it mean to have a good conscience?
Why is it so important today to have a good conscience?

Question
7

Finally, to have a **good conscience**, we must faithfully adhere to the standards in God's Word; not only must we live by them, but we must also teach them to others. Two men in the Ephesian church, **Alexander and Hymenaeus**, have abandoned sound teaching and **have suffered shipwreck** in their **faith** (vv. 19b-20). These two were teaching heresy (incorrect belief) about the resurrection, distracting other people and causing them to stumble in their **faith** (see [2 Tim 2:17-18](#)). Because they

were unrepentant and taught something false and inaccurately, Paul **delivered** them to **Satan so they may not blaspheme**. After giving them time to repent and going through proper church discipline, Paul recommended that the church kick them out so that they would not create confusion and corrupt the doctrine, causing people to reject the gospel entirely. Consequently, Paul reminds Timothy of the importance of correct teaching. Teaching the Bible correctly must be a priority today when there are so many false religions and beliefs that cause people to be confused about salvation and how to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

What are some ways that society distorts the teaching of the Bible? Why is it important that we all know and apply the Bible to combat such distorted teaching?

Question
8

Inspire

Whether we like to admit it or not, we live in a society that craves attention and recognition. It may be five minutes of fame for doing some foolish, life-endangering stunt on YouTube or receiving recognition for our service to the community to make us feel good. Yet, we should have a humble spirit of service and cooperation like that of Titus Rexroat—being willing to serve in the smallest, most seemingly insignificant ways to honor and glorify Christ. It takes every one of us to serve in this church so that we maintain focus on our primary mission: honoring Christ by reaching people in His name.

We have numerous opportunities to serve in the church and community so that we may share the gospel. For example, we have needs in

maintenance of the grounds and church building that cannot be overseen with a weekly cleaning crew. We need people to serve with the First Impressions Team as greeters, ushers, and to aid those with mobility issues. We also need people to serve in the worship ministry in the choir, orchestra, praise team, and media and sound. Moreover, we have needs in the children's areas to volunteer for teaching in Connect Classes and on a rotation basis during the 11 am worship hour. In addition, we have need for people to volunteer once a week for six weeks at two different schools for the Good News Club so that children may hear the gospel. We have needs in the Youth for mentors who would build relationships and train them in the way that they ought to live and serve. Moreover, we need people to fellowship with the Youth on Wednesday or offer their homes for fellowships so that they have opportunities to build relationships with the mature Christians in our church. For the adult ministries, we need people to serve in activities that reach our community, such as the Birdville ISD Refresh, to assist with the Straight Shooters Bible Study to develop relationships with the unchurched, and to build relationships with those in Independent Senior Adult Apartment Complexes in Northern Tarrant County. Although these highlight some of the ministries in our church, we have many more opportunities to impact the community with the gospel.

It doesn't take a seminary degree to serve in the church, but only a relationship with Jesus Christ and a willingness to serve in any way in which He has called us. God has called each of us to serve with the spiritual gift that He has given us; we must remember that if God calls us

then He will also equip us for success. In order to serve God, we must be faithful in responding to the call, but we must also maintain a life of integrity and faithfulness to God's Word in both the way that we live and the content that we teach. As we conclude this series on service, let us each find our area of ministry in the body of Christ and be faithful to represent Him well and point others to Him.

Incorporate

In what ways has God equipped you to serve in this church?

Prayerfully and honestly evaluate your service to God. How would you describe your service in terms of faithfulness?

Incorporate

In what ways can you serve as a Christ-like example in your area of ministry? If you don't serve anywhere currently, how can you start? Go to mymember.fbcfw.org for more information about ways to serve in the church.

Finally, prayerfully ask God to show you in what ways you need to be better equipped to handle His Word faithfully—in both how you live in faithfulness with a good conscience as well as how you teach others (whether in the home, work, or society).

Journal: Document God's Work

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