



“Grace for a Purpose Driven Life” – Week 16

Introduction:

1. So far in our series, we covered 4 of the purposes for which we have been created:
 - **Purpose #1: You Were Planned for God’s Pleasure (bring glory to God)**
 - **Purpose #2: You Were Formed for God’s Family**
 - **Purpose #3: You Were Created to Become Like Christ**
2. Last week we began our study of the 4th purpose: **Purpose #4: You Were Shaped for SERVING GOD (chp. 29-32)**
 - this purpose is based on several verses – but Paul especially states the matter very clearly:
 - Ephesians 2:10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**
3. Each of us have to make a choice . . .

I. Accepting Your Assignment

“You were put on earth to make a contribution.” – p 227

A. You were CREATED to serve God / SAVED to serve God / CALLED to serve God.

“A ‘non-serving Christian’ is a contradiction in terms.”

- that’s one of the reasons why we have no statement in our church constitution regarding ‘inactive members’
- where is that concept in the NT? (it’s NOT!)
- The Word commands / implies / and assumes a believer in Christ is going to be serving!
- Just as a reminder . . .

“There are no insignificant ministries in the church. Some are visible and some are behind the scenes, but all are valuable” – p. 230

D. You are COMMANDED to serve God.

“Jesus taught that spiritual maturity is never an end in itself. Maturity is for ministry! We grow up in order to give out.” – p. 231

- We also need to understand/remember that we have been . . .

II. Shaped for Serving God

- A. SHAPE: Unwrapping Your SPIRITUAL GIFTS**
- B. SHAPE: Listening To Your HEART**
- C. SHAPE: Applying Your *Abilities***

“Whatever you’re good at, you should be doing for your church!”

D. SHAPE: Using Your PERSONALITY

E. SHAPE: Employing Your Experiences

- Every aspect of your past can help you be more effective in your ministry today!

4. We’re going to wrap up our study of the 4th purpose: Shaped for God’s Service!

- Let’s think about

I. How Real Servants ACT

- Think about the implications of the following verses:

- Mark 10:43 **"But it is not this way among you (i.e. as opposed to the Gentiles, or the non-believers), but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."**
- Matthew 7:16 **"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?"**

- A friend of mine once said:

“The test of your servanthood is how you respond when you’re treated like one.”

Input: When asked to serve, what is the response of a real servant?

Note: This doesn’t mean a servant always says YES – but that there must be something of far greater importance/priority in order for that person NOT to serve

POINT: NOT serving is the exception NOT the norm!

“Jesus, however, measured greatness in terms of service, not status. God determines your greatness by how many people you serve, not how many people serve you. This is so contrary to the world’s idea of greatness that we have a hard time understanding it, much less practicing it.” – p. 257

- Jesus put the focus on not so much what you do, but what you are (the inner man or the heart is what’s important!)

“Your shape reveals your ministry, but your servant’s heart will reveal your maturity.”
– p. 258

Input: Is it possible to serve in church for a lifetime without ever *being* a servant?

Answer: To some degree yes – you could be serving for . . .

- ✓ the praise of men
- ✓ the fear of man,
- ✓ or to sooth your own conscience and avoid feeling guilty

Point: Jesus wants us to have the heart of a servant!

Input: How can you know if you have the heart of a servant?

- Jesus said, “You can tell what they are by what they do.”

- Matthew 7:16 **"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?"**

A. Real servants make themselves AVAILABLE to serve.

- Much like a soldier

- Servant must always be standing by for duty – with the attitude of being “On Call” (24/7)

- 2 Timothy 2:4 **No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.**
- I'm not saying that anyone who doesn't serve is automatically worldly – but it is amazing how the entanglement with 'the affairs of this life' keep many from serving our God!
- If you only serve when it's convenient for you, you're not a real servant.
- Real servants do what's needed, even when it's inconvenient.

B. Real servants **PAY ATTENTION** to needs.

- John, the Beloved Apostle, put it this way:
 - 1 John 3:17 **But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.**
- This is one of the major points of the record of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
 - > Of all the people that passed by the man who had been robbed – it was the Samaritan who stopped to help him – who 'loved his neighbor'
- Here are a couple of verses that really make this point:
 - Galatians 6:10 **So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**
 - Proverbs 3:28 **Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.**
- This assumes that we have a heart of love for the Lord and for people

C. Real servants do their **BEST** with what they have.

- Ecclesiastes 9:10 **Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with *all* your might . . .**
- Colossians 3:23 **Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men . . .**
- This is one of the lessons about *stewardship* – it's not about how many talents you were given, it's about what you DO with the talents you were given
 - > multiply them – bury them – squander them??

Input: Why don't people serve?

: They fear they are not good enough to serve.?

> If it can't be done with excellence, don't do it at all!

> True to a point . . . but don't allow that to lead to PERFECTIONISM which usually results in doing nothing at all or spending so much time on one project, it has become an IDOL!

Input: What is the balance between these two (perfectionism vs. the "good enough" principle?)

Perfectionism	"Good Enough"
[various answers]	[various answers]

D. Real servants do every task with EQUAL DEDICATION

- A real servant will do the little things as if they were great things, because God is watching!
- Apply this to teaching our children to do a task as if Jesus were going to inspect what we've asked them to do!

[for some of our children, that would be great because they think He'd show more mercy!]

- Colossians 3:23 **Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,**

"God will never exempt you from the mundane." – the daily routine is a HUGE part of the Christian life!

Input: What task did Jesus do that would be considered menial

- ✓ Washing feet
- ✓ Helping children
- ✓ Fixing breakfast
- ✓ Serving lepers

"Small tasks often show a big heart."

- Luke 16:10 **"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? 12 "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"**

E. Real servants are FAITHFUL to their ministry.

- KJV Proverbs 20:6 **Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?**

- Can others count on you to deliver – are you dependable/reliable?

- Proverbs warns us about unfaithfulness:

- KJV Proverbs 25:19 **Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.**

- That's another principle of stewardship to learn – it's what you want Jesus to say to you when it's all over:

- Matthew 25:23 **"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'**

"Faithful servants never retire."

[Explain how some people as they get older, STOP serving – start coasting!]

ILL: Examples of people in our church retired, yet still serving!

F. Real servants maintain a LOW PROFILE

- Colossians 3:23 **Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.**

- Real servants don't serve for the approval or applause of others. They live for an audience of One.

- Galatians 1:10 **For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.**

- The most significant service is often the service that is behind the scenes – not upfront.

Input: Which of the six characteristics of real servants offers the greatest challenge to you?

]

- I tell my kids all the time: If you're going to act like a servant, you have to think like a servant!

- Proverbs 23:7 **For as he thinks within himself, so he is.**

- **We all need to work on . . .**

II. Thinking Like a Servant

- Numbers 14:24 **"But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.**
- Philippians 2:5 **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,**

A. Servants think more about OTHERS than about THEMSELVES.

- Philippians 2:3 **Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,**

"When was the last time you emptied yourself for someone else's benefit?" You can't be a servant if you're full of yourself. It's only when we forget ourselves that we do the things that deserve to be remembered." – p. 266

- Paul went on to comment on Timothy and the kind of person he was (we need to be like Timothy!)

- Philippians 2:20 **For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.**

GREAT QUOTE: ** **Self-denial is the core of servanthood!**"

- That's because at the 'core' of the life of Christ is His self-denial in order to accomplish what the Father wanted!

- Luke 9:23 **And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."**

B. Servants think like STEWARDS, not OWNERS

Input: Contracts the difference between a steward and an owner:

Steward Mentality	Owner Mentality

- 1 Corinthians 4:2 **In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.**

C. Servants think about THEIR WORK, not what others are doing.

- The focus is on the task that God (or my authority) has given me to do
 - > there is a recognition of “I will stand and give an account for myself – my motives, etc.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10 **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**
- One of the things that will discourage and/or hinder your effectiveness in ministry is comparing yourself with another believer!
- Paul WARNS us NOT to do that:
 - KJV 2 Corinthians 10:12 **For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.**
- Another hindrance to effective ministry is ‘judging’ someone else’s service:
 - Romans 14:4 **Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.**

IMPORTANT: **** If you serve like Jesus, you can expect to be criticized.**

Example: Mary, washing Jesus’ feet – was criticized by the disciples, especially Judas! (Matthew 26)

D. Servants think about their POSITION in Christ

- This whacks the whole self-image concept – it’s not “I have to have a good self-image to serve, but rather I need to have a biblical view of myself and understand my position in Christ is secure and sealed until the day of redemption!”
- While I wouldn’t use the word ‘secure’ or ‘insecure’ (lots of baggage w/that terminology) – I do think there is some value to Warren’s quote:!

“If you’re going to be a servant, you must settle your identity in Christ. Only secure people can serve. Insecure people are always worrying about how they appear to others. They fear exposure of their weaknesses and hide beneath layers of protective pride and pretensions. The more insecure you are, the more you will want people to serve you, and the more you will need their approval.” – p. 269

E. Servants think of ministry as an OPPORTUNITY, not an OBLIGATION

- Viars message last week!! GRACE for today (not past grace, but today’s grace from God)

II. God’s Power in Your WEAKNESS

- 2 Corinthians 12:9 **And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.**
- cf. Rom 7:14-25 – Growth – not perfection is the emphasis

!

Grace for a Purpose Driven Life
You Are a Servant! – Week 16

Introduction:

Purpose #4: You Were Shaped for _____

I. How Real Servants _____

“The test of your servanthood is how you _____ when you’re treated like one.”

Input: When asked to serve, what is the response of a real servant?

“Jesus, however, measured greatness in terms of service, not status. God determines your greatness by how many people you serve, not how many people serve you. This is so contrary to the world’s idea of greatness that we have a hard time understanding it, much less practicing it.” – p. 257

“Your shape reveals your _____, but your servant’s heart will reveal your _____.” – p. 258

Input: How can you know if you have the heart of a servant?

A. Real servants make themselves _____ to serve.

B. Real servants _____ to needs.

C. Real servants do their _____ with what they have.

Input: What is the balance between perfectionism vs. the “good enough” principle?

Perfectionism	“Good Enough”

D. Real servants do every task with _____

Input: What task did Jesus do that would be considered menial?

“Small tasks often show a big heart.”

E. Real servants are _____ to their ministry.

F. Real servants maintain a _____

Input: Which of the six characteristics of real servants offers the greatest challenge to you?

* *If you're going to act like a servant, you have to _____ like a servant!*

II. Thinking Like a Servant

A. Servants think more about _____ than about _____.

"When was the last time you emptied yourself for someone else's benefit?" You can't be a servant if you're full of yourself. It's only when we forget ourselves that we do the things that deserve to be remembered." – p. 266

** "**_____ is the core of servanthood!**"

B. Servants think like _____, not _____

Input: Contrast the difference between a steward and an owner:

Steward Mentality	Owner Mentality

C. Servants think about _____, not what others are doing.

** **If you serve like Jesus, you can expect to be _____.**

D. Servants think about their _____ in Christ

"If you're going to be a servant, you must settle your identity in Christ. Only secure people can serve. Insecure people are always worrying about how they appear to others. They fear exposure of their weaknesses and hide beneath layers of protective pride and pretensions. The more insecure you are, the more you will want people to serve you, and the more you will need their approval." – p. 269

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III. God's Power in Your _____

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- Matthew 25:23

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- Colossians 3:23-24
- Galatians 1:10

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- Proverbs 23:7

II. Thinking Like a Servant

- Numbers 14:24
- Philippians 2:5

A. Servants think more about OTHERS than about THEMSELVES.

- Philippians 2:3-5

Quote: p. 266

- Philippians 2:20-21

**** “Self-denial is the core of servanthood!”**

- Luke 9:23

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- 2 Corinthians 5:10

- KJV 2 Corinthians 10:12

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***Quote:* – p. 269**

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- 2 Corinthians 12:9

- cf. Rom 7:14-25