

# DAY 3 SERVING

Yesterday we looked at Ephesians 2:8-9 which says we are saved by God's grace and not by our own works. So if my future has already been taken care of, what is the point of good works? The very next verse says this:

**"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."**

It's no coincidence that the apostle Paul wrote this verse after the previous grace-filled verses. There's a flow to this: once you receive God's grace, you can't help but want to do good. If you are filled with gratitude because someone has helped you, you want to repay that person. It's the same with us and God.

Second Kings 4 is the story of a wealthy Shunammite woman. She made a guest room in her house for the great prophet Elisha. And so one day he says to her, "You have gone to all this trouble. Now what can be done for you?"<sup>6</sup> What I love about this story is she didn't build the room so Elisha would one day do something for her. And Elisha didn't ask her what he could do for her because he had to. They both genuinely wanted to serve the other person.

Far too many people come into a relationship with Jesus just wanting to get more from Him. I get really frustrated when preachers twist the true

Gospel and replace it with a prosperity Gospel that says if you are following Him, God will bless you and you will live a prosperous life. You give this much money and God will take care of your debt, or you do something for someone else and next time you'll get the perfect parking spot.

**We don't serve God in order to get more from Him.** We've already received Jesus. He is the prize. He is the great reward! We serve God because He first served us.

However, while the motivation behind serving God is not to get more from Him, we always do!

*"Just as Elisha actively looked for ways to bless the Shunammite woman, God is eager to bless us. Isn't that a perspective-changing, paradigm-shifting way to look at God? I think most of us imagine that God looks for ways to get us. But what if God is actually dreaming about how He wants to bless you and move on your behalf?"<sup>7</sup>*

**Our gratitude for what God has done leads us to serve Him.** We don't serve God because we have to or because it's how we earn our salvation. We serve God because of everything He's done for us, and for this reason:

**While serving others won't save you, it just may help save someone else.** Only the Holy Spirit can save someone, but the Holy Spirit lives inside all those who believe in Him. That means He can use someone like you to help save someone else. **You are more powerful than you realize!**

I understand that not everyone in this Challenge is on the same spiritual level. And that's okay. Some of you are doing this Challenge because you feel like you "should." But I hope that over the course of these forty days you realize just how good our God is and how much He's done for you, and your "have to" attitude becomes a "want to."

Jesus had a heart of service. When we serve, we reflect who our God is. A big piece of this 40-day Challenge is changing people's perceptions of Christ-followers. When we serve, when we care for orphans and widows, when we feed the hungry, when we clothe the naked, when we let our lights shine before others, people notice and are drawn to us.

1 Peter 3:15 says, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." Many times we focus on having the right answers, but before you can give an answer, a question must be asked. We must live our lives so that others will ask, "What is different about that person? Why do they care so much? Why do they serve so much?" And when they ask us, we can tell them we serve because Jesus first served us.

During the third full week of this Challenge, you will begin to serve. You will learn who God calls you to serve and how He calls you to serve.

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