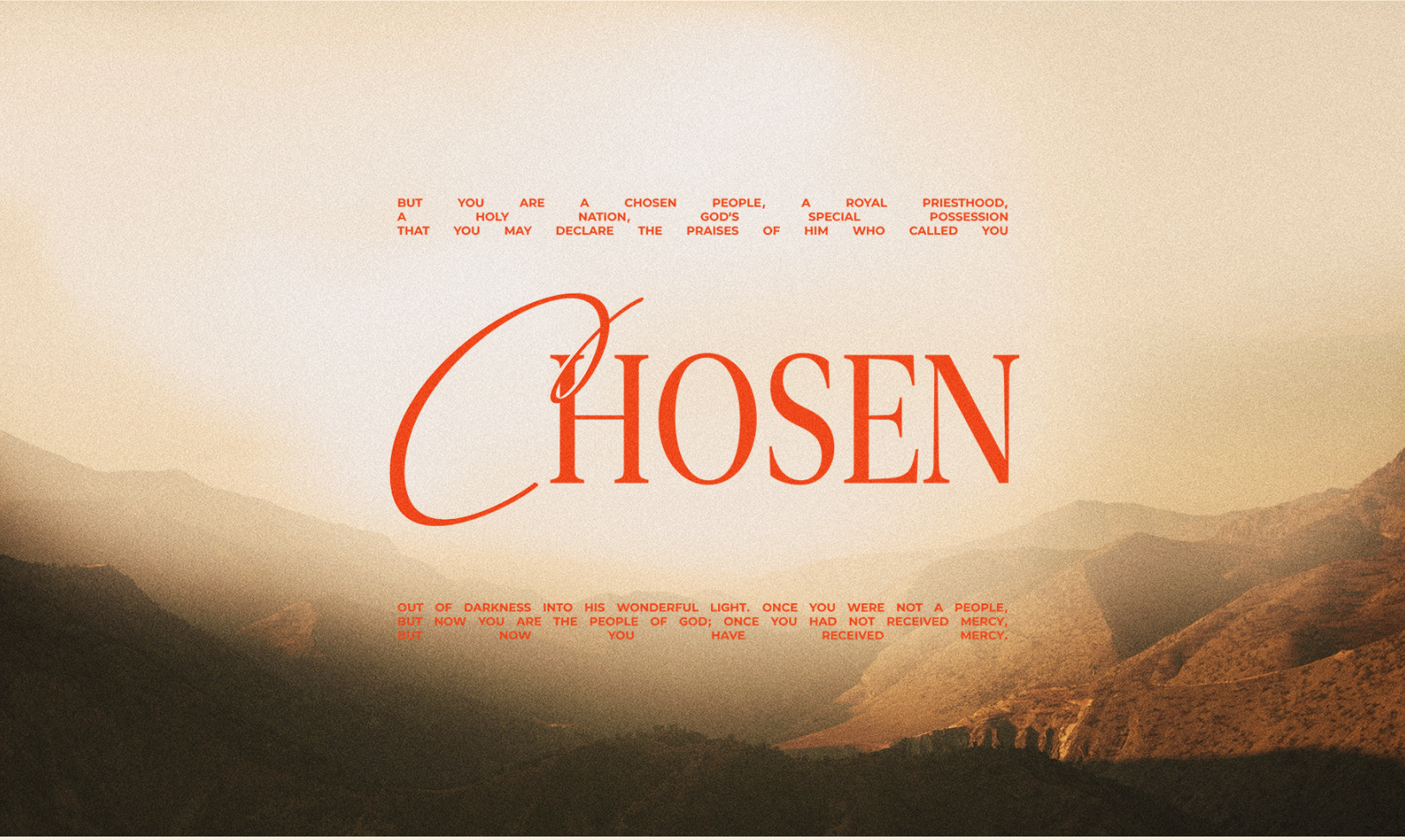


WEEK THREE

Show Me How

John 13:1–17

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL · SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Compassion CHURCH

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Greatness Through Serving

DAY 1 The Posture of Greatness

READING · JOHN 13:1–17

The world defines greatness by position, power, and the number of people who serve you. Jesus redefined it entirely. On the night before His crucifixion, knowing full well what was coming, He knelt down and washed dirty feet. He did not wait for someone else to step up. He saw a need and met it. True greatness, according to Jesus, flows downward, not upward. Greatness is not found in the title you hold. It is found in the people you choose to serve.

REFLECTION

What need around you have you been waiting for someone else to address?

TRY THIS WEEK

Identify one task today that feels beneath you and do it without being asked and without telling anyone.

DAY 2 Humility Is Not Weakness

READING · PHILIPPIANS 2:3–11

Paul describes how Jesus, though equal with God, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant. Humility is not thinking poorly of yourself. It is thinking about yourself less. Jesus knew exactly who He was. He knew His authority, His identity, and His power. And yet He still knelt. Our insecurity is often what keeps us from serving. We fear that serving will make us look small. But Jesus shows us that the most secure person in the room is always the one willing to pick up the towel. Security in Christ frees you to serve without needing credit.

REFLECTION

In what areas of your life does insecurity keep you from serving others freely?

TRY THIS WEEK

Spend five minutes in prayer asking God to replace your need for recognition with a secure identity rooted in Christ.

DAY 3 Seeing People, Not Interruptions

READING · MATTHEW 9:35–38

When Jesus saw the crowds, He was moved with compassion. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd, lost and in need. He did not see them as a distraction from His agenda. He saw them as the agenda. So many of us walk through our days task-focused, missing the people God has placed directly in our path. The harvest, Jesus said, is plentiful. The laborers are few. Serving begins the moment we stop treating people as interruptions and start recognizing them as divine appointments. Someone around you today is waiting to be seen.

> REFLECTION
>
> *Who in your daily life have you been treating as an interruption rather than an opportunity?*
>
> TRY THIS WEEK
>
> The next time someone interrupts your plans today, pause, make eye contact, and give them your full attention before moving on.

DAY 4 Serving the Undeserving

READING · ROMANS 5:6–10

Romans 5 reminds us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Not after we cleaned ourselves up. Not after we proved our worth. While we were yet enemies of God, He served us with His very life. Jesus washed the feet of Judas, His betrayer, knowing what was coming. He served not because Judas deserved it, but because serving is who Jesus is. Serving only those who appreciate you is not servant leadership. It is a transaction. True servanthood extends to the difficult, the ungrateful, and even the ones who have hurt you deeply.

> REFLECTION
>
> *Is there someone you have withheld service or kindness from because of how they treated you?*
>
> TRY THIS WEEK
>
> Write down the name of one person who has hurt or disappointed you and pray specifically for them today. Ask God to show you one small way you can serve them.

DAY 5 We Serve Because We Have Been Served

READING · 1 JOHN 4:19

First John 4:19 tells us simply that we love because God first loved us. The same is true of service. We do not serve in order to earn God's approval. We serve because we have already

received it. The cross was the ultimate act of servant leadership. Jesus gave not just His time, not just His energy, but His life. When we truly grasp what Christ has done for us, serving others becomes a natural response of a grateful heart rather than a burden we carry reluctantly. The gospel is not just the beginning of your faith. It is the fuel for your service every single day.

> **REFLECTION**
>
> *How would your approach to serving change if you lived daily from the overflow of what Christ has already done for you?*
>
> **TRY THIS WEEK**
>
> Before the week ends, take a concrete step toward serving in your church, your home, or your community. Pick up a towel. Someone is waiting.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Show Me How

OPENING PRAYER & ICE BREAKER

> *Open your time together in prayer, asking God to search each heart and to give the group the humility to hear what He may be saying about serving.*

Ice Breaker: When was the last time someone served you in a way that genuinely surprised you? What made it memorable?

SERMON OVERVIEW

This message walked through Jesus washing His disciples' feet in John 13. On the eve of His betrayal and crucifixion, Jesus did not gather His closest followers to receive honor. He grabbed a towel and got on His knees. This week the group wrestles with what it truly means to serve, and what it might cost to do it well.

KEY SCRIPTURE · JOHN 13:14–15

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

On Humility

1. Pastor Jay said humility is not thinking less of yourself—it is thinking about yourself less. How does that reframe the way you have understood humility? Does the distinction change anything for you?
2. Jesus knew exactly who He was—the Son of God with all authority—and He still picked up the towel. How does a secure sense of identity free us to serve rather than hold us back?
3. “Everybody wants a title, but nobody wants to carry a towel.” Where in your own life have you been more focused on recognition than on serving? Be honest.

On People Over Position

1. Consider two questions: “How many people work for you?” versus “How many people are you willing to serve?” Which one more accurately reflects how you measure success—at work, at home, or at church?

2. Some come to church asking “What do you offer me?” and others asking “What is my assignment?” Which posture best describes where you are right now? What would it take to shift?

On Seeing What Others Miss

1. Serving begins when we stop seeing people as interruptions and start seeing them as opportunities. Where are the “interruptions” in a typical week for you? What would it look like to view them differently?

2. Jesus was highly interruptible—He regularly stopped mid-task to meet a need in front of Him. Does your drive to accomplish things ever cause you to miss the person standing right there?

On Serving Those Who Will Fail You

1. Jesus washed Judas's feet knowing the betrayal that was coming—He served not because people deserved it, but because that is who He is. Is there someone difficult to serve right now because of how they've treated you? What would serving them anyway look like?

2. “It is not your job to inspect the person you are serving. It is your job to just show up and do it.” How does that challenge or encourage you?

On the Cost of Serving

1. Philippians 2 says Jesus emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, and humbled Himself to the point of death. The towel led Him all the way to the cross. What has serving cost you in the past? What might it cost you going forward?

2. “If we are going to follow Jesus, we do not get to choose only the comfortable parts of His example.” Which parts of Jesus' servanthood are you most tempted to skip or soften?

On the Gospel Foundation of Serving

1. We do not serve so that God will love us. We serve because God already loves us. How does that shift the motivation behind your serving? Does it change the way serving feels when no one notices or says thank you?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Serving starts with humility: not thinking less of yourself, but thinking about yourself less.
- ✓ Great leaders do not collect servants. They become one.
- ✓ Jesus served people He knew would fail Him, betray Him, and deny Him.
- ✓ Visibility does not equal value. No act of service is too small in God's eyes.
- ✓ We do not serve to earn God's love. We serve because we have already received it.
- ✓ Serving will cost you something: comfort, time, recognition, or pride.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose one or more to put into practice before your group meets again:

Option 1 Meet a Need Quietly

Identify one need in your church, workplace, neighborhood, or home that you've noticed but assumed someone else would handle. Do something about it this week without telling anyone.

Option 2 Serve Someone Difficult

Pick one person who has been hard to serve. Perform one act of service for them with no expectation of acknowledgment or reciprocation.

Option 3 Make Yourself Available

If you haven't yet filled out a serve card at your church, take that step this week and make yourself available.

Option 4 Serve at Home

If you're married, ask your spouse directly, “How can I serve you this week?” and follow through. If you have children, involve them in a simple act of service together, then talk about why you did it.

Option 5 Serve as a Group

Identify one tangible way your group can serve together outside your regular meeting—a neighbor in need, a local ministry, someone in a hard season. Commit to a specific date and plan.

PERSONAL JOURNALING

- Am I willing to do what needs to be done, not just what I want to do?
- Am I willing to serve when no one notices?
- Am I willing to serve people who cannot serve me back?
- Am I willing to serve when it is inconvenient?
- Am I willing to serve like Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER POINTS

- Reveal where pride or a desire for recognition has kept you from serving.
- Give the humility to serve people who may never say thank you.
- Open your eyes to the interruptions in your week that are actually divine appointments.
- Thank God that His love for you is not based on your performance, and ask Him to let that truth fuel your serving.

> *"There is a towel with your name on it. The question is whether you are willing to pick it up.*
>
> CHOSEN · WEEK THREE