

This is What True Greatness Looks Like

A 5-Day Devotional Guide

Day 1: The Power to Serve

Scripture

"Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet."

John 13:3-5

Thought for the Day

What would you do if you had ultimate power? Jesus had all power, yet he chose to serve in the most humble way imaginable. In our culture, greatness is measured by the things you don't have to do – the tasks you can pass on to someone else. The greatest amongst us are given a pass on life's mundane responsibilities. But Jesus flips this completely upside down.

On the night before his crucifixion, when everyone in the room was avoiding the awkward task of washing feet, Jesus – the most important, most powerful person there – did what no one else wanted to do. He didn't use his power to make life easier for himself. He used it to serve others.

True greatness isn't about being served. It's about serving. Jesus redefines what power looks like: not dominance, but humility. Not taking, but giving. Not avoiding the dirty work, but getting down on the floor with a towel.

Reflection

- In what areas of your life do you feel you've "earned" the right not to serve?
- What tasks do you avoid because they feel beneath you?
- How does Jesus' example challenge your understanding of greatness and power?
- If you truly had power and prominence, would you serve or be served?

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for showing me what true greatness looks like. You had all power and used it to serve. Forgive me for the times I've thought certain tasks were beneath me, or when I've waited for someone else to step up. Help me to see opportunities to serve not as burdens, but as chances to be like you. Give me the humility to pick up the towel and wash feet, even when no one else will. Amen.

Day 2: Seeing What Needs Doing

Scripture

"He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'"

John 13:6-7

Thought for the Day

Picture that room on Thursday evening. The Passover meal is about to begin, but there's an obvious problem – everyone's feet are dirty and dusty from the walk. It's the elephant in the room that nobody wants to mention, because naming it might mean you have to be the one to pick up the towel.

We've all been in situations like this. There's a task that everyone can see needs doing, but nobody wants to do it. Maybe it's the washing up after a family meal. Maybe it's the boring admin task at work. Maybe it's checking in on that difficult relative. We all see it. We all hope someone else will step up.

Jesus sees it too. But unlike everyone else, he doesn't wait for someone else to go first. He doesn't calculate whether it's his turn or his responsibility. He simply does what needs to be done. And in doing so, he teaches us something profound: servanthood isn't about keeping score or waiting your turn. It's about seeing a need and meeting it.

Reflection

- What are the "obvious tasks" in your life that everyone can see need doing but nobody wants to do?
- Why do you think you hesitate to step up in those moments?
- How might your relationships or workplace change if you stopped waiting for others to go first?
- What small act of service could you do today that nobody expects you to do?

Prayer

Lord, open my eyes to see the needs around me that others are ignoring. Give me the courage to step up and serve, even when it's awkward or uncomfortable. Help me to stop keeping score of whose turn it is, and instead to simply see what needs doing and do it. Thank you for the example of Jesus, who didn't wait for someone else to go first. Make me more like him today. Amen.

Day 3: You Can't Pick Up the Bread Without the Towel

Scripture

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"
Matthew 26:26-28

Thought for the Day

The same night that Jesus washed his disciples' feet, he also gave them the gift of Communion. He took the familiar Passover meal and reframed it around himself, declaring that he was the new Passover lamb – the one whose blood would rescue not just one nation, but all people across all time who choose to trust in him.

Here's what's easy to miss: the meal and the towel belong together. You can't pick up the bread without picking up the towel. If we take Jesus' forgiveness but aren't willing to bend down and serve, we've missed what he's actually inviting us into.

Communion isn't meant to be a quick ritual we add to a service. It's meant to be woven into the rhythm of our lives – an intimate act of remembering Jesus' sacrifice and recommitting ourselves to follow his example. We acknowledge our need for a Saviour, we thank Jesus for what he's done, and we recommit ourselves to him and his people.

But that commitment can't stop at the table. If we receive his love and don't pass it on in very ordinary, very practical ways, we've only done half of what Jesus asked.

Reflection

- How do you tend to separate receiving from Jesus and serving like Jesus?
- What does it look like to "pick up the towel" in your everyday life?
- Where do you need to admit, "I need a Saviour – I can't rescue myself"?
- How can you live out your worship this week through practical acts of service?

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for the gift of Communion – for your body broken and your blood poured out for me. I acknowledge that I need you. I can't save myself. Forgive me for the times I've gladly received your forgiveness but been unwilling to serve others. Help me to see that the bread and the towel belong together. As I receive your love at the

table, give me the courage to pass it on through humble, practical service. Amen.

Day 4: Following the Example

Scripture

"When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them. 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.'"

John 13:12-15

Thought for the Day

Jesus makes it crystal clear: this isn't just a nice story to admire from a distance. It's an example to follow. He's set a pattern for us, and he invites us to do the same.

But here's where it gets challenging. Jesus doesn't just suggest we consider serving others. He says, "You *should* wash one another's feet." If we're not willing to do this – to give of ourselves, to help the people around us, to do the tasks that everybody can see need doing but nobody wants to do – we're saying we're greater than Jesus.

Are you?

That question should make us uncomfortable. None of us would claim to be greater than Jesus. But our actions sometimes tell a different story. When we refuse to serve, when we think certain tasks are beneath us, when we wait for someone else to go first – we're living as if we're more important than the One who washed feet.

The good news is that Jesus doesn't just command us to serve. He shows us how. And he promises that when we follow his example, we will be blessed.

Reflection

- In what ways do your actions suggest you think you're "greater" than Jesus?
- What specific acts of service feel beneath you or outside your comfort zone?
- Who in your life needs a "foot-washing" moment from you this week?
- How have you seen others blessed when they've chosen to serve?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are my Teacher and my Lord, yet you washed feet. Forgive me for thinking that any act of service is beneath me when you willingly did the lowest task in the room. Help me to follow your example – not just to admire it, but to actually do it. Show me who needs my service this week, and give me the humility to step up without hesitation. I want to be blessed through obedience to your way. Amen.

Day 5: The Ripple Effect of Service

Scripture

"Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

John 13:16-17

Thought for the Day

The ripples of that night – Jesus washing feet and breaking bread – are still being felt today. Since that evening, countless followers of Jesus have taken up the towel. They've served in hospitals and schools, fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, and given themselves for others. The basis of how we treat each other in our society is built upon the things Jesus said and did.

When we live like Jesus, when we serve like Jesus, we are blessed. But it doesn't stop there. The people around us are blessed. And the world

is blessed. Your acts of service, no matter how small or hidden, create ripples that spread further than you can imagine.

Here's the challenge to carry into this week: Where do I need to admit, "I need a Saviour"? And who or what is Jesus asking me to quietly serve this week?

What is the task that everybody can see needs doing but nobody wants to do – and Jesus is quietly pointing at you and holding out the towel?

The invitation is really simple: receive his love, then pick up the towel.

Reflection

- How have you seen the ripple effects of someone else's service in your own life?
- What difference would it make in your family, workplace, or community if you consistently served like Jesus?
- What is the specific task Jesus is holding out the towel for this week?
- How will you move from knowing these things to actually doing them?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the ripple effects of Jesus' sacrifice and service that have reached even to me. I don't want to just know these things – I want to do them. This week, show me clearly where you're asking me to serve. Give me eyes to see the needs around me and a heart willing to meet them. Help me to create ripples of love and service that bless others and point them to you. I receive your love at the table, and now I pick up the towel. Use me to continue the work Jesus started. Amen.

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