John 13:3-17 Pastor Shannon Popp
"How to be a Healthy Disciple" 11.15.26

Small Groups Study Guide: Read the entire Passage first

- Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

Other passages to review: — John 13:3; Philippians 2:5–8; Colossians 3:23–24

READ THE PASSAGE
What does this passage tell us about God? Who He is and what He does.

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,

Jesus did not doubt that the crown would follow the cross (vs 3)

This gave Jesus confidence to serve without being celebrated (vs 3)

4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Focusing on our "self" will keep us from serving like Jesus. (vs 3-4)

Jesus' activity comes from His identity (3-4)

True leadership lowers itself to lift others up (vs 3-4)

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"

Peter was a follower of Jesus, but tried to lead Jesus instead of following Jesus. (vs 6)

7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."

Our Sanctification process is patience, patience, patience (vs 7)

8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

Jesus is teaching us there is a difference between union and communion (vs 8-11)

Sanctification is a process not about perfection (vs 8-11)

[12] When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? [13] You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. [14] If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

Jesus said I came to serve, and as you follow me, serve other people as I have served you. (vs 12-15)
You cannot influence a place or people that you do not serve (vs 12-15)

Put into Practice:
[] Humbly serve who you are with
[] Humble serve where you Live, Work, Learn, Play and Worship

Small Group Discussion Questions
Passage: John 13:3–17
Sermon: How to be a Healthy Disciple

Big Idea: Healthy disciples follow the example of Jesus by serving others from a place of security in Christ, with humility, obedience, and love.

These questions are designed to move your small group from understanding God's Word to building deeper relationships, honestly examining their hearts, and taking practical steps toward becoming more like Jesus.

1. Serving from Security, Not Insecurity
John 13:3; Philippians 2:5–8; Colossians 3:23–24
Jesus knew exactly who He was, where He came from, and where He was going. His security in the Father gave Him the freedom to serve without needing recognition.
Discussion Question:
- How does knowing who we are in Jesus change the way we serve others, especially when nobody notices or appreciates what we do?
- Can you share a time when you served someone and felt overlooked or unappreciated? How did you respond?
- Why do you think we sometimes desire recognition for serving others?
- How might our homes, workplaces, and church look different if we served from security in Jesus rather than a desire for approval?

2. Humility That Moves Us to Action
John 13:4–5; Philippians 2:3–4; Mark 10:43–45
While the disciples were concerned about their own greatness, Jesus picked up a towel and washed their feet. He didn't simply teach direct them, He demonstrated it.
Discussion Question:
- What are some ways pride, busyness, or self-focus can keep us from noticing and meeting the needs of people around us?

- Who has modeled genuine humility and servant leadership in your life? What did they do that made such an impact on you?
- Where do you find it most difficult to serve: at home, at work, in your community, or at church? Why?
- What is one need you have noticed recently but have been hesitant to meet?

3. Following Jesus When We Don't Understand
John 13:6–7; Proverbs 3:5–6; James 1:2–4
Peter questioned what Jesus was doing because he couldn't understand it. Jesus reminded Peter that understanding would come later.
Discussion Question:
- Why is it sometimes difficult to trust and follow Jesus when His plans don't make sense to us?
- Share a season when God was working in your life, but you couldn't understand what He was doing. Looking back, what did you learn?
- Are you naturally someone who wants to control situations, or someone who finds it easier to trust and wait? How has that affected your relationship with God?
- Is there an area of your life right now where you need to stop telling Jesus what to do and begin asking Him what He wants you to do?

4. Staying in Communion with Jesus
John 13:8–11; 1 John 1:7–9; Romans 8:1
Jesus used the washing of the disciples' feet to reveal a deeper spiritual truth. Through faith in Jesus, we are made clean, yet as we walk through this sinful world, we continue to need confession, repentance, and spiritual growth.
Discussion Question:
- What is the difference between having a secure relationship with Jesus and enjoying close, daily fellowship with Him?
- Have you ever experienced a season when you knew you belonged to Jesus but felt spiritually distant from Him? What contributed to that distance?
- How can unconfessed sin affect our prayer life, relationships, and spiritual growth?
- What practices have helped you remain close to Jesus during difficult or spiritually dry seasons?

5. Becoming Disciples Who Serve Like Jesus
John 13:12–17; Galatians 5:13; James 1:22
Jesus didn't simply ask His disciples to admire His example. He commanded them to follow it. He concluded by reminding them that the blessing comes not merely from knowing these things but from doing them.
Discussion Question:
- If someone observed how you lived this past week, what evidence would they see that you are becoming a disciple who serves like Jesus?
- Who is someone who has served you sacrificially? How did their actions influence your relationship with them or with Jesus?

- What would change in our families, small group, and church if each of us began looking for opportunities to serve rather than waiting to be served?
- Think about where you live, work, learn, play, and worship. Who is one person God may be calling you to serve this week, and what would that practically look like?

A final reminder from Jesus:
"If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." — John 13:17 (ESV)

PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUPS

Small groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth together in deep Christian relationships through the application of God's Word. The goal is to care about each other enough to ask the BIG questions of life, such as: What is God doing in your life? What is He asking you to do about it? Then walk with each other through life.

sharing, **caring**, **praying**, **serving, and mobilizing** each other.
SHARING – We come together each week to share a meal, God's Word, and how His story impacts our daily walk.
CARING – We gather together each week to ask great questions, listen to understand each other, and what God is doing in and through our lives.
PRAYING – We meet together to pray with each other. Not just to speak to God, but to hear from Him each week in community, and daily individually.
SERVING - We work together, using our unique gifts, to serve one another by God's grace and build the body in love each week.
MOBILIZING – We are praying for our neighbors by name and pray through "Good Events" once a quarter.

Leader's Guide (WITH SUGGESTED AND HELPFUL ANSWERS)

Main Purpose

Help your group see that the gospel is not merely behavior improvement but identity transformation. In Adam, sin and death reign. In Christ, grace reigns. Because of this, we rejoice — not just in what God does, but in who He is.

Pathway

When people move off track of the purpose, point to Scripture and remind people of the purpose.

Understanding the Questions

Passage: John 13:3–17

Sermon: How to be a Healthy Disciple

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1. Serving from Security, Not Insecurity

John 13:3; Philippians 2:5–8; Colossians 3:23–24

Jesus knew exactly who He was, where He came from, and where He was going. His security in the Father gave Him the freedom to serve without needing recognition.

Discussion Question:

- How does knowing who we are in Jesus change the way we serve others, especially when nobody notices or appreciates what we do?
- Can you share a time when you served someone and felt overlooked or unappreciated? How did you respond?
- Why do you think we sometimes desire recognition for serving others?
- How might our homes, workplaces, and church look different if we served from security in Jesus rather than a desire for approval?

Biblical Answer: Jesus served from the security of His identity and relationship with the Father (John 13:3–5). Philippians 2:5–8 reveals that Jesus humbled Himself despite His divine nature. Colossians 3:23–24 reminds us that our ultimate audience is the Lord, not people. Healthy disciples serve because of who Jesus is and what He has done, not because of what they hope to receive.

2. Humility That Moves Us to Action

John 13:4–5; Philippians 2:3–4; Mark 10:43–45

While the disciples were concerned about their own greatness, Jesus picked up a towel and washed their feet. He didn't simply teach direct them, He demonstrated it.

Discussion Question:

- What are some ways pride, busyness, or self-focus can keep us from noticing and meeting the needs of people around us?

- Who has modeled genuine humility and servant leadership in your life? What did they do that made such an impact on you?
- Where do you find it most difficult to serve: at home, at work, in your community, or at church? Why?
- What is one need you have noticed recently but have been hesitant to meet?

Biblical Answer: Philippians 2:3–4 teaches believers to count others more significant than themselves and look to their interests. Jesus demonstrated this by taking the position of a servant (John 13:4–5). In Mark 10:43–45, Jesus teaches that greatness in His Kingdom is expressed through serving rather than being served. Biblical humility is not thinking less of our worth, but willingly placing the needs of others before our own.

3. Following Jesus When We Don't Understand

John 13:6–7; Proverbs 3:5–6; James 1:2–4

Peter questioned what Jesus was doing because he couldn't understand it. Jesus reminded Peter that understanding would come later.

Discussion Question:

- Why is it sometimes difficult to trust and follow Jesus when His plans don't make sense to us?
- Share a season when God was working in your life, but you couldn't understand what He was doing. Looking back, what did you learn?
- Are you naturally someone who wants to control situations, or someone who finds it easier to trust and wait? How has that affected your relationship with God?
- Is there an area of your life right now where you need to stop telling Jesus what to do and begin asking Him what He wants you to do?

Biblical Answer: Jesus reminded Peter that understanding often follows obedience (John 13:7). Proverbs 3:5–6 calls us to trust the Lord rather than lean on our own understanding. James 1:2–4 teaches that trials produce steadfastness and maturity. Following Jesus requires surrendering our desire for control and trusting His wisdom, even when we cannot see His purposes clearly.

4. Staying in Communion with Jesus

John 13:8–11; 1 John 1:7–9; Romans 8:1

Jesus used the washing of the disciples' feet to reveal a deeper spiritual truth. Through faith in Jesus, we are made clean, yet as we walk through this sinful world, we continue to need confession, repentance, and spiritual growth.

Discussion Question:

- What is the difference between having a secure relationship with Jesus and enjoying close, daily fellowship with Him?
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- How can unconfessed sin affect our prayer life, relationships, and spiritual growth?
- What practices have helped you remain close to Jesus during difficult or spiritually dry seasons?

Biblical Answer: Jesus distinguished between being clean and needing one's feet washed (John 13:8–11). The sermon connects this picture to salvation and

sanctification. Romans 8:1 assures believers that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Yet 1 John 1:7–9 teaches that believers must continue walking in the light, confessing sin, and receiving God's forgiveness. Our standing in Christ rests on His finished work, while our daily fellowship with Him calls for ongoing repentance and obedience.

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- Think about where you live, work, learn, play, and worship. Who is one person God may be calling you to serve this week, and what would that practically look like?

Biblical Answer: Jesus commanded His disciples to follow His example of humble service (John 13:14–15). Galatians 5:13 teaches us to serve one another through love, while James 1:22 calls believers to be doers of the Word rather than hearers only. Jesus promises blessing to those who put His teaching into practice (John 13:17). Healthy disciples don't simply know what Jesus taught; they increasingly live as Jesus lived.

One Simple Step | From Knowing to Doing
Humbly serve someone this week without seeking recognition.
Before your group closes, invite each person to identify one specific person they can serve this week. Encourage them to share what they plan to do with the group so they can pray for one another and follow up next week.

Closing Prayer Focus: Pray that the Holy Spirit would expose pride, deepen our security in Christ, restore close fellowship with Jesus where sin has created distance, and give us eyes to see the needs of others.
Ask God to make South Holly a church filled with disciples who don't simply talk about serving like Jesus but joyfully follow His example.
A final reminder from Jesus:
“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” — John 13:17 (ESV)