

What We Never Realized About Service

John 13:1–14 (ESV)

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 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, 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. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." 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." 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.

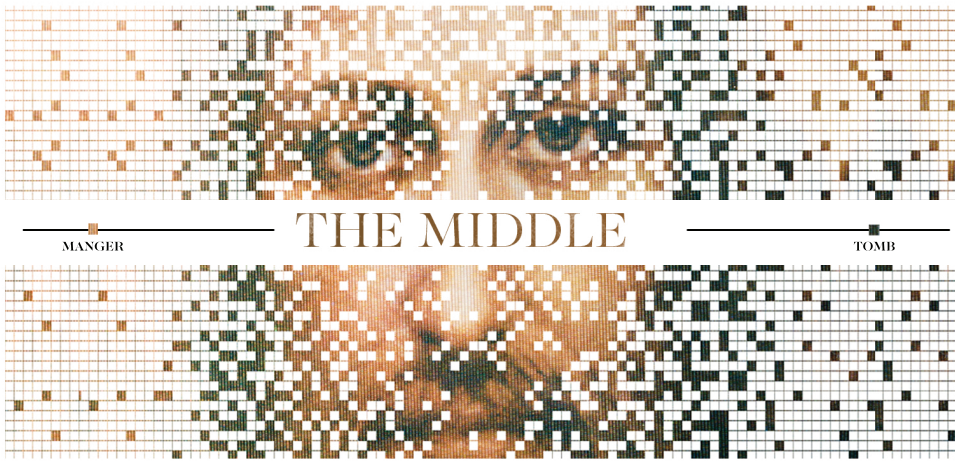
1. Service is not just what we do; a servant is who we are.

- We will only risk stooping to serve the crowd when we have been exalted by the king. (John 13:13)
- Lowly service isn't a way to rise to greatness - it is greatness.
- The best way to serve is by sharing the Gospel.

2. Service unlocks relationship potential.

- Service brings hope back into broken relationships.
- Service breaks the control of self-centeredness.
- Our vertical relationship with God is measured by the quality of our horizontal relationships with His children.

3. A servant's heart is seen when we accept the service of others.



JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES FEET

JOHN 13:1-26

#NVSTORYSHARE

CONNECT THE STORY

What happened in our last story? What key principles or truths did we discover through the story of the Prodigal Son? Can someone retell the story?

TELL THE STORY

Tell the story: as best as you can, do not stop and teach, try not to make points (Commentary), just tell the story.

REBUILD THE STORY

As a group: chronologically rebuild the story from memory. Ask questions if necessary. Like – “What happened first?”, “What happened next?”, “Did we leave out anything?” Finally, have participants look at their Bibles and see if anything was added or left out of the story as they go through it one more time.

ASK QUESTIONS

- **Where do you see yourself in this story?**
- **What do we learn about Jesus/God in this story?**
- **What do we learn about man in this story?**
- **What is Jesus teaching you personally through this story?**
- **What application/adjustment do you need to make in your life due to the truth discovered in this story?**

ADULT

- What are some images or words that come to your mind when you hear the word “servant”?
- Verse 3 seems to set the stage for Jesus’s next move. How does having assurance of our identity play into our ability to “serve” or be a “servant?”
- How does our identity help or hurt us when we are being betrayed?

COLLEGE

- What was Jesus’s purpose in washing his disciples’ feet?
- What are some practical ways you could serve with your group?
- Why are the characteristics of being a servant so important in the Christian life?

STUDENT

- Share a time when someone served you?
- How can you apply the act of humbling yourself and serving others?

CHILDREN

- Older Child – Why did Jesus wash the disciples’ feet?
- Older Child – How are we to follow Jesus’s example?
- Younger Child – Why did Jesus wash the disciples’ feet?
- Younger Child – How can we serve others?

KINDERGARTEN/PRESCHOOL

- Why did Jesus wash His disciples’ feet?
- Who questioned Jesus about washing his feet?
- What lesson was Jesus teaching His disciples?
- Who can you help this week to show your love?

THE MIDDLE

MY
TIME
WITH
GOD

MONDAY

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13:7

What do you think it means for love to bear and believe all things? What are some examples that you know of in your life where this kind of love has been modeled for you? Love doesn't give up. In Scripture we see this modeled in Jesus's parable of the prodigal son. In the story, even though the father's *younger* son treated him terribly, the father still saw the prodigal "while the son was still a long way off" and the father was "filled with compassion" (Luke 15:20). Love always sees and believes in the potential of others. Like the father of the prodigal, love gives us the strength to continue to believe in others when all hope seems lost. What is it about love that can make us hopeful and give us endurance? As Christians, love makes us hopeful and gives us endurance because we have experienced the transformative power of Christ's love.

READ JOHN 13:1, 4-5

How does it make you feel to read John's words, "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end?" How is Jesus's love the perfect example of 1 Corinthians 13:7? Why do you think Jesus washed the disciples feet on the eve of His crucifixion? We are not the easiest people to love, and if anyone knew our issues, it would be Jesus. After all, Jesus knew that He would soon depart to be with the Father, but the way He departed would be through dying for our sins. Jesus died *for* and *because* of us. Yet John poignantly adds that even though we were the reason for Jesus's death, He loved us to the very end. Jesus washed the disciples feet to teach them what enduring love looks like. Jesus, though He is the Master, stooped to wash the feet of His disciples. Love is humble, kind, and sacrificial. Even though Jesus knew Peter would deny Him, Jesus still loved and believed in His friend. Even when we fall short, Jesus loves us just the same.

WEDNESDAY

READ JOHN 13:6-10

What do you think of Jesus's interaction with Peter in these verses? If Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, why do you think that Jesus kept Judas around for so long? Jesus was patient with Peter. Jesus *knew* that Peter did not understand why He was washing their feet. Peter did not yet fully understand servant leadership or the humility of Christ. Despite Peter's protest, Jesus washed the feet of His brash disciple because He loved Him to the end. We may not be able to fully answer why Jesus kept Judas around. What we do know is that Jesus *knew* Judas would betray Him, and yet Jesus was kind and patient with Judas and even called him friend (Matthew 26:50). Though we don't know all of Jesus's motivations for keeping Judas around, it is a great example of what Paul means when he writes that "love bears all things." Love endures the roughest of seasons.

THE MIDDLE

MY
TIME
WITH
GOD

THURSDAY

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

What additional insight does this text give us into how Jesus served us? What are the implications for our love and service of others? Jesus didn't merely serve others out of duty, He did so humbly and selflessly. What does humility in service look like? What does selflessness look like? Why are both of these characteristics vital if we are going to serve others well? Paul pointed to Christ's love for others and His obedient service to God as examples for his Philippians friends. We are to live with an attitude of humility as we relate to others. With a healthy and balanced view of ourselves, we neither think too highly nor too little of ourselves. With that wholesome attitude, we can serve others effectively.

FRIDAY

RE-READ JOHN 13

How might you and your small group demonstrate an enduring love toward one another in tangible ways? How much difference would it make if we "believed all things" by giving others the benefit of the doubt? What are some things that you could personally do to show your love to others through service?

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14