

JESUS ON LEADERSHIP

Becoming a Servant Leader

C. GENE WILKES

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Contents

THE AUTHOR

4

INTRODUCTION

5

CORE CONCEPTS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

6

WEEK 1

Down from the Head Table

9

WEEK 2

Leaders Who SERVE, Part 1

45

WEEK 3

Leaders Who SERVE, Part 2

79

WEEK 4

How to EQUIP Others

117

WEEK 5

How to Serve in TEAM Ministry

145

LEADER GUIDE

177

The Author



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Dr. Wilkes served as the senior pastor of Legacy Church in Plano, Texas, for 26 years prior to coming to Carroll Institute as the vice president of development. During his local-church ministry, Legacy Church transitioned to become a mission outpost where every member was a missionary in his or her mission field.

Dr. Wilkes has also taught biblical servant leadership as an adjunct professor in the Gary Cook School of Leadership at Dallas Baptist University at both the master's and doctoral levels. Along with his teaching ministry, Dr. Wilkes speaks nationally and internationally on the topic of servant leadership and as a Bible teacher. Some of the international sites include Mexico, Cuba, China, Vietnam, Albania, Greece, Russia, Canada, Portugal, and Honduras.

Dr. Wilkes lives in Plano, Texas, with his wife, Kim, and they have two married daughters and two grandchildren. Dr. Wilkes's hobbies include trail running, hiking, mountaineering, cycling, and golf. He summited 14,410-foot Mount Rainier, Washington, on his 60th birthday in 2013.

Introduction

Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader originated in a local church setting and, since its first printing in 1998, has continued to provide direction and aid to churches worldwide. This Bible study attempts to develop leaders by following the pattern of Jesus' ministry of training people to do Kingdom work. Although the study is neither the first nor the last word in leadership discovery and development in the church, developing servant leaders is what the church has been about since Jesus affirmed Peter's confession of faith and established His church on that rock. Training servant leaders will be a task of the church until Christ returns.

Jesus on Leadership joins many books about leadership in church and business. Interest and materials about servant leadership have grown in both secular and ministry contexts. More needs to be written and modeled to provide service-first leadership among God's people. Too many works start with characteristics of a leader and then, if at all, move to Jesus' life and teachings to support those ideas. This workbook starts with the ways Jesus modeled and taught leadership, then brings principles gleaned from His ministry into church life. The challenge is to make Jesus' example the guide and focus of leadership among God's people. As long as church members revere a worldly model of leadership more than Jesus' examples and teaching, misunderstanding and conflict will result. In contrast, when a church follows a biblical model of servant leadership for all its leaders, God works in amazing ways through those leaders. That's my prayer for your church.

"Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above" (Jas. 1:17). I acknowledge God's hand in the entire process of completing this project. I want to thank Henry Webb for his initial trust in me and his encouragement throughout this project. I worked closely with Sam House and Richard Ryan during the production stage, and I thank them for their diligence and attention to detail. I'm also grateful to the people who are Legacy Church in Plano, Texas, where I was the senior pastor for 26 years. Their vision and mission to make disciples created the environment for such a study.

My wife, Kim, is my best friend. Without her support throughout my writing and sharing this message, I couldn't have completed this project. And to my daughters, who put up with Daddy's writing habits, I say a very special "Thank you."

May this workbook guide you and your church to discover and develop servant leaders. May God use this Bible study "for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).

CORE CONCEPTS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

**SERVANT LEADERS SERVE GOD
AND EQUIP OTHERS FOR TEAM MINISTRY**

God Prepares Servant Leaders to **SERVE**

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

EXPERIENCES

RELATIONAL STYLE

VOCATIONAL SKILLS

ENTHUSIASM

Servant Leaders **EQUIP** *Others*

ENCOURAGE THEM TO SERVE.

QUALIFY THEM FOR SERVICE.

UNDERSTAND THEIR NEEDS.

INSTRUCT THEM.

PRAY FOR THEM.

*Servant Leaders Serve in **TEAM** Ministry*

TOGETHERNESS

EMPOWERMENT

ACCOUNTABILITY

MENTORING

Biblical Principles of Servant Leadership

1. Servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them (see Luke 14:7-11).
 2. Servant leaders follow Jesus rather than seek a position (see Mark 10:32-40).
 3. Servant leaders give up personal rights to find greatness in service to others (see Mark 10:41-45).
 4. Servant leaders can risk serving others because they trust that God is in control of their lives (see John 13:3).
 5. Servant leaders take up Jesus' towel of servanthood to meet the needs of others (see John 13:4-11).
 6. Servant leaders share their responsibility and authority with others to meet a greater need (see Acts 6:1-6).
 7. Servant leaders multiply their leadership by empowering others to lead (see Ex. 18:17-23).
-



Week 1

**DOWN FROM THE
HEAD TABLE**

This Week's Memory Verse

Even the Son of Man did not come to be served,
but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.

MARK 10:45

One day I found myself at the head table at a typical denominational event. As the leader of the church-growth team, I was responsible for introducing the speaker. Others sitting at the head table included the director of missions, the moderator, the person singing the special music and her spouse, and the speaker. After I'd introduced the speaker, everyone at the head table stood and moved to sit in the audience—everyone but me! The speaker, noticing that the others were leaving the head table, said, "If you're at the head table and would like to move, you may at this time." Alone, I stood and said, "I'd love to!" We all laughed, and I walked red-faced to sit at a table with those who served in the kitchen.

As the blood gradually returned to the rest of my body, Jesus' story about where to sit at big meals came to mind. At the home of a prominent Pharisee, He taught the people:

When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, don't recline at the best place, because a more distinguished person than you may have been invited by your host. The one who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give your place to this man," and then in humiliation, you will proceed to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that when the one who invited you comes, he will say to you, "Friend, move up higher."

You will then be honored in the presence of all the other guests.

LUKE 14:8-10

As I reflected on my social blunder, I realized I'd done what was typical of many leaders. When given a position, we happily accept the status that goes with it, often overlooking the fact that the true place of Christlike leadership is out in the crowd rather than at the head table. Leaders who follow Christ's model of leadership work with those who serve in the kitchen and serve alongside them until they complete the job. Head tables are optional. Service, not status, is the goal of leaders who have Christ as their master.

Many churches and ministries struggle because they lack servant leaders. Head tables have replaced the towel and washbasin as symbols of leadership among God's people. Churches and ministries, however, need leaders who know how God has made and gifted them for service and who serve Christ's mission of reconciliation. Churches need leaders

who have the skills to equip others to team with them in ministry. Churches need leaders who will step down from the head table and be willing to serve in the kitchen. Churches today need men and women who will stop following the world's concepts of leadership and adopt Jesus' teachings and example of servant leadership.

The term *servant leadership* isn't an oxymoron!¹ Neither is the word *servant* a soft-shell cover for what leadership really is. *Servant* and *leader* stand together as a model for people called to influence others to work toward the mission of God. Leadership through service is the way Jesus modeled and taught discipleship among His followers. True servant leadership begins by submitting to Jesus and obediently following His teachings and lifestyle. You can lead like Jesus only when you obey His teachings about leading as a servant.

Jesus was a servant leader. He was a servant to the Father's mission, and He was a servant to those on mission with Him. His model provides the basis for our working definition of *servant leader*:

A servant leader serves the mission and leads
by serving those on mission with Him.²

This study will help churches discover, equip, and place servant leaders in all areas of ministry. Jesus' teachings and model of servant leadership are the foundation for this study. Participants will discover their roles as servant leaders and will be equipped for team ministry. Our purpose as individual members, as a church, or as a ministry is to develop servant leaders in team ministry who carry out the mission of God. My prayer is that churches and ministries will honor and train leaders who follow Jesus' teachings and model of servant leadership. My personal goal is to serve you and your church through this Bible study and to help restore a biblical model of servant leadership in your church.

This Week You Will

-
- Discover seven principles of servant leadership (days 1-4).
 - Examine definitions of *servant leadership* and Jesus' teachings about humility (day 1).
 - Examine Jesus' teachings about being first and being great (day 2).
 - Observe Jesus' model of servant leadership the night He was betrayed (day 3).
 - Examine biblical models of shared leadership (day 4).
 - Evaluate God's calling in your life to be a servant leader (day 5).

1. An oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines opposite or contradictory ideas or terms. Examples are "civil war" and "bittersweet."

2. C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the Secrets of Servant Leadership from the Life of Christ* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1998), 18.

Day 1

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON LEADERSHIP, PART 1

Christian leaders are servants with credibility and capabilities, who are able to influence people in a particular context to pursue their God-given direction.¹

AUBREY MALPHURS

Today You Will

- Review the biblical concept of servant leadership.
- Examine Jesus' teachings about humility.
- Take inventory of your relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Study Jesus' model of humble service to all.

Today we want to examine different ideas about leadership. We'll look at biblical models of leadership and the ways Jesus taught and modeled leadership for His followers. Let's start with your impressions of a leader.

Below you'll find a list of character traits. Select the qualities you consider important in a leader.

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| Honesty | Kindness | Fairness | Goal-oriented |
| Humility | Boldness | Caring | Integrity |
| Godliness | Above average | Serving | Inspiring |
| Dependability | Emotional | Decisive | Cautious |
| Cooperative | Independent | Loyal | Intelligent |

Return to the list and circle the characteristics that are present in your life.

People know what they want in a leader. Some prefer that their leader be decisive or visionary. Others want their leader to be charming and kind to people. Some desire not to have a leader!

I want to highlight the trait of service in a leader. Such a leader serves the mission and meets the needs of the group that relate to the group's goals. This kind of leader leads by example rather than by memo.

In 1977 Robert Greenleaf, who was then an executive in the communications industry and is best known for making popular the concept of servant leadership, announced to the world that a new moral principle was emerging in society. He wrote that in the future “the only truly viable institutions will be those that are predominately servant-led.”²

Observing that people respond best to leaders who are servants to the group or institution, Greenleaf called for servant-led organizations. He understood that people had lost an appetite for bosses who lord it over them. People prefer to follow those who help them, not those who intimidate them.

J. Oswald Sanders, whose book *Spiritual Leadership* has become a classic, wrote:

True greatness, true leadership, is achieved not by reducing men to one's service but in giving oneself in selfless service to them. And this is never done without cost. ... The true spiritual leader is concerned infinitely more with the service he can render God and his fellowmen than with the benefits and pleasures he can extract from life. He aims to put more into life than he takes out of it.³

Sanders and Greenleaf call for the same quality in a leader: a servant's heart. This mark of a leader isn't a new discovery. It's an affirmation of Jesus' teachings on leadership. Sanders's source for his description of leadership is Jesus' teachings. He found true leadership in Jesus' examples of and teaching about being a servant.

Leadership in the kingdom of God is different from leadership in the world. It's still leadership, an individual who influences others toward a shared goal, but those who lead in the kingdom of God look very different from those who lead by the world's standards. Life under the lordship of Christ has different values from life under the lordship of self. Therefore, kingdom leaders are people who lead like Jesus. They act differently from leaders trained by the world. Kingdom leaders are servant leaders because they follow Jesus, who “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45).

Jesus taught His disciples a valuable lesson about head tables and a humble spirit.

Jesus' Story About Humility

Read Luke 14:1,7-11. Where was Jesus when He told this story (see v. 1)?

Why did He tell the story (see v. 7)?

Put yourself in the disciples' sandals. What would your response be to Jesus' message in that place to those people?

Jesus told this story to His followers while they attended a meal at the house of a prominent religious leader. Noticing that the guests picked places of honor at the head table near the host, Jesus chose this situation to teach His disciples how they should behave toward places of honor.

Write the main point of each verse in the parable.

Verse 8:

Verse 9:

Verse 10:

Verse 11:

Jesus said those who follow Him must first humble themselves. Any head-table recognition should come from others. Final recognition will come from God. The world says, "Take a seat at the head table." Jesus says, "Take a seat at the back. I'll choose who sits up front."

The word *humble* in verse 11 means to "make low or humiliate by assigning to a low(er) place."⁴ Jesus called His disciples to lower themselves rather than exalt themselves. He made it clear that His followers weren't to seek places of honor. Jesus' disciples wait for their Host to invite them to the head table. They don't seek high places on their own. The Bible says, "Humility comes before honor" (Prov. 15:33). Moses was more humble "than any man on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). His life demonstrated that humility is the confidence you lead by God's choosing rather than by your efforts, and with this certainty you can even take up for those who are trying to take your place (see the rest of the story in Num. 12).

SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 1

Servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them.

Those Jesus calls to lead willingly humble themselves to God's mission call on their lives and patiently wait for Him to direct them to positions of leadership in His timing.

Humility, not pride, is the hallmark of a servant leader's character. Patience, not aggressiveness, illustrates a servant leader's dependence on God rather than himself.

You can't apply this first principle of a servant leader to your life unless you commit yourself to follow Jesus' teachings. You must decide whether you'll pattern your life after the model of Jesus or around the thinking and experience of the world.

Before we go any further, you must settle this issue in your life. You must answer the question, Who's the Master of my life? Here's why your answer to that question is basic to this study: no one can be a servant without a master. You can't be a servant leader as modeled by Jesus without having Him as your Master. Jesus said:

No one can be a slave of two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other.

MATTHEW 6:24

Leaders without Jesus as their Master can serve only themselves, not others.

Take a moment to examine your heart and answer the following questions.

Have I confessed my sinfulness and resistance to God's leadership in my life? Yes No

**Have I confessed that Jesus is the Lord of my life (see Rom. 10:9)?
Yes No**

Do I live my life as if I am in control or as if Christ is in control (see Gal. 2:20)? I am. Christ is.

**Do I show a willingness to humble myself before others, or am I happier when I earn a seat at a head table? I humble myself.
I love earning my seat.**

The answers to these questions characterize your relationship with Jesus Christ. The rest of this workbook will be only an exercise in self-will if Christ isn't in control of every aspect of your life. If you want to settle this issue in your life right now, pause and ask Christ to be the Savior and Lord of your life. Then call your group's leader or your pastor and ask this person to join you in prayer. Be prepared to share your decision at the next group session.

An Attitude like Jesus

The apostle Paul asked the Christians in Philippi to serve one another the way Jesus would serve them. Paul reminded his friends of their source of strength, fellowship, and unity in Christ. He wrote, “Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). Paul then described Jesus’ humble service of taking on the form of a man and dying on the cross for others.

As you read Philippians 2:5-11, underline words that describe the ways Jesus humbled Himself. Then go through the verses again and circle words that indicate the way God exalted Jesus.

Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,
who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be used for His own advantage.
Instead He emptied Himself
by assuming the form of a slave,
taking on the likeness of men.
And when He had come as a man
in His external form,
He humbled Himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.
For this reason God highly exalted Him
and gave Him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
of those who are in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

The key phrase in the first half of this passage is “He humbled Himself” (v. 8). Paul’s term for *humble* is the same word Jesus used in His story to the disciples in Luke 14:7-11. Jesus taught humility because it was at the core of who He was. It was God’s plan for His Son’s life. The key phrase in the second half of Philippians 2:5-11 is “God highly exalted Him” (v. 9). Paul’s word for *exalt* is also the same word Jesus used in His story in Luke. God exalted His Son after Jesus humbled Himself in obedience to death on the cross. Peter, who was present when Jesus taught this lesson about humility, later told the early Christians to “humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Pet. 5:6).

Servant leaders in the church humble themselves in obedience to Christ. Exaltation is God’s choice, not ours. Leaders must have the humble spirit of Christ and must be willing to take the seats at the back. God will choose those who will sit up front.

PERSONAL REVIEW

Prayerfully take time to consider your answers to the following questions.

Am I trusted as a leader because people see me as a servant?

Yes No

Am I willing to wait for the invitation of the Host to sit at the head table? Yes No

Do people see the humility of Christ in my life? Yes No

Is Jesus genuinely the Master of my life? Yes No

Am I willing to humble myself like Jesus to allow God to accomplish His plan for my life? Yes No

PRINCIPLES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Principle 1: Servant leaders _____ themselves and wait for God to _____ them.

SUMMARY

- Servant leadership principle 1: Servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them.
- True leadership begins with a servant's heart.
- Jesus taught His disciples not to seek places at the head table.
- Jesus must be your Master before you can be a servant leader like Him.
- Jesus modeled a servant's heart in His incarnation and in His crucifixion.

1. Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*, Kindle edition (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2003), 33.
2. Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1977), 10.
3. J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 13.
4. William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 812.

Day 2

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON LEADERSHIP, PART 2

Above all, leadership is a position of servanthood.¹

MAX DEPREE

Today You Will

- Examine James and John's request of Jesus.
- Define greatness and being first as taught by Jesus.
- Discover servant leadership principles 2 and 3.
- Reflect on the biblical event recorded in Mark 10:32-40 and identify ways you can be great and first.

I entered the office of one of our church's volunteers to join him for a lunch meeting. The highly successful salesman was on the phone when I entered his office, so I had time to look around. I checked out his desk to see what mementos or expressions of himself he'd chosen to put there. My eyes immediately went to a message on his desk. It read, "If the meek inherit the earth, what do we tigers get?" I smiled. Later, I realized the sign misrepresented Jesus' teaching on meekness, and it illustrated how many people in our society regard what appears to be weakness in leading others.

Jesus redefined greatness and being first when He declared:

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,
and whoever wants to be first among you must be a slave to all.

MARK 10:43-44

You're great when you serve. You're first when you willingly become a slave to the needs of others. Jesus taught this paradox to His closest disciples. These men had accepted Jesus' call to follow Him. They would lead others in His work after Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father. Their understanding of leadership among God's people was crucial to the way Kingdom people would live together in generations to come.

Jesus taught about greatness and being first after James and John had asked Him a favor. Let's look at what led Jesus to teach His disciples about servant leadership.

James, John, and You

Read Mark 10:32-40. Then answer the following questions.

What did James and John ask Jesus (see v. 37)?

What had Jesus said that caused them to ask the question (see vv. 33-34)?

What was Jesus' reply to their question (see v. 38)?

How did James and John reply to Jesus' comments (see v. 39)?

What did Jesus say to them (see vv. 39-40)?

What do you think of James and John's request?

James and John sensed that something important would happen in Jerusalem. They thought Jesus was getting close to taking His throne, and they selfishly wanted to lead from positions of power beside Him. James and John thought Kingdom leadership meant a position or title. They betrayed their ambitious hearts by being the first among the disciples to make their request of Jesus.

Before you judge the sons of Zebedee, remember that we're very much like them. We too want places up front when Jesus defeats His enemies. We forget, however, that suffering like Jesus comes before reigning with Jesus. Jesus wanted James and John to know that following Him would cost them their lives, not gain them places at the head table. Only the Host knows who sits there.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 2

Servant leaders follow Jesus rather than seek a position.

Following Jesus means setting our personal agendas aside to follow Jesus in obedience. Don Howell Jr. concluded:

New covenant servant-leaders learn, by imitating their servant-Lord, to abandon their own agendas and preferences in order to seek the good of their fellow servants.²

Servant leadership isn't about position and power. Leaders among Christ's disciples follow Jesus as He serves others and suffers on their behalf. Servant leadership requires drinking the cup and being baptized with the baptism of Christ's suffering (see vv. 38-39).

The Other 10 Disciples and You

Read Mark 10:41-45. Put yourself in the other 10 disciples' sandals when they heard James and John's request. Answer the following questions.

Were the other disciples' feelings toward James and John justified (see v. 41)? Yes No Why or why not?

When Jesus called the group together, how did He describe the world's concept of leadership (see v. 42)?

Write your own definition of *dominate*.

Write your own definition of *exercise power*.

Jesus said the way the world practices leadership mustn't be the pattern among His true disciples.

Fill in the blanks with Jesus' words in verses 43-44:

**Whoever wants to become _____ among you must be your _____,
and whoever wants to be _____ among you must be a _____ to all.**

MARK 10:43-44

We get our English prefix *mega* from the Greek word for *great*. Our English word *deacon* comes from the Greek word for *servant*. A servant in the ancient world waited on tables.

Record your understanding of Christlike greatness, based on this information.

We get our English prefix *proto* from the Greek word for *first*. It means *first in a series or line*. No single English word adequately describes the Greek word for *slave* (*doulos*) in this passage. Such a slave was on the lowest rung of the social ladder. The owner bought and sold slaves like household goods. The *doulos* was a bond slave who served the master without will or question.³ A slave had no rights or privileges, no wants or desires, only the commands of the master.

Record your understanding of being first among Jesus' disciples, based on this information.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 3

Servant leaders give up personal rights
to find greatness in service to others.

Jesus redefined greatness and being first. He specified the posture required to be a great leader in the mission of God. When you make Jesus Master of your life, you become a servant to others. To lead in the kingdom of God is to serve others and to follow the King.

Jesus, the Servant Leader

Jesus defined greatness as the life of a servant. What does this picture of leadership look like in real life today? How can servants and slaves really lead? The answer poses a real dilemma for a disciple of Jesus.

Servants and slaves don't define *leadership* in the world's dictionary. Many people understand the idea of being a servant and forfeiting personal rights as portraying a negative self-image. Jesus came to show what life in the kingdom of God looks like, not to modify the way the world does things. The ways of God work only in the hallways of humanity when Jesus reigns in our hearts. Any follower of Christ who seeks to lead like Jesus must be willing to be treated like Jesus.

Some will follow. Others will throw stones.

By example Jesus answered the question of how to lead like a servant. He concluded His lesson on leadership:

Even the Son of Man did not come to be served,
but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.

MARK 10:45

Jesus wasn't a teacher who merely defined His terms. He also modeled what He called others to do. James, John, and the other 10 disciples experienced what Jesus taught as they followed Him to His death. They soon learned that servant leadership ultimately means giving up oneself so that others can have the life God desires for them.

Jesus deserves service from those He created. However, He came to serve us. He came to give His life as a ransom so that we could be set free from sin. A ransom in the ancient world was a payment to free a slave or prisoner.⁴ As the Son of Man, Jesus saw His life as one of sacrifice so that others could benefit.

Jesus is our only true model of servant leadership. He served others by giving His life for them. His entire mission was to free others, not to gain a position for Himself. This is a mystery to the world, but it's the heart of Kingdom leadership. Anyone who seeks to lead in the body of Christ must submit himself or herself to the lordship of Jesus. Only then can we begin to understand why servants are great and slaves are first.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Jesus responded to the wishes of His disciples and taught them about servant leadership.

Consider your responses to the following statements. Prayerfully record your feelings and thoughts.

I'm like James and John because I ...

I'm like the other 10 disciples because I ...

I can be "great" as a servant this week by ...

I can be "first" as a slave this week by ...

PRINCIPLES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Principle 1: Servant leaders _____ themselves and wait for God to _____ them.

Principle 2: Servant leaders _____ Jesus rather than seek a _____.

Principle 3: Servant leaders give up personal _____ to find greatness in _____ to others.

SUMMARY

- Servant leadership principle 2: Servant leaders follow Jesus rather than seek a position.
- Servant leadership principle 3: Servant leaders give up personal rights to find greatness in service to others.
- Jesus redefined greatness and being first when He declared, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be a slave to all” (Mark 10:43-44).
- James and John thought Kingdom leadership meant a position or title.
- Jesus deserves service from all those He created. However, He came not to be served but to serve. He came to give His life as a ransom to free others.

1. Max DePree, *Leadership Jazz* (New York: Dell, 1992), 220.
2. Don N. Howell Jr., *Servants of the Servant* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003), 19.
3. Ibid., 6–19. See Howell’s description of the biblical words for *servant/slave* and his discussion of this image of God’s people and leaders as a significant theme throughout Scripture.
4. William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 483.

Day 3

JESUS' MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

Implicitly, Jesus is saying that leadership in its very essence is serving. It cannot be otherwise. To lead is to serve. And to serve is to become the servant of those whom one is leading.¹

TED ENGSTROM AND PAUL CEDAR

Today You Will

- Discover servant leadership principles 4 and 5.
- Discover the power of servant leadership by examining John's statements about Jesus before He washed His disciples' feet.
- Observe that Jesus left His place at the table and washed His disciples' feet.
- Evaluate your feelings as a leader about washing the feet of others.
- Test your knowledge of Jesus' model of servant leadership.

The Power of Servant Leadership

Where do you find the power to serve others? If your ego wars with God for your loyalty, how can you break the bondage of self-interest to serve those around you? John 13 gives the account of Jesus' last meal with His disciples. At that meal Jesus modeled for all time what servant leadership looks like by washing His disciples' feet. John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, noted some details about Jesus before He took up the towel and basin. These facts reveal the secret to risking servant leadership.

Read John 13:3.

Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into His hands, that He had come from God, and that He was going back to God.

JOHN 13:3

How do you think Jesus' knowledge of these matters influenced His decision to wash the disciples' feet?

Jesus knew His Father “had given everything into His hands.” He knew His Father was in control of His life and ministry. He knew His place as the Son of God. Jesus knew “He had come from God.” He knew His Father was the source of His mission on earth. He was confident that what He was doing was part of God’s ultimate plan for His life. Jesus also knew “He was going back to God.” He knew He would return to His eternal place as God in heaven. Jesus’ knowledge of these facts, John wrote, preceded His act to take up the towel and basin. Confident of these facts, Jesus was able to model what God had sent Him to do: serve others and lay down His life.

Circle the number that represents your trust in God in the following areas of your life, with 1 being least like you and 5 being most like you.

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| I trust that in Christ, God has given me power to | | | | | |
| serve others (see Eph. 2:6-7 for your place in Christ). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I trust that God created me and has a plan for my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I trust that I will go to be with God at my death. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

These facts of faith are the source of power that allow you to risk leading others as a servant. You’re secure enough to brave serving others only when your security is in God and not in yourself. Without God-centered certainty, you have no choice but to protect your ego and defend your rights. Only when you trust God with the absolute control of your life can you risk losing your self and status in service to others.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 4

Servant leaders can risk serving others because
they trust that God is in control of their lives.

Jesus knew His power was from His Father. He knew He came from and was returning to His Father. The secret to risking servant leadership is the assurance that God is in control of your life. Risk is simply the courage to be obedient to God’s certain call on a servant leader’s life, and “servant leaders are proactive risk takers.”²

The Ministry of the Towel

I kept a towel in my church office that was stained with shoe polish. I used it when we set apart members of our church as deacons. Each time we did this, I got on my knees and wiped the dust from their shoes in front of the church. I did this for two reasons:

1. To remind myself of my role as their servant leader
2. To remind them of Jesus' example of servant leadership when He washed His disciples' feet

Jesus performed two symbolic acts for His followers on the night He was betrayed. He took up a servant's towel and washbasin and washed their feet. He also took the bread and wine from the Passover meal and announced a new covenant between God and His creation in the blood of Jesus.

When Jesus asked His disciples to prepare the Passover meal, they didn't hire a servant to do the dirty work of washing feet after a day in the dirt of Jerusalem. Instead of scolding them for their incompetence or ordering one of them to do the lowly job, Jesus took up the towel and washbasin because He wanted His closest followers to learn an important lesson that night.

Read John 13:4-11. In your own words, describe what Jesus did.

When Jesus came to Peter, the fisher of men resisted Jesus.

Why do you think Peter said what he did (see vv. 6,8)?

How do you relate to what he said?

How did Jesus respond to Peter's resistance (see vv. 7-8)?

Jesus surprised His followers when He left the head table and moved to where servants worked. He took off His outer clothes and picked up a servant's towel. He was now dressed like a servant. He wrapped the towel around His waist, filled a basin with water, and began to wash the dusty feet of His friends. He now did the work of a slave. This wasn't His job. He was Teacher and Lord. Yet Jesus redefined what leaders do: leaders meet the needs of those they lead. Jesus' followers had dirty feet, and no one else was willing to wash them. They had a need, but no one else would leave his place to meet it.

Jesus modeled servant leadership when He willingly left His place at the table and knelt down to meet a need. Peter's response revealed that he didn't get the picture at first. Nobody does. Jesus could only say, "You'll understand later." Jesus' descent from the Passover meal to the servant's towel and washbasin parallels His descent from heaven to the cross (see Phil. 2:5-11). His actions also modeled what He'd taught earlier about being great and first (see Mark 10:35-45). The Teacher modeled in the upper room what He'd taught earlier on the road to Jerusalem. Dressed like a servant and acting like a slave, Jesus led.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 5

Servant leaders take up Jesus' towel of servanthood
to meet the needs of others.

Jesus took the focus off positions and cultural ideas of leadership and placed it on matters of the heart. Reggie McNeal surmised:

Jesus turned the leadership equation around with his emphasis on servant leadership. Instead of establishing leadership positions in his kingdom, he focused on the character of leadership, declaring it to be that of serving others in humility.³

Meeting needs doesn't necessarily mean giving in to people's wishes. Jesus knelt as a servant at Peter's feet, but He didn't allow Peter's personal preference to keep Him from His mission. Peter didn't get his way. Servanthood doesn't mean a lack of resolve or insight. Servants can't waver from doing their master's wishes. Leaders must sometimes reveal a need before meeting it.

Jesus washed the feet of Judas, the disciple who would betray Him with a kiss. Jesus knew Judas would turn Him over to the religious leaders to be crucified, yet He washed his feet. Your greatest test of servant leadership may be to wash the feet of those you know will soon betray you.

Jesus modeled for all what Kingdom leadership looks like. Seeking to lead like Jesus means you must be willing to give up your position in order to serve and kneel at the dirty

feet of others. Sometimes that means exposing a need in order to meet it. At other times it means humbling yourself before the ones who will soon turn you over to your enemies.

An Example for All to Follow

Read John 13:12-17.

When Jesus finished washing the disciples' feet, He put on His outer clothes and returned to His place at the table. Having acted out His lesson, He wanted to know whether His students understood (see v. 12).

Jesus said He was His disciples' teacher and master (see v. 13). Because that was true, He said, they must do what He commanded them to do. He said they should "wash one another's feet" (v. 14).

Write some ways you could "wash the feet" of people you know.

Jesus said He set an example for His disciples to follow (see v. 15). The word *example* means "to show under the eyes as an illustration or warning."⁴ Jesus modeled behavior He wanted His followers to imitate.

What was the implication of Jesus' words in verses 16?

Jesus concluded His lesson in servant leadership by saying, "As my servants and those whom I've sent, you're to do what I have done." Those who lead in the kingdom of God must check where they sit and what they wear. If you aren't wearing a servant's towel and kneeling at the feet of others, you're in the wrong place.

Those who lead in God's kingdom lead from a kneeling position, dressed like a servant, meeting the needs of those who follow them. Kingdom servant leaders, like Jesus, can dress like a servant, act like a slave, and lead.

Jesus made a promise to His disciples at the end of His lesson.

What was it (see v. 17)?

Jesus said you'll receive a blessing when you serve others as He did. God blesses those who take up the towel and washbasin like His Son.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

As you think about what you've learned in today's study, place a *T* (true) or *F* (false) beside each statement below.

- _____ 1. You can be a servant leader by deciding in your own power to act like Jesus.
- _____ 2. You can risk being a servant leader when you trust that God is in control of your life.
- _____ 3. The symbols of Christlike leadership are a towel and a washbasin.
- _____ 4. Servant leaders lead from a kneeling position.
- _____ 5. Jesus should have honored Peter's request not to wash his feet.
- _____ 6. If Jesus led with the towel, so should His followers.
- _____ 7. You'll be blessed if you do as Jesus did.
- _____ 8. You can serve others when you trust that God is in control of your life and that God is your beginning and your end.
- _____ 9. A leader models servant leadership when he leaves his position at the head table, takes up tools of service, and kneels at the feet of others to meet a need.
- _____ 10. By His actions on the night He was betrayed, Jesus modeled what He'd taught about being great and first in Mark 10:35-45.

PRINCIPLES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Principle 1: Servant leaders _____ themselves and wait for God to _____ them.

Principle 2: Servant leaders _____ Jesus rather than seek a _____.

Principle 3: Servant leaders give up personal _____ to find greatness in _____ to others.

Principle 4: Servant leaders can risk serving others because they _____ that God is in _____ of their lives.

Principle 5: Servant leaders take up Jesus' towel of _____ to meet the needs of _____.

SUMMARY

- Servant leadership principle 4: Servant leaders can risk serving others because they trust that God is in control of their lives.
- Servant leadership principle 5: Servant leaders take up Jesus' towel of servanthood to meet the needs of others. Jesus acted out servant leadership by washing His disciples' feet.
- Because Jesus did this for His disciples, you are to do this for those you lead.

Answers to true/false statements: 1. F, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T, 9. T, 10. T

1. Theodore Wilhelm Engstrom and Paul A. Cedar, *Compassionate Leadership*, Kindle edition (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2006), 814.
2. Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*, Kindle edition (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2003), 44.
3. Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, Kindle edition (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 1261.
4. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 5 (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1932), 240.

Day 4

THEY NEEDED SERVANTS

In *servant* leadership, serving is the expression of leadership, regardless of how people follow. Serving is both the end as well as the means.¹

STACY T. RINEHART

Today You Will

- Discover how the early church leaders met a pressing ministry need by involving others in leadership.
- Examine Moses' father-in-law's advice to make Moses a more effective leader.
- Understand servant leadership principles 6 and 7.
- Evaluate your role as a servant leader who empowers others to lead with you.

B. H. Carroll was the pastor of First Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, for 29 years, from 1870 to 1899. He saw beyond the needs of his members to the needs of pastors who didn't have theological training. His desire to train future pastors led him to invite students from the newly formed Baylor University into his study to read from his library and to learn from him. He also saw that the need to train pastors and church leaders was far greater than he could meet on his own. His vision led him to enlist others to start a seminary in the southwest that would combine practical application with academic excellence to equip pastors. This pastor and scholar in a local church empowered church leaders through theological education to do the work of Christ for generations to come by recruiting others to join him in equipping church leaders.

A Special Fellowship

After Christ ascended to heaven, He poured out His Spirit on His people at Pentecost. The church grew rapidly. God drew people from all races and walks of life to His church. The new believers lived together in Christian fellowship and shared all they had with one another.

Read Acts 2:42-47. Describe the believers' life together after God poured out His Holy Spirit on them at Pentecost.

In what ways does the church today practice these aspects of Christian fellowship?

Two Threats to Unity

The church in Jerusalem experienced great growth and fellowship through the presence of God's Spirit in people's lives. But as the church grew, two internal cancers threatened to stop the movement of God.

Hypocrisy was the first internal threat to the church. Acts 5:1-11 gives the account of Ananias and Sapphira, a husband and a wife who thought they could lie to God and still be part of God's work in the church. God quickly and decisively judged their actions, demonstrating that He doesn't tolerate hypocrisy among His people. The church learned God's demand for holiness. Great respect for God came on the church (see v. 11).

Grumbling was the second internal threat to the church. As the church grew, its needs grew. Acts 6:1 reports that the apostles failed to meet the needs of the Hellenistic Jews in the fellowship, and people were grumbling. Grumbling sometimes means leaders have neglected to address a need adequately. Aubrey Malphurs advises:

I would argue that often it's wise to listen to those who oppose your leadership, especially those who oppose it for the right reasons.²

The church didn't have enough leaders to oversee the daily distribution of food. The apostles' inability to serve all the members their daily rations resulted in division and grumbling.

Servants Are Appointed

Read Acts 6:1-6. What did the apostles suggest to address this need?

Verse 2:

Verse 3:

Verse 4:

As leaders, the apostles saw their role as ministers of the word of God. Their place in the church was to know, preach, and teach the words and deeds of Jesus, the Christ. That's what Jesus had commissioned them to do (see Matt. 28:19-20). Yet they were also responsible for the well-being of the fellowship. The church had members with an unmet need. To neglect it would mean division and hurt in the body. The apostles wisely shared the responsibility of this need with qualified members of the church, seven members who were "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3). These seven were to "handle financial matters" (v. 2) for the neglected members so that the apostles could devote themselves "to prayer and to the preaching ministry" (v. 4). *Ministry* is the same word for *slave* that Jesus used when He said the great ones among His followers "must be a slave to all" (Mark 10:44). The apostles multiplied their leadership by delegating some of their responsibility and authority to others in order to meet needs in the fellowship.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 6

Servant leaders share their responsibility and authority with others to meet a greater need.

The currency of leadership includes power and authority. Through the use and sharing of these two leadership resources, leaders serve those in their care. This power isn't our own. Rather, ...

God has shared his power with us. We are stewards of the power that flows from God's blessing and from our connections to the heart and heartbeat of the community.³

Similarly, the authority isn't our own. That too comes from God, and because that's true, ...

The strongest and purest leaders do not need to rely on position or title. Their passion, wisdom, and authentic love carry all the authority that is needed.⁴

The apostles shared the responsibility of caring for others and delegated enough authority for the seven to make the necessary decisions to meet the people's needs.

Before ascending back to the Father, Jesus shared His authority with His disciples in order to meet the greater need of world evangelism:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven
and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples.

MATTHEW 28:18-19

Jesus gave His followers authority before He gave them the responsibility of making disciples. Jesus shared His authority and responsibility with His disciples in order to spread the gospel around the world.

A Father-in-Law's Insight

The principles of delegation and empowerment aren't new. After the exodus Moses was responsible for leading the children of Israel to the promised land. One responsibility was to make decisions about disputes between people. The only problem was the great number of people! Moses sat from morning to evening settling arguments (see Ex. 18:13-16).

Read Exodus 18:17-18. What was Jethro's observation about the way Moses was leading the people?

Leaders wear out their followers and themselves when they try to lead alone. Too many church leaders suffer burnout because they think they're the only ones who can do the job. Owning responsibility for a task doesn't mean you alone can do it. Servant leaders know they're most effective when they trust others to work with them. Good leaders train and empower capable people to help them carry out their responsibilities.

Read Exodus 18:19-23. What was Jethro's suggestion to Moses to meet the people's needs and carry out his responsibility as a leader?

Verse 20:

Verse 21:

Verse 22:

Moses listened to his father-in-law. He taught the people and appointed judges over the nation. Moses delegated responsibility and authority to trustworthy judges to meet the needs of the people.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 7

Servant leaders multiply their leadership by empowering others to lead.

Moses and Jesus' apostles met needs by sharing authority and responsibility with other leaders. Paul applied this same principle. He commanded Timothy to entrust what he'd taught the young church leader to "faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

Jesus multiplied His leadership by empowering His disciples with the Holy Spirit. He told His followers that they would "receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Empowerment always accompanies mission. Jesus gave His Holy Spirit to His disciples so that they would have power to witness about who He was and why the Father had sent Him. Jesus empowered His followers with the authority of His name and the power of His presence.

Results of Shared Leadership

Read Exodus 18:23. What did Jethro say would be the result if Moses did what he said?

In Acts 6:7 what happened when the apostles shared their leadership with the seven to care for members in the church?

The benefits of shared leadership include less stress on the leader and satisfied followers. The result is healthy growth and caring in the fellowship of the church. Shared leadership also results in more ministry and more focused leaders. Leaders serve by empowering others to lead with them.

Jesus followed these principles of servant leadership when He chose, trained, and sent the disciples out to build the kingdom of God. Matthew 10 records the way Jesus enlisted, trained, and sent out His disciples.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

If you're presently a leader in your church, choose the statement that best describes your honest feelings about leadership.

- ☐ I'm tired and drained as a leader.
- ☐ I feel as if I'm the only one who can do what I've been asked to do.
- ☐ Enlisting and training others will take too much time, and my work will never get done.
- ☐ I'm happy to delegate some of my responsibilities to others so that they can share in my joy of leadership.
- ☐ I've been given much responsibility and little authority.
- ☐ I've been trained as a leader and feel good about what I've been asked to do.
- ☐ My church has enough trained leaders to help meet the needs of our fellowship.

What needs exist in your church and community that require good leadership?

Circle the needs you're responsible for in some way. List members you can enlist and train to help you meet this need.

End today's lesson by asking God to show you how He wants you to lead. Ask Him to show you others who can lead with you.

PRINCIPLES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Principle 1: Servant leaders _____ themselves and wait for God to _____ them.

Principle 2: Servant leaders _____ Jesus rather than seek a _____.

Principle 3: Servant leaders give up personal _____ to find greatness in _____ to others.

Principle 4: Servant leaders can risk serving others because they _____ that God is in _____ of their lives.

Principle 5: Servant leaders take up Jesus' towel of _____ to meet the needs of _____.

Principle 6: Servant leaders share their _____ and _____ with others to meet a greater need.

Principle 7: Servant leaders _____ their leadership by _____ others to lead.

SUMMARY

- Servant leadership principle 6: Servant leaders share their responsibility and authority with others to meet a greater need.
- Servant leadership principle 7: Servant leaders multiply their leadership by empowering others to lead.
- Servant leaders know their value to the group and seek to stay focused on that role.
- The apostles enlisted others to help them meet needs in the body.
- Jethro helped Moses lead by suggesting that he share his leadership with capable men.
- God wants you to share your leadership with others so that they can experience the joy of servant leadership.

1. Stacy T. Rinehart, *Upside Down: The Paradox of Servant Leadership* (Colorado Springs: NavPress: 1998), 41.
2. Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*, Kindle edition (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2003), 126.
3. Robert E. Dale, *Seeds for the Future: Growing Organic Leaders for Living Churches* (Saint Louis: Lake Hickory Resources, 2005), 112.
4. Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are*, Kindle edition (Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 2140.

Day 5

YOU AS A SERVANT LEADER

True servant leadership embraces a humble sincerity that brings out the best in leaders and those they serve. That's exactly what Jesus did.¹

KEN BLANCHARD

Today You Will

- Identify four elements of Jesus' leadership.
- Review the seven principles of servant leadership.
- Recall the events and teachings of Jesus' ministry that are the basis of each principle.
- Consider committing yourself to live like a servant leader in the weeks ahead.

Servant leadership isn't something you obtain. It isn't a position on the company chart you work toward. It isn't a career choice or a degree you earn. You don't gain it even after a six-week Bible study on the subject. Servant leadership grows from a relationship with the Master who came to serve rather than to be served. A servant's heart grows from time spent with Jesus and His teachings and from obeying what He said to do. He is your model of servant leadership and no book, course, or conference can substitute for your training time with the Master.

Four Key Elements of Jesus' Leadership

Jesus was a leader, and the focus of His leadership was empowering others to live out God's plan for their lives, not their own agendas. He served His disciples through a clear mission, direction, training, and a team of focused leaders to continue the mission of reconciliation after He returned to the Father.

When we observe Jesus' life, we see four key elements of His leadership.

1. Jesus had a clear mission. Jesus was a servant to the Father's mission for His life: to be the Suffering Servant Messiah (see Isa. 53:11), "to give His life—a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He didn't come to do His will "but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). Jesus humbled Himself and became a servant to God's mission for His life (see Phil. 2:6-8). The mission of God first belonged to Jesus.

The mission of God is everything for a servant leader who follows Jesus, answering the question “Why are we here?” The most familiar statement of this mission is what we call the Great Commission (see Matt. 28:19-20). As followers of Jesus go about their lives, we’re to “make disciples” (v. 19) of Jesus. More specifically, God has commissioned with us the “ministry of reconciliation”(2 Cor. 5:18), in which we’re “ambassadors for Christ” where we live, learn, work, and play (v. 20).

2. Jesus provided a clear direction. Jesus influenced His followers to leave their status quo and go where they wouldn’t go on their own. The direction Jesus provided enabled His disciples to answer the question “Where are we going?” Jesus led them to trust “the kingdom of God has come near” and to “repent and believe in the good news” of His coming (Mark 1:15). He told vision stories in the form of parables to help them see God’s preferred future for them. Jesus led those who trusted Him to the cross, where He suffered and died but was raised on the third day. Jesus kept the purposes and plans of God before His followers through His actions, teachings, and stories. Servant leaders like Jesus continually tell those they lead where they’re going and what their lives are becoming through a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. This is the vision of a servant leader like Jesus.

3. Jesus trained His disciples to carry out the Father’s mission. Jesus equipped them through His “Follow Me” method of training (Matt. 4:19) and trained them with the skills to be Kingdom people through His teaching and example. Equipping answers the question of those who join us on mission, “How do we do this?”

4. Jesus invested in a team of disciples. At the end of three years, when Jesus’ time came to return to the Father, He commissioned His disciples to continue God’s mission of reconciliation (see Matt. 28:19-20). To lead as a servant leader like Jesus is to invest in a core group of leaders who will carry on the mission in the leader’s absence. Team leadership answers the question “Whom can we count on?”

Reviewing the Seven Principles of Servant Leadership

Today we want to review the seven principles of servant leadership. You’ll record them and recall the events and teachings from Jesus’ life that are the basis of each principle. When you’ve finished the review, you’ll be asked to make a commitment to spend time with the Master, learning from Him how to live as a servant leader.

As you reflect on all you've experienced in this week's study, try to recall the seven principles and record them. If you need help, reread the foundational Scripture passage.

Principle 1: Based on Luke 14:7-11, servant leaders ...

Principle 2: Based on Mark 10:32-40, servant leaders ...

Principle 3: Based on Mark 10:41-45, servant leaders ...

Principle 4: Based on John 13:3, servant leaders ...

Principle 5: Based on John 13:4-11, servant leaders ...

Principle 6: Based on Acts 6:1-6, servant leaders ...

Principle 7: Based on Exodus 18:17-23, servant leaders ...

Choose to Be a Servant

Return to the seven principles you've just written. Circle principles that seem to be a part of your life today. Underline the biblical passages that have taught you the most about servant leadership. Be prepared to share your answers in your next group session.

You may be sensing now that this study was intended for someone other than yourself. You may feel that you aren't a leader in the church and that you'll never hold any position of leadership. On the other hand, you may now be a leader in the church, and this study has challenged everything you thought about leadership. In either case, you're still in the right place. Here's why.

Because you've trusted Christ to be your Savior and Lord, two things are true.

1. As a disciple of Jesus Christ, you're called to serve. Sometimes God calls you to lead others, but the pressure of leadership is off when you follow Jesus. Your priority becomes service. Any other model falls short of Jesus' example. Leadership in the body of Christ should always follow service. Meeting needs is your most important task as a servant leader.

2. You were created by God, bought with a price, called out for a purpose, and sent on mission. Success has already been achieved on the cross and in the resurrection of Christ. Your success is measured by your service. God created you for a purpose. He bought you with the price of His only Son's death (see 1 Cor. 6:20). God's only Son has commissioned you to make disciples (see Matt. 28:19-20) and to be an ambassador for Him:

We are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

With those credentials, who needs the titles and headlines of leadership?

See, you belong here. God wants you to serve His people and those who need to know His love. This fact also applies to being a servant leader in your family as well as in ministries outside the church.

Jesus has called you to be a servant first and foremost. Leadership comes when the Host invites you to the head table for a season to guide and direct others. The training school for leaders in the body of Christ is with towel and washbasin in hand, kneeling at the feet of others.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Prayerfully consider the following statements. Select those that represent your feelings at this time.

- ☐ I never saw myself as a leader, but after this week of study, I believe God wants me to be a servant leader in my church.
- ☐ I've been a leader in the church before, but this study has helped me see my role in a whole new way.
- ☐ Jesus is the Lord of my life, and I commit myself to follow His examples and teachings of servant leadership.
- ☐ I want to continue this discovery of servant leadership. I make a commitment now to spend time with the Master, to participate fully in the study, to learn to live as a servant leader, and to discover where Christ wants me to serve.
- ☐ I'm uncertain about what all this means, but I'm willing to continue to seek God's will in my life.
- ☐ I don't think I want to continue this study. These concepts are too foreign to me.

SUMMARY

- Servant leadership grows from a relationship with the Master who came to serve rather than to be served.
- When you follow Jesus, the pressure to lead is off. Your priority becomes service. Success has already been achieved on the cross and in the resurrection of Christ. Your success is measured by your service.
- God wants you to serve His people and those who need to know His love. This fact also applies to being a servant leader in your family as well as in ministries outside the church.

1. Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time*, Kindle edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 213.