



# BE THE BODY

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## SERVE

### Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Actively seek to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others, address issues of oppression and injustice, bring freedom to those ensnared, and give voice to those unheard.

### Spiritual Outcome Described:

One of the more stunning statements of Scripture is Jesus' description of why he came: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45). As this Scripture describes, the being through whom "all things were made" (John 1:3) enters into his own creation not to be served but to serve. In another place we read "he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant." (Philippians 2:7). Jesus could have made demands. He could have revealed his position, flexed his authority, and demanded his own pleasures and comfort. Instead he became "obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8). Why? What would motivate the creator of all to serve and comfort others rather than demand the service of those he created? A glimmer of understanding—and exhortation—comes when we consider the circumstances. Enter into any tragic situation, and anything short of service is grossly misguided. If we were first on the scene of a multi-car pile up, we would not step into the situation and look for ways to serve ourselves. We would call for help, apply tourniquets, bandage wounds, and comfort the distressed. It's revealing that the Son of God took the approach he did in this world. All indicators are that from his vantage point we live in the midst of a multi-car pile up. We don't always see it this way from our vantage point, though.

*"Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."*  
-John Wooden

All too often, we miss the tragedies that surround us for the thin veil that covers it all. But tragedy does abound, and the people we lock eyes with every day are both hurting and oppressed. Jesus made his purpose clear. He came "to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18). Those who follow Christ will do as he did. We will be freedom fighters, liberators, and healers. We will look for ways to serve those around us—both physically and spiritually—and not be consumed with our own prestige, power, or comfort. We will "have the same mindset of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5). In Paul's letter to the Galatians he describes his interactions with Peter, James, and John, men he described as "pillars" of our faith and said that "they asked...that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along." (Galatians 2:10). So from the earliest followers of Christ, and from Christ himself, we have the example of those who served by proclaiming the deepest of spiritual truths and by giving in the most practical of ways.

### **Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:**

- Proactively finds ways to serve others rather than dodge needs.
- Can name at least one serving situation in the past three months that was challenging—and not particularly pleasurable within itself—but engaged nonetheless .
- Can identify one simple act of service in the past twenty-four hours.
- Practices service in a manner that truly helps and empowers those being served rather than service that hinders or enables.

### **Guidance**

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

### **Deuteronomy 15:7-11**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your attitude toward helping the poor?



**Psalms 82:1-4**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your attitude toward the weak, sick, or oppressed?

**Proverbs 14:21, 31:8-9, 19:17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your current season of life, what are ways you could speak-up for those who do not have a voice or serve those in physical need?



## **Isaiah 58:6-12**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does God's heart for the poor and oppressed surprise you? Why or why not? How closely does your heart currently reflect God's heart?

## **Jeremiah 22:1-5, 15-17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you sense God's seriousness and focus on helping the oppressed? How does this affect you?



## **Micah 6:6-8**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might your life increasingly reflect the profound simplicity of this passage?

## **Matthew 5:14-16**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your life currently radiating?



## **Matthew 23:11**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you been inspired by another person's service? Why might you consider those who serve "great"?

## **Luke 4:16-21**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might you increasingly be a freedom fighter, healer, and liberator with Christ?



## **Luke 22:24-27**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you sitting at the table of life or serving at the table of life?

## **1 Thessalonians 3:10-13**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Has your giving ever become enabling rather than empowering?  
If so, how, and how do you discern the difference?



## **Philippians 2:1-11**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do your current attitudes and actions reflect those of Christ's? How do they not?

## **James 1:27, 2:14-17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does your life reflect your profession of faith? How or how not?





## Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on service? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

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## Memory Verses:

### Mark 10:43-45 NIV

Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

### 1 John 3:16-18 NIV

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

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