

The Best Place to Start Picking Up the Towel

Introduction:

1. Have you ever been convinced that you needed to do something, but you were faced with the question, “Where do I start?”
2. We’ve all been there, and it can be quite frustrating and discouraging. This can also happen to us in our walk with Christ. We read something in the Bible, or hear a message in church, or get really challenged in our small group, but think, “Where do I start?”
3. For the past three weeks we have examined the powerful story of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples. It is an amazing story of the King of kings taking on the form of a servant and in humility serving others (John 13:1-6). He is serving instead of being served. What a challenge to us.
4. We can’t be like Jesus if we aren’t serving. But where do we start? You ask, “Where do I get involved, what would I be good at, do I have time?” Sometimes, you never get out of the starting blocks.
5. I believe the best place to start is right in your own home! Do you want to be like Jesus and serve? Begin serving those who are closest to you. This has the power to revolutionize any marriage and any home. Until I have learned to give sacrificially to those closest to me, I have not truly understood the heart of Christ. He served those closest to Him.
6. This may seem like a no-brainer, but serving at home is one of the greatest challenges a Christian faces. Why? We tend to take those closest to us for granted. We expect more and tend to give less. We are well acquainted with their faults. We can get bitter very easily if we aren’t getting what we want.
7. But the best place to start picking up the towel and learning to live a life of service is right at home. If you can start there, you are on your way to being like Christ. How can we serve at home?

Husbands – serve your family by providing servant leadership.

1. Deep down, every man knows that he should provide good leadership for his home, but the kind of leadership style that Jesus advocated is not what naturally comes to our minds as men (washing stinky feet).
2. The world teaches us that leadership means that you are powerful, your opinions are what matter, you are served by others, and you

- exercise your power over others. We think the words “headship” and “leadership” are licenses to indulge ourselves.
3. Jesus taught an entirely different concept of leadership. Luke 22:25-27
 - A benefactor is one who receives all the benefits. The world says, “Use your leadership and power to enrich **yourself**.”
 4. But Jesus taught and lived the concept of servant-leadership. In Christ’s economy, to be the “head” is to be this unique blend of leader and servant. This was Jesus Christ. John 13:3-5 (all powerful, yet He served)
 5. His disciples did not follow Him because He forced them or coerced them to. His servant’s heart and leadership style caused them to **want** to follow Him. This is exemplified in our story.
 6. Hey guys, our wives will follow a leader like that – a husband who has a heart to serve. A husband says, “But I tried to clean her feet and she didn’t want me to.” Try doing the dishes instead!
 7. Seriously, what does a servant-leader look like in everyday life? There are a multitude of different things, but let me give you a few examples.
 - A servant-leader listens to those in his family instead of always barking orders. A servant-leader wants what is best for everyone in the family, not just himself.
 - A servant-leader finds great value in his wife’s perspective and opinions, and focuses on what is good about his wife, not her flaws.
 - A servant-leader never intimidates to get his way, but values what is best for his marriage and family.
 8. Hey guys, let’s be honest. We can begin to be like Christ by picking up the towel at home. Start at home by looking for ways to serve.

Wives – serve your family by providing unconditional love.

1. Do you remember what the Bible said right before Christ washed their feet? John 13:1 – “...*having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*” Jesus’ love and service was inseparably tied together.
2. Ladies, let’s read Titus 2:4. Why did the Holy Spirit put this in the Bible?
 - There is nothing on earth more powerful than a wife and mother’s love. It is so needed, yet so under attack in our culture.

3. It's easy for ladies to get distracted from one of the most needed, powerful, and influential things that they could ever do on earth.
4. How does a wife love her husband? The primary way is by being there for him. Without a wife's focus, attention, encouragement, and unconditional love, input and accountability, the husband will have glaring gaps in his life.
5. Remember what God said about Adam, "It's not good for him to be alone."
6. You serve your husband by being there for him, giving him your time and energy. He must be a priority, providing thought and creativity to building him up. Be his #1 cheerleader, etc.
7. The same principle is true of your children. Children need tremendous doses of personal attention, support, and love. It is not good for children to be left alone either. A mother's love is a powerful thing.
8. Children need training (Proverbs 22:6) and lots of time (Proverbs 29:15). Satan loves to get ladies distracted, and instead of focusing on unleashing that unconditional love on their husband and children, they are busy chasing after other things that are not as important (many ladies get that too late).
9. Ladies, you can begin serving (like Christ) by picking up the towel at home. Allow nothing to distract you from your primary purpose of fervently loving your family. Be there for them.

Children – serve your family by obeying with a respectful attitude.

1. The Bible teaches that children are supposed to bring joy to their parents. Unfortunately, many homes are constantly full of turmoil and strife.
2. Many times it is simply because of disobedient or disrespectful children.
 - They expect to be served, not serve (consumer, not contributor)
 - They expect to get their own way.
 - They expect to be allowed to disobey and disrespect their parents with no real consequences.
3. Take those attitudes, put them together, and it makes for a real miserable environment in any home.
4. Children have to be **taught** the right way. It won't come natural. The disciples were Jesus' kids if you will. He was training and equipping them for their future. That is what we are doing as parents.

- The kind of husband or father your son will be, the kind of employee he will be, the kind of church member he will be – you are training and shaping him for those things (apply to daughter also).
5. Isn't it interesting that Christ gives them an example? He shows them the right attitude of humility and service, but then He applies it to their lives. John 13:12-15 (notice the word "*example*")
 - Do our children see a servant's heart in us? Do they see us picking up the towel at home and at church?
 6. In verse 17 Jesus says, "*If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.*" Christ expected obedience. He says, "If you obey and have a heart of humility and service, things will go well and you'll be happy."
 7. Our children must learn this – by our example, by our instruction, and by our holding them accountable. Ephesians 6:1-3
 8. Teach your kids that life is not all about them. How? By teaching them to serve others. Teach them that they are not to simply be consumers, but contributors. This starts at home.
 - They need to be serving (taking the garbage out, cleaning their room, helping clean the kitchen, mowing the grass, helping plant flowers...).
 - My dad sure taught me the great feeling that comes with serving and being a contributor and for this I am so thankful.
 9. Teach your children to serve or they will end up living an empty life. Serve as a family. Let them watch you serve. A picture is worth a thousand words.

In Conclusion:

1. When you spend every day on yourself, you will be empty for the rest of your life. When you invest your life in others, you will be filled. The greatest is the one who is a servant.
2. It's not just actions, it is attitude. Serving is not what I do. Serving is who I am. Don't miss that. I am a servant. It's who I am.
3. The first place this needs to be exemplified is right at home. Selfishness destroys families; servanthood builds families.