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02

CHAPTER 2 - THE HEART OF A SERVANT

Becoming the kind of leader Jesus models

“Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, ‘You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles domineer over them; and their people in high position exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you; rather, whoever wants to become prominent among you shall be your servant; and whoever wants to be first among you shall 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’” Mark 10:42-45

In Matthew 20:26-28, Jesus redefined greatness, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”

This was revolutionary. In a world where power meant privilege, Jesus flipped the script. True greatness in the Kingdom is not found in control but in compassion. It does not come in being noticed, but in noticing others.

A servant leader chooses humility over hierarchy. Humility means freedom from pride or arrogance. Paul writes in Philippians 2 that Jesus, though equal with God, made Himself nothing, taking on the nature of a servant. If He could wash feet, so can we.

This mindset does not mean we become doormats. It means we serve with strength, anchored in identity. When we lead others, ask: “How can I lift them up? How can I make them successful?”

The best leaders go low so others can rise.

Write out Philippians 2:3-7. What parts of this verse are hard for you to live by right now.



● From Hands-On to Heart-Led

Most of us have been faithfully serving: setting up chairs, leading a bible study, watching over kids, or maybe even greeting at the door. These tasks are essential to the life of the church. But leadership is not about what we do with our hands; it is about the **posture of our hearts**.

God is asking, “Will you serve me not only with your actions, but with your influence?” And the kind of influence He values most is **servant-hearted leadership**.

Write out Romans 12:10. Try to memorize this verse this week

● The Kingdom Is Upside Down

In the world, leaders rise by climbing over others. A servant is one that serves others.

In the Kingdom, leaders rise by **kneeling to serve**. A Leader is someone that leads; person who has commanding authority or influence. Jesus flipped the whole idea of greatness:

- He washed feet (John 13), a task meant for servants.
- He touched lepers and welcomed children.
- He shared meals with outcasts and called fishermen to change the world.

If Jesus, the Son of God, chose servanthood as His leadership style, we must do the same.

Explain how John 13:12-17 shows Jesus turning things upside down.

According to 1 Corinthians 11:1 who are we ultimately imitating?



● What Is Servant Leadership?

Servant leadership is not about:

- Being a pushover
- Avoiding authority
- Letting everyone else decide

It is about:

- Putting others first
- Carrying the weight of responsibility with humility
- Seeing leadership as a ministry, not a position

Servant leaders wash feet, even if we are tired. We pick up trash when no one is looking. We encourage others into the spotlight. We listen more than we speak. Here is testimony from Pastor Chuck Smith on his experience of being a servant-leader:

"Now I admit that there are times when I don't find it so much joy. Some of the service that I have done, I have griped, and I will frankly admit it. I always feel guilty after I gripe, but I do gripe occasionally. Mainly when I have to pick up the cigarette butts around the church. That's one task I just detest, and that's again, from the time when I was a kid my mom told me, "Never touch a cigarette." And I feel like I'm disobeying every time I pick one up. I hate to touch 'em. And so, quite often, as I'm picking up cigarette butts, I will be grumbling a bit. Until the Lord speaks to me and says, "Who are you doing that for?" And I say, "I'm doing it for You, Lord, and nobody else." And He says, "Then why are you griping?" "I don't know. I'm sorry, Lord. Forgive me." But most generally, I find it a joy to serve. For Jesus said, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it to me". So, I'm serving the Lord by serving my fellow man. Whatever I do for others, I'm really doing for Him. I'm His servant, that He has commanded me to serve the body of Jesus Christ. So, in being His servant I'm only obeying His orders as I serve the body of Christ; and in serving the body of Christ, I'm really serving Him. So, you can't really separate it, it's all tied up together" ~ Chuck Smith

According to Matthew 20:26 who is to be the servant?

● What Kind of Leader Are We Becoming?

As we read about being a leader or servant leader, what are you discovering you lean more towards? Be honest with yourself, this is just between you and the Lord.

Ask yourself:

- Am I leading to be seen - or to build others up?
- Am I clinging to control - or releasing it to God?
- Do I serve only when it is convenient - or when it is costly?

Being a servant-leader does not mean we hide in the background. It means we are out front carrying the cross not our own crown. It means we are sacrificing control for the sake of others.

What is required to follow Jesus according to Matthew 16:24

● Marks of a Servant-Hearted Leader

There are many ways we can tell if we are following the servant-leader model. Here are three of the top ways:

- **Humility Over Self-promotion:** We are not the hero, Jesus is.
 - True leadership makes room for others and gives God the glory. It means that we put the Lord over our own importance, not seeking what will make us look good, feel good, or exalting self in the process.

Describe what 1 Peter 5:5-6 says about humility. What do you need to do in order to live a humble life?

- **People Over Agendas:**
 - We care more about who we are leading than how big the ministry gets. Numbers do not impress us - souls do.

How can we be an example to others based on Galatians 1:10?

- **Faithfulness Over Popularity**
 - We would rather be faithful in a small room than famous on a stage. We are not in it for the spotlight. We want to serve the Lord, and are not looking for a pat on the back for the things we have done.

How are we taught to practice our righteousness based on Matthew 6:1-6?

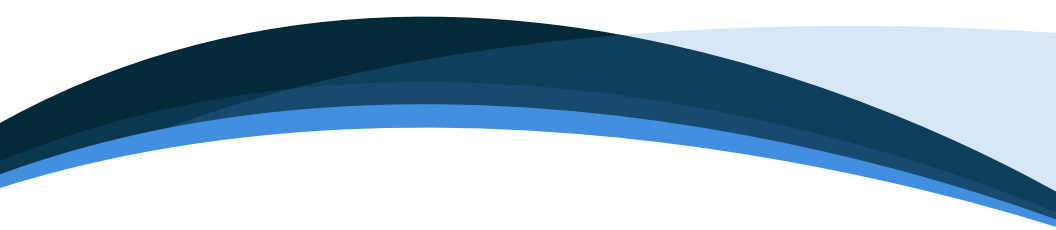


● **Our Example Matters**

Volunteers will watch how we treat people, how we handle pressure, and how we respond when things go wrong. Servant leadership does not just talk about Jesus, it reflects Him.

Even one person in our ministry catching that heart of servanthood can multiply that culture across the church.

What are four areas we can be an example to others in based on 1 Timothy 4:12?



● Reflection Questions:

In what ways do you naturally serve others?

In what areas of your life or ministry is God inviting you to serve more deeply?

How has Jesus' model of leadership challenged your current way of serving?

How are you modeling Jesus in the way you serve?

Where have you struggled with self-promotion or control?

How do you handle recognition or praise in your current serve team role?

● Personal Challenge:

Ask another person on your team:

- "How can I serve you better this week?"
- Challenge yourself to ask someone you don't know well.
- Then act on their answer.

● Leadership Challenge:

This week, take initiative to serve in an unnoticed way:

- Clean a space without being asked
- Write an encouraging note to a fellow servant
- Pray privately for the people you serve with

Then, journal this: "What did I feel God doing in me as I served quietly?" Do not do what is normal, or easy. Stretch yourself.

● Prayer & Journaling:

Jesus, make me more like You, as a servant leader, unafraid to go low for the sake of others...

