**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**How do I live for God?**

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” ([Matthew 6:33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.33))

*Parents are constantly bombarded with information from their kids. One child might be describing something that happened to her at school, and another could be going on and on about a favorite video he just watched or created. Or they might just be demanding more snacks. Then, at times, those same kids simultaneously try to explain why they were fighting with each other and whose fault it was. In those moments, freshly armed with details, a parent can be left wondering,* “What do I do with all this information?”

*You may be feeling the same way. In society, we’re constantly bombarded with information and competing agendas. What should you do with all these facts and opinions? If you’re feeling that tension, this volume is for you! We’ll be looking at Scripture for answers as to how to assimilate this information as we ask the all-important question: How do I live for God?*

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| First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**When you think of a servant, what images come to mind? |

Depending on your definition of a servant, a number of images may have come to mind. Perhaps you pictured a butler sporting a fancy bowtie, waiting to be summoned by a handbell. Maybe you imagined a selfless parent or grandparent, a favorite teacher, or a community leader. Perhaps you thought of someone famous, like Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King, Jr. But when it comes to servanthood, there’s no greater example than Jesus. The Bible tells us that He came not only to serve, but to give His life for all of us ([Matthew 20:28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt20.28)). Today we’ll look at another example of serving in the Bible when Jesus told a story to redefine what it means to love and serve our neighbors.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What are the best qualities of a favorite neighbor you’ve had?



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| **QUESTION**What are the best qualities of a favorite neighbor you’ve had? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

In [Luke 10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10), a religious leader asked Jesus to tell him what it truly meant for someone to be a neighbor ([Luke 10:25–29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.25-29)). To help him understand, Jesus told a story about a Samaritan man that served in a radical way.

As the story unfolds, Jesus described the terrible things a Jewish traveler had endured. He’d been attacked and beaten by thieves, stripped of his clothes, and left for dead on the side of the road. The disciples and religious leaders must have been sitting on the edge of their seats waiting to hear who would heroically reach out and help this broken traveler.

**Serving Others Is Intentional**

Read [Luke 10:30–33](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.30-33).

The Samaritan man was faced with a choice. He could have followed the priest and temple assistant and crossed to the other side of the road. After all, if anyone had a good reason to ignore the traveler, it was him. But the Samaritan could not shake the knowledge that his heart was moved by compassion. So he made an intentional choice to stop and serve the wounded man. In doing so, he reminds us that serving others doesn’t happen by accident, and it’s rarely convenient.

The kindness of the Samaritan in Jesus’ story likely shocked his Jewish listeners. Hundreds of years of racial and cultural tension existed between the Jews and Samaritans. The roots of the tension started with intermarriage and intermingling between Jews who had escaped being exiled by an Assyrian king and the non-Jews he moved into Samaria. So, Jesus’ description of the Samaritan’s choice to serve shifted the person His audience likely expected to be the bad guy into the role of hero.

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think the priest and the temple assistant both ignored the traveler? |

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| **QUESTION**What excuses keep us from serving others? |

**Did You Know?**

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| *There’s debate about whether the priest and temple assistant were justified in avoiding contact with the beaten and dying man due to ritual purity laws. The Law outlined that if they came into direct contact with a dead body, they would be ritually impure and unfit for temple service for a time. There are a few things to consider about this. First, it’s possible that this man would have been considered a* goses*—one who was at death’s door but not dead yet. Therefore, it’s arguable that these two should have lent help regardless of purity laws because he wasn’t dead. Second, the preservation of life surpasses all laws of ritual purity in Judaism. So, even if he had died, they would have been found in service of higher moral law. Third, certain clues in the passage indicate that the men were also traveling to Jericho from Jerusalem. This suggests that they weren’t traveling to perform temple duties, and thus, likely had no immediate religious reason for bypassing the desperate man.* |

**Serving Others Is Personal**

Read [Luke 10:34–35](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.34-35).

To take care of the injured man, the Samaritan generously offered his own oil and bandages, use of his donkey, and money for expenses. The Samaritan made a personal sacrifice of his time and resources to ensure the traveler was given the best chance to recover.

It’s not enough simply to love others with our words. We have to own the moments God gives us and personally love others with our actions too ([1 John 3:16–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn3.16-18)).

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| **QUESTION**Share about a time when someone met a personal need you had. How did that make you feel? |

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| **QUESTION**What’s a need you see right now in your home, at church, or in our community? How can you personally meet that need? |

**Serving Others Isn’t Optional**

Read [Luke 10:36–37](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.36-37).

As followers of Jesus, when we choose to live for God, we’re signing up for a life of service to others. Jesus doesn’t simply suggest that serving others is a good idea. On the contrary, He commands us to serve others. He reminds us we’re most like Him when we do.

Since we’re the light of the world ([Matthew 5:14–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5.14-16)), we should be confident that God will regularly put people in our path who need our help and to be introduced to God’s love. It’s important to keep our eyes, our heart, and our schedule available to serve others. When we sense the Holy Spirit moving us to respond, we can’t sidestep or ignore that calling. We need to act in immediate obedience.

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever ignored an opportunity to serve someone? How did you feel afterward? |

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| **QUESTION**What can you do to keep your eyes, heart, and schedule available to the needs of others? |

**Reflect**

**I Serve Others**

Choosing to live for God requires us to make room in our heart and our schedule to serve our neighbors. The example of the Good Samaritan shows us that this means more than just our close friends and family or only the people who look like us. We’re called to love and serve our coworkers, classmates, strangers, and even our enemies. As believers, God wants us to love and serve every person—regardless of their race, gender, or background—that He puts into our path. Every person matters to God and is worthy of love. We express God’s love to others when we’re serving.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**Is serving others something you think about daily, weekly, or less often? How often do you serve someone outside your family? |

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| **QUESTION**Do you avoid serving certain people in your life? Think about someone who would be a difficult person to serve in your life right now. What makes that so? |

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| **QUESTION**When it comes to making your schedule available to God, how can you make more space for serving in your life? |

**Activate**

Living for God requires serving others. We have to be intentional about seeing and meeting the needs of others. We must be prepared to invest personally with our time, our talent, and our resources.

**Challenge**

As you serve others, think small. Serving isn’t only committing to a summer-long missions trip to another continent. It might be as simple as letting someone go ahead of you at the grocery store or taking the time to listen to someone who needs to talk through some disappointing news. Try to listen to the Holy Spirit as you encounter people each day. The simplest act of serving may be life-changing for someone.

As you make yourself available to God’s direction and the needs of others, consider using one of the following ideas:

• Invite a friend to meet you for coffee. Pay for their drink and spend time encouraging them.

• Mow or rake a neighbor’s yard.

• Deliver a meal to a family experiencing sickness or hardship.

• Give a ride to someone who doesn’t have a vehicle.

• Share the story about how Jesus changed your life with a friend or stranger.

• Make bags of bottled water and snacks to hand out to homeless individuals.

• Volunteer in your community.

• Volunteer to meet a need in your church.

• Give to a charitable cause or missions project.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**What We Believe**

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| **The Church and Its Mission**The Church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her Great Commission. Since one of God’s purposes concerning humanity is to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world, one of our priorities should also reflect this by showing God’s love and compassion for others. |

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: I Serve Others**

Read [Luke 10:30–37](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.30-37).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about living for Him by serving others? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: Serving Shows Our Love**

Read [1 John 4:7–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn4.7-12).

Jesus spared no personal expense to show His love to us. He paid the ultimate sacrifice by dying on the Cross for our sins. This was the greatest act of love our world will ever know.

Jesus’ death is a reminder that love requires action. Just as Jesus gave His life for us, we should give our life to others through serving. We can give ourself away by sharing our time, our talent, and our resources. When we serve, we’re showing our love for God and our love for others. No matter the size of our effort, our actions show our love when we serve with a pure motive from the heart.

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| **QUESTION**Can you think of a time in your life when someone wowed you by serving you? |

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| **QUESTION**What gifts and abilities do you have that could be used to serve and show God’s love to others? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: Serving Shows Our Faith**

Read [James 2:14–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jas2.14-18).

Imagine having a brand-new car in your garage. You have your driver’s license, the keys, and a full tank of gas. You’ve been given permission to drive anywhere you want, but you choose to let the car just sit there, week after week, collecting dust. What a waste that would be!

God has given us each a brand-new life ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Co5.17)). He’s given us His love and offered empowerment through the Holy Spirit ([Acts 1:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac1.8)). He’s given us permission to serve the world on His behalf and even promised to be with us every step of the way ([Matthew 28:19–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19-20)). Not responding to all He’s provided for us by serving others would be a waste as well. If we truly have faith in God, we’ll act on it.

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| **QUESTION**Does the way you serve others match your faith journey? If not, what can you do to change that? |

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| **QUESTION**Take some time to remember and write down how your life has been transformed by God. As you reflect on all God has done for you, ask God to use you to show that same love to others through serving. |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: Serving Shows Our Motives**

Read [Luke 6:27–36](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk6.27-36).

Serving others is a tangible way to point people to God’s love and mercy. Serving others should always draw their focus to God and not to us. It’s important that we check the motivation of our heart. We should serve without wanting to be noticed. We should serve without wanting to get the credit. We should serve out of humility and obedience, not guilt or obligation. We should serve without expecting to be repaid. We should serve with a selfless heart and attitude ([Philippians 2:3–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php2.3-4)).

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| **QUESTION**What’s your motivation for serving others? Confess any selfish ambition, pride, or self-centeredness that distracts you from serving others to draw attention to God. |

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| **QUESTION**Jesus said, “If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also” ([Luke 6:29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk6.29)). When serving others, do you go above and beyond or simply meet the bare minimum? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: Serving Shows Our Obedience**

Read [Matthew 25:31–46](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt25.31-46).

Loving our neighbors and responding to their needs isn’t a suggestion. As followers of Jesus, each of us has been personally commanded and commissioned to do this. It’s our great privilege to partner with God to meet the needs of others. When we actively show love to those around us, we’re obeying God’s purpose and mission for our life.

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| **QUESTION**Do you find serving others to be more of a joy or an inconvenience? |

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| **QUESTION**Based on today’s passage, would you find yourself standing on the right (obedient) or the left (disobedient) side of God? How do your actions support that decision? |