**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Be Different**

Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. ([Romans 12:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro12.2))

*Christians have long understood that we live and walk a fine line. We are to be in the world—all things to all people, as Paul put it—yet not of the world. God’s people have always been a chosen people, holy and set apart from the world’s ways. To pull it off, to be truly different, means we must each hold fast to the truth, speaking it when needed, all while humbling ourself and faithfully serving others.*

**Session Overview**

**Humble Yourself**

**Biblical Encounter:** Party Guests Discover the Best Seat ([Luke 14:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.1), [7–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.7-15))

**Outcome:** Become first by humbly putting others first.

*In this session, we’ll explore how Jesus changes our heart in ways we might not expect. We all have ideas about ways followers of Jesus can have a positive impact on the people around them. But most likely humility wouldn’t be high on our list. Jesus’ ways are distinct from anything else the world has ever seen. Moving up in Jesus’ kingdom happens as we take the position of humility. He truly calls us to be different, and we can do that by putting others first.*

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| *First time leading* Live *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**Some high school yearbooks have a recognition section for awards like, “Most Likely to Succeed,” “Most Athletic,” and so on. What category could you have been recognized in and why? |

Our society uses very distinct markers for what it means to be a person of success or power. Media is saturated with images of famous and celebrated people. Many people look to wealth, looks, or status to judge how important a person is. Something in each of us wants to be noticed and appreciated for being special in some way. And much of our society is built on the dreams of being and having more.

At the same time, everyone can see that the world is broken and needs help. Jesus came to save and change people. He showed us how to be people who aren’t stuck in the world’s standards of loving position, money, and power. His kingdom is absolutely different from what people would expect. Jesus taught and demonstrated that to win, we have to lose; to be first, we need to be last; and to lead, we must humbly serve others.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: How do you react when others pursue recognition and honor?



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| **QUESTION**How do you react when others pursue recognition and honor? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

The dinner party in [Luke 14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14) was hosted by one of the Jewish religious people in town, and he invited his friends. Jesus was invited too, and everyone was curious to find out more about Him. Parts of the Jewish Law deal with caring for your neighbor and welcoming others. If anyone should have known the real heart of God about serving others, it should have been the teachers of the Law and the religious leaders at this party.

Yet, the party guests were competing to get the best seat at the table. They might not have been as interested in knowing Jesus as they were in looking important. But the guests at the party learned—and we are about to learn—what Jesus had to say about what’s really important.

**Did You Know?**

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| The word translated as *hospitality* in the New Testament has a level of depth that’s easy to miss. It’s the Greek word *philoxenos*, a combination of the words *philos,* which means “to love” and *xenos,* which means *foreigner* or *stranger*. In Bible times, hospitality was not limited to just caring for your friends. It often included caring for those you didn’t know. God specifically commanded this of His children in Deuteronomy 10:19 which says, “So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.” |

**Invited to the Table**

Read [Luke 14:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.1).

If this event had happened today, it would be like going to a church leader’s house after church to get to know him or her a little better. These guests had surely been to many dinner parties with many special teachers over the years. This was just another Sabbath day meal. But Jesus was different from anyone they had ever met before, and many would have been curious to be around Him more. This passage says they were watching Him closely as they gathered in the religious leader’s home. They were listening to what Jesus had to say and watching how He handled himself.

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| **QUESTION**What might the dinner guests have been thinking as they arrived for the dinner that day? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think they watched Jesus so closely? |

**Challenged by Reality**

As all the guests arrived, everyone began looking for the place they would sit during the meal. Jesus was watching them.

Read [Luke 14: 7–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.7-11).

With their eyes on Jesus, many of the guests may have already known that this wasn’t going to be a normal dinner party. As people looked for somewhere to sit, Jesus watched. Then He later made it clear that everyone was doing it wrong! Jesus was already proving to be an exciting party guest.

Jesus challenged the way they typically did things by using an illustration everyone would have understood. It’s embarrassing to sit in the wrong seat and have to be moved. Jesus used common sense to challenge the social customs of these guests. He began to teach a new way of looking at things by first helping them see their situation clearly. Being humble isn’t pretending to be less than we really are. It’s recognizing that others are also important.

The party guests were acting just like everyone else in the world by trying to push others out of the way to make themselves look better. But Jesus wasn’t trying to take power by force or status, and they shouldn’t have either. In this passage He revealed one of the most beautiful truths of Christianity: “For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” ([Luke 14:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.11))

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| **QUESTION**How do you think the dinner guests felt as Jesus corrected everyone? |

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| **QUESTION**What might the guests’ whispered conversations have been like after Jesus said that? |

**Inspired to Be Different**

Read [Luke 14:12–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.12-15).

Then Jesus took things to another level. The host of the party was one of the religious leaders. It’s likely that most of the guests that day were his friends and associates. Just like today, he might have invited others to his home to look important or to show off what he had. Just as we would now, his guests might have felt compelled to invite him again later.

Often when we read the Bible, it’s easy to put ourself in the place of good and virtuous people, but harder to put ourself into the place of those being corrected. This story is no different. Jesus challenged all of us, then and now, to stop acting like the rest of the world. He has given us life and power so we can share and not hoard for our own.

The real and lasting reward comes in sharing joy and hope with “the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind” ([Luke 14:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.13)) who can’t pay anything back or give the host a status boost. Jesus brings real change to our life, but it isn’t just for us and our close friends and family. Everything He does *in* each of us, He wants to do *through* us. As we humbly serve and invite those who can’t help us in any way, Jesus helps us truly be different.

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| **QUESTION**In what ways were the dinner guests’ faith challenged by Jesus that day? |

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| **QUESTION**How can we be different in why we invite people into our life? |

**Reflect**

**Become first by humbly putting others first.**

In this session, we explored how Jesus transforms our heart and mind in ways we might not have expected. In our world, the rich and powerful like to stay that way, and the poor people wish to have more. But Jesus’ ways are distinct from anything else the world has ever seen. He came to love and serve. He taught us that living means we must die to ourself. To be first, we must be last. He taught us that humility is not just thinking less of ourself, but also thinking of others more. He challenges us to humbly put others first.

**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**What would you like to ask one of the dinner guests about their experience that day? |

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| **QUESTION**What might it look like for you to invite some people you don’t know well to your own table? |

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| **QUESTION**Is it easy for you to humbly put others first? Why or why not? |

**Activate**

So much of what we do is about how it makes us look to other people. We often just want people to think highly of us. As Christians, we need to check our motives for what we do. Do we act a certain way so people will think we are generous or kind, or do we actually want to be generous and kind? One way to restore our poor motives is to do things for people who have no way of knowing who helped them.

**Challenge**

This week, find someone in your community who needs help. Then help them without telling anyone about it. You might give a financial gift anonymously. Perhaps you could mow a lawn or weed a flowerbed while they’re away from home, or secretly leave a bag of groceries for someone who could really use them. Prayerfully consider who you could bless and help without getting any sort of credit from anyone else.

**Prayer Requests**

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

Jesus came to save us from our sin and to show us how to live an abundant life. His teachings challenge us to be different from the rest of the world. Instead of striving for status and wealth, Jesus teaches us that the greatest person is the one who puts others first. The Bible has so much more to say about this, which the devotions for the rest of the week will explore.

**Live 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: Humble Yourself**

Read [Luke 14:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.1), [7–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk14.7-15).

Look back over Live 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 becoming great by putting others first? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 2: Jesus Is Servant of All**

Read [John 13:1–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn13.1-17).

The disciples all walked into the room, ready for a nice evening together with Jesus. In that day, guests often could expect their feet to be washed by a servant of the host. But this was a borrowed room, and there was no servant for the customary foot washing. All the disciples would have seen the basin and towel, but none of them had made a move. Any one of them probably would have washed Jesus’ feet. But would they have been humble enough to wash each other’s feet?

In a powerful display, Jesus himself assumed the position of servant and washed their feet. They were shocked that He would stoop to that low position for them. Jesus showed all of us that to be truly great, we must be willing to put everyone else first.

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| **QUESTION**What do you imagine the disciples were thinking as they watched Jesus getting ready to wash their feet? |

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| **QUESTION**Jesus said we’ll be blessed if we follow His example. What acts of service are you challenged to do? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 3: God Is Concerned for All**

Read [Matthew 15:21–28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt15.21-28).

The disciples were annoyed by a woman who kept pestering Jesus with her problem. In their minds, she shouldn’t be allowed to bother Jesus. To their surprise, Jesus not only helped the woman, but even gave her a great compliment.

We can often be like the disciples were, thinking that we should help and serve only certain people. Even though they were being taught that the greatest person is the one who serves others, they still had ideas about who deserved it and who didn’t. Jesus lovingly showed them and us that there are no qualifications required to be served. The greatest person is the humble servant of all.

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| **QUESTION**What kind of conversation do you think the woman Jesus helped had with her family when she returned home? |

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| **QUESTION**Who in your life could benefit from an interaction like this one with Jesus? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 4: God Looks at Our Heart**

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| **QUESTION**If you had to choose a new leader, what things would you look for in that person? |

Read [1 Samuel 16:1–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Sa16.1-13).

The nation of Israel needed a new king. Saul, who had really looked like a leader ([1 Samuel 9:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Sa9.2)), was their first king. But he had disobeyed God. Now God directed the prophet Samuel to Bethlehem where the new king would be found. To Samuel’s surprise, God didn’t choose any of the older sons in David’s family.

God revealed that He doesn’t look at outward qualifications like we do. People tend to judge others by their outward appearance, but God is always looking at our heart. In God’s estimation, to be the greatest person doesn’t mean being the best looking, or having the most money or power. To God, a great person has a heart full of compassion and concern for others.

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| **QUESTION**What are your thoughts about knowing God is more interested in your heart than in your outward appearance? Does your life reflect that? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 5: Jesus Is the Greatest of All**

Read [Philippians 2:1–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php2.1-18).

Throughout the session and devotions, we’ve seen that many people are looking for status, wealth, or appearance to determine who is important. People in the Bible were not that much different from what people are today. They wanted to take the best seats for themselves. They had ideas of who did and didn’t deserve attention. They expected others to serve them, not the other way around.

We’re still the same. But Jesus came to save us from our sin and selfishness, and to show us His plan to restore the world. His willingness to leave everything and to come here to die a criminal’s death on a cross shows us what true greatness means. Because of Jesus’ willingness to give everything for others, God gave Him the name above all other names. He is the true King and the greatest of all.

We no longer have to wonder how to become the greatest. It’s our turn to show the world how great Jesus is by acting like Him. To be truly different, we should be humble like Jesus. To be truly great, we can give all for others like Jesus did. We can have the same attitude as Jesus who joyfully and willingly is the servant of all.

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| **QUESTION**Which verses in this passage of Scripture challenge you most? Why? |

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| **QUESTION**How is God challenging you to be less like the world and more like Him? |