

Servant 
Leadership

Sessions 3

SERVANTHOOD
(Leadership in the Kingdom of God)

Name: _____

Contact Info: _____

Objectives

- *Identify* the dimensions of servanthood as a leadership model.
- *Examine* passages in the Bible and themes in Jesus' life that teach about serving in God's kingdom.
- *Reflect* on the state of one's heart and its disposition towards servanthood.

EXPLORE

In small groups with 4-5 members, share your insight on this question:

1. Why do you think you need to be broken?
2. How do you think brokenness prepares you and equips you for ministry?

EXAMINE

Introduction

Nowadays, hundreds of books and seminars on leadership abound. All promise and claim to make you a better and a more effective leader.

But as leaders in God's kingdom, it is important that as you learn many principles and acquire skills in leadership, you also keep subjecting all of it to the leadership model of the Lord Jesus Christ as shown in the pages of the Bible. If there is a model of leadership that Jesus clearly laid down and concretely modeled during His brief ministry on earth that would be of 'being a servant.'

"42 So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 43 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:42-45 (NLT)

Three (3) key dimensions of 'servanthood':

1. Jesus _____ the world's version of leadership.

42 So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them.

Jesus specifically pointed to the world's version of leadership as characterized by two things: **(a)** lording it over others, and **(b)** flaunting their authority to people under them. He condemned their misuse of power.

Over against how the rulers and Emperors of his day conduct themselves as 'lords' in the lives of the people, Jesus said that in His kingdom, things would be different. He who seeks to be a leader must be willing to be a servant **(Mark 10:43)**.

- During Jesus' time, the leaders of the Roman Empire kept people subdued by threatening them with the sword. But instead of such an obsession for 'controlling' people by use of force, Jesus' power was displayed by a pre-occupation with 'caring' for people and allowing them to respond to him freely. In the face of top-down leadership that is so often exercised in the kingdoms of the world, Jesus showed that in the kingdom of God power operates from the 'bottom-up.'

51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. **52** And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; **53** but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. **54** When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" **55** But Jesus turned and rebuked them, **56** and they went to another village.

Luke 9:51-56 (NIV)

- At one point in his ministry, Jesus rebuked two of his apostles for wanting to use 'power' recklessly (**Luke 9:51-56**). James and John must have had the example of Prophet Elijah in the Old Testament whereby he called down fire from heaven to persuade the skeptical Israelites to believe in Yahweh. But Jesus reminded them that should a person want to follow him, she/he would have to do so freely (**see Luke 9:57-62**). More so, the two disciples missed the point of wielding power – it is to render service and seek the welfare of others. Not to prove one's self or serve one's personal interest.

- Jesus, himself, possessed power that is above all powers in this world. But as **Philippians 2:6** says, *“Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to (NLT).”* When Jesus came to earth as man, he showed that power is not something that a leader needs to flaunt. When He returned to heaven and send off His disciples to continue His mission of saving the world, He showed that power need not be kept for one’ self. Jesus promised to share to us ‘power’ from God himself through the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**).

50 Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. **51** With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. **52** "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. **53** Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? **54** But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"
Matthew 26:50-54 (NIV)

- It is but natural for well-meaning leaders to “desire strength in order to do good” as the famed author of the Lord of the Rings trilogy, JRR Tolkien, would put it. But as Abraham Lincoln observed, “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.” Melba Maggay warns us further, “no one can remain uncorrupted by the desire for power.”¹ Remember, power starts to corrupt a leader when it starts to take hold of the leader and the leader starts to hold on to it and keeps all power to himself. The healthy alternative would be to do as Jesus did and follow his design for leadership – instead of being a powerful ‘lord’ over people, be a powerful servant instead.

2. Jesus _____ true leadership as
_____ and _____.

43 *But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else.*

¹ Melba Maggay. “Transforming Society: Reflections on the Kingdom and Politics” (Oxford: Regnum, 1994) p. 61.

When Jesus told His disciples “*whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else*”, he is actually inverting the world’s standard for earning honor for one’s self (**Mark 10:44**).

- It must be noted that in the original Greek text of the Bible, the word ‘slave’ in this verse is different from the word ‘servant’ in verse 43. Verse 43 used ‘diakonos’ and means one who voluntarily renders service to other people. Verse 44, however, used ‘doulos’ which refers to a certain class in society that has forfeited its rights and freedom and fell into slavery. One refers to an activity; the other refers to an identity.
- A person becomes a ‘slave’ in 3 ways: being captured in a war, being born a slave by a slave mother, or by being sold as a slave either by himself to satisfy one’s debt or by another person. Under the Roman Law, should a free person choose to be a slave, he cannot reclaim his freedom.²

² Ibid. p. 553.

- With this backdrop in mind, Jesus is teaching a radical principle of earning honor as a leader. Back then and even up until today, people often work their way up the ladder to get higher positions. Due to stiff competition, they strive to do everything just to inch their way to top management, even if, unfortunately, they will have to step on others. But Jesus challenges His disciples to choose to be a 'slave' (doulos) of everyone. This means that those who want to go up must come down. Those who want to be on top means going all the way down and choosing to be the 'slave' of everyone.

- 'Servant-hood,' then, when understood in the sense of being a 'slave,' is not a stepping-stone for leadership. It is the consequence and essence of choosing to be a leader. Unlike the Greek philosopher Plato who once said, "He who is not a good servant will not be a good leader," Jesus is saying that a good leader is a servant and will remain to be a servant serving people.

- Len Sweet in his book “I am a Follower” highlighted how “we have been told our entire lives that we should be leaders, that we need more leaders, leaders, leaders. But the truth is that the greatest way to create a movement is to be a follower and to show to others how to follow. Following is the most underrated form of leadership.”³ Jesus told his disciples the same thing: to be a ‘slave’ means to be a ‘follower’ not just of those whom you like following but of everyone else. Sweet adds, “Leadership has led us to the place where everybody is trying to get everybody else to do something, and no one ends up doing anything.”⁴ But Jesus would have none of this.

³ Leonard Sweet. “I am a Follower: the Way, Truth, and Life of Following Jesus” (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2012) p. 14.

⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

- Jesus Christ is actually pointing leaders to tread the difficult path of humility. During his time, the Greeks praise 'meekness' only in the sense of being gentle and lenient but not in the sense of being humble. Aristocrats in the Roman Empire disdained humility as a virtue except, of course, for the lowly in society (e.g. slaves). More so, ancient Greeks considered 'meekness' a prime virtue only of women.⁵ Men, on the other hand, are expected to exude honor by displaying remarkable strength and pride.

In **Luke 14:11**, Jesus said, "***For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.***" For him, honor is not something that you should claim and wave in the face of people. Instead, it is something that you allow people bestow on you (see Luke 14: 7-10). But lest we mistake humility for being weak, C.S. Lewis has this to say, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." It is not weakness per se, but simply strength under control and self-centeredness held at bay and rejected for good.

⁵ The IVP Bible Background Commentary of the New Testament (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993).

Daniel 4:1-37 (NIV)

1 King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly!

2 It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous.

5 I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me.

6 So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me.

7 When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me.

8 Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

9 *I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me.*

10 *These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous.*

11 *The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth.*

12 *Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.*

13 *"In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven.*

14 *He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches.*

15 *But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field. "Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth.*

16 *Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.*

17 *"The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men."*

18 *"This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."*

19 *Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you." Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!"*

20 *The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth,*

21 *with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air--*

22 *you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.*

23 *"You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.'*

24 *"This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king:*

25 *You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.*

26 *The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.*

27 *Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."*

28 *All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar.*

29 *Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon,*

30 *he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"*

31 *The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you.*

32 *You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes."*

33 *Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.*

34 *At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who*

lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

35 *All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"*

36 *At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before.*

37 *Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.*

3. Jesus _____ as the standard of servant-leadership.

45 *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

1 *It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.*

2 *The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.*

3 *Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;*

4 *so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.*

5 *After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

John 13:1-5 (NIV)

This task was reserved for the lowest level of slave in the house . . .

He washed the feet of even Peter and Judas . . .

What can we learn from Jesus here?

- † v.1 – Time on earth is too short to waste on being preoccupied with position. Let us do what we can to serve others and bless them.

- † v.3 – Jesus was absolutely secure about who He was and where He was going, and therefore He served others. Is this not the same for us?

In **Mark 10:45**, the word 'ransom' refers to the payment in behalf of a slave or captive in order to secure release or freedom. Used with the preposition "anti" (for in English) it expresses the concept of substitution. While this verse is often used in teaching the doctrine of salvation, the original context of it is Jesus' rationale for a leader that is willing to sacrifice so other won't have to.⁶

⁶ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck. "The Bible Knowledge Commentary" (USA: Victor Books, 1983) p. 155.

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John 13:1-5 (NIV)

15 *You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.*

16 *May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.*

17 *On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me.*

18 *May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.*

2 Timothy 1:15-18 (NIV)

What can we learn from Onesiphorus (“one who adds joy”)?

- 1.** Again it begins with a contrast – everyone else deserted Paul (due to fear, shame of association, cost too high to pay, etc) when he was arrested and thrown into prison.
- 2.** Onesiphorus refreshed Paul – how do you think he did that? Did he do it just once? What do you think Onesiphorus had to do in order to minister to Paul (inconvenience, risk, give up things he could have done for himself).
- 3.** Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul’s chains – what do you think that means?
- 4.** How does Paul describe Onesiphorus’ search for him in Rome?
- 5.** Paul prayed for the Lord’s mercy twice on Onesiphorus and his household. Why so? What was the last statement he made about him?

EXPRESS

Do the following activity in your discussion group:

15 minutes

1. For each aspect of servant leadership that was discussed in this session, think of one example in CCF or in your Dgroup/D12 that you see this demonstrated.

Then think of one change that you as Dgroup/D12 leaders will make so that you can reflect that particular aspect of servant leadership better. You may have many ideas, but just choose one that is applicable to most of you in the group.

Write down your insights on a Manila paper using the format below and display the Manila paper on your table. Include your names on the Manila paper. These will be collected by GLC after your class.

Servant Leaders Handle "Power" Differently

One example:

One change:

Servant Leaders See Honor in Humility

One example:

One change:

Servant Leaders Considers Sacrifice a Privilege

One example:

One change:

2. Go around the room and find out what other groups have come up with. Take note of 1 or 2 application points that you will personally make in your own life. Write these down on the EXPERIENCE portion below:

EXPERIENCE

This will be your homework. Do it on your own time but within the next 2 weeks.

My Application Points

(Include your own group's answer to the "One Change" portion)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



NOTES