

## Serving

I'm going to admit something to you today. This is hard for me to do, but it is so true, and I think that you guys need to hear it. I am a very selfish person. Do you know that song by Toby Keith? I wanna talk about me. Wanna talk about I, Wanna talk about number one, Oh my me my, What I think, what I like, what I know, what I want, what I see. I like talking about you you you, usually, but occasionally, I wanna talk about me. I try to be nice to people and think about others, but my first thoughts are usually about myself. I love Christmas and my birthday because of the gifts that I might get from other people. I love having my own things and doing things my own way. It killed me to have the crappy cell phone that I had because I wanted a really nice one because I felt like I deserved one. I really could go on and on about how selfish I really am.

I get convicted quite often about how selfish I really am. Usually every time I pick up the Bible and read it, I get convicted about how selfish I am. There are some verses in particular that really convict me about how selfish I am.

There were these two guys who were really tight with Jesus. He had 12 guys that hung around with him a lot called his disciples, but there were 3 guys who were in his inner circle. They were really tight with Jesus and he shared the most with these three guys. Two of these guys—who happened to be brothers—got it into their heads that they were really something special. 'Who else is so close to Jesus as we are?' they thought to themselves. "We should be rewarded for how tight with Jesus we are." So they told their mother one day how special they were, and she was really impressed by her sons. She was so impressed, that she wanted to make sure that he sons would always be so tight with Jesus. So she took her sons and went to Jesus one day and asked Jesus a favor. She said "Jesus?" And he said, "Yes, ma'am." She said, "Jesus. I have a favor to ask of you. My sons are really tight with you, and they are really good boys. I know that a lot of people are followers of you and that you're gonna need some help handling all these people. I was wondering if you could officially make them second in command in your kingdom, right behind you. Could you do that for me?" The two boys were really excited and couldn't wait for Jesus to say yes to this favor. Why wouldn't he? They were all real tight. They could tell that he liked them the best, so there was no way that he could say no to this. However, the answer that Jesus gave wasn't exactly what they were looking for.

Jesus said no. "Sorry bros. That's not my call. The people who are going to be 2<sup>nd</sup> in command behind me have already been decided by God the Father. It's up to him, not me, and I don't know how he's going to put in that position. But I do know one thing. You guys obviously want to be great. You want people to look up to you and think that you're pretty cool. The thing is, if you want to be great, you have to be a servant. If you want to be first, you have to be last. That is the only way that you will truly be great."

I don't know about you guys, but I really identify with those two brothers. I really want to be great. I want people to look at me and think about how cool I am or how good I am or how smart I am. I want people to think about me and be impressed by me.

Typically, our first thought is that in order for people to think that I am great, I have to impress them. I have to do things that will just blow them away and then they will see how great I am. I have to go down double black diamond slopes or go off the highest jumps. I have to be the first one down the mountain. I have to lift the most weights. I have to get the best

grades. I have to be the funniest. I have to be the best. I have to be the cutest, the best looking. I have to have the designer clothes. I've got to have the coolest cell phone. I've got to hang around with this particular crowd. That is how people are going to see how great I am.

God sees all of that, and he is not impressed. He's not impressed with your max on the bench or the kids you hang around with. What he is impressed with is people who are willing to give all of those things up for the benefit of other people. God is really impressed with us when we are willing not to care about those things—willing not to care about ourselves—and willing to care so much about others that we are willing to serve them.

God doesn't want us to be looking out for ourselves. He doesn't want us to be looking out for number 1. He wants us to be looking out for others. And he tells us that is the way to truly be great. It's so ironic, isn't it? The way to be really great is to make yourself less than everyone else. And you do that by serving others.

Jesus came as a servant, serving other people. This is what Paul wrote about what Jesus did: In all of your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind that Christ Jesus had: who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing, by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I have a feeling that y'all are not too different than I am. We can all admit that we are pretty selfish people. I know you guys. So here's the deal, if you want to be great like I do, here's what we can do. I have a bunch of opportunities for you guys to serve that I want to tell you about.