
Love That Serves (From Self-Centered to Servant- Centered)

Love In Action

Pastor Wil Nichols

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Victorious Praise Fellowship Church of God in Christ

2116 Page Rd. Durham NC 27703

WEBSITE: www.VictoriousPraise.org

EMAIL: PastorWil@VictoriousPraise.org, Info@VictoriousPraise.org

PHONE: (919) 957-7500

Sermon: Love In Action: Love That Serves (From Self-Centered to Servant-Centered)

Series Text

James 2:14–17 (KJV)¹⁴ What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Sermon Text

John 13:1–5 (KJV)¹ Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. ² And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him; ³ Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; ⁴ He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. ⁵ After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

John 13:12–17 (KJV)¹² So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, **Know ye what I have done to you?** ¹³ **Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.** ¹⁴ **If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.** ¹⁵ **For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.** ¹⁶ **Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.** ¹⁷ **If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**

Introduction: Love In Action (From Self-Centered to Servant-Centered)

Throughout this year, we have discovered how God's love transforms our hearts, renews our minds, changes our relationships, and empowers us to overcome fear, shame, rejection, failure, and separation.

But now it's time to move from experiencing God's love to expressing God's love!

"We are not just called to receive God's love; we are called to reveal God's love. Because when love becomes action, lives are changed, families are restored, churches are strengthened, and communities are transformed!"

In this new series, Love In Action, we will discover how love serves, gives, forgives, restores, and builds unity between us.

James 2:17 declares, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Genuine love is not just something we receive or believe; it is something we demonstrate!

One of the greatest obstacles to genuine love is our tendency to put ourselves first. But Jesus teaches us a different way of living.

In John 13, Jesus is approaching His crucifixion. He knows Judas will betray Him, Peter will deny Him, and His disciples will abandon Him. Yet, instead of focusing on His own suffering, He chooses to serve others.

John 13:1 declares, "...having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

Jesus demonstrates His love by taking a towel and washing His disciples' feet—a task normally reserved for the lowest servant.

The One who deserved to be served became the One who served!

Jesus teaches us that the greatness of our love is not measured by how many people serve us, but by how willing we are to serve others.

Central Truth: Love becomes visible when we move beyond ourselves and humbly meet the needs of others.

Today, I want to share three principles from John 13 that will help us move from self-centered to servant-centered.

Series and Sermon: Love In Action: Love That Serves (From Self-Centered to Servant-Centered)

(The Perception of Service, The Posture of Service, The Practice of Service)

I. The Perception of Service (Recognizing the Needs of Others)

John 13:1 (KJV) — "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

Before love can serve the needs of others, love must first recognize the needs of others.

Jesus knew that betrayal, suffering, and death awaited Him. Yet, instead of focusing on His own problems, He remained attentive to the needs of His disciples.

Too often, we become so consumed with our own circumstances that we overlook the needs of others.

Philippians 2:4 declares, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

We cannot serve needs that we refuse to see!

- Self-centered people see their problems; servant-centered people see the problems of others.

- Self-centered people ask, "What do I need?" Servant-centered people ask, "Who needs me?"
- Self-centered people wait to be noticed; servant-centered people notice those who need help.

The first step toward becoming a servant is learning to see beyond yourself!

II. The Posture of Service (Releasing the Pride Within Us)

John 13:4–5 (KJV) — "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Genuine love requires the humility to lay aside our pride and willingly serve others.

Jesus knew He was the Son of God, yet He humbled Himself to wash His disciples' feet.

He did not lose His greatness when He picked up the towel. He revealed His greatness through the towel!

Philippians 2:7 reminds us that Jesus "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."

Sometimes our greatest obstacle to serving is not our ability, but our pride.

- Pride seeks a position; humility accepts an assignment.
- Pride demands recognition; humility demonstrates compassion.
- Pride asks, "Why should I?" Love declares, "How can I?"

Jesus teaches us that the towel is just as important as the title!

III. The Practice of Service (Reproducing the Pattern of Jesus)

John 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Genuine love is not demonstrated by what we know about serving, but by what we actually do for others.

After washing His disciples' feet, Jesus commanded them to follow His example.

Notice verse 17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

The blessing is not merely in knowing what Jesus taught, but in doing what Jesus commanded!

James 1:22 declares, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

We are not called simply to admire Jesus' example, but to imitate it.

- Service must move from our intentions to our actions.
- Service must move from occasional opportunities to consistent obedience.
- Service must move from something we discuss to something we demonstrate.

The greatest evidence that we are following Jesus is that we are learning to serve like Jesus!

Conclusion: From the Table to the Towel

Jesus had every right to remain seated at the table. He was their Master, their Lord, and the Son of God!

Yet He got up, laid aside His garments, and picked up a towel and served.

It's time for us to move from the table to the towel! From self-centered to servant-centered! Because genuine love doesn't just speak—it serves!

It's Time to Stop Seeking a Position and Start Serving with a Purpose!

Mark 10:43 (KJV) — "**But whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:**"

Because greatness in God's Kingdom is not measured by how many people serve you, but by how many people you are willing to serve!

It's Time to Stop Talking About Love and Start Demonstrating Love!

1 John 3:18 (KJV) — "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Because love that never moves beyond our lips will never change the lives of those around us!

It's Time to Stop Living for Ourselves and Start Living Like Jesus!

Galatians 5:13 (KJV) — "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Because when we serve the hurting, help the helpless, and lift the fallen, we become the hands and feet of Jesus in a world that desperately needs His love!

Final Preaching Climax

So, pick up your towel! Put your love into action! And let somebody see Jesus through you!

Because love that sees will serve, love that serves will sacrifice, and love that sacrifices will change somebody's life!

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Love That Serves (From Self-Centered to Servant-Centered))

Lesson Text

- **Primary Text:**
 - **John 13:1–17**
- **Supporting Texts:**
 - **Philippians 2:3–8; Mark 10:42–45; Galatians 5:13**

Sermon Outline

- **I. The Perception of Service (Recognizing the Needs of Others)**
- **II. The Posture of Service (Releasing the Pride Within Us)**
- **III. The Practice of Service (Reproducing the Pattern of Jesus)**

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting To Know “Me”

1. As the weather changes from warm to cold, do you do anything differently to stay healthy?
2. When do you typically start your holiday shopping? Are you an early shopper or a last-minute shopper?

II. Into The Bible

1. What does Jesus’ example of washing his disciples’ feet teach us about whom we should serve, how we should serve, and what should motivate us to serve?
2. Read Galatians 5:13-15. How does serving out of obligation look and feel different from serving out of love? Is the outcome of service affected by the motive?

III. Life Application

1. What stops us from turning our good intentions into real actions when it comes to helping others?
2. How do you feel when you help someone and their actions reveal they don’t appreciate it? Do you feel like quitting?