

FOLLOWING JESUS
A Disciple's Handbook

Lesson 10:
“Following Jesus in Serving and Giving”

Serving and Giving Introduction

Read Mark 10:42-45

Near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, He found it necessary to sum up for His disciples how to steward well the resources and relationships entrusted to them. They were looking for what gain and glory they might receive personally through their connection to Him. But He wanted them to understand that whatever had been given to them was to be used as kingdom currency to serve sacrificially and give generously for the purpose of redeeming, reconciling and restoring people. Jesus' message to them was that even He, their Messiah and Master, did not come to use position, possessions or power as a means to be served or catered to, but rather as a means to minister to the needs of others. Jesus saw His life as a ransom offering to be given unreservedly to serve and save bound and broken people everywhere. The word *ransom* means the payment or price given to free one from slavery or captivity. Jesus came to give life and liberty to all, releasing them from bondage to sin and death. (Read Luke 4:18-19.) Our Lord paid the highest price and gave everything He had to serve mankind's deepest needs for God's greatest glory—He intended for His followers to do the same.

Jesus made it clear that everything we have of value is to be secured to souls and linked to lives. (Read Mark 10:17-21; Luke 22:24-30.) According to Jesus, all the resources we have been given to steward are to be used for the serving of and giving to others. (Luke 12:31-34.) We have been called to mark and measure our real riches and truest treasures—our relationships with precious people in the church and the world. Serving and giving are two sides of the same kingdom coin.

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Serving and Giving Defined

In the Scriptures, *servicing* means meeting spiritual and physical needs and making a positive difference in the lives of others. Serving has to do with anything and everything that helps and heals the human condition. To define, describe and illustrate serving in the clearest way

possible, Jesus got down on His hands and knees and washed the feet of His disciples. (□ Read John 13:12-17.) In so doing, He declared to them that the exercising of kingdom authority was not done with a scepter, but a basin and a towel. He also declared that serving was, in fact, the only real and true greatness in His kingdom. (□ Read Matthew 20:26-28.)

In the Scriptures, *giving* means presenting tithes, offerings and charitable gifts—or anything of value in one’s life and possessions—to honor God and to bless others. (□ Read Malachi 3:10-12; Matthew 6:1-4; Acts 20:32-35.) Giving is to be done with generosity of heart and hands. (□ Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.) It is to be abundantly sown in faith as one believes that a harvest of resources to be reaped and further released. Giving includes time, talent and treasure, offered generously and intentionally for righteous and redemptive purposes. (□ Read Proverbs 3:9-10; 11:24-26.)

Serving and Giving in the Life of Jesus

Jesus’ entire earthly life and ministry was a picture and a pattern of serving and giving sacrificially and generously for redemptive purposes. (□ Read Matthew 20:27-28.) In His coming to earth, He came as an act of serving and giving on the part of the Father, who gave the treasure of heaven to serve and save the inhabitants of earth. (□ Read John 3:16-17; Romans 8:31-32; 1 Corinthians 2:12.) Jesus taught that obeying the command to serve and give generously would result in the release of a return from God that would be abundant and overflowing. (□ Read Luke 6:38.)

In all of Jesus’ message and ministry concerning serving and giving, He linked the stewarding of resources with the stewarding of relationships. (□ Matthew 23:23; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:44-48.) To Jesus, everything He said and everything He did was about helping people rightly relate to God and rightly relate to one another. Serving and giving were always attached to resourcing people’s lives with all they needed, spiritually, physically and materially to become fully what God the Father and Jesus the Son intended them to be. This must be the example we follow in serving with our time, talent and treasure and the giving of our tithes, offerings and charitable gifts. In our serving and giving, as with Jesus, everything must be secured to souls and linked to lives.

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Serving and Giving in the Lives of Jesus’ Followers

Jesus' followers learned well how to live lives of serving and giving. The Lord pointed and paved the way that was theirs to follow. Jesus' disciples gave up all they possessed to serve the Master and follow Him into a process of becoming fishers of men who transformed lives and changed nations. (☐ Read Luke 5:9-11; Matthew 28:18-20.) Jesus promised them that if they gave all to serve all, they would be rewarded with abundant resources to meet their needs to continue in serving and giving to others. (☐ Read Mark 10:28-30; Luke 18:28-30.) The Apostle Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus that he had modeled for them how to steward resources and relationships in serving and giving sacrificially and joyfully. (☐ Read Acts 20:32-34.) In fact, he reminded them of the words of Jesus when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (☐ Read Acts 20:35.) The Apostle Peter instructed his readers that any spiritual gift or grace given by God was to be released in service to the people He puts in one's life. (☐ Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.) He told them they were to be faithful stewards of every good thing that had been divinely deposited into their lives. The writer of Hebrews sums up serving and giving well as sacrifices offered to a God who is well-pleased, and to others who are well-served. (☐ Read Hebrews 13:16.)

In all these examples and many more, these followers of Jesus revealed their commitment to steward resources and relationships through their serving and giving. They saw all of their time, talent and treasure as divine provision to be managed well that they might minister well. They understood that their only true success was found in souls saved and disciples made, and they used everything they had received to be everything they released unto that end.

Serving and Giving in Our Lives

As it was for Jesus' followers, so it must be for us with what we possess from God's gracious hand. Time, talent and treasure—and tithes, offerings and charitable gifts—are the resources we must steward in serving and giving. Brothers and sisters, neighbors and nations are the relationships we must steward in serving and giving. We must always see these things as interconnected to one another. As stated earlier in this lesson, we must see everything we have and everything we do as secured to souls and linked to lives. All of our *servicing* must have people's lives and eternal destinies in view. All of our *giving* must have people's lives and eternal destinies in view. For when the personal lives of precious people who God loves deeply are our focus, our serving and giving will rise to unprecedented levels of abundance and excellence.

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MEMORIZE: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.* (Mark 10:45)

Use the following lines to write out the scripture to help you commit it to memory.

KEY TRUTH: Jesus' entire earthly life and ministry was a picture and a pattern of serving and giving sacrificially and generously for redemptive purposes.

YOUR RESPONSE:

This is how you can respond in loving obedience to Jesus as you apply the truths from this lesson to your life.

- Freshly surrender your time, talent and treasure to Jesus, acknowledging that everything belongs to Him and that you are to be a faithful steward of it all.
- Make sure that with the financial resources entrusted to you, there is the setting aside of the tithes, offerings and charitable gifts to honor God as creator and provider and to bless and build up others.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you whether or not all of your serving and giving is secured to souls and linked to lives, enabling you to steward, connect and integrate resources and relationships.
- Make a list of the people Jesus has called you to serve and give your life for redemptive purposes and pray daily for them as brothers and sisters, neighbors and nations.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Lesson Review

Review each section from the lesson on the previous pages to fill in each blank below. This review will help to reinforce the truths from this lesson in your life.

1. In the Scriptures, _____ means meeting _____ and _____ needs and making a _____ in the lives of others.
2. In the Scriptures, _____ means presenting tithes, offerings and charitable gifts—or anything of _____ in one's _____ and _____ —to _____ God and to _____ others.

3. Jesus' entire earthly _____ and _____ was a _____ and a _____ of serving and giving _____ and _____ for redemptive purposes.

4. In all these examples and many more, these _____ of Jesus _____ their _____ to steward _____ and _____ through their _____ and _____.

5. As stated earlier in this lesson, we must see _____ we have and _____ we do as _____ to _____ and _____ to _____.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Using the journaling section on the pages at the end of this lesson, write in your own words your responses to the following questions.

1. What have you learned and what has impacted you personally from this lesson?

2. In reading the scripture references in this lesson, what are you sensing and seeing the Holy Spirit highlighting and revealing to you that will enable you to better follow Jesus?

3. As a disciple and follower of Jesus, what steps of loving obedience do you need to take to see what you have learned in this lesson become ongoing practices and patterns in your life?