

I AM A  
SER>ANT

A FOUR-WEEK STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP JOURNAL

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

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# LeaderTreks®

Making Disciples...Developing Leaders

*I Am a Servant*

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# Getting Started

In the early 17th century, pretty much everyone thought the earth was the center of the universe. It seemed obvious—the sun rose in the morning and set in the evening, and at night, the moon and stars seemed to spin across the sky. *Besides, educated people thought, we're pretty important, so it makes sense that everything else in the universe revolves around us.*

But Galileo Galilei had a different idea. After doing some complicated mathematical calculations, Galileo realized that the earth actually revolves around the sun. The earth wasn't the center of the universe at all! It just looked that way from our perspective. But when he tried to tell people about his discovery, the authorities weren't happy. They refused to believe the earth wasn't the center of the universe, so they locked Galileo under house arrest, where he eventually died.

Seems pretty crazy, right? How could people be so confused about something so obvious? The truth is, we're in a similar situation when it comes to service.

Most people think service is all about them. Even when they do things to help other people, it's really to help themselves. They pick up trash on the beach to get their picture in the paper. They serve in a soup kitchen to boost their college resume. They go on mission trips to brag about it on social media. It's as if the needs, the injustices, and the hurting people only exist to revolve around the real center of the universe: us.

This book was written to change that perspective. Like Galileo finding out that the earth actually revolves around the sun, you'll discover that service is actually centered on something much bigger than us. It revolves around Christ!



So prepare to shift your entire perspective on service. Are you willing to admit that you aren't the center of the universe? Are you ready to stop saying, "I serve when it's convenient," and start saying, "I am a servant, now and always"?

# Let's Get Started.



## HOW IT WORKS

*This book includes four weeks of journal pages to challenge the way you understand service. Each week takes you through seven days of questions to get you thinking, bible studies to shift your perspective, and challenges to stretch you out of your comfort zone. Then, on the seventh day of the week, you'll get a break to recharge for the next section. It'll help you get into a rhythm of learning, growing, and putting that knowledge into action.*

*Throughout this journal, you'll also find the **Marks of a Disciple**. These are things that Christ-followers are committed to and have in common, especially when it comes to serving others.*

*Remember, you'll get out of this book what you put into it. The challenges you'll encounter won't always be easy—they're designed to stretch you! Take a risk and do your best to engage each day with energy and passion. When we make ourselves available to God, he'll transform us and use us in ways that will blow our minds!*





**Week One**

WHAT IS A  
SERVANT?



# DAY ONE

## INTRO

If you earned your medical degree, worked for years as an intern and a resident, and started working at a hospital, you wouldn't think of yourself as someone who, treats patients from time to time. You're a doctor! Even when you're on vacation, if you see someone collapse in the street or get sick on a plane, you have an obligation to help out. Just because you aren't in the office doesn't mean you aren't still in doctor-mode.

Service is the same. We go on mission trips and service projects hoping to do some good, but the minute we get home, we feel like we're off the clock. But people's needs don't just stop after a week (or day, or month!) of service. That's why true service, the kind that Jesus showed us, requires us to change our thinking. It means we don't think of service as a once-in-a-while kind of thing. Instead, we start seeing ourselves as servants—always on the lookout for those who need our help.

# Backwards

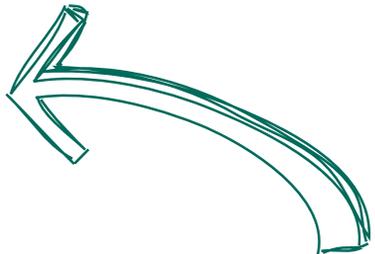
Our culture values service. Pretty much everyone believes that good service should be rewarded and bad service should be punished. The size of a tip depends on the quality of service. We feel like we deserve to be served—not just in restaurants, but everywhere. Imagine how much of your day would be different without people serving you. You’d have to face tests completely unprepared, you’d have to crawl through mounds of trash and step over vomit in the halls, and you’d probably go hungry when lunch rolled around.

Just think about how frustrating it is when the Internet goes out and no one can fix it until the next day. When people aren’t serving us, we feel like our world has been thrown off kilter. By assuming that we deserve to be waited on, we have developed a distorted understanding of what service is.

Jesus was born over 2,000 years ago, but his culture wasn’t that different from our world. Just like us, many people felt like they deserved to be served. In Matthew 20:28 Jesus says, *“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Jesus came to set the record straight. He knew that people had the whole concept of service backwards. And that’s the same problem we have today.

**This week we will approach the idea of service from God’s perspective to discover the many ways we have it backwards.**



# Backwards

When was the last time someone served you at a restaurant? At school? At home? Somewhere else? Make a list of 20.



Think about all of the jobs you could go out and get right now. How many of those positions involve serving someone else?

What are some of the ways Jesus served others? How has Jesus served you?

Name a few things our society has backwards about serving and being served.

# DAY TWO

## FOUNDATIONS



It is easy to get confused about service when we see it as something we do instead of something we are. Our lives are changed when we enter a relationship with Christ. Are you willing to let Jesus transform you from the inside out so that works of service flow out of your new identity?

In the Old Testament, we see many countries and people who worshiped idols. They made statues out of stone and wood and believed those idols would give them riches, status, and health. By worshipping these objects, they often ended up serving themselves. After all, it's not like the stone statues were telling them what to do!

When we follow Christ, we take on a new identity. We become servants. But unlike the idol worshippers, we are called to serve other people, not ourselves. That doesn't happen all at once. Sometimes we continue serving objects (and, in turn, ourselves). Think about the amount of time you devote to things like TV shows, video games, social media, popularity, or sports. Some of those are good things, but if we spend too much time "worshipping" them, they can distract us from the new life Jesus wants us to live.

We were made to serve. If we don't serve God and the people he loves, then we will serve other things. In order to understand true service, we must first be transformed into servants by following Jesus.

Take a look at **2 Corinthians 5:16–21** using the **5P Bible study method**. Here, Paul explains how Jesus transforms us into new creations, and then calls us to live out that transformation.

## PURPOSE

Why do you think the author wrote this? Why is it important enough to be in the Bible? In a sentence or two, write what you think the overall theme or topic is.

## PRIMARY VERSE

Which verse seems to contain the most important thought in the passage? Which one stands out most to you? Write out the verse completely and the corresponding reference.

## PROMISES

Make a list of any promises you find. Sometimes you need to infer promises from a passage. For example, John 3:16 does not come right out and promise you heaven. But it implies a promise: “If you believe, you will have eternal life.”

## PROBLEMS

If you find anything you don’t understand—even if it’s just a word—write it down as a question. Then ask someone for the answer or look it up yourself. One way to know if you have any problems is to ask yourself, “Is there anything in this passage that I could not explain to a friend?”

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Think about what the passage means to you. What action should you take? What do you need to change or work on so that what you have read is real in your life? Be specific—your application should tell who, what, and when.

# DAY THREE

## SERVE LIKE CHRIST

When we love God with everything in us, we follow his commands. We begin to love the things and the people he loves. We see the immense value of those God created in his image—and that includes everyone.

As you probably know, loving others can be difficult. Before we see God's image in people, we see their flaws, quirks, and differences. Have you ever met someone at school with opposite views as you? You probably have an unwritten list of people you avoid at school or block on social media because they drive you nuts.

Yet that's exactly who Jesus came into the world to love. People bothered Jesus constantly, and he got exasperated with them from time to time (Matt. 17:17). The people he came to save rejected him, denied him, and hung him on a cross. But even after all of that, he died to save them from their sins. We tend to see others as annoying or lowly and ourselves as charitable when we reach out to help them. But the truth is, we've all rejected Jesus—yet he still loves us and died to serve us.

What would happen if you stepped out in obedience to God and served that person you don't like? What if you chose to treat them well, open the door for them, encourage them, or invite them to your house? Maybe by serving them the way Christ served others (and you), you will begin to see others the way Christ sees them.

## TAKE THIS CHALLENGE:

*Do one of the following to stretch yourself this week. Serve people you wouldn't normally serve. Serve in places you wouldn't normally go. Then write about that experience in the space provided.*



Go out of your way to compliment or encourage someone on social media whom you wouldn't normally connect with.



Call someone you don't regularly talk to from your youth group and ask how you can pray for them.



Go through your closet and give away your favorite outfit to someone who needs it more than you.



Pick a teacher you aren't close to. Ask what their favorite beverage is, then buy it for them.

# DAY FOUR

## SERVANTS NEVER RETIRE

The comforting thing about only serving when we feel like it is that we know there's a finish line. If things get difficult and we just want to quit, we can tell ourselves, *Don't worry; you only have to serve for three more days!* And if things get really tough, we find a way out for ourselves—an eject button to push when we're tired of serving.

But living with a servant identity is different. All-the-time servants don't look for a way out when things get tough. They don't count down the hours until they "don't have to serve anymore." Since their servant lifestyle never ends, they learn to appreciate service in a way "part-time" servants never will. They work until the job is done, because service is about helping other people as much as possible, not about making ourselves feel good. And it connects them to Jesus in a unique way because he is our primary example—a servant who never stopped serving, even when it led to his death.

Check out this quote from pastor Rick Warren. Then answer the following questions to dig deeper into what he's talking about.

“FAITHFUL SERVANTS NEVER RETIRE. THEY SERVE FAITHFULLY AS LONG AS THEY'RE ALIVE. YOU CAN RETIRE FROM YOUR CAREER, BUT YOU WILL NEVER RETIRE FROM SERVING GOD.”

—Rick Warren, “Servants Finish Their Tasks”

Do you ever get tired of serving others?

Describe a time when you were helping someone out but just wanted to give up and go home.

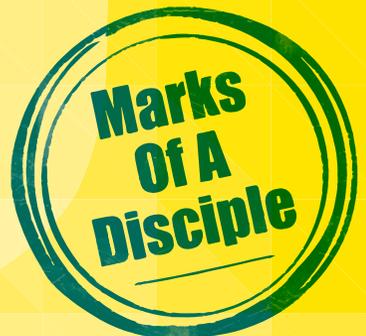
Why do you think pastor Rick Warren says, “Faithful servants never retire”?

What strategies might help you stick with a service project you really want to quit?

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**Disciples of Christ NEVER  
STOP serving. (Romans 12:11)**

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# DAY FIVE

## SACRIFICIAL SERVICE

*Serving others usually requires some form of sacrifice. When we do something for someone else, we give up our time, money, or comfort. Becoming a servant means putting others' needs above our own desires.*

*The ultimate example of serving is when Jesus died for our sins. It was the most valuable thing anyone has ever done for us, but it required a huge sacrifice. Jesus gave up his immediate desire for safety and security because he loved us and knew what we needed more than we did.*

*Today you'll read about Jesus washing his disciples' feet in John 13. Why do you think he did that? And why did he think it was so important, that he would spend part of his last few hours with them, washing their feet? Weren't there other, more important things to do with time running out? He was giving them an example to follow because he knew he would be leaving them soon. It was an act of sacrificial service—something a servant would normally do. Jesus served his followers because he loved them, but also because he wanted them to become more like him. When we serve one another based on his example, we'll start to look more and more like him.*

**Jesus set the example for how to serve God and others. Use the OPA method to study John 13:1-9. Discover what serving others looked like to him.**

## OBSERVATION

Compile all the facts found in these passages. Make 20–30 observations about what you read.



## PRINCIPLES

Draw a few principles from the observations you made. What is God trying to teach you in this passage?

## APPLICATION

How will you apply these principles to your life? Be specific—a good application will tell who, what, and when.

# DAY SIX

## BE A MIRROR

*Imagine that you began to live out Jesus' mission to serve others. You prayed for an opportunity to serve others, and when that opportunity came up, you took it. You started cleaning up for others at lunch every day without being asked. You didn't care if anyone noticed. You gave up five to ten minutes of time hanging out with friends each day to serve your classmates and teachers. No one ever asked or mentioned anything to you. You simply served in a small way, expecting nothing in return.*

*Then at the end of your senior year, a student signed your yearbook and shared the impact that your small act of service had on them. They wrote that they noticed you picking up after others each day and they admired you for it. They shared that they could sense God's love and faithfulness through your faithful work.*

*Then another student wrote something similar. Then another. Eventually your entire yearbook was filled with the appreciation of other students and teachers. You discovered that many students noticed what you'd done and were drawn to God through the small example you set.*

*Would that actually happen if you did this act of service? Probably not. Yet wouldn't it be worth it if just one person saw Jesus in your actions? You have the potential to make a tremendous impact on those around you. God calls each of us to be a mirror that reflects him to the rest of the world. One part of that is through regular, humble service. How can you reflect Jesus and influence the people in your life?*

**Start by taking the following challenge:**

# An Open Hand

Live the next two days with an “open hand.” Whenever someone asks you for something, give it to them immediately. When someone asks you to do something, just do it, no questions asked (obviously, only if it’s in the bounds of safety and morality). As you live these days open handed, think about the things you’d normally keep for yourself. Take note of the things you would usually say no to automatically. Once the two days are over, answer these questions:

**Were you surprised by the number of times you gave away or did something you wouldn’t have if you weren’t living out the “open hand” challenge? Why or why not?**

**What were some of the things you had to give away? What were some of the things you had to do?**

**How did you feel after the two days were up? Was it difficult? Would you choose to keep living this way for a week?**

# DAY SEVEN

## REST

Just because you're an all-the-time servant doesn't mean you should never take a break. When God created the world, he ended his work by resting on the seventh day. Do you think the almighty God of the universe actually needed a nap? Of course not! He was setting an example for us.

There's a difference between taking a short break to recharge, and looking for excuses to stop serving entirely. So go ahead and take today off! Use this break to recharge your batteries and refresh your mind. Then come back tomorrow, ready to dig into service again!

***\*\*If you've finished the "Open Hand" challenge from yesterday, spend some time answering the questions that followed it.***



**“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.”  
-Genesis 2:2**

# deep

DISCIPLESHIP

A ONE-YEAR, COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR GROWING DISCIPLES



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