

5 SPIRITUALLY SELF-FOCUSED

John 13:1-17

Introduction

How would Jesus teach His disciples about being too self-focused? How would He get them to move beyond their “Me” worldview? We rarely recognize this self-focus in ourselves. It is much easier to see it in someone else’s life. In fact, it is usually glaringly evident to us in the world around us. You really are not ready to change if you don’t recognize that you have something to change. What would it take in your life to recognize that you were living a self-focused life?

That teachable moment for the disciples came just before the Passover Feast. No servant was moving to provide the traditional foot washing for those gathered at the table. Without fanfare, Jesus got up from the table, poured water into a basin, and began to wash and dry His disciples’ feet. In that humbling moment, the disciples saw their own “Me” lifestyle.

In this simple act of humble service, Jesus both highlighted their “Me” life and demonstrated how He fulfilled all of their human needs, freeing them to live an others-centered life. Their three primary needs took the form of unanswered questions about how valuable they were in this world (their worth), how their needs would be met (their security) and whether their life would ultimately count for something (their significance). These same needs are at the heart of the self-focus that captures all of us.

I. He Loves You - His Love Gives Us Our True Worth (Our Value)

A. An Unconditional Love

Knowing that we are loved (valued) unconditionally is the heart of knowing our true worth. John 3:16 might be paraphrased: God so valued the world, that he spent the life of His only Son to redeem us. It was a love, not based on our performance but on His view of our unexplainable worth. A child’s favorite, raggedy teddy bear becomes the object of the family’s frantic search if becomes lost. Its value is set by a child’s love. In our human attempt to feel valuable, we compare ourselves with others. The labels we place on ourselves and others are an attempt to assign or claim value, both theirs and ours. The One who made us determines our true value. His selfless, unconditional sacrifice shows how he views our true worth and the worth of the others He calls us to serve.

B. A Personal Love

Jesus moved from disciple to disciple in loving service. In our world of mass communications, the inefficiency of a one to one moment with each disciple makes this experience even more remarkable. Jesus insisted on loving each one, even when they protested. He loved even the one who would betray Him, Judas, and the one who would deny Him three times, Peter.

He knows us and loves us. No label can give us a truer value.

II. He Serves You - He Meets All of Our Needs (Our Security)

A. Our Real Need

Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet. When Jesus helped him know that unless Peter submitted to the process, he could not have any part with Jesus, Peter relented. Then he asked Jesus to wash his hands and head as well. Jesus had to point out that Peter only needed his feet washed.

Are we really the right ones to determine what will meet our need? Jesus knew what the real need was and met it. What would give you greater security?

B. Our Every Need

If He will wash my feet, what else could I need that He wouldn't supply? When a mother changes her baby's diaper, is there anything else she wouldn't do for that child? Humble service, by its very nature, expresses unlimited willingness to meet the real needs. We might say, "If God will do this, then He most certainly would do that!" What could give you greater security?

III. He Calls You - To Join Him in Serving (Our Significance)

A. An Example

Jesus always modeled his call to us. His call is always to come and join Him in the ministry He has for us. We don't have to make it up. We don't have to wonder if it will "work." He invites us to follow His model. Watch Him to see how it is to be done. He invites us into sacred ministry. Even the lowly job of washing feet becomes significant because Jesus did it first. So, it isn't the fame or the honor that comes with the job that makes us significant. It is the call of God to join Him that makes the lowliest task significant.

B. A Blessing

His promise to the disciples was that they would be blessed if they did what Jesus modeled for them. We usually pray, "Lord, make me a blessing." But that isn't what Jesus said. Or we might pray, "Lord, bless me." But that wasn't the promise, either. He said, "You will be blessed as you serve like I did." The blessing He promised isn't a reward for service. That would again be about "Me." The blessing is the service itself. Finding my significance as I humbly serve others is an indescribable blessing. Knowing that I am doing what I have been called by God to do brings fulfillment that no public recognition or earthly fame can match.

Conclusion

Can you imagine how your world would change if you did not have to prove to anyone (especially yourself) that you are valuable?

Can you imagine how available you would be if you knew that God would meet all of your real needs?

Can you imagine how purposeful your life would be if you were sold out to following His example in servanthood?

All of these realities are available to you, anchored by the truth of God's Word and received by faith. Suddenly, it is not all about you. Your self-focus has been transformed by the satisfaction of your value, security and significance in Christ.

You are freed to open your eyes to the needs of those around you. You are emboldened to believe that God can meet their need as well. You are thrilled to get to co-labor with the Jesus as he "washes feet."