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### **We Serve God By Serving Others**

by Jon Walker

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13 NIV)

Many people have the misconception that being “called” by God is something only missionaries, pastors, nuns, and other church leaders experience. But the Bible says *everyone* is called to serve God by serving others.

We are not saved *by* serving, but we are saved *for* serving. The Apostle Paul gives three insights related to this:

**First, the basis for serving others is salvation.** Paul says, “You were called to be free.” You cannot serve God until you’ve been set free by Jesus. It’s the prerequisite for serving.

Until you experience the transforming power of God’s grace in your life, you’re too enslaved by your own hurts, habits, and hang-ups to think much about others.

Without the freedom of forgiveness, you’ll end up serving for the wrong reasons: trying to earn the approval of others, trying to run away from your pain, trying to remedy your guilt, trying to impress God. Service motivated by these illegitimate reasons is bound to leave you burned out and bitter in the end.

**Second, the barrier to serving others is selfishness.** Paul warns, “Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature.” The No. 1 reason we don’t have the time or energy to serve others is that we’re preoccupied with our own agendas, dreams, and pleasures.

Only a small minority of people use their lives to serve others, but Jesus said, “If you insist on saving your life, you will lose it. Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.” (Mark 8:35 LB)

**Third, the motive for serving is love.** Paul says, “Serve one another in love.” This is an important key to building community: 1 Corinthians 13:3 records, “No matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love.” (MSG)

God is far more interested in *why* you serve others than in *how well* you serve them.

He's always looking at your heart, serving willingly and eagerly out of love for Jesus and gratitude for all he's done for you.

You are most like Jesus when you're serving others. After washing his disciples' feet, Jesus said, "I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you." (John 13:14–15 NLT)

### **What now?**

- **How can I help?** – Consider your response to this Scripture verse: "Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, 'How can I help?'" (Romans 15:2 MSG)

- **Who will you serve this week?** – Ask God to bring to mind someone you should serve this week, and ask him what you should do for that person. Then do it!

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