



FINDING YOUR PURPOSE

WEEK FOUR

SET APART TO SERVE

SIX DAILY DEVOTIONS

We find purpose as we are set apart for service.



MONDAY

Set Apart to Serve

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE • JOHN 13:1-17

John 13 begins with an astonishing contrast. Jesus knows the Father has given Him authority. He knows where He came from and where He is going. Then the One with all authority gets up from the table, wraps a towel around His waist, and kneels in front of His disciples.

His security does not make Him too important to serve. It frees Him to serve. Jesus does not protect His image or wait for someone else to handle the lowly task. He notices a real need, lowers Himself, and meets it.

That gives us a different picture of purpose. Purpose is not simply finding a role where our abilities shine. It is becoming increasingly available to Jesus.

Last week we asked what burden God may be placing on our hearts. This week asks the next question: if God has shown you a burden, are you willing to serve? A burden that never reaches our hands can remain only an idea.

The exact act of footwashing belongs to Jesus' culture, but the pattern is permanent: notice the need, lower yourself, and serve as Jesus served. Sometimes that means being interrupted. Sometimes it means doing work that receives no applause. Sometimes it means choosing another person's good over our convenience.

We find purpose as we are set apart for service. Today, do not try to solve your whole calling. Simply ask Jesus to make you available for the person and need directly in front of you.

REFLECT

1. When you picture Jesus kneeling to wash feet, what challenges your assumptions about what a purposeful life looks like?

2. Where might being fully available to Jesus require humility or inconvenience from you?

AVAILABLE TO JESUS

One place I sense Jesus asking me to be more available:

One small need I can stop walking past:

TAKE ONE STEP

Notice one small need today that you would normally walk past. Meet it quietly. Do not seek recognition; simply practice the way of Jesus.

PRAYER

Jesus, teach me to follow You downward into loving service. Free me from needing recognition and make my life available to You. Help me notice the need, lower myself, and love well. Amen.



TUESDAY

Washed Before We Serve

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE • JOHN 13:6-10 • SEE ALSO HEBREWS 9:11-14

Peter is uncomfortable when Jesus kneels in front of him. "You will never ever wash my feet," he protests. Peter wants to follow Jesus, but in this moment he struggles to receive from Jesus. Jesus answers with a deeper truth: "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

John 13 is more than a lesson in good manners or volunteerism. Jesus is moving toward the cross. The One washing dusty feet will soon give His life to accomplish the cleansing we cannot accomplish for ourselves.

That order matters. Before we offer our service, we receive His grace. Before Jesus sends us, He saves us. Before our lives become an offering, we belong to Him.

It is possible to turn service into another way of proving ourselves. We can work hard, help people, stay busy at church, and quietly hope our effort will make us worthy. But grace refuses that bargain. Jesus does for us what we cannot earn.

This has been the rhythm of the entire series: who before do, grace before gifting, a new heart before action - and now cleansing before service. We do not serve so Jesus will receive us. We serve because He already has.

Today is less about what you can do for God and more about letting yourself be loved by Him. Receive again the mercy of Jesus. Let gratitude, not anxiety, become the soil from which your service grows.

REFLECT

1. Where are you tempted to prove your worth to God through what you do for Him or for other people?

2. What changes when you remember that Jesus serves, cleanses, and receives you before asking you to serve others?

RECEIVE BEFORE YOU DO

Something I am tempted to prove through performance:

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One gift of grace from Jesus I want to receive with gratitude today:

.....

TAKE ONE STEP

Spend several quiet minutes receiving rather than doing. Thank Jesus specifically for His grace, forgiveness, presence, and the welcome you did not earn.

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for meeting me with grace before asking anything from me. Cleanse what I cannot cleanse and free me from trying to prove my worth. Let my service grow from gratitude and love. Amen.



WEDNESDAY

Set Apart for Sacred Use

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE • LEVITICUS 8:22-30 • SEE ALSO HEBREWS 9:11-14

Leviticus 8 can feel strange to modern readers. Aaron and the priests are being ordained for service, and the ceremony includes sacrifices, blood, oil, and acts of consecration. The details belong to Israel's priestly system, but the central idea is easier to understand: these people are being set apart for sacred use.

They belong particularly to God and are being made available for His purposes. Hebrews later points beyond that sacrificial system to Jesus, whose sacrifice is better and final. We do not repeat Leviticus 8 in order to become holy. Jesus has accomplished what those sacrifices pointed toward.

So what does holiness mean for us? It is not spiritual superiority, flawless performance, or becoming strangely disconnected from ordinary life.

Holiness means belonging to God. Set apart. Devoted to Him. Available for His purposes. Increasingly becoming like Jesus.

That makes holiness wonderfully practical. Your calendar can belong to God. Your home can be available to Him. Your work, money, abilities, relationships, influence, body, retirement, and ordinary routines can all become places where love is offered in Jesus' name.

You do not need to leave ordinary life to live a sacred life. The ordinary parts of your life become sacred when they are placed in God's hands. The question is not only, "What ministry should I join?" It is also, "What has God already entrusted to me that I can place fully at His disposal?"

REFLECT

1. Which ordinary part of your life are you most tempted to think of as "mine" rather than something entrusted to you by God?

2. How could that ordinary resource, relationship, skill, or routine become a place of loving service?

SET APART FOR SACRED USE

Something God has entrusted to me that I want to place more fully in His hands:

One ordinary part of my life that could become a place of sacred service:

TAKE ONE STEP

Choose one ordinary possession, resource, ability, or block of time and tell God: "This belongs to You. Show me how to use it for Your purposes."

PRAYER

God, all that I have is ultimately Yours. Set apart my ordinary life for Your purposes. Teach me to see my time, resources, abilities, and relationships as gifts I can offer back to You in love. Amen.



THURSDAY

Is Anything Off Limits?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE • JOHN 13:13-17

Jesus tells His disciples, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right." The title Lord reaches farther than agreement with a set of beliefs. Lordship means Jesus has the rightful authority to lead the whole life we have entrusted to Him.

Most of us can surrender in broad language. "Jesus, my life is Yours" sounds beautiful. The harder question is whether there is a particular corner of life where our answer quietly changes to, "Everything but this."

The issue may be money, comfort, reputation, sexuality, career, plans, habits, control, relationships, or something no one else knows about. Surrender is not pretending these things are easy to release.

It is honestly naming what we fear we might lose and choosing to trust the character of Jesus more than our grip on that thing.

Holiness is not God taking good things away just to make life smaller. It is the freedom of belonging wholly to the One who loves us. Entire surrender is not spiritual theater. It is the quiet, sometimes costly prayer: "There is no area of my life that is off limits to You."

Today, do not rush past the place that makes you uncomfortable. That may be the very place where Jesus is inviting deeper trust.

REFLECT

1. Is there an area of your life where you are more comfortable calling Jesus Savior than allowing Him to be Lord?

2. What are you afraid you might lose if you fully surrender that area to Him?

NOTHING OFF LIMITS

An area of my life I have difficulty fully surrendering to Jesus:

What I am afraid I might lose if I surrender it:

What trusting Jesus with this area could look like in practice:

MY PRAYER OF SURRENDER:**TAKE ONE STEP**

Do one wise, concrete thing that expresses the surrender you wrote about - confess, ask for help, change a boundary, begin accountability, give, or have a needed conversation.

PRAYER

Jesus, I surrender my life to be set apart for sacred service. All of my life is Yours. Give me courage to trust You with what I have held back, and form in me a heart fully devoted to You. Amen.



FRIDAY

Take Up the Towel

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE • JOHN 13:12-17

After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus returns to the table and asks whether they understand what He has done. Then He makes the application unmistakable: "I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you."

Yesterday's prayer was, "My life is Yours." Today asks what Jesus may want to do with that surrendered life. The answer will often look less impressive than we expect.

Footwashing required humility. It required proximity. Jesus had to interrupt the meal, leave His place, kneel, and handle a need nobody wanted. Service still works that way. Love moves close enough to learn what another person actually needs and humble enough to help without making ourselves the hero.

This is where last week's burden becomes concrete. A burden eventually needs a face, and love eventually needs an action. The opportunity may be at home, work, school, church, or in your neighborhood.

You may cook a meal, give a ride, listen without fixing, offer your professional skill, help with a task, babysit, repair something, give quietly, or take the assignment nobody else wants. The act itself may be ordinary. What makes it sacred is a surrendered person offering it in the way of Jesus.

Do not wait for the perfect opportunity to live on purpose. Take up the towel that is already within reach.

REFLECT

1. Who is one person close enough to you that you can learn what they actually need rather than assuming?

2. What humble or inconvenient act of service would look most like taking up the towel for them?

TAKE UP THE TOWEL

One person Jesus has placed in front of me:

A real need I notice - or need to ask about:

One humble, practical way I can serve:

When I will do it:

What I learned after listening, asking, or serving:

TAKE ONE STEP

If possible, do the act of service today. Do not merely make the plan. Take up the towel, move toward the person, and love in a practical way.

PRAYER

Jesus, give me Your humility and attentiveness. Make me willing to be interrupted, inconvenienced, and unseen. Help me serve real people in practical ways with the love I have first received from You. Amen.



SATURDAY

Set Apart and Sent

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE • MATTHEW 28:18-20

This week began with Jesus kneeling with a towel. We remembered that He washes us before we serve, considered what it means to be set apart for God, surrendered what we have been holding back, and practiced serving someone in front of us.

But being set apart does not mean being withdrawn from the world. We are set apart for God, and people who belong fully to Jesus become available to be sent by Jesus.

Matthew 28 records Jesus sending His disciples to make disciples. That calling is larger than any one job, personality, or ministry role. It is the shared mission of people who belong to Him.

Notice also the promise that surrounds the mission: "I am with you always." The series comes full circle. Week One began with the conviction that before Jesus calls us to do something, He calls us to be with Him. Now, as the series moves toward its final week, the Jesus who calls us near is the Jesus who sends us out - and He goes with us.

You do not need to force a spiritual conversation today. Simply begin with one person. Who in your life may need the hope of Jesus? Who could you pray for consistently? Who might someday be helped by hearing what Jesus has done in you?

A surrendered life is not only set apart. It is ready to be sent.

REFLECT

1. Who is one person already in your life who may need the hope, grace, or invitation of Jesus?

2. What would it look like to pray for that person with genuine love rather than treating them like a project?

ONE NAME

One person in my life who may need the hope of Jesus:

What I already know about where they are spiritually:

How I can begin praying for them today:

TAKE ONE STEP

Write down one name. Pray for that person today and bring the name with you to worship tomorrow. Do not force anything; simply begin with prayer.

PRAYER

Jesus, my life belongs to You. Send me where You want me to go. Help me see the people You have already placed around me and make me ready to help someone take a step toward You. Amen.