

Rethinking Church | Finding Your Place To Serve | GUIDE - Galatians 5:13

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God created each of us with a unique set of talents or skills, and as we asked Jesus into our lives, we were also given at least one spiritual gift. We were given these gifts in the anticipation that we would use them to build up the Church.

It doesn't take a degree to change a life. Many of us believe that we are not qualified to serve in church. However, it doesn't take a Bible scholar to teach kids in kids' church. You don't have to have barista experience to make coffee for Sunday services. You don't even need a degree in theology to lead a small group.

Consider what it means to serve. Serving isn't just for the Pastor, or the Missionary, or the church leaders. In fact, the Bible says everyone is called to serve God. Serving isn't about how much I can do, what I do, or how I do it.

Serving isn't what saves me; there isn't enough that I can do to earn God's glory. Serving isn't about us at all. It's about our relationship with God and leading others to Him.

The Basis For Serving Is The Cross. (Mark 10:43-45)

Galatians 5:13 (NLT) For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

We have been set free from sin. The first thing that Paul says in this verse is, "You were called to be free." What does this mean for us? What am I free from? What Paul is talking about is freedom from sin. You see, we have a sin problem - our sin separates us from a Holy God:

Romans 3:23 (NLT) For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Sin is us choosing to go our way vs. going God's way. It is saying that my way is better than God's way. And because of that sin, the Bible says that we will die:

Romans 6:23 (NLT) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now if we were to stop there, it would be really bad news, right? But there is great news! Jesus defeated death. He had victory over sin and death so that we could be set free from our sin and could be reconciled to Him. The Bible says all we have to do is turn from going our own way, and trust in God's way. It's that simple!

So what does this have to do with serving? *Everything!*

You cannot serve God until you've been set free from sin by Jesus. The truth is, Salvation is really the prerequisite for serving. Until you experience the transforming power of God's grace in your life, you're too enslaved by yourself to truly help anyone else. You're too caught up in your own hurts, habits, and hang-ups to think much about serving others. Salvation through Jesus is the foundation for serving others.

Mark 10:45 (NLT) For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

The Barrier To Serving Is Selfishness. (Galatians 5:13)

Church isn't about you or me. Many people come to church just looking to receive, and not looking to serve others. They attend "Me Church" - I come in, find my seat, listen to some songs, hear an uplifting message and then off to lunch.

Pauls says: "Don't Be Selfish".

Galatians 5:13 (NLT) For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

Paul warns us to not be selfish, "Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature." What he is saying here is don't get caught up in yourselves. Just because you have been set free from your old life, that doesn't give you the right to do whatever you want. Don't use your new-found freedom (salvation) in Christ to be selfish.

A big reason we don't have the time or energy to serve others is that we're preoccupied with our own agendas, dreams, and pleasures. When we are selfish, we don't want to serve. We don't have time to meet needs other than our own. Paul is saying look, you are free from that now. *You are free to get into the game.*

The Motive For Serving Is Love. (1 Peter 4:8-9)

Galatians 5:13 (NLT) For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

The opposite of selfishness - is loving God and others. God actually calls us beyond ourselves to love Him first with everything we have. He gives us new life and purpose and wants us to leave our selfish ways and desires behind. He commands us to love others as ourselves. How do we love others? We serve them!

But God is far more interested in why you serve others - It's not about what you can do for someone, it's about why you do it for them.

1 Peter 4:8 (NLT) Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

The motive that we have to serve is love, just as Jesus loved us. Service without love is useless. And the truth is, we are most like Jesus when we are serving others.

We need to RETHINK Church! It is time to change our perspective on what it means to live to honor God. When you were saved, you made a commitment to *follow* Jesus, not just learn about Him (or worse, merely just acknowledge Him). We desperately need and want in the game!

Talk About It

- *What is your initial reaction to this topic? What jumped out at you?*
- *What is your definition of serving? Explain what lead you to this definition.*
- *Do you think it is important to serve others? Why or why not?*
- *What is the hardest part of serving others for you? Discuss.*
- *Has anybody made an impact on your life by serving you? Explain.*
- *Read **Mark 10:43-45**. The Bible talks about living to honor God, how does serving fit into this?*
- *How does Jesus's sacrifice on the cross model serving? Discuss.*
- *Are you ready to start serving in response to God's sacrifice for your life? If not, what is holding you back?*
- *Read **1 Timothy 4:10**. What does Paul mean by spiritual gifts? Do you know your spiritual gift? If so, what is it?*
- *What are some practical ways that you can serve others?*
- *Are you serving in your local church? If so, in what areas? How is it going for you?*