newark united pentecostal church

Lesson Title: Why Should We Serve?

Key Concept: Service is key to our identity as disciples of Jesus and to living out the greatest commandment. But why should we serve? We serve because our service is a key part of God's plan of reconciliation.

Scriptures:

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am El-Shaddai—'God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life."
(Genesis 17:1 *New Living Translation*)

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
(Acts 9:6 *King James Version*)

Context Scriptures: John 13:35; Matthew 22:36–40; Genesis 22:18; Exodus 19:3–6; Acts 9:36–39; John 21:14–17; Luke 22:27; John 12:26; Acts 6:1–7; Romans 12:11; 1 Corinthians 12:5

Lesson Thoughts:

Service is the hallmark of Christianity (see John 13:35). In fact, long before the birth of the church God called our forefather Abraham to "serve me faithfully and live a blameless life" (Genesis 17:1). When God chooses us and we choose him, he calls us to serve. We serve to demonstrate our love of God. Service allows us to fulfill God's age-old plan to reconcile the world unto himself.

Jesus was asked "which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" (Matthew 22:36). His response is the answer to our key question—why should we serve? The answer is love: both of God and of our neighbor. God's plan considers everyone. Abraham's faithfulness to God's call has affected all generations: "And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be

blessed—all because you have obeyed me" (Genesis 22:18). Later, God told the children of Israel, "And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). The whole nation was to serve God, which included taking care of others! Likewise, as heirs and descendants by adoption, our faithful service will bring blessing to the nations. We serve to exemplify the goodness of God so that others might enter his presence and choose him.

The Scriptures are full of examples of God working powerfully through service. Saul, who became the Apostle Paul, began his service to the early church with the question: "what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6 KJV). Paul gave himself fully to strengthening the church. Tabitha served by being kind and making clothing for those in need (Acts 9:36–39). Her service so impacted her community that when she died the people sent for Peter, and in response to his prayer God raised her up! Surely the service of Saul, who formerly persecuted believers, and Tabitha, who was raised from the dead, drew attention to the God they served!

Like Abraham, every disciple is called to serve God faithfully. Matthew 5:16 says "In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." Service leads to a life that is not self-centered and carnal but instead consciously acts in concert with God's plan to reconcile humanity to himself.

? Discussion Questions:

1) How is living a blameless life connected with serving God faithfully?

2) In John 21:14–17, Jesus asked Peter "Do you love me?" When Peter answered yes, Jesus responded, "then feed my lambs!" What does love have to do with Jesus' instructions?

3) How does serving affect the servant and how does it affect the recipient? What does this say about discipleship and evangelism?

4) Who are some groups or individuals that we should serve?

Next Lesson: How Should We Serve?

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Notes and Reflections

1) Search the Bible for the word "serve." Note how many references are found in Scripture and take the time to "slow read" each passage.

2) From your study, what did you learn about serving?

3) If you count yourself a follower of Christ and you are not serving, pray about your reason(s) and consider them in light of the Word. Respond accordingly.

Notes and Reflections, cont.