

At a recent NCAA Final Four event one of the coaches was asked prior to the game, "Why has your team done so well? What is it about this team that has made it come as far as it has, because everybody wants to know about your success?" The coach said, "We have a motto on our team, and the motto is this: 'Good people do for themselves; great people do for others.' " (Repeat)

That sounds a lot like what Jesus taught his disciples about greatness.

Mark 9:33-37

"Good people do for themselves; great people do for others."

Let's look at four points about how great people do for others.

1. Great people put others first.

If you want to be great, you must be last. That means putting other people first.

How does that fit into your schedule? Probably not very well! We have enough to do ourselves without thinking about anyone else. And yet we still pack our schedules with our own things that when the opportunity does come- we blow off the opportunity or cram one more thing on the calendar and spread ourselves so thin that nobody gets the best out of us.

I've taken to being very deliberate about holding the door open for someone when I have the opportunity to do so. First, it makes people smile to see that someone cares. But for me it makes me slow down and put other people first. Often when I'm driving I get it into my head that I need to be first. So this is a great way to make me think of others first.

Great people in the Kingdom of God always seek out ways to put others first. They're willing to sacrifice their time and surrender their schedules to the opportunities God presents to serve.

Let's get real practical here. Would you be willing to sacrifice one thing from your schedule or from your child's schedule in order to go serve somewhere?

Great people put others first.

2. Great people serve all.

Jesus mentioned to the disciples that not only do you put others first but you become servant of all. [*underline that word all*] That means that we do not discriminate. Our serving must be without the prejudices that so easily sneak into our determining who we serve.

That means that we don't get to pick and choose who we serve. We don't get to serve only those people who can help you in return or the person whose need fits your schedule. And sometimes it requires you to step outside of your comfort zone, to go where you may not care to go and do what you may not want to do.

I'll make one observation about the list of places that we are serving next weekend. One location is lacking in the number of people to serve and the reason being, I think, is due to the location. Now tell me, where do you think Jesus would serve? Who would be the people that he would go to serve?

Great people in the Kingdom of God always serve all.

3. Great people serve with no thought of reward.

Jesus used a little child to drive this point home. Children can't offer us anything in return for the service we provide them. They can't pay us, they can't reward us in any way other than the pure joy of knowing that we have enriched their life.

Most of us, like the disciples, look at who we can serve based on the ability of the served to do something in return for us or for our standing in the world. The extent of our service is measured by the quality of the reward. And, unfortunately, we limit the joy that we can get because our focus is on ourselves.

Remember last week I mentioned the difference between service and servanthood. Richard Foster said: "There is a difference between choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant. When I choose to serve, I retain control about whom I serve and when I serve. But when I choose to be a servant, I have given up all rights and all control."

Well that principle comes into play here. Servants never think about the cost to benefit ratio; they just serve because it is who they are.

Great people serve with no thought of reward.

4. Great people depend on God to give them what they need to serve.

To be great in the kingdom of God means that I must draw upon the resources that only God can give.

How do you do it? It's nice to say that this is what great people ought to be and do, but where do the resources come from to accomplish what you're talking about? Where do you drum up that spirit of putting other people first? You know, it might cost me something to do that. What if I don't have what it costs? Where do you get the resources to serve everyone? After all, what about myself, my

family, public opinion, the impression I make on other people? I need to take care of that.

Servanthood requires us to be completely dependent upon God. Dependent for the resources necessary to serve others and dependent for the faith to trust God to provide

Remember the feeding of the 5,000? The disciples were urging Jesus to send the people away because there was no way to feed so many people. What did Jesus say to them, "You give them something to eat."?

When the disciples looked around all they found were five loaves of bread and two fish- hardly enough to provide for 5,000 men plus their families. But Jesus blessed what little they had and in the end they collected more leftovers than what they began with.

Why does God ask us to do more than what we believe we are capable of doing? Because if it something we can do without God's intervention then it is still all about us. But if God intervenes then God gets the glory and not us.

Great people depend on God to give them what they need to serve.

Now who remembers what the coach said? "Good people do for themselves; great people do for others."

When the basketball coach gave his answer notice that he didn't say bad people or self-centered people, but good people. That really nails your ego to the wall to start with because I bet that most people think they're good people. But what this coach is saying is that I want great people on my team. And Jesus is no different when it comes to wanting great people on his team.

Some of you may remember the series we did several years ago based on the Jim Collins' book, *Good to Great*. In the opening lines of his book, Jim Collins said, "Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great."

I think when it comes to serving others we settle for good. We figure that 'good' is good enough. But for Jesus, settling in with good enough misses the passion and commitment that disciples of Jesus are supposed to live with each day.

If we settle for good enough we will miss out on the opportunity to make a life changing impact on the world.

And if we settle for good enough we will miss out on the lasting impact that our servanthood will have on the next generation.

I learned servanthood from my mom. She was always giving. Giving of herself, her time and what little money she had. She always put others first, served anyone in need; as a matter of fact at 90 years old she is still serving others—working every Friday morning as she has done for 25 years at the hospital and serving in her church at the monthly shoe bank.

She passed that DNA of servanthood on to me.

If the church of Jesus Christ is going to endure; if Linglestown Life is going to endure and do more than just survive; but actually make a lasting impact; we need to stop settling for good and start launching out toward greatness.

Why have so many left the church over the years; because they didn't find the Jesus displayed in the Gospels. They saw instead a bunch of people who settled for good not the great that Jesus inspired us to become.

The next generation is looking at the church today for people who will aspire to and reach for greatness. We need to be certain that we instill the DNA of servanthood in the next generation. And we can bring people into a relationship with Jesus by engaging in servanthood.

As a matter of fact I got an article in my inbox this week that stated it this way...
<http://www.churchleadership.com/Updates/110406Update.asp>

“we do know that for increasing numbers of persons with a passion to serve and some disillusionment with the church, mission may be their most likely entry point – if churches are actually serving others and including new people in such service. [Did any of you think about inviting someone from outside the church to join you in our Day of Service?] We also know that, in this time when "belonging leads to believing," it is often only after a person comes to trust a community and to feel accepted by that community that there is much interest in what the community believes.” Lovett Weems

Let's make good a thing of the past when it comes to serving others! If we are going to embody our mission to Love God and Love Others then we need to be a body of great people who do for others.

“Good people do for themselves; great people do for others.”

How will you put others first this week? (sacrifice time, surrender schedule)
How will you serve all without any discrimination? (how will identify your blind spots and prejudices)
How will you serve without thought of reward?
How will you depend upon God to resource your ability to serve? (Ask yourself, 'Am I doing what I can do or what only God can do?')

In His Steps Pastor George S. Reynolds
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“Good people do for _____; great people do for _____.”

1. Great people _____.
2. Great people _____.
3. Great people serve with no thought of _____.
4. Great people depend on _____ to give them what they need to serve him.

“Good is the _____ of great.” Jim Collins

Where did you learn servanthood?

Service as an Entry Point...

“we do know that for increasing numbers of persons with a passion to serve and some disillusionment with the church, mission [service] may be their most likely entry point – if churches are actually serving others and including new people in such service. We also know that, in this time when "belonging leads to believing," it is often only after a person comes to trust a community and to feel accepted by that community that there is much interest in what the community believes.” Lovett Weems

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