

Nothing Happens Overnight  
**Serving**  
**Hebrews 6:9-12**  
**February 23, 2020**

For the past several weeks we've been looking at the tools we can use to advance our spiritual fitness. We've looked at these spiritual elements and compared them to the physical fitness equipment we find at the gym. We've talked about prayer, devotions, LifeGroups and today we're going to dive into the fourth thing I believe we cannot live without in our spiritual lives. If I were going to tell you that there are four things you cannot live without in your physical lives you would probably do pretty good at coming up with four, right. For example; air, water, food, and sleep. Now, if you're one of the women in the room you would most likely substitute sleep for chocolate but, hey...everyone's gotta live.

And just like there's four things in our physical life there are four things in our spiritual lives too. Prayer, devotional time, time with others, and this last one, serving. I believe that as Christ followers we hear something from Jesus over and over again, that we are to be giving out what we've received. We're supposed to be spreading what we've learned, we're supposed to be helping others, lifting others up out of desperate situations, rescuing those who are floundering, and stepping in when we see others in trouble or torment. **We are the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today.**

In general terms, the words "doing good" are used by those who have written what God wants us to hear and know. The Bible is filled with stories of people who did the wrong thing and equally with those who served others...often times at the cost of something they valued. God says over and over again that we are to be those who do good, who do the right things, those who help the needy, visit the sick, feed the hungry, and shelter the homeless just to name a few.

There are two reasons that God has called His followers to do this kind of work. The first is that **we are to be the presence of God on earth.** We are to be those whom God uses to reach those whom God loves and God's heart is hurting for. We are to be the body of Jesus on earth, doing the things Jesus would be doing if He were here. Serving is about making sure that the presence of Jesus is still felt and known in the world we live in.

Secondly, when we serve, **we receive more than we give.** I have never been in a situation where I was serving the cause of Jesus Christ that I didn't gain more than I gave, been blessed more than I was a blessing, and had my life lifted more than I was able to lift others. The principle at work is this; when God finds someone who is striving to be faithful by giving who they are and what they have to others – God pours even more into that person. Why, because God has found someone He can trust with His blessings, someone who will give from what they've been given. So, the more we give away the more God gives us. I've seen this principle at work many times. I've seen it with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders during our summer Vacation Bible School week where they travel out to local places and offer the help they are able to give. I've seen it in the lives of our middle school and high school students when they travel to unfamiliar places and help out someone who has a need that is greater than they can meet. I've seen it in our adults who serve locally at our Food Pantry and Clothing Connection on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday's of each month, and in our H.I.M. outreach that is a group dedicated handymen who offer small home repairs to people who have a need they cannot meet without someone else on their side.

I've seen people blessed when they serve on a hospitality team, as a LifeGroup leader, as a part of our hospital visitation team or homebound communion team, as a volunteer in the office, and as one of our living nativity cast at the Christkindle Markt in Linglestown this past Christmas. Serving doesn't mean that you have to go to a country in the developing world...you can serve right here, right now.

Look at verses 10 and 11 of Hebrews 6: ***10 For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. 11 Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true.***

There is something God wants each of us to do as a way to show how much we love what God has done for us. **The serving we do is our way to show God how much we love Him.** And notice that it is a lifelong pursuit...not a once and done event. Serving is a lifestyle that begins at home and permeates every aspect of our lives. It begins with emptying the dishwasher when it's not your turn because if we can't serve at home, we shouldn't be serving anywhere else. It might be making coffee in the morning or helping the kids with their homework.

So many people think serving has to come at a cost and in many ways, I have to agree. Serving will cost you. It will cost a Saturday morning, a road trip, a cup of coffee, an uncomfortable moment, a hot afternoon on a roof with a hammer or a nail gun, a day cooking or baking for the fundraiser, and a lot more. Serving may cost you but, the principle at work is

that God replenishes what we give in hopes that we will continue to give it away. So, it may cost you but, our God has an endless supply of blessings that He would love to have distributed in the world and God is looking for people like us who are willing to serve so that God can pour into you knowing that you will be like a cup overflowing. And what I've learned from those who have seen this principle at work is this – the more you serve the more you'll want to serve. It's addictive. The feeling of allowing ourselves to be emptied only to experience the refilling of our souls by God is mind blowing and something that – once you've experienced it – you'll want more. **When you experience the principle of serve and replenish, serve and replenish you will want to do it more.** You may get home totally exhausted but, you'd do it all over again.

That means that each of us has to step up. We have to be willing to move out of our comfort zones and into places where God wants His presence and power to be felt in very real and tangible ways. There are places and situations in the world today, right now, that need us to step in and offer solid, real, life changing solutions.

Again, it starts at home. If you serve all day and then come home and complain and expect everything to be done when you raise your voice, right. Our spiritual work out begins first thing in the morning as we serve each other at home. Now...hear me. This is not about one person serving everyone. This is about everyone trying to out serve each other. Can you imagine what a morning at your home would look like if everyone was trying to out serve each other. Beds would get made, dishes would get cleaned up, coffee would get made and the dog would be fed, all without asking for it to be done. This spiritual workout starts at home.

Then it goes out into our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our friendships, our momentary contacts with others. I was at a restaurant with my family not long ago and the server came to the table with our food. My wife and I were at opposite sides of the table and we had ordered the same dish. When she put down my food in front of me, I picked it up and gave it to Julie. The server was stopped cold when she realized what I had done, and she said that was a big help because otherwise she would have had to walk around the table to deliver that dish to Julie. Now, you can say that it is that server's job to do that and I'm on the receiving end but, we are to be like this: <sup>12</sup> ***Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and endurance.***

It's time for us to start spiritually working out through serving. It is our work to do that we don't become spiritually dull and indifferent. This kind of workout comes with some responsibility on our part. We have to choose to serve each day. We can turn elements of our work into our service. We can turn our relationships into opportunities to serve. But, we need to do it on purpose.

What would the world look like if we began to be the people God wants us to be?