

Glorifying Christ Through Serving Others

Among the many things people may be “born with,” a heart for service is normally not on the top of the list. Probably as early as the fall, man has been innately selfish, chiefly concerned with himself. Unfortunately, I am no exception. As I have grown older, discovering more about the world and myself, I have learned that being a servant and living unselfishly is a day-to-day choice I must make. Choosing to serve is neither easy nor natural for me. But it is necessary in obeying the two greatest commandments, to love the Lord with everything I am and to love others as Christ loves me. Choosing to serve requires sacrificing my personal rights and following His example of perfect servanthood. Learning to serve others, with my love for Jesus Christ as my motivation, has truly changed my life. When God uses me to serve other people, I am changed as more of my flesh falls away and is replaced by Christ.

Having been homeschooled all of my life, I spend a lot of time with my family. Through my involvement with them, I have learned that the home can be one of the hardest places to serve. No one sees the way I treat my little sister when she spills her milk and I have to clean it up. There is no one to watch the way I react when my mother asks me to unload the dishwasher for the third time in one day. There is no applause when I willingly help my family with a good attitude. But God has used my family to show me how selfish and self-centered I can be. He has transformed my attitude towards serving in the mundane circumstances of life. Many times each day, I am given the choice to either serve my flesh and selfish desires, or to deny myself, and follow after Christ and His ultimate example of serving the least among us. Through my family,

God has taught me what true servanthood is, sacrificially giving up my rights to address the needs of others, no matter how significant.

My involvement in American Heritage Girls, an organization similar to Girl Scouts but with a distinctively Christian focus, has also given me many opportunities to serve the community, through a variety of activities including working at a local food pantry, visiting the elderly in nursing homes, and packaging Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes. Last fall, I was awarded AHG's highest honor, the Stars and Stripes Award. Among the many different requirements, I had to plan and implement a service project that would benefit my community. I chose to hold a Ladies Tea to benefit 1st Choice Women's Health Center, a faith-based crisis pregnancy center that serves women who are experiencing an unexpected and often unwanted pregnancy. A representative from the center came and spoke to about fifty women, describing the ministry and impact of 1st Choice and ways the center needs support. Baby supplies were collected from the attendees and donated to the center. These items were distributed to the expecting moms through an "Earn While You Learn" program, which rewards the mothers for participation in various childcare and personal development educational programs. As I worked many hours planning this event, my appreciation and love for what 1st Choice is doing grew. Serving the center in this way not only sparked my interest in becoming more active in the pro-life movement, but it reminded me again how precious each life is.

God has also given me many opportunities to serve younger girls, which has fostered a passion for encouraging them to be godly and virtuous women. An example of this is when God called me to start a summer Bible study for younger teenage girls. I felt incredibly inadequate when more and more girls said they were interested in participating. I remember asking God to give me the words to speak to them, because without Him, I knew I would completely fail.

Through leading and serving that first group of girls, God has changed my attitude towards encouraging younger girls. I certainly do not have everything figured out, but I understand that I do not have to be perfect to minister to them. Serving in this way caused me to lean on God and turn to Him for strength and wisdom far more than I would have if I had ignored what He was calling me to do.

I have never gone on a mission's trip to another country. I am not very good at evangelizing. I have never started an orphanage or built a church for a hurting community. Sometimes it can be easy for me to feel as if what I have done – serving my family and my community – is not important or significant. If I am not doing something “big” and public for God, I must not really be making a difference in the world or eternity. This is a lie that I have had to battle. While those things are important and meaningful acts of service, I believe choosing to serve God in the mundane, unglamorous things in life, with an open and obedient heart, can be just as pleasing to the Lord. Often it seems easier to serve for a week or two in a far away place where no one knows you, rather than serving day in and day out with the people we rub up against all the time. God has given me so many different opportunities to serve right where I am, as I wait to see what He will call me to in the future. Each time I have trusted Him and chosen to put my will aside and serve others in smaller things, I have been blessed and encouraged to do more.

God has called us to love and honor one another. I believe the most practical form of obeying this command is selflessly serving others. When we serve each other, we are demonstrating the love of Christ to the world. Hebrews 6:10 says “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.” No matter how big or small, visible or hidden, mundane or exciting, God is

calling us to throw ourselves wholeheartedly to obeying His call and serving whomever the Lord has put in our path. I know that I have been placed here and have been provided with opportunities to bring Him glory. God has put me where I am “for such a time as this,” and I am excited to see the doors God is going to open for me, humbled to look back and see how He has used me so far.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11