

Serving can help you live longer. Research has shown that these kinds of activities can improve health in ways that can lengthen your lifespan—volunteers show an improved ability to manage stress and stave off disease as well as reduced rates of depression and an increased sense of life satisfaction—when they were performed on a regular basis. This might be because volunteering alleviates loneliness and enhances our social lives—factors that can significantly affect our long-term health.

Serving is contagious. One study found that people are more likely to perform feats of generosity after observing another do the same. This effect can ripple throughout the community, inspiring dozens of individuals to make a difference.

Serving others makes us happy. One team of sociologists tracked 2000 people over a five-year period and found that Americans who described themselves as “very happy” volunteered at least 5.8 hours per month.

Serving improves your health. According to one study, people who suffered from chronic pain tried working as peer volunteers. As a result, they experienced a reduction in their own symptoms. One piece of research showed that older individuals who volunteered for at least 200 hours a year decreased their risk of hypertension by a whopping 40 percent..

We are serving Christ, not merely volunteering for an organization.

- We are not volunteers serving an organization; we are sons and daughters serving Christ.

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men" Colossians 3:23

- **Volunteer:** Chooses to help; sees it as optional. Works for an organization or cause. May stop when it gets inconvenient. Acts out of kindness or interest.
- **Servant:** Sees it as a joyful responsibility. Works unto the Lord. Stays faithful even when unseen.

If we only see ourselves as volunteers, we can feel like we're doing God a favor. But when we see ourselves as servants, we realize it's an honor.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

Serving is not something you do; it's something you are.

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function," Romans 12:4

When you serve, you are not being generous. You are being yourself.

Every member has a function, not just a presence.

Waking up and stepping into your role doesn't make you a volunteer; it makes you whole.



1. Servanthood activates spiritual maturity.

Sonship must lead to servanthood, or it will lead to stench.

And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. Luke 15:12

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. Luke 15:13

Receiving the cross gives you sonship, but picking up the cross makes you a servant. You can receive the power of the cross yet resist the way of the cross. The power of the cross must lead to the way of the cross.

- The power of the cross saves you (Eph 2:8–9). The way of the cross sanctifies you (Lk 9:23).
- The power of the cross is received. The way of the cross is followed.
- The power of the cross is a gift (Rom 6:23). The way of the cross is a choice (Lk 14:27)
- The power of the cross brings forgiveness (Col 1:13–14). The way of the cross produces obedience (Jn 14:15).
- The power of the cross makes you right with God (2 Cor 5:21). The way of the cross makes you like Christ (Rom 8:29).
- The power of the cross cancels your past. The way of the cross crucifies your flesh (Gal 5:24).
- The power of the cross brings new birth (Jn 3:3). The way of the cross brings daily death (1 Cor 15:31).
- The power of the cross delivers you from judgment (Rom 8:1). The way of the cross delivers you from self (Lk 9:23)

You can spend your whole life finding yourself, improving yourself, promoting yourself, and protecting yourself, and still lose yourself.

"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! Luke 15:17

You will lose yourself by trying to find yourself. You will find yourself when you lose yourself. The prodigal son didn't just lose money; he lost himself in the pigpen of self-centered living.

Serving feels like a waste to the selfish, but it's good work to God.

"Why this waste? For this fragrance might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor." Matthew 26:8

The devil's lie: sin is where the wonder is. Serving is where you waste your life. But sin brings wreckage and wretchedness — while serving brings worship.

Your life will be filled with fragrance or with stench—depending on whether your self is broken or protected. You can't pour yourself out until you break the box of yourself. Remember: Jesus is worthy of everything you're afraid of losing.

The most dangerous form of selfishness is the one that sounds spiritual. Don't baptize your selfishness in Christian language. "I need to focus on me right now" "I'm protecting my peace" "I





deserve better" "I need to love myself first" "God wants me happy" "I don't want to burn out". Boundaries are meant to protect you from abuse; not to protect you from sacrifice.

2. Serving activates spiritual gifts.

His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." John 2:5

Grapes have what it takes to be wine but they have to be crushed. Your gift is like a grape if you don't learn to serve and crush your selfish pride, you'll not be wine but a dry raisin.

Water doesn't have what it takes to be wine. Don't worry about the fact that you don't have what it takes, be willing to do whatever He says. If you do what you can to serve Christ, God will do miracles.

"Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother." Genesis 24:53

If you water the camels, He will give you His gifts. She volunteered to water his camels. He didn't ask her to do that!

3. Serving activates eternal rewards.

"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'" Matthew 25:21

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every one according to his work." Revelations 22:12

"Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ." Colossians 3:24

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

The judgment seat of Christ does not determine our salvation; that was determined by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (1 John 2:2) and our faith in Him (John 3:16). It determines our reward. The Greek word for judgment seat is bema is a tribunal for rewards. In the large Olympic arenas, there was an elevated seat on which the judge of the contest sat. After the contests were over, the successful competitors would assemble before the bema to receive their rewards or crowns. The bema was not a judicial bench where someone was condemned; it was a reward seat.

- Salvation is a gift; rewards are heavenly treasures.
- Salvation is God's grace; rewards are our works.
- Salvation is eternal life; rewards are crowns, possessions, and rules of service.

Bible mentions 5 crowns:

- The Imperishable Crown (1 Corinthians 9:24-25) for sacrifice
- The Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19) for witnessing
- The Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8) for intimacy with God
- The Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4) for pastors/leaders
- The Crown of Life (Revelation 2:10) for being faithful in trials