



SESSION 2

CHRIST CAME WITH A MISSION

Jesus came to serve God and set us free.



WORSHIP

READING PLAN

Continue exploring the Book of Acts throughout this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses as you read.

Day 1

Acts 5:1-16

Day 2

Acts 5:17-42

Day 3

Acts 6:1-15

Day 4

Acts 7:1-36

Day 5

Acts 7:37-60

Day 6

Acts 8:1-25

Day 7

Acts 8:26-40

CHRIST CALLS US TO SERVE GOD

When we read through the Scriptures, we find a number of concepts and situations that were common in ancient times but are uncommon today. Think of kings, for example. As modern readers of the Bible, we can recognize the concept of a king on an intellectual level. However, in an era of democracy, it's difficult to really understand what it must have been like to live under the complete, all-powerful rule of a single person.

The same thing is true for the concept of servanthood. As modern readers, we can understand the definition of a *servant* as someone who serves others. However, we typically think of this service in terms of a job. Meaning, the servant serves his or her master for a certain period of time—8 or 10 hours each day, for example—and then “clocks out” to return home and enjoy some rest and relaxation.

In reality, servants in the ancient world were entirely dedicated to meeting the needs and wants of their masters at all times. In fact, it may help us understand things better if we think of the word *slave* instead of *servant*.

Read the following passages of Scripture and record what they teach about life as a servant (or slave) in the ancient world.

Genesis 16:1-6

Exodus 21:20-21

Deuteronomy 15:12-18

Ephesians 6:5-9

Why is this important? Because when we accept the call to follow Jesus as His disciples, we are accepting His call to live as servants (or slaves) of God.

As we saw in the group discussion, Jesus Himself came to earth in obedience and service to God. He emptied Himself and assumed “the form of a slave” (Phil. 2:7). As disciples of Jesus, we model Him in all things. Our goal is to become more like Him in every area of life (see 2 Cor. 3:18). Therefore, we follow Christ by joining Him as servants of God.

Sadly, too many Christians believe that serving God is a part-time occupation. When we focus on spiritual things several times throughout our day, we feel justified in pursuing our own interests and desires for the remainder of each day. Again, we often treat serving God as a 9 to 5 occupation, when in reality our identities as disciples of Jesus require a 24/7 commitment.

Jesus Himself made it clear that our service to God must be all-encompassing:

⁷ Which one of you having a slave tending sheep or plowing will say to him when he comes in from the field, “Come at once and sit down to eat”?

⁸ Instead, will he not tell him, “Prepare something for me to eat, get ready, and serve me while I eat and drink; later you can eat and drink”? ⁹ Does he thank that slave because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ In the same way, when you have done all that you were commanded, you should say, “We are good-for-nothing slaves; we’ve only done our duty.”

LUKE 17:7-10

What’s your initial reaction to these verses? Why?

Do you feel you should be rewarded whenever you obey God by doing something positive or rejecting something negative? Explain.

Jesus has called us to serve God, just as He serves and obeys the Father in all things. The wonderful news is that such service is not a burden or a shackle. Instead, only by fully embracing our identities as servants of God can we experience the fullness of life God designed us to enjoy.



CHRIST CALLS US TO SERVE OTHERS

Jesus came to earth with a mission. Though He is God, He willingly emptied Himself in order to enter our world and fulfill that mission, thus serving the Father. As disciples of Jesus, we're also called to serve God, and we're also called to do so by joining Jesus in accomplishing His mission.

Given these truths, it's logical to ask, "What *is* the mission?" What is it we're supposed to aim for or accomplish when we become disciples of Christ? Interestingly, Jesus provided some clear answers to that question when He first announced His ministry (and mission) in a public way:

¹⁶ He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. As usual, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read.

¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him, and unrolling the scroll, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is on Me,
because He has anointed Me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me
to proclaim freedom to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

²⁰ He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled."

LUKE 4:16-21

In what ways did Jesus fulfill the prophecy from Isaiah?

How do these verses help you understand your responsibilities as a disciple of Christ?

Jesus alone could fulfill the spiritual implications of Luke 4:16-21. Through His death and resurrection, He proclaimed good news to those in spiritual poverty, freedom for those held captive to sin, life to those oppressed by the law, and sight to those blind to their own need for salvation.

Still, we can join Jesus in His mission on a practical level. Specifically, we can be:

- **God's messengers.** Jesus shared the good news of the gospel with clarity and variety. He communicated in ways that were mindful of the personalities of individual hearers, relevant to their culture, and sensitive to their needs (see John 3:1-16; 4:3-26; Mark 10:21-22). Likewise, serving God faithfully requires us to be competent, creative, and confident messengers of His salvation. We are called to spread the good news.
- **God's ministers.** Throughout His ministry, Jesus took notice of those who needed help. His mission was primarily spiritual, yet He still took the time to focus on physical needs and earthly troubles. He ministered to the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed—and He has called us to do the same.
- **God's missionaries.** Just as Jesus left paradise in order to save us, we are called to go out of our comfort zones in order to make a difference in the world. This may mean going out into our neighborhoods, going out into our country, or going out across the world. The key is obedience to God's leading and a willingness to go in order to serve those in need.

In what situations do you feel most confident about sharing the gospel?

When you think about people with practical needs, who comes to mind?

Where is God calling you to go in order to serve Him and others?

Jesus met the spiritual and physical needs of those He encountered and those He sought out. As His disciples, we are called to do the same.