

Back of the Line

Lower Yourself As Jesus Did

As any retail worker knows, customers take their spot in line very seriously! They look for the quickest checkout, jockey for position, and sometimes fight like schoolchildren to defend their territory. It seems every year, we hear about the latest kerfuffle to make the news over someone cutting in line. It's silly, but haven't most of us gotten caught up fighting for our "place" at one point or another?

We're modeling our servanthood after Jesus' servanthood, as we continue our [Cross Training](#) journey. Servanthood includes seeing with new eyes, humility, sacrificial love, and honor. So how can we humbly place ourselves at the back of the line as a servant?

What You Need to Know

Once while Jesus sat at a dinner, he quietly watched guests enter and fight for the good spots at the table. He noted that if you sit in the seat of honor and someone more important comes in, the host will humiliate you by sending you to the back of the room. But suppose you place yourself at the lowest place. The host will say, *"Friend, we have a better place for you!" Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted*" (Luke 14:10-11).

Life has a way of disgracing those who elevate themselves (Prov. 11:2; 16:18; 29:23). God hates the pride that sneaks in and corrupts our hearts (Prov. 6:16-17; 16:5; Psalm 101:5). And in the end, God will turn the tables and bless the lowly (Luke 16:19-25). As Jesus often repeated, *"the last will be first, and the first last"* (Matt. 10:31; 19:30; 20:16).

A hidden bear trap lies on the path toward godliness. As God blesses us with growth and we congratulate ourselves on "how far we've come," pride can take hold and destroy all the good (cf. Luke 18:9-14). But even if you obey *perfectly*, how should you feel? *"... when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty'"* (Luke 17:7-10).

The King of kings wrapped a towel around his waist, got on his knees, and washed his disciples' dirty feet (John 13:3-5). Why? As he explained, *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you"* (John 13:14-15). In one simple act, Jesus destroyed any superiority they felt, giving his disciples marching orders to go and serve!

What You Need to Do

To borrow an old cliché, "Keep it simple, servant" (K.I.S.S.). Rather than making everything a big production, work with what you have. Jesus used a towel and a washbasin to change his disciple's lives. Don't underestimate the value of a gifted meal or a few hours visiting someone who's sick or

struggling (Matt. 25:34-40). If we imagine service as some elaborate act, we probably won't make it a regular part of each day.

Beware of defining yourself by your strength, wisdom, wealth, or position. Instead, rejoice in the goodness of the God you've come to know (Jer. 9:23-24). "*Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 1:31; cf. Gal. 6:14). Spend time each day in worship. When we magnify the Lord, we see our smallness — and yet we walk away feeling filled! It's better to worship than to get "too big for our britches" like the king of Babylon who took credit for "his" accomplishments. After God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, he rightly declared, "... *praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble*" (Dan. 4:37).

Through the Week

- **Read** — Matt. 5:2-11; 12:9-21; Luke 1:46-55; 18:9-14; James 4:6-17
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, "*What might Satan try to use to stir pride in me?*"
- **Request** — Pray, "*May I only boast in this, that I know you, the Lord of steadfast love, justice, and righteousness*" (cf. Jer. 9:23-24).
- **Respond** — Go and visit someone or drop off a meal.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, "*What small acts of service have made a difference to you?*"