

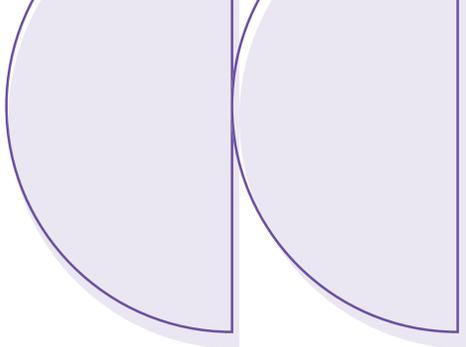
DAY 6

The greatest among you must be a servant.

Matthew 23:11 NLT

Do you have weekly chores at home? Maybe it's to clean your room, take out the trash, put away the dishes, or even do your laundry. No matter what chores you have, they probably involve serving others in your family and thinking of their needs before your own. In this week's verse, Matthew makes it clear: To be the greatest that you can be, you have to choose to put others first and meet their needs . . . first. Jesus' friends knew one big secret: We grow the most when we think of ourselves the least. And there aren't many better ways to grow in faith than to put others' needs before our own.

How can you serve someone else first today?



DAY 7

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7 NLT

Just like a tree has deep roots to keep it standing strong, we can choose to let our roots grow strong in God. To let our roots grow, we have to spend time growing our faith by having a relationship with God. And one of the best ways to do that is by reading, learning about, and even memorizing Scripture. The more we learn about God, the stronger our foundation will be to build our faith.

Today, say this verse out loud ten times in a row. Each time you say it, let the words sink in. Then, try to write it one time without looking to see how far you've gotten in committing it to memory.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

CONNECT THE DOTS / WEEK 3

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.
Galatians 6:9 NLT

When was the last time you did something for someone else even though you got nothing in return? If we're honest, it can be hard to want to serve others when we know there isn't much in it for us. Here, even Paul recognizes how easy it is to get tired of serving others or doing what is right. But he doesn't leave it there! He says that there actually is something in it for us. When we don't give up on serving others, we find a blessing that only God can give us. All we have to do is keep going and choosing to serve where we can.

Memorize this verse this week to help you remember that there is always good to come when we serve others.

DAY 2

Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have.
2 Corinthians 8:12 NLT

Serving others often requires a sacrifice of some kind. It may mean giving up part of your allowance to a friend going on a mission trip, or using your time to mow your neighbor's lawn, or helping a sibling with homework instead of watching YouTube. No matter what, serving others can cost us something. But this verse reminds us that when we serve others, we should give what we have eagerly. That just means we should find a way to be truly happy to do it! And while that isn't always easy to do on our own, it's something we can ask God to help us do as we grow in faith.

So today, do just that. Pray that God would help you be happy and willing to give what you have to serve someone else.

DAY 3

For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

2 Corinthians 9:10 NLT

Most of us would probably say that there have been moments when being generous to someone else hasn't been easy. Truth be told, it can be hard to give away our time, energy, and resources to others. The great news is that we don't have to figure this out on our own! Part of growing in faith means growing closer to God, who will help you become more generous as you do. The more time you spend growing in your faith, the more you'll become aware of needs around you and the more generous you'll become with what you have.

Reach out to a friend or someone in your small group. Talk about ways you can encourage each other to be generous or even take a step to meet a need together.

DAY 4

When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.
Romans 12:13 NLT

Have you ever noticed someone in need? Maybe a kid who didn't have lunch money, or a person who was homeless in your community, or someone in another country that you learned about at school. When we see needs around us, big or small, it can be easy to think we don't have what it takes to help. But as Paul reminds us here, we do! All we have to do is be ready and willing to serve. When we have that attitude, God will lead us to do what we can to help those who need it.

Write down a few needs you know about in the world. Then, take a few minutes to think about how you can be ready and willing to let God use you to help!

DAY 5

(Jesus) sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.
Mark 9:35 NLT

Written by Matthew, age 16 from Sanford, Florida, USA

Don't you love it when a drive-thru is fast at a restaurant AND they get your order right? Or when one of your siblings randomly does one of your chores for you? I know for me, I love when that happens! I was recently sick with a stomach bug, and while I was sick, my mother took great care of me. She was always asking if I needed something to drink or if there was anything she could do to help. During that time while I was sick, it was such a blessing to be served. The reason most of us love to be served is because, as humans, we want to be put first!

But Jesus actually says we should do the opposite. Jesus says, if we want to be first, we must be last and serve others. Just like Jesus did! Jesus calls us to serve everyone. Yes, even that

kid that gets on your nerves at school or church. Or your sibling or friend that always seems to annoy you. Serving could mean many different things. You could serve in Sunday School at your church, or pick up your friends' trash at lunch, or you could do one of your sibling's chores around the house. And as you serve, you will see your faith grow in the process, too!

Today, I want to challenge you to choose to do just one thing to be like Jesus by putting someone else first and serving them!