

MON 5-15

"Nonetheless, the LORD is waiting to be merciful to you, and will rise up to show you compassion. The LORD is a God of justice; happy are all who wait for him." [Isaiah 30:18, CEB] Our God is full of mercy, compassion, and justice. Our lives are meant to be God's expression of these qualities to the world!

PRAY: Merciful God, sign me up! I want you to use my life to show others your perfect love. Forgive me when I fall short and help me to remain open-minded and willing to grow. Amen.

NOTES: _____

TUES 5-16

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." [Rom 12:2, NLT] The custom of our culture is not necessarily to think of others ahead of ourselves, but that is God's will for us. We are called to serve others--going against the grain!

PRAY: Lord Jesus, create in me a servant's heart just like your own. Remind me, when I am tempted to focus on my wants and desires, to balance that with working for the good of others. Amen.

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WED 5-17

"Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." [Proverbs 14:31, NIV] Those in need are close to the heart of God. Professing our love for God should go hand-in-hand with lifting up and helping people in need. This is how we *show* love.

PRAY: Loving God, I want to demonstrate my love in ways that matter to you. Show me how you are calling me to serve and give me the energy and passion to follow through. Amen.

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THURS 5-18

"After calling the crowd together with his disciples, Jesus said to them, 'All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me.'" [Mark 8:34, CEB] With a prayerful heart, think of something you could say no to in order to sacrifice for the sake of someone else. Ask God for the discipline required to make it happen!

PRAY: Amazing God, may the standard Jesus set for loving others inspire me to grow each day. Show me how you are leading me to lean into the process of transformation. Amen.

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FRI 5-19

"This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples." [John 15:8, MSG] God's goodness is seen in us when we grow in maturity as believers. This is evidenced by our choices day in and day out!

PRAY: God of love, thank you for the way you nudge me out of my comfort zone so I can continue to produce good spiritual fruit. I submit to your ways today. Amen.

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SAT 5-20

"And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the LORD Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father." [Col 3:17, NLT] Giving thanks is the antidote to living selfishly. Our awareness of how much we have will help increase our contentment so we can focus on becoming a blessing rather than asking for more.

PRAY: Lord, I give you praise and thanks for the countless ways you have taken care of me. Help me move beyond my personal bubble to develop a giving heart toward the world. Amen.

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Intro Jesus called us to serve others, but how do you do that? We all want to help people but sometimes it can be hard to know where to start. Jesus paints a pretty clear picture of what it means to be a servant and each of us has a role to play in showing love to the world!

Reflect

- Does the word *servant* have a positive or negative connotation in your mind? Why?
- Matthew 25:35-40 gives us a peek at the importance that Jesus placed on serving others. "For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'" [NLT]
 - How does this scripture passage make you feel?
 - How might it change your approach or attitude toward serving and giving?
 - What would it look like in your life to see those in need through the eyes of God?
- Important marks of God's kingdom are love, justice, and compassion. If we are called to bring the kingdom of God into the here and now, how does that help us prioritize our investment of time and financial resources? What specific things can we do to foster these characteristics of God in the world around us?
- What is your belief about the role of prayer when it comes to issues such as poverty around the world? Is that enough? Do you find it easy or difficult to keep these types of issues on your mind and heart? Why?

Consider "Jesus' identification with the 'least of these' is so profound that when we reach out to them with love and enter their pain, it is Jesus himself we are loving and embracing." --Richard Stearns

Pray Lord Jesus, create in me a deep compassion for people who struggle to have their basic needs met. Help me to understand how you are calling me to make a difference. Amen.



What did I learn?

How might it apply in my life?

What is a next step I can take?
