

*If Only... Living Life With No Regrets* (print edition).

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## Session Three

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# The Power of Influence

Some people come to the end of their lives, only to realize they made life about themselves. They lived self-absorbed, self-centered, and self-consumed. Never did they invest in others or add anything of lasting value to this world.

Almost daily we hear tragic stories of powerful people who have gained status, money, and fame in an attempt to gratify their desires. Yet, their lives unravel and self-destruct. They guarded their power, time, and possessions closely, yet in the end, they find themselves all alone drowning in success. There is much more to life than attaining power, notoriety, and possessions.

God did not design us to live isolated and alone. He has called us to a life of impact where we step out of our comfort zone and help others succeed. We influence others as we pour our lives into them and help lift the burdens that hold them back.

Do not spend your life only on yourself. Learn to invest in others. This is one of life's greatest opportunities. Make a difference in others by following the example of Jesus Christ. Leave a legacy and live a life of significance.





God has created  
every man, woman,  
and child with a  
unique desire to  
want to make an  
impact in life.

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# CHECKING IN

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Investing in others is the key to living free of regret. Even though Jesus was God in the flesh, He made Himself the servant of all as an example for us to follow. We are called to a life of greatness through serving others.

According to the Scriptures, God created every man, woman, and child with a unique desire to make an impact. God created each of us to become great in this world. Yet greatness doesn't mean lording over or taking advantage of people. Greatness isn't making a name for ourselves. Nor is it climbing to the top only to crush those below. Greatness is about influence. The greatest influence is gained as you add value to others.

Jesus left an eternal legacy. We can do the same as we invest in others.  
*We were made for greatness.*

**Get started with these questions:**

- How do we add value to others?
- Give an example of someone who invested in you.
- How did God speak to you from this *If Only* journey this past week?

**Memorize this verse:**

*“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.”*

**Mark 10:43**



**Up Next**

Watch The Lesson

Use the next page for notes to write your thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember from the teaching. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the lesson, then discuss among your group. Remember to try to share the responsibilities of leading the discussion each week.

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# WATCH THE LESSON

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*...Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works...*

**Titus 3:8b**

*Remind them to...be ready for every good work...*

**Titus 3:1**

*...learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*

**Titus 3:14**

*“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. <sup>44</sup>And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>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 10:43-45**

- Sincere Christ-followers should devote themselves to doing what is good and beneficial for others.

What does it mean to be \_\_\_\_\_ ?

*But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.”*

**Mark 10:42–43**

- God has created each of us with a desire to become great—a unique ability and purpose to make a difference with our lives.
- True greatness in life isn’t to make a great name for ourselves. Greatness is about influence—and the greatest influence is achieved by adding value to others.

What is the \_\_\_\_\_ to greatness?

*“And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.”*

**Mark 10:44**

- The world tells us to get all we can get, but we can only become great by investing in others.
- We can leave a legacy behind us by helping others to thrive, excel, and surpass our achievements.

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God has given us His \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ .

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

**Genesis 1:26**

- We are made in God's likeness, His image, and His dominion.
- We have been given a dominion mandate—authority from God to take dominion over the negative aspects of this world that hold people down.
- God has authorized us to be lid lifters, creating life-giving environments where others can flourish.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you have learned from the weekend message and the small group study. Then think about practical steps you can take to live out what you've learned.

### **Read Mark 10:42–45**

*But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

- When you think of someone who has lived a selfless, generous and influential life, who comes to mind? What qualities will be remembered in this person's life and legacy?
- In Mark 10:42-45 we read that the Son of Man (Jesus) did not come to be served, but to serve. This is a very different message than today's culture that constantly asks, “What's in it for me?” culture of today. What are some ways that people can choose to serve others rather than expecting to be served?

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- Why do you think it is easier for people to flourish and be successful in life-giving environments where value is being added to them? What qualities create a life-giving, value-added environment?

**Read Titus 3:8,14**

*This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are profitable to men. ...And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*

- In today's video lesson we learned that true greatness in life isn't to make a great name for ourselves. Greatness is about influence—and the greatest influence is achieved by adding value to others. What can this principle of true greatness practically look like in our lives?
- Is there someone—a family member, a neighbor, or a coworker—that you believe God wants you to serve? What can you do for them? How will this act of kindness impact their life?
- What is your main takeaway from our group discussion today? What is God asking you to do as a result?



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# PRAYER AND PRAISE

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Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests and praise reports. Write your personal prayer requests and make notes of how you can pray for each other.

## Prayer Requests

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## Praise Reports

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## DIVING DEEPER

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Take some time between now and the next meeting to dig into God's Word.

In this week's lesson, we learned the key to greatness in God's eyes is living to serve others. Living beyond ourselves is how we leave a legacy. Study the scriptures below to learn how to impact the world around you through serving others.

*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

**1 Timothy 5:8**

*"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you...If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."*

**John 13:15,17**

*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all....*

**Galatians 6:9-10**

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

**Matthew 5:16**

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## Questions

- What do these verses teach you about the priority God places on His followers doing good works?
- Jesus took the role of a servant as an example for us to follow. How has this session influenced the way you think about serving others?

**...learn to maintain  
good works, to  
meet urgent needs,  
that they may not  
be unfruitful.**

**Titus 3:14**

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# DAILY DEVOTIONS

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You will need two items—a pen and this guide—to hear from God through these daily devotions!

## **What is God saying to you?**

Open to your reading for the day. Take your time reading both the scriptures and devotional. Write out what you are hearing from the Bible under the first question, *What is God saying to you?*

## **What does it mean to you?**

What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture and devotional? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Write this out under the second question, *What does it mean to you?*

## **What action steps do you need to take?**

Personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your life. Write how this truth applies to you today in the third question, *What action steps do you need to take?*

## **Bring it to God in prayer.**

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture or even a prayer for a great insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out in the space titled, *Bring it to God in prayer.*

## Day 1

### Scripture

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

### Ephesians 2:8–9

*What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

### James 2:14–17

### Reflect

James, a New Testament writer and leader in the Early Christian Church, tells us that faith without works is dead. What did he mean? Does a person have to do good works to earn their way into Heaven?

According to the Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 2:8–9, our salvation comes from faith, and even our faith itself is a gift of God. The answer to this seeming contradiction is found in Titus 3:8, which says, “...Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.”

Believing—the faith part—comes first, *BEFORE* good works. We receive salvation by faith in Christ alone, without any of our prior exemplary deeds or acts of goodwill. But upon becoming a Christian, doing good works should be our natural response to His love for us. Our faith in God is put into action when we do what He asks us to do. Without works, faith is just a theory. Obeying God is the key to our faith coming alive.

In a million years we couldn’t work long enough or hard enough to earn the saving grace Jesus bought for us when He died on the cross for our sins. Doing good is our response to the unconditional love God gave us—*NOT* a requirement to receive it.

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**What is God saying to you?**

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**What does it mean to you?**

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**What action steps do you need to take?**

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**Bring it to God in prayer.**

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## Day 2

### Scripture

*“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 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 should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”*

**John 13:13–16**

### Reflect

Jesus clearly and unapologetically calls every one of His followers to become servants. For the people who bear His name, kindness is a distinctive characteristic He explicitly encourages. Expressing kindness through acts of service is a principle distinguishing factor to which Jesus’ followers should aspire.

Jesus calls us to live beyond ourselves—to look beyond our concerns, titles, and reputations. A practical opportunity God may give us is perhaps letting a mother with small children go in front of you through the grocery checkout line, or helping clean up the office or classroom after everyone has gone home, or even just sharing the remote control.

In His humility, Jesus—the second person of the Trinity—said washing dirty feet was not beneath Him, and it should not be beneath us. Simple acts of kindness abound. Take time today to look for simple acts of kindness that can make a difference in someone’s life. *Your life will never be the same!*

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**What is God saying to you?**

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**What does it mean to you?**

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**What action steps do you need to take?**

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**Bring it to God in prayer.**

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## Day 3

### Scripture

*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

**1 Timothy 5:8**

*...“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*

**Acts 16:31**

### Reflect

As people grow older, the deepest regret most often expressed is the remorse of not spending enough time with their families. When death’s door is near, they wish they could go back and show their loved ones how much they cared—but often there’s not enough time to do much more than say, “I’m sorry.” It’s heartbreaking some people never realize how important their families are until it’s too late.

God designed us to care for our family. He never planned for us to do life alone. But sometimes we forget—in all our doing good—we are obliged to do the *MOST GOOD* for those closest to us. If we gain all the titles and success the world has to offer, but we do not encourage and serve our own family members, then we will find our hearts full of deep regrets.

If you really want to put the words of Jesus into action, start in your own home. The Scriptures admonish the husband to serve his wife and love her as Christ loves the Church. To the wife, it says to respect her husband and follow his leadership. In so doing it brings peace to the family. To the parents, it says to lead and encourage their children. To the children, it says to obey your parents’ instruction.

As we intentionally love and serve our families, one thing is undeniable: we become better followers of God, and so do they.

**What is God saying to you?**

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**What does it mean to you?**

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**What action steps do you need to take?**

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**Bring it to God in prayer.**

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## Day 4

### Scripture

*“For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you... If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”*

**John 13:15,17**

*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all....*

**Galatians 6:9-10**

### Reflect

God’s favor comes upon those who take up the towel of service and live beyond themselves. In John 13:17, Jesus made a blanket, across-the-board, no-exceptions promise that those who understand and follow His example in serving others receive God’s blessing.

The Apostle Paul echoed that promise in Galatians 6 saying, “let us not grow weary while doing good...” If we stay enthused in serving others, we receive God’s blessings in return. Do you believe that? Do you believe it enough to reorder the value system of your life around the principles found in these verses? Is the fulfillment and satisfaction you seek achieved by chasing after the world’s materialism and applause, or through doing good for someone else?

The blessing of achieving true significance comes through serving others with a pure heart. If you want to be blessed and fulfilled in life, act on the promises of God, and seize every opportunity you have to do good. The world awaits your service!

**What is God saying to you?**

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**What does it mean to you?**

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**What action steps do you need to take?**

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**Bring it to God in prayer.**

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## Day 5

### Scripture

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

**Matthew 5:16**

### Reflect

*“This little light of mine... I’m gonna let it shine... Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine.”*

Some of us grew up in church singing this song. But what do these words really mean? In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said “the light” that shines is the light of our good works.

Very few things reach people more than an act of kindness. One simple act of kindness can change someone’s day. A simple word of encouragement can help someone find hope to persevere through tough times. A very small group of people can help meet the needs of a struggling community. And a devoted single man or woman committed to doing good every day, like Mother Theresa, can start a movement that empowers the lives of an entire generation, thus, motivating millions of people around the world.

Serving others with the light of God’s love is powerful, but that is not where our good deeds stop. When we commit to serve others—our good works bring God glory and inspire others to give their lives to Him.

Let’s commit to help others flourish. Let’s get involved. Let’s give, and let’s go! Let’s commit to make a difference in the people we come in contact with daily. Allow the light of God’s love shine through your good works. By doing so, you testify of God’s love and lead others to Him.

**What is God saying to you?**

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**What does it mean to you?**

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**What action steps do you need to take?**

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**Bring it to God in prayer.**

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## Day 6

### Scripture

*“...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”*

**Luke 12:48b**

*Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

**1 Timothy 6:18–19**

### Reflect

The closer our relationship with God, the clearer His voice becomes. The clearer we hear His voice the more sensitive we become to people's needs and His desire for us to help them. As we grow spiritually, our Christian maturity is evidenced by our ability to hear God and act on what He's asking us to do.

God has blessed us with much. He's given us time, abilities, and resources. What we do with His blessings is determined by our willingness to walk in obedience to 1 Timothy 6:18-19. Are we selfish with His gifts, or do we share them with others? Do we stay inside and watch the game, or obey God and help our neighbor cut down a tree? When God reminds us of a friend who is sick, do we pick up a meal for the family or brush it off?

*What is our response when God asks us to invest in others?* When we share the abundant blessings God gave us, we create a legacy that outlives us. A wonderful treasure is stored in our heavenly account.

Is God speaking to you to serve someone close to you—a family member, someone in your small group, or a friend at work? How will you share God's blessings with others today?

**What is God saying to you?**

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**What does it mean to you?**

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**What action steps do you need to take?**

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**Bring it to God in prayer.**

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