

# CHAPTER 4: THE CREATURE SERVES

## SUMMARY

“As humans, we struggle deeply with receiving unconditional love...unconditional love frustrates our desire to earn and accomplish.” These words from chapter 4 capture the essence of our struggle with service. Pride, that old enemy that seems to never die, is again at the root of this problem. The gospel approach to service, as laid out in this chapter, is refreshing and challenging.

“We serve because Jesus served us. His service should melt our hearts and cause us to serve others out of sheer gratitude to Him. That’s the appropriate response to His loving service of us.”

The questions and activities below are designed to help you and your church staff move toward a greater and deeper understanding of gospel-centered service. Take time to answer the questions that best challenge you. Enjoy.

## AUDIT QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

### *Individual*

1. If I’m completely honest, I serve because \_\_\_\_\_. What do I hope to gain from serving?
  
2. Read through the section titled “Motivation for Service” beginning at the bottom of page 69 in Creature of the Word, and ask yourself, which are more likely to be reasons you serve?
  - a. Do I feel badly for those in need (guilt)?
  - b. Do I think no one else will serve, so I must (force)?
  - c. Do I want to appear spiritual or important (pride)?
  - d. Do I long to see God’s glory and kingdom come?
  - e. Does the love of Christ and desire for His glory motivate me?

3. What types of service am I drawn to? Are there types of service I don't want to do or that I feel I am above doing?
  
4. How often do I offer my service? Is it only when there's a great need or an opportunity for importance or fame?
  
5. After I have served:
  - a. Do I feel tired and frustrated (guilt/force)?
  - b. Do I feel important and needed (pride)?
  - c. Am I glad to help but overwhelmed by the need (compassion)?
  
6. When I serve, does it move me to worship?
  
7. When is the last time you served where no one but you and God knew what you were doing? Do I tend to want something in return when I serve?
  
8. How am I serving in my home? How do I serve my roommates, spouse or children?
  
9. Am I frustrated with others when they don't notice my service?
  
10. How does it make me feel when I think of the reality of Jesus washing my feet? Thankful? Guilty? Obligated to Him? How do I react to the thought of Him washing my feet?

**11. Do I struggle with wanting to earn God's love and approval?**

**12. When I am served by others, does it ever produce anger or indignation in me? If so, why is that is the case?**

**13. How would you react to Jesus wanting to wash your feet? Would you protest like Peter?**

*Staff*

**1. What motivates our people to serve?**

**2. In evaluating the level of service at our church:**

**a. Are certain people doing all the work?**

**b. Are our people too busy to serve?**

**c. Are we involving our families/church family/community in the service, or are we trying to do it all ourselves as a staff?**

**3. When new volunteers are needed in a certain ministry of the church, how do we encourage our people to step up? Do we "crank up the guilt and arm-twisting"?**

**4. How connected to the gospel and to what Christ has done for us are our requests for new volunteers?**

**5. Have we taken time to teach our church about why Christians should serve? If so, did that teaching include that our service begins at home, extends to our neighbors and to our workplaces?**

6. Are the numbers of volunteers that we have growing because people understand what Christ has done for them?
  
7. Are we constantly reminding our people how Christ served and how He continues to serve them?
  
8. As a staff, are you setting the example by serving your people well? Are you willing to wash their feet?

## **RENEWAL QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES**

### *Individual and Staff*

1. Think of times in the last few months when you have served others out of any other reason besides the gospel. How did that end up? Was it sustainable? What was the outcome in your heart and affections?
  
2. Are you more likely to serve people you know and like or are you more likely to serve people you are less acquainted with? Why do you think that is?
  
3. What 3-5 actionable steps can we plan now that will help move our church to a better understanding of why Christians should serve?
  
4. As a staff, how can we model service better to our people?

## **PRAYER**

*Father, we confess that our motivations for service are not genuine and honest. We fight the desire to be known for what we do. Sometimes, we are motivated by guilt or our desire to gain man's applause. Help us, God, to be motivated to serve completely by what Christ has done for us on the Cross. Help us to lead our church members to that understanding as well. We have much to learn in this area, dear God, and we confess that we need You to teach us. Open our minds and our hearts to serve well and to serve for the right reasons. Amen.*