

LIVING AN AUTHENTIC FAITH, PART 5

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14, NIV)

A FEW YEARS BACK, in a conversation with sport psychologist David Cook, he told me of an episode when he was playing a teaching round with a tour player. They came to a par-3 with water flanking one side of the green, and this competitor who plays the game for his living stood on the tee nearly paralyzed. He could not see himself hitting a good shot. The trouble was right where his fear was.

For you and me, possessing a little fear on the golf course is no real issue. We don’t make our living from the game, and while embarrassment avoidance is a legitimate motivator, no one has ever actually died from embarrassment (have they?!).

What can be truly scary, though, if we’re willing to admit it, is the thought of what Jesus might ask us to do. Like wash someone’s feet.

Authentically following Jesus can have much to do with your brain. There is doctrine to understand, and increasing knowledge of who God is and what he calls us to do. Even hearing “a still small voice” in times of prayer or meditating on Scripture is a matter of the head.

But this is not how faith is *lived*. Faith is meant to lead to action. “Without works,” James wrote, “faith is dead.”

Where faith comes to life is in service. In fact, in drawing on James again, we are told that “religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faithless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress...” (James 1:27).

Service isn’t appealing. Never has been, not in our culture or any other. It is inconvenient, uncomfortable, even demeaning. But Jesus advocated for it in the flow of everything else he taught: “Blessed are the merciful,” “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,” “Anyone who wants to be first must be last...” That last statement, found in Mark 9, ended like this: “...and the servant of all.”

Do you see it? Those who would demonstrate authentic faith—that is, true to what Jesus commanded—must be ready to serve in all situations and for all people. It’s what Jesus did, and he left his example that we would follow in his steps (1 Peter 2:21).

Opening questions What is the best example of service you have ever seen? How well do you do at honoring those who serve you?

READING Matthew 19:16-26; 2 Samuel 9:1-13; 1 Peter 5:1-4

Enemies of service (Matthew 19)
What does the account of the rich young man show us about how we can be pulled from authentic faith? In verse 26, what did Jesus offer as the final answer for our own weaknesses in following him?

David’s mercy, Ziba’s service (2 Samuel 9)
What do you find as examples of mercy and service in this account of David seeking someone to bless? If David is the “Christ-type” that theologians establish him to be, how does this story match up with our study today?

Servant leaders (1 Peter 5)
What part should servanthood play among the leaders of God’s people?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/8D2c09QG8R8>