

When I was a kid, in the late sixties, it was a time of unrest and revolutionary thinking in our country. I came across an entertaining book that at the time summed up how I felt and how much of our youth felt as well. It was called **“How to Be a Nonconformist.”** The book sort of poked fun at our desire to be different! Even though it was comical, the truth is that we really didn’t want the norm. We wanted something different. We were looking for a better way. The funny thing was I lived in a very loving, near perfect home. I had great parents, all of my needs were met, and we lived in a great and free country with a stable economy.

The problem was that I, nor anyone else, really knew what we wanted. “We were rebels without a cause” you might say. We wanted something to believe in. We wanted something to fight for, and we were willing to take risk, if we only knew what it was that we were fighting for!

**Those days passed. I grew up, I conformed rather than being a nonconformist. Most of us do.**

But deep down inside, the desire for something different never left me. Even after I surrendered my life to Christ Jesus, I still felt there was something more. There was still something within me that knew life could be better than what we were experiencing on the surface.

As I looked at the mediocre lifestyle that most were living, the rat race, keeping up with the Jones’s, it’s as if I could hear the words of Jesus echoing in my brain, **“Not So With You”.**

“Don’t conform to the ways of society, be a nonconformist... but do it My way.”

I knew that, even as believers, we needed to revolt from the normal and ordinary, and live according to the principles and teachings of Jesus so that our lives would have meaning and significance.

Lives that are abundant and full. This desire was from God because, as I learned later in life, Jesus didn’t want us living mediocre lives either. As a matter of fact, Jesus said. **“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” John 10:10 (NKJ)**

That’s what Jesus wants for me and that’s what Jesus wants for you – “Abundant Life”. That’s why He came. He wants you to not only have eternal life with Him in heaven, but He wants your life right now, right here on this earth, to be full, meaningful, rewarding, and abundant!

The Greek word for abundant is *perissos*, meaning *superior* or *beyond measure*.

Are you living that kind of life? Now that you are a Christian, is your life superior to what it was before? Are you living a life that is beyond measure?

### **The Key to Abundant Living Is Serving.**

In John 13, one of the followers of Jesus, John, records a life lesson that Jesus taught his disciples. A practical application that they wouldn’t soon forget and a lesson that we are still trying to apply today. Jesus and His twelve disciples are invited to a dinner party. When they arrived, there was a servant’s towel, a basin, and pitcher of water. The thing that was missing was the servant who was, according to custom, to wash the feet of the dinner guest. (*Tell the story of John 13:1-11*)

**John 13:12-17 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them.**

**13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am.**

**14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16**

**Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.**

Unapologetically, Jesus calls every one of His followers to servanthood, even in practical ways, like washing people’s dirty feet.

- Jesus was saying, *“This is how I want you to be. I want this to be a characteristic of people who bear My name. I want My followers to stand out from other people because they are the ones who are willing to do what normal, pride-filled people are always unwilling to do.”*  
**“I am asking you to see a need and then step up and meet that need by serving.”**

## **Jesus Is Saying, “This Is What I Would Do.”**

**John 13:13-14** “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. **14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.** Jesus was saying,

- “Acts of service are not below Me, they ought not to be below you either.”
- “If I, your Teacher and your Lord, the second person in the Trinity, God in the flesh wash feet...I expect you to do it to.”

We should be willing to wash each other’s feet in every practical situation.

- When you walk into a room, you shouldn’t be looking around and asking yourself, “Who will wash my feet.” No, you should walk into a room at work, at home, at church, wondering if there is a simple act of kindness that you can do for someone else.
- You should be saying, “Whose feet need washing today.” “How can I serve you?”

## **Why Serve Others?**

Now, we should be doing acts of service, volunteering, giving of ourselves just because Jesus said He wants us to live that way. But WHY? **Why** is Jesus asking us to live this way?

**Because...“You will be blessed .... if you do them.”**

**John 13:17** Now that you know these things, **you will be blessed if you do them.**

There it is! The Key to an Abundant Life! The Key to the blessed life that we were created for! This is where we become **nonconformist**! This is where we do what others will not do. This is where our life takes on meaning, purpose, fulfillment, and abundance!

## **Knowing Vs Doing**

But there is a difference in just knowing the secret to a blessed life and actually doing acts of service. There is a difference in desiring to serve others and actually serving others.

**John 13:17** Now that you **know** these things, **you will be blessed if you do** them.

The blessing doesn’t come in the knowing, or the desire, or in good intentions. You will only be blessed **if you do them**. If you do what? “Them” – acts of service, acts of kindness, if you serve others, **they will be blessed, and you will be blessed too!** If you step forward and volunteer to serve others today, you will be blessed beyond your wildest dreams! Jesus guarantees it!

**Jesus is making a blanket, across-the-board, no-exception promise!**

- Those who serve people in practical ways, those who live beyond themselves will become the recipients of God’s sovereign blessing and favor.
- God’s divine favor will fall on those who take up the servant’s towel and live in the way Jesus demonstrated for us to live.

## **The Greatness Principal: Greatness Comes As We Serve Others.**

Jesus told the disciples that true greatness and abundant blessings in life only comes from serving others. “...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant... **Matthew 20:26**. Or as Jesus said in **Matthew 23:11**, “The greatest among you will be your servant.”

## **The Greatness Principal Result: When you bless others, God blesses you.**

Do we really believe that? Do you really believe that if you take up the servant’s towel that your life will be blessed? Come on now, do you really believe that? Do you believe it enough that you will actually “do it”. That you would reorder the value system of your life around the promise of Jesus Christ that if you were to take up the servant’s towel, you would be blessed?

## Be a Nonconformist

All of your life, you have been taught how to have an abundant life and obtain greatness the world's way. You learned to chase the "American Dream" and to look for ways, shortcuts, and get rich quick schemes to get you there sooner. More money / More applause / More fame/ to be great. Is it working?

- Do you think if by getting more, more, more of the all-American dream then you're going to feel blessed and live in a God-blessed way?
- Do you think you are going to feel inner satisfaction and peace?  
Is abundant life more likely to come through more of those things?

**Or is it more likely to come through washing feet, serving others?**

Your conclusion and what you do about it will affect the rest of your life.

## Live Like a Servant

### 1. Be Willing to Get Involved

**John 13:4** "so he (Jesus) got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. Jesus got up from the table. There is a time to sit at the table, and there is a time to get up from the table, roll up your sleeves and go to work!

### 2. Be Willing to Go Low

Jesus stooped down, He got low, a sign of humility. He humbled Himself, and washed the feet that would run away from Him at His crucifixion, but would later carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

**Isaiah 52:7** How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation..."

- Jesus went low to bring us up. We may have to get low to minister to people who are down and out, but we may find ourselves washing feet that one day God will use in great and mighty ways.

### 3. Be Willing to See Beyond

As Jesus washed their feet, He saw beyond where they were. He saw what they could be and what they were going to be. This is a great trait for us to have. A church that sees people not just where they are at, that sees not only their problems, that sees not only their issues, but sees what they can be in Christ Jesus.

### 4. Be Willing To Get Messy To Make a Difference

I don't think the disciples ever forgot this lesson, the day Jesus got messy to make a difference. Peter was the first to say "Not me, Lord, don't do this for me."

**"Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" John 13:6** "Lord, it's not right for someone of your position." But Jesus got messy to make a difference.

### 5. Be Willing To Bless and Be Blessed

Look what happened in Jesus' life... **Matthew 20:28** ...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Philippians 2:9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## **NEXT STEPS**

**First Step: Before you leave church today, I want you to do a simple act of kindness.**

Why? Because the minute you do it, I bet you're going to feel blessed by God.

- Let someone go first. / Hold the door open. / Greet someone.
- Help a teacher clean her room. / Pick up in the sanctuary before you leave.
- Carry something to the car for someone.

I want you to do a small act of kindness for someone so that you can feel the blessing of God associated with it.

**Second Step: Before you go to bed tonight, do a simple act of kindness for your family.**

If you do, today you get two senses of the blessing of God on your life for just those two acts of service, you'll start falling into the pattern of saying, *"I like that."*

**Third Step: I will begin serving others today by volunteering to First Serve on a Believers Church Ministry Team by filling out the enclosed Ministry Team Sign Up Card. Today in the foyer you can learn more about serving our children.**

## **Life Group and Family Devotional Application**

1. Do you feel that stirring and that call to be a non-conformist for Jesus? To do something different with your life, to make a lasting and significant difference?
2. In John 10:10, Jesus promised an abundant life. Are you living that kind of life? Now that you are a Christian, is your life superior to what it was before? Are you living a life that is beyond measure?
3. To have a more blessed life this year, how will you step into serving in the insignificant, in the small, and the areas no one else wants to?
4. Share a time in your life when you served in secret. How did God use that time to bless you?
5. Discuss the blessing you've received from serving in our church now.
6. If you aren't serving, what will you do to get started, even if it wouldn't be your top pick?