

MIDDLE SCHOOL IDENTITY IN CHRIST

8

UNITE
I AM CALLED

SERVANTS OF JESUS KNOW AND GROW IN GRACE

SERIES:
GOD IS THE MASTER — I AM A SERVANT



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SERVANTS OF JESUS KNOW AND GROW IN GRACE

UNITE: I AM CALLED

The Unite Year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are given a spirit of adoption as sons (Romans 8:15-16), are made a child of God, and we are also saved into a family- the Church. The Unite Year explores how we are to live as a part of a family, and to live in light of our calling as servants and disciples of Christ. We use our gifts to build up the church as we pursue unity, humility, and gentleness with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2).

BIG TRUTH: SERVANTS OF JESUS KNOW AND GROW IN GRACE**BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 20:15-16**

“Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last.”

BIG IDEAS

- Every person that God calls to serve Him is unworthy of their calling.
- Every servant of Jesus serves diligently with the time they have left on earth.
- Every servant enters God’s family the same way: grace.

BIBLE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 19:29-20:16**SERIES AIMS****[KNOW] Every student should know that...**

- They are a servant of Jesus
- They have been forgiven an unimaginable debt
- To be a servant means to lay down their lives

[DO] Every student should strive to...

- Forgive anyone who has wronged them as Jesus has forgiven them
- Walk by faith instead of giving into anxiety
- Be known by their allegiance to Christ and the gospel

[FEEL] Every student should feel...

- Awe at the forgiveness they have experienced in Christ
- Thankful for the grace that brought them from death to life and into God’s family
- Unworthy of the mercy and grace they have received

[WANT] Every student should desire to...

- Be faithful and pursue obedience to God
- Sacrifice their comfort and control for the sake of the gospel
- Be committed to Christ above all else

STUDENT WORKOUT OVERVIEW:

Jesus’ servants grow in Him. This week we will ponder what it means to grow in the grace of Jesus. We will pray for hearts that desire to serve Jesus diligently and we will practice living for Him every day.

FAMILY WORKOUT OVERVIEW:

As servants of Jesus, we grow in grace as we serve Him. This week we will ponder how to discuss with our son or daughter what it means to live diligently for Jesus. We will pray with them to grow in His grace and we will lead them to practice living diligently for Him every day.

Help families explore the Big Truth by encouraging students and parents to utilize this week’s Workouts at www.tcbchurch.org/msfdp

SERVANTS OF JESUS KNOW AND GROW IN GRACE

BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 20:15-16

“Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last.”

God’s servants know they do not deserve His grace.

“Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?”

- In this story in Matthew 20:1-16, Jesus teaches a truth about His grace and our unworthiness of it. As God’s servants, we understand that we are all sinners and we do nothing to deserve God’s grace.
- God is complete and sufficient in Himself. He does not need to show us grace. We do the opposite of earning grace. We reject Him and rebel against Him. He chooses to show us grace and that makes us so undeserving of it. As His servants, we know this and live in this truth.

God’s servants must put off a sense of entitlement.

“...Or do you begrudge my generosity?”

- Entitlement is the idea that we deserve something whether we have earned it or not. Our flesh natures cause us to think we are more than we are, and this leads us to believe we deserve something we do not.
- God’s servants put this thought and idea away as they seek to please God. They die to their sense or desire of being owed. Instead, they understand fully that they don’t deserve grace. Instead, they deserve punishment and eternal separation from God.

God’s servants serve don’t care about their position in this life.

“So the last will be first, and the first last.”

- Because we all deserve God’s wrath, none of us can truly earn a “first place” position. In this story, Jesus taught that we all enter heaven through the same way. We all have to receive the undeserved grace of God in order to even enter heaven.
- God’s servants don’t concern themselves with their rank or position in this life. They know that they deserve nothing but condemnation, so they feel incredible gratitude that they get to know God at all.

BIG IDEA #1: EVERY PERSON THAT GOD CALLS TO SERVE HIM IS UNWORTHY OF THEIR CALLING.¹

[THIS]

Service is often viewed as a negative thing because we don't like to humble ourselves to meet other's needs. Jesus turns this idea upside down when He shows His disciples that it is actually better to be last and not first. Being last indicates a heart that has willingly died to the desires of this world and placed faith and trust in the one true God. Because none of us save ourselves and no one seeks God, we know Him because He calls us to Himself. When God calls us to repent and believe in Jesus for salvation, He is calling us to serve Him all the days of our lives. God redeems people and uses them to make His name known in the world. He doesn't have to use His redeemed people, but He chooses to use them for His glory and their good. Every person God saves is called to serve Him wholeheartedly.

[THEREFORE]

Why are we unworthy?

When we understand that we are unworthy of God calling us to Himself, we can understand our purpose better. 1 Corinthians 15:10 and 2 Corinthians 9:8 help us understand that it is God's grace that allows us to be used by Him.

[THIS]

In Matthew 20:1-16, Jesus compares God's kingdom to an owner of a field who uses laborers to work his field. Some workers worked all day and others only worked an hour. When the master of the field paid his laborers, he paid them all the same. The laborers who worked all day questioned the master's payment. According to the world's view this would seem unfair. Why wouldn't the owner of the field pay the workers according to the hours they worked? Jesus was using this story to teach His followers what God's kingdom is like. Imagine that God is the owner of the field and people are the laborers. The time the laborers worked would symbolize when someone became a believer. Jesus was teaching that none of us are worthy of entering God's Kingdom. None of us deserve to serve God. We are all unworthy. Instead of wondering why we are not being rewarded like others, we should remind ourselves that we don't even deserve to know God.

[THEREFORE]

Read Matthew 20:1-16. What does the struggle with entitlement look like in your life?

In these verses, we see laborers who feel entitled to a certain wage. Because of our sin natures, it's easy for us to feel entitled. We may feel that we are helping God and doing Him a favor by serving Him, but, actually, we are unworthy to even be called His son or daughter. It is a privilege to serve God.

How can you actively put on humility in order to serve God as the unworthy servant that you are?

In order to humble ourselves, we must first remind ourselves of who we are as sinners and God's grace. 1 Peter 5:5 speaks of clothing ourselves in humility. Colossians 3:12 and Ephesians 4:2 both teach us that humility is something that we must do and not something that just happens. We should live in the truth that we are unworthy of anything God does for us.

1. Romans 3:10: No one is good. No one seeks God. That we know God is because of His mercy and grace. We are undeserving of His calling us to Himself.

SERVANTS OF JESUS KNOW AND GROW IN GRACE

BIG IDEA #2: EVERY SERVANT OF JESUS SERVES DILIGENTLY WITH THE TIME THEY HAVE LEFT ON EARTH.²**[THIS]**

The parable in Matthew 20:1-16 reminds us that life on this earth is short. Believers are not citizens of this earth, which means we live for our eternal home. It is God's kingdom that we live for and He is the King we serve. Our time on this earth is not forever; it isn't even long compared to our eternity. Yet, there are so many distractions in this life. Our sin natures distract us away from seeking God's kingdom. The things of this world entice us and we fall prey to living for this life instead of for God's Kingdom. Servants of Jesus reject this and choose to serve Him diligently every single day. Servants of Jesus learn to number their days and to live each day as if it were their last. They serve with urgency and seek opportunities to make God known in the world because they understand that life is brief here on earth.

[THEREFORE]

How can you daily remind yourself that this life is brief in order to serve God diligently?

Psalm 39:4 and James 4:14 remind us that our time here is fleeting. Psalm 39:4 teaches us the value of asking God through prayer to help us live each day with urgency because it could be our last. We can remind ourselves daily that our lives are short by praying and asking God to help us number our days as Psalm 90:12 reminds us. He will guide us to use our time wisely for His glory.

[THIS]

To serve diligently means to serve with purpose and faithfulness. It is more than taking opportunities that may or may not come our way. Serving diligently means living purposefully for Jesus with the understanding that our time here on earth is brief. Whatever time we have, we choose to use it for His glory, knowing that His glory is for our good. We are purposeful in our service, choosing to seek out opportunities to serve instead of just waiting for them to come our way. Though the scope of our time on here is short, our days can be and feel long. This requires us to remain steadfast, or firm in our faith. We serve diligently when we are steadfast and do all of our work for the Lord. This means no matter what we're doing, we do it so that He is glorified. Being steadfast requires sacrifice and dedication to God and His purposes.

[THEREFORE]

What should serving God diligently look like in your life? What distractions can you remove to serve Him more diligently?

In order to serve God diligently, we must first remove the things that take our eyes off of Him. Romans 12:2 reminds us not to be conformed to this world. Hebrews 13:5 and Colossians 3:23 teach us to not love money and the things of the world and to do all of our work as unto the Lord.

What are some areas of your life that lack steadfastness? How can you become more steadfast?

When we set our hearts and minds on the Lord, we can be steadfast in all things. 1 Corinthians 15:58 tells us to be immovable, or resolute. We are to abound in the work and love of God. Galatians 6:9 reminds us to not grow weary, but to look to our eternity and Philippians 4:6 teaches us to turn our anxiety into prayer and to trust God in all things.

2. James 4:14: *Life on earth is short. James tells us that this life is like a vapor that is present one moment and gone the next.*

SERVANTS OF JESUS KNOW AND GROW IN GRACE

BIG IDEA #3: EVERY SERVANT ENTERS GOD'S FAMILY THE SAME WAY: GRACE.³**[THIS]**

In Matthew 19:30, Jesus teaches that many people who are first in life will be last and those who are last will be first. This seems like a contradiction. How can a person who is first be last and a person who is last be first? A tie is the only way in a race this idea is true. Finishing at the same time is the only way that both things are true. Jesus was teaching a deeper truth in His parable. He was teaching that every person who enters the Kingdom of God does so in the same way, through God's grace. So, even those who perhaps are saved as young children and those saved on their death beds, both are saved by grace. So the person who was first in believing is equal to the person who was last in believing. Because Jesus is God's grace to us, He is the only way that anyone can be saved and enter into God's family. Those who are seemingly first will be last and those who are last will be first in eternity. What matters in eternity is who we say Jesus is and whether He is our Savior.

[THEREFORE]**Why is it important to understand that we enter God's family through grace?**

Titus 2:11 and Romans 11:6 teach us that we are all saved by God's grace. He chooses to show us grace and there is nothing we do or can do to earn it or deserve it. It's important to remember this because it helps us understand our own unworthiness as His servants. It could be easy to compare ourselves to others who perhaps became believers later in life and think we are better than them, but we should reject this. We are all unworthy of this marvelous grace God bestows.

[THIS]

In Matthew 20:1-16, the servants who worked all day begrudged the servants who only worked an hour. The idea is that those who work longer deserve a greater reward. Those who become believers when they are young and serve God all of their lives are more deserving of His love and blessing than those who do so late in life. This idea lacks an understanding of God's grace and that none of us are deserving of His blessing and eternal life. In order for anyone to enter the kingdom of God, he or she must believe in Jesus. Because no one seeks God of their own volition, the fact that we even realize we need Him is His grace in our lives. There is nothing we can do to earn this grace or to be worthy of being His servant. Because of this, we are all on equal footing and should serve Him faithfully out of a love and gratitude that He even allows us to serve Him.

[THEREFORE]**How can you put on gratitude this week in order to serve more faithfully?**

1 Thessalonians 5:18 and Psalm 107:1 teach us to give thanks. We should practice giving thanks every day to God. We should look at our lives and our salvation and express thanksgiving to Him for it. Colossians 3:15-17 reminds us to seek God's people and to be thankful. We express this through our encouragement of others and our worship of God.

How does having a right view of yourself help you serve faithfully?

Romans 12:3 reminds us to have a right view of ourselves. When we remind ourselves that we do not deserve God's grace and mercy, we will understand that we are sinful and deserve His wrath. Teaching ourselves who God is helps us understand ourselves and keeps us serving Him faithfully out of love.

3. Ephesians 2:8: We are saved by God's grace and His grace alone.