



# BE THE BODY SERVE

## SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DEFINED

Actively seeks to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others, addresses issues of oppression and injustice, brings freedom to those ensnared, and give voice to those unheard.

*“Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”*

*- John Wooden*

## SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DESCRIBED

Jesus said a lot of shocking things while on earth, one of them being His description of why He came: *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45). As this Scripture describes, the being through whom *“all things were made”* (John 1:3) enters into His own creation not to be served but to serve.

In another place we read, *“he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant”* (Philippians 2:7a). Jesus could have made demands. He could have revealed His position, flexed His authority, and demanded His own pleasures and comfort. Instead, he became *“obedient to death — even death on a cross!”* (Philippians 2:8b). Why? What would motivate the Creator of all to serve and comfort others rather than demand the service of those He created? What motivates God is not external circumstances, but an internal disposition. God came to earth to serve and give because He *is*, by nature, a self-sacrificing, self-giving God. The fact that God would create humanity in the first place, to enjoy relationship with Him is evidence of the servant-hearted Creator He is. And we all know, we desperately need this kind of God to rescue us because there is no other way.

Jesus made His purpose clear. He came *“to proclaim freedom for the prisoners ... to set the oppressed free”* (Luke 4:18). Those who follow Christ will do as He did. We will be freedom-fighters, liberators, and healers. We will look for ways to serve those around us — both physically and spiritually — and not be consumed with our own prestige, power, or comfort, and *“have the same mindset of Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5).

In Paul’s letter to the Galatians he describes his interactions with Peter, James, and John, men he describes as *“pillars”* of our faith and says that *“they asked ... that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along”* (Galatians 2:10). So, from the earliest followers of Christ, and from Christ himself, we have the example of those who served by proclaiming the deepest spiritual truths through giving and serving others in the most practical of ways.

## EVIDENCE OF THIS SPIRITUAL OUTCOME IN A PERSON’S LIFE

- Proactively seeks ways to serve others rather than avoid needs.
- Seeks to be servant-hearted in all relationships, looking to the needs of others above one's own.
- Prayerfully considers how one's resources might be used in the service of others.
- Practices service in a manner that truly helps and empowers those being served rather than service that hinders or enables.

## GUIDANCE

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

### **DEUTERONOMY 15:7-11**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your attitude toward helping the poor?

### **PSALM 82:1-4**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your attitude toward the weak, sick, or oppressed?

### **PROVERBS 14:21, 31:8-9, 19:17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are ways you could speak up for those who do not have a voice or serve those in physical need?

**ISAIAH 58:6-12**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does God's heart for the poor and oppressed surprise you? Why or why not? How closely does your heart currently reflect God's heart?

**JEREMIAH 22:1-5, 15-17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you sense God's seriousness and focus on helping the oppressed? How does this affect you?

**MICAH 6:6-8**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How could your life increasingly reflect the profound simplicity of this passage?

**MATTHEW 5:14-16**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your life currently radiating?

**MATTHEW 23:11**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you been inspired by another person's service? Why might you consider those who serve "great?"

**LUKE 4:16-21**

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might you increasingly be a freedom fighter, healer, and liberator with Christ?

**LUKE 22:24-27**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you sitting at the table of life or serving at the table of life?

**1 THESSALONIANS 3:10-13**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Has your giving ever become enabling rather than empowering? If so, how, and how do you discern the difference?

**PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11**

Observations:

Discernment Question: In what ways do your current attitudes and actions reflect those of Christ's? In what ways do they not?

**JAMES 1:27, 2:14-17**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does your life reflect your profession of faith? How or how not?

## NEXT STEPS

What are practical next steps you will do based on what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture about cultivating a servant's heart? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life, as well.

## MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

### **Mark 10:43-45, NIV**

*Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

### **1 John 3:16-18, NIV**

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*



# BE THE BODY SERVE

## OR

Consider a useful but all-too-often misapplied little word. Consider...

*OR*

Yes, we need it ...

*Do you want to travel to this city OR that city?*

We can't be in two places at the same time.

*Do you want to marry this person OR that person?*

We can't marry both people, at least not legally.

*Do you want to have a child OR not?*

We can't get pregnant and not get pregnant at the same time.

Or is a needed and important little word. Life has its moments of distinction; times when mutually exclusive choices must be made. Danger arises, though, when we carelessly apply the little *OR* word and create a false choice.

*Do you want to be honest OR do you want to make money?*

Can we not find a way to do both?

*Is our company about quality OR quantity?*

Maybe sometimes this choice must be made, but certainly not always.

*Do you like this friend OR that friend?*

Can't we like both?

It's not uncommon to misapply *OR*. Choices are presented, and at first glance, the choices feel absolute. The wise detect false choices.

## TRUE SERVICE

Consider service. What does it look like to truly love and serve another person? This question seems straightforward; but try to apply it to a specific scenario.

*The woman stands at the intersection holding a tattered sign. Her eyes are fixed on seemingly nothing. The sign speaks of hungry children and a willingness to work, but children are not in sight, and the cup in her hand makes it clear she's asking for money.*

What does she need? How might we love her? What would true service look like to this woman in need? No doubt her needs are abundant, but what would truly help her?



She needs a job. She needs dinner. She needs a way to put a roof over her head and food on the table. Does she have the skills to work? If no, she needs training; and if yes, she needs opportunity. Does she lack motivation? She needs encouragement. Is she lonely? She needs someone to befriend her, to be an advocate for her, to talk with her and listen to her. Clearly, this woman is in a predicament.

Let's say we do all that. Let's say we step in, and to our surprise, she responds. Let's say she gets the training, gets the job, and gets off the street. We didn't expect that she'd really do all that, but she does. It takes time, maybe months or years, but she responds to our encouragement and advocacy. Then what? Is she OK? Is all well in her world? Did we truly serve her?

Maybe, but let's say we did all that and never addressed her soul. Let's say she gets the job and gets off the street, but she continues to live without knowledge that there's One out there who loves her and wants to be in relationship with her. Let's say time passes and she really did make changes, but let's say it ends. She ends. She gets cancer, and in a matter of months, she's gone. Yes, she got off the street and became a fully functioning member of society, but she never truly trusted God. And to be perfectly honest, we never really talked to her about it. So, did we truly serve her?

Let's not stop with that. Let's flip it around and make it more challenging. Rewind the story, and let's do this differently. Let's say we don't get her training, don't get her a job, don't get her off the streets, and don't help her become a fully functioning member of society. Let's say we avoid all that, and rather than engage those physical needs, we engage her in conversation. That conversation turns to spiritual matters, and ultimately the woman gives her life to Christ.

Even more, let's say all indicators are that her choice is genuine. She breaks an addiction to drugs, she gets baptized, she gets involved in a church, and she even reaches out to other hurting people. She does all of this, but let's say she never gets the job thing figured out. She continues to bounce from shelter to shelter and is perpetually dependent upon others. She never breaks out of this, and to be perfectly honest, we never attempt to help her with this. We don't talk with her about job training; we don't give her guidance, support, and encouragement in these matters. We don't dirty ourselves with day-to-day matters. We keep things spiritual. What then?

Did we truly serve her?

## **PROPENSITY**

Let's make an observation. It's admittedly oversimplified, but let's make it, anyway. There's truth in it that's helpful to note. The observation is this...

*Some have a propensity toward physical service.*

*Others have a propensity toward spiritual service.*

Those with a propensity toward physical service like to meet tangible needs. They want to fix the person's car or make her a meal. They want to roll up their sleeves, get their hands dirty, and really help people. They build wells, supply medicine, and construct housing. Yes, they may recognize the need for spiritual and emotional matters, but they don't want to wade too deep into these waters. They'll leave that to others. To be honest, that other stuff doesn't feel like *real* service. They're meeting *real* needs, *tangible* needs, needs that are going to better a person's life in the moment.

Those with a propensity toward spiritual service take a different approach. They want to teach, to pray, and to heal. They want to help people discover the love and grace of Christ. They want to take people into the depths of Scripture and help them experience the liberating presence of the Spirit of God. Yes, they may recognize the need for physical service — matters of food, drink, and shelter — but they're frustrated by the distraction of temporal needs in the face of such significant and eternal matters. They're meeting *real* needs, *lasting* needs, needs that are going to better a person's eternity.

So, which is it? Which is the real act of service the body of Christ is called upon to engage? Are we to focus on physical acts of service OR are we to focus on spiritual acts of service?

## PAUL

Hear carefully how Paul described his work.

*..This grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things (Ephesians 3:8-9).*

Paul's work was profoundly spiritual. Among other things, he was a teacher. He sought to bring clarity to a mystery. He traveled the known world to make known the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

In another place, Paul tells the Corinthians, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20). Here as well, Paul's work is described in deeply spiritual terms. He's working as Christ's ambassador urging the Corinthians to "Be reconciled to God." This man understood the spiritual and eternal implications of remaining unreconciled to God, and he worked tirelessly to help others discover the grace available to them through Christ.

Considering the spiritual weight of Paul's work, it would be easy to conclude that he did not concern himself with physical matters. How could this man who traveled the world proclaiming the mysteries of Christ, a man who worked night and day to draw people's attention to eternal and spiritual matters, have time and energy to concern himself with more immediate needs like poverty and hunger?

Listen to a letter from Paul to the church in Corinth:

*Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me (1 Corinthians 16:1-4).*

Paul is bold. He asks the church in Corinth to set aside weekly donations that will then be sent to Jerusalem. Why? What is Paul doing? We gain clarity by another letter written by Paul, likely at a later date. Hear carefully what he says to the church in Rome: "Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem" (Romans 15:25-26).

Did you catch that? First, Paul writes to the church in Corinth asking that money be sent as gifts to Jerusalem each week. He then writes the church in Rome letting them know that he is on his way to Jerusalem because the churches in the regions of Macedonia and Achaia — which includes the church in Corinth — had made contributions "for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem."

With that in mind, consider Paul's commitment to poverty relief. Not only was he an active advocate for the poor in Jerusalem — it's believed Jerusalem was experiencing a famine at this time — but he willingly traveled back to Jerusalem to deliver their support. This is a walking distance of about 800 miles, or a treacherous sail through the Mediterranean Sea. This man, who passionately preached about the "unsearchable riches of Christ," worked tirelessly at great personal sacrifice to make a practical difference in the lives of those hurting.

Could Paul have just prayed for the people in Jerusalem? He had plenty to do. He didn't need a broader job description. God had made it clear that it was his role to take the good news of Christ to the Gentiles. Wouldn't a trip back to Jerusalem be a major distraction from his primary calling? And yet, we don't sense any hesitation from Paul. Paul's work served both spiritual and physical needs.

In a word, Paul's love was *holistic*

## HOLISTIC

People have needs. Injustice abounds. Oppression flourishes in countless ways. Some are oppressed by poverty. Others are oppressed by abuse. Circle the globe and find countless people oppressed by dark and self-serving political regimes. A Christ-follower is a liberator, a freedom fighter, a lover of those in need. John stated this plainly.

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:16-18).*

The cross of Christ is not only our salvation, but it also is our example. To love our neighbor means that we actively engage the world around us by making a practical difference in the lives of others. We are exhorted to “...Love [our] enemies and pray for those who persecute [us]” (Matthew 5:44).

This love and passion will, at times, be of a more spiritual nature: “... We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Those who follow Christ will risk ridicule and, in some places of the world, persecution, to tell others about Christ. Peter’s exhortation to the church states this well. “... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

We are called to give reason for the hope that we have, and we are to do this with gentleness and respect. To ignore this prevents others from the greatest opportunity availability to humanity, the opportunity to know and walk with our God.

But that’s not all we are to do. When speaking of these very things, Jesus predicted a day when His followers would stand before Him and hear Him say,

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me (Matthew 25:35-36).*

This was followed by some confusion ...

*...Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? (Matthew 25:37-39)*

To which Christ responds...

*“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).*

It’s as if He’s saying, “That widow you served, she is My daughter. I created her and delight in her. To love My daughter is to love Me. And that impoverished man that you fed, He is my son. I created and crafted him. I love him and to love him is to love Me.”

The love mandate is not satisfied with “*this OR that*” kind of love. The love mandate propels our passion to simply meet needs — all of them.

But this can be a bit daunting and leads to a critical distinction.

## **HARMFUL HELPING**

A person's needs will sometimes be more deeply rooted than the presenting physical problem. The person asking for food or money may in fact need food or money, but it's not uncommon for there to be deeper needs driving the presenting need.

This is not to say that physical needs are always of a person's own doing; to believe that is misguided. But there are times that this is true, and what a person may need is not just a meal but proverbial wisdom, or even loving correction. Paul made this clear when we wrote the Thessalonians:

*"For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat'"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Yes, Christ-followers are called to meet both spiritual and physical needs, to serve holistically. But that doesn't mean we must meet every request or serve foolishly without regard to real issues. Yes, we sacrifice; but true service, loving service, is done with the whole person in mind.

Acts of service that disregard this, as well meaning as they may be, run the risk of doing more harm than good and leaving people in perpetual dependency. Such actions are neither wise nor loving.

For some, this is a loophole to justify their exclusive "spiritual" service. Those with physical needs are viewed as lazy and irresponsible; such thinking is misguided. True service, holistic service driven by love, will not look for a way out but a way in.

Sometimes when we engage with people's needs at this deep level, we find ourselves in way over our heads. We are uncertain if we're able to do much good. It's at this place that we discover the strength of the body of Christ.

## **THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Consider Paul's approach to poverty in famine-stricken Jerusalem. What does he do to bring relief to the problem? Does he dig into his own purse? Most likely. But does he carry this burden alone? No. Rather, he rallies the larger body of Christ. Collectively, the churches throughout Macedonia and Achaia are able to make a contribution worthy of Paul trekking all the way back to Jerusalem to deliver it.

We tend not to ignore the needs around us when we realize what we can accomplish together with other believers. When we collectively pool our experiences, giftedness, and resources, we discover a powerful opportunity. No longer is our service limited to our own resources; we can work collectively to provide holistic service.

## **UNIQUELY EQUIPPED**

Consider again the woman holding the sign on the side of the road. Because we have either been this person or interacted with this person, we know the likelihood that her needs are many. Maybe she was abused. Maybe she has mental health problems. Maybe she's an addict. We don't know the issues, but we are relatively confident that there's more to it than simply getting a few dollars for her next meal. As we pass her on the road, we struggle. Yes, we want to help her, but we question if we really can. At times, we may bring her a meal. At other times, we drive on wondering if there is something we can do that will truly help.

Consider a different scenario. A young couple is struggling in their marriage. They may be our friends or acquaintances, but the need is apparent. The marriage is unraveling. As with the first scenario with the woman, because we have either been in a relationship like this, or interacted with couples like this, we know the likelihood that the couple's needs are many. Maybe one of them is haunted by past events. Maybe the other has an addiction to pornography. Maybe they don't know how to manage money, and they are drowning in debt and unaddressed bills. We'd like to help this couple, and we know a few things we can try, but we wonder if we truly can make a difference — so we only halfheartedly help.

These issues are not one dimensional. If the woman just needed dinner and the couple just needed training on communication skills, then maybe we could help. But they are more complex, which highlights the need for a holistic solution and an opportunity for a uniquely equipped body of people.

As the body of Christ, we are not limited to spiritual impact or physical impact. We are uniquely equipped to serve the whole person. This differentiates participation in the body of Christ from any other opportunity. We are able to go into the deepest matters of humanity, and we also are able to meet the practical needs of the hour. Together, we can offer holistic healing to the entire person.

## LOVE

Consider a few critical passages of Scripture.

*Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow (Isaiah 1:17).*

This is echoed in the New Testament.

*Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (James 1:27).*

A similar message is heard in a passage descriptive of Christ's purpose.

*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.  
(Luke 4:18-19; similar to Isaiah 61:1-2)*

The mission of Jesus, the reason He was sent, was to preach good news to the poor and to proclaim freedom for the prisoners. He would recover the sight for the blind and liberate the oppressed from their oppressors.

It is a noble cause that is even more piercing when we discover that His very purpose, the exact same cause, has been passed from Christ to us: *"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you"* (John 20:21b).

Just as Christ was sent to bring good news to the impoverished, we, too, are sent to bring good news to the impoverished. And just as Christ was sent to bring freedom to the prisoners, we, too, are sent to fight for freedom. And just as Christ was sent to bring sight to the blind and liberation to the oppressed, we, too, are called to be healers and liberators.

When asked what was most important in all of Scripture, Jesus responded with the two greatest commands: *Love God and love people*. What's most telling is the way He underscored the importance of these words: *"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments"* (Matthew 22:40).

All of the commands *to plead the case of the widow, to preach good news to the poor, to liberate the oppressed, to proclaim the year of God's favor*, each one of these hangs on one hook: *To love your neighbor as yourself*.

We must be a people who love those who are suffering and struggling. We are called to love our neighbors. If our neighbors have physical needs, then we serve them physically. If our neighbors have spiritual needs, then we serve them spiritually. Ours is not an either/or love because we are not surrounded by either/or needs. Ours is a love that meets the physical *and* spiritual needs around us.



# BE THE BODY SERVE

## WHY DO I DO WHAT I DO FOR OTHERS?

The exercise that follows is simple, but not easy. You will be asked to consider your most recent interactions with people. *Why did you say what you said? Why did you do what you did? Why did you refrain from doing what you could have done?*

You said a kind word to a colleague at work.

Why?

Was this to encourage him or to impress him? If it was to impress him, why are you concerned with what he thinks of you?

You corrected your daughter when she left the light on?

Why?

Was this to teach her responsibility, or was it about your personal anxiety over money?

There are three stages to this first of two exercises:

- **Brainstorming** — Identify your actions and inactions toward others over the past two weeks.
- **Heartstorming** — Uncover the heart behind these actions and inactions.
- **Entrusting** — Discuss what you discovered with God.

To do this well, you must be thoughtful, prayerful, and daring. As always, use the pages that follow as a guide, but don't restrict yourself to the pages. If important insights or ideas take you off the page, you're encouraged to "color outside the lines."

After this initial assessment you will explore holistic solutions for serving others by examining "what's underneath" their needs.

## **FIRST STAGE: BRAINSTORMING**

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Answer the following two questions as many times as possible:

What “loving actions” have you taken toward people in your relational world during the past two weeks?

What “loving actions” could you have taken, but held back, toward people in your relational world during the past two weeks?

Here are some examples:

### **Serving Someone**

Examples:

- *I cleaned the house for my wife on Monday because I knew she was tired.*
- *I stayed home when my small group went to serve at the soup kitchen this week.*

### **Investing in Someone Relationally**

Examples:

- *I invited my neighbors over for dinner Saturday evening.*
- *I avoided meeting with a friend who was seeking counsel about her marital problems.*

### **Encouraging, Affirming, or Speaking Kind Words to Someone**

Examples:

- *I praised my son for his good report card.*
- *I didn't congratulate my co-worker on her recent promotion.*

### **Showing Kindness to Someone**

Examples:

- *I stopped to offer help to the person whose car was stalled.*
- *I didn't use a calm or considerate tone of voice when sharing my feedback with my boss.*

### **Saying “Yes” to Someone’s Invitation/Request**

Examples:

- *I went with my roommate to her art show, even though I didn't feel like going.*
- *I didn't offer to pick up my friend's father from the airport.*

### **Putting Someone’s Preferences Above Your Own**

Examples:

- *I invited my in-laws to stay for the whole week, even though I didn't want them to.*
- *I didn't let my friend choose where we went to lunch on Thursday.*

If you find it helpful, think through different relational circles in your life:

- Family
- Friends
- School
- Church
- Extended Family
- Work
- Neighbors
- Unknown (store clerks, drivers on road, etc.)

**I DID**

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**I DIDN'T**

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## **SECOND STAGE: HEARTSTORMING**

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Of the actions or inactions you listed, circle the six that either surprise or trouble you the most. In the space provided below, thoughtfully and prayerfully ask yourself why you did or didn't do the described action. Continue to ask and answer "Why?" until you are at the deepest-known motive you can identify.

### **Example:**

**Action/Inaction:** *I called an old friend and wished him a happy birthday.*

**Why?**

- It's been a while. I wanted to talk with him.

**Why?**

- I wanted him to know what I am doing now.

**Why?**

- I wanted him to know of my recent success.

**Why?**

- I wanted to be impressive.

### **YOUR ACTIONS:**

**Action/Inaction:**

**Why?**

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**Why?**

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**Why?**

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**Why?**

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**Action/Inaction:**

**Why?**

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**Why?**

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**Why?**

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**Why?**

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**Action/Inaction:**

**Why?**  
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**Why?**  
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**Why?**  
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**Why?**  
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**Action/Inaction:**

**Why?**  
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**Why?**  
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**Why?**  
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**Why?**  
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## THEMES

Read over each of the six actions and inactions. What themes do you notice? Are there common motives underneath each of these actions or inactions, or are each of the six different? What themes are encouraging? What themes are convicting?

Theme:

Thoughts and Comments:

Theme:

Thoughts and Comments:

Theme:

Thoughts and Comments:

Theme:

Thoughts and Comments:

### **THIRD STAGE: ENTRUSTING**

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Talk to God about any themes or observations you have made.

Ultimately, we cannot love people if we do not first love God at our core. Our part is to confess to God what is currently true about our hearts and to entrust ourselves to Him for transformation. If we are to truly be transformed and liberated to love people, then we must invite God into the process.

Spend time now inviting God into your journey and sharing with Him any insights you've gained. Did you discover a love of recognition and approval at your center? Confess this to God and ask Him to begin changing your heart. Did you discover a love of money? Talk to God about why you feel driven to pad your bank account and listen for anything He might want to share with you. Did you discover good motives and drive? Thank God for the good work He has already done in your heart.

Use the space below to journal your insights.

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## WHAT'S UNDERNEATH

Most of us, when we first consider the needs of others, see them from one angle. We see the struggling marriage, but we miss the abusive past fueling the relational hardship.

Or we see the financial struggle, but we miss the addiction influencing the person's stewardship. We might call the first need the presenting problem. Underneath the presenting problem, there may be a host of other needs. Most of life's challenges are not one dimensional.

Take the previous assessment to the next level by considering those situations through the lens of holistic serving. What other needs (physical or spiritual) might be related to the presenting needs? In truth, you may or may not know, so you'll want to be careful about drawing hard conclusions. Considering what may be under the surface not only inspires greater understanding, but also sets you up for a greater ability to serve.

There are three stages to this exercise:

- **Holistic Needs** — Looking underneath the presenting need.
- **My Limitations** — Recognizing areas of your own limitations in meeting holistic needs.
- **My Network** — Actively engage your network in the body of Christ to meet holistic needs.

## FIRST STAGE: HOLISTIC NEEDS

In this **first stage**, consider a sample scenario and then consider the real-life situations you identified in the previous assessment.

**Sample Scenario:** A childhood friend is in an extremely difficult marriage. The situation is fairly complicated, and it appears to be hardening. He or she is deeply in debt and barely talking. You recall years ago when this friend's parents went through a divorce, and you know bits and pieces about the abusive stepfather who took the place of your friend's dad. You also suspect your friend may be masking pain by escaping to addictive behaviors. It troubles you to see history repeating itself, but you care very much for this friend and would like to do something to help.

What physical needs do you see in this scenario? What questions can you ask to gain greater understanding?

What spiritual needs do you see in this scenario? What questions can you ask to gain greater understanding?

How might the person's physical and spiritual needs be related?

Looking back at your responses to the previous assessment, write your own real-life scenarios as you experience them in the world around you. Then answer the questions below to assess holistic needs.

**Scenario 1:**

What physical needs do you see in this scenario? What questions can you ask to gain greater understanding?

What spiritual needs do you see in this scenario? What questions can you ask to gain greater understanding?

How might the person's physical and spiritual needs be related?

**Scenario 2:**

What physical needs do you see in this scenario? What questions can you ask to gain greater understanding?

What spiritual needs do you see in this scenario? What questions can you ask to gain greater understanding?

How might the person's physical and spiritual needs be related?

## **SECOND STAGE: MY LIMITATIONS**

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This **second stage** is designed to help you recognize your own limitations in meeting the holistic needs of those around you. For each of the scenarios above, you are asked to distinguish between: 1) needs that you are able to meet on your own, and 2) needs that you are unable to meet given your current limitations of time, resources, giftedness, etc.

### **Scenario 1:**

What needs are you likely *able* to meet on your own?

What needs are you *unable* to meet on your own?

### **Scenario 2:**

What needs are you likely *able* to meet on your own?

What needs are you *unable* to meet on your own?



### THIRD STAGE: MY NETWORK

This **third stage** is designed to help you consider how you might actively engage your network in the larger body of Christ to meet the holistic needs in the world around you. What resources are available through those you know, your church, or other helpful next steps?

What other believers do you know with whom you might be able to partner in meeting the needs you have identified? What is their gifting or experience that makes you consider involving them?

	PERSON(S)	GIFTING	EXPERIENCE
SCENARIO 1			
SCENARIO 2			

What resources or ministries are available through your local church or other organizations that you could partner with in meeting the needs you identified? If helpful, click through your church's website to familiarize yourself with various offerings.

	MINISTRIES AND OPPORTUNITIES
SCENARIO 1	
SCENARIO 2	

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