

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

Lesson 4: It's Not All About You¹

Goal: *Build Authentic Relationships by Reestablishing the Art of “One Anothering.”*

Objective: *Provide Scriptural support for honoring one another above ourselves*

We live in a world today where most people focus primary on themselves. This is an ‘all about me’ world. People manipulate others to get their way and often are very demanding. For example, during the Christmas season, there are atheists who demand that nativity scenes be removed because *it is offensive to them*. What about the rights of Christians to freely worship and celebrate the advent of the living God? The social media promotes putting self-first and the masses seem to join the ranks. Have you been blinded by an inclination to see Christianity through a lens that validates only *your own needs and desires*? Have you considered the need to overcome the challenges in ministry or Christian living that causes so many to focus on ‘*my gifts, my abilities, my passions and my vision*’?² People struggle for self-satisfaction by any means necessary only to find that true peace and happiness can only be found in trusting God. He is faithful to do just that. “*A life lived in love will only work out of a growing trust in God to provide for us and show us how to love people he has put near us.*”³

Jesus states that we are in the world, but not of the world. (John 7:14-16) As a body of believers, we are to be opposite or counter to the world’s belief and values. We are a peculiar people of God, called to serve others in love. To help build a healthy congregation, we must be devoted to one another showing affection and preferring others above ourselves. The freedom and liberty we have in Christ as mature Christians should enable us to meet the needs and well-being of others. As we further engage in the art of one anothering by giving to others, we must trust God to fulfill our needs. Just think how beautiful and wonderful an experience we can all enjoy as the body of Christ, when we make God’s love known by honoring others in a self-preferring world.⁴

“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)

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.” (Roman 12:10)

¹ Jacoben, W., & Jacoben, C. Authentic Relationship: discover the lost art of “one anothering”. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, (2003). Print

² Ibid. p. 46

³ Ibid, p. 48

⁴ Ibid. p.54

In today's society it is not unusual to have a crowded agenda. We become caught up in fulfilling our own needs. How often have we found ourselves insensitive to the needs and feelings of others? Consider this; Jesus' own disciples who had walked closely with Him for three years were just as guilty. In Mark 10: 33-34, Jesus announced to the disciples His pending crucifixion, preceded by beatings, and mocking. Yet, James and John asked for a seat on the right and left of Him in glory. The other disciples were indignant perhaps because they had not asked first. (Mark 10: 35 -41) Are we any different? Jesus said to them eventually that whoever wants to be great must be your servant and that even He did not come to be served but to serve. (Mark 10:43-45) Consumed by our own mission, we do not tune in so to speak to hear the heart of another person who may be longing to be heard, understood, and shown attention or empathy. Instead, we hurriedly rush off to fulfill our own needs. The story is told of the little boy who got lost from his mother at the mall. In her anguish, she found him sometime later with his little nose pinned to the window of a manger scene. He said "Look mommy! It is Jesus – baby Jesus in the hay!" With obvious indifference to *his joy and wonder*, she jerked him away and said, "Come with me. We don't have time for that!" Are you that mother? Are you those disciples? Let us, brothers and sisters in Christ, be even more aware of the needs and feelings of others than ourselves. Remember, it is not all about you.⁵

Discussion Point #1:

Consider Joseph in Genesis 47:11- 12 who was second in command to Pharaoh. In what ways is he an example of serving others as Jesus did when he could have demanded attention for himself?

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy fleshly desires.
(HCSB, Romans 13:14)*

Discussion Point #2

Begin to think about people God has placed near you. Ask God to show you ways you can put your own need for attention, fulfillment, or desires to be heard under control to serve them. What did you do and what was the effect?

*For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you
And you gave me nothing to drink; (43) I was a stranger and you didn't take
Me in; I was naked and you didn't clothe Me, sick and in prison and you
didn't take care of Me. (HCSB, Matthew 25: 42-43)*

Biblical Exercise:

For the next two weeks ask someone in your immediate environment the following question: "What can I do for you today?" Talk about the outcome of your service with your Deacon's group or a fellow believer in Christ. What was the impact? How were you changed?

⁵ Ibid, Jacobsen, 46 - 47

Monthly Biblical Exercises

Month	Year	Monthly Biblical Exercise
October	2011	<i>Introduction to Authentic Relationships</i>
November	2011	<i>Loving Others Like God Loves You</i>
December	2011	<i>A Soft Place to Fall</i>
January	2012	<i>It's Not All About You</i>