

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

John 13:1-17

### Opening

- Gathering: Who was your best teacher in school? Were they the best because they made you pay attention to them or because they cared to help you learn?
- Today's Focus: Jesus taught by His life and actions that greatness in His kingdom comes to those who serve.
- Key Verses: *Having loved His own..., He now showed them the full extent of His love.* John 13:1  
*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.* John 13:15

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

Jesus' Example (*Philippians 2:5-8*)

- What is the key message of today's lesson?  
Philippians 2:5-7 = Imitate Christ and take *the very nature of a servant*
- How did Jesus fulfill the role of a humble, obedient servant?  
Philippians 2:8 = *Became obedient to death - even death on a cross!*

A Serving Example (*Mark 6:31-44*)

- Who was Jesus concerned about after learning of John the Baptist's death?  
Mark 6:31-32 = He wanted to give His exhausted apostles some rest
- How did Jesus react when this solitary place proved not to be so solitary?  
Mark 6:33-34 = *He had compassion on them...so He began teaching them*
- How did Jesus again play the role of a servant as evening approached?  
Mark 6:35-37 = He accepted the responsibility of feeding the crowd
- How did the great servant complete this example when His apostles gave up?  
Mark 6:38-44 = He used His faith to perform a miracle in feeding the 5000

The Example of Everyday Servants (*Luke 17:7-10*)

- How did Jesus illustrate the tireless service of an obedient servant?  
Luke 17:7-8 = Used an everyday example of a servant doing his job
- Should we, as obedient servants, expect praise for our service?  
Luke 17:9-10 = *We are unworthy servants, we have only done our duty*

The Well-Taught Students (*Mark 9:33-37*)

- Did the apostles learn servanthood after a couple of years watching Jesus live as a servant?  
Mark 9:33-34 = No, they argued about which was the greatest
- Knowing what they had discussed, how did Jesus remind them of their calling as servants?  
Mark 9:35 = He clearly said that the greatest must be *the servant of all*
- What object lesson did Jesus add to make sure they understood? = Kids were second class  
Mark 9:36-37 = Even serving lowly children is not stooping too low

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Page 2

### A Forgotten Lesson (Mark 10:13-16)

Did the apostles take this lesson to heart?

Mark 10:13 = No, they tried to keep kids from getting in Jesus' way

How did Jesus restate His lesson of a few months earlier?

Mark 10:14-16 = He pointed out how we should look up to and emulate kids in faith

### Looking for Greatness in All the Wrong Places (Mark 10:32-41)

How did Jesus again show His obedient servanthood a few days later?

Mark 10:32-34 = He went on to Jerusalem despite great danger; obeyed His destiny

Did the apostles recognize and understand what Jesus was doing?

Mark 10:35-37 = No, they continued to look for greatness in Jesus' kingdom

Were James and John willing to work to earn these positions of honor?

Mark 10:38-39 = Yes, although they didn't understand what they were agreeing to

*Drink the cup I drink* was a Jewish expression of sharing in someone's fate

Would they be given these positions of honor because they wanted them or were first to ask?

Mark 10:40 = No, those positions were reserved by the Father

How did the other apostles feel about James' and John's attempt to be the greatest?

Mark 10:41 = They were upset with them

### Greatness in the Lord's Kingdom (Mark 10:42-45; 1 Peter 5:1-6)

How did Jesus explain that greatness in His Kingdom is different than greatness in this world?

Mark 10:42-44 = Rulers are great in the world, Servants are great in God's kingdom

What example could the apostles look at to see the greatness of servanthood in action?

Mark 10:45 = Jesus Himself came not to be served but to serve

How did one of the witnesses to this lesson later explain it to other church leaders?

1 Peter 5:1-3 = Leaders should be examples of service, not as lords

What benefit is there in serving rather than ruling?

1 Peter 5:4 = Chief Shepherd will reward us with the great eternal crown of glory

Is this message of humility only for leaders?

1 Peter 5:5-6 = No, *All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another*

### A Servant to the End (John 13:1-3)

With less than 24 hours to live, what did Jesus feel was most important to do?

John 13:1 = To show His apostles *the full extent of His love*

How did this obedient servant show the full extent of His love?

John 15:13 = *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends*

Had Jesus' final hours begun to play out?

John 13:2 = Yes, His final meal was being served and Judas had already sold out

Could Jesus have stopped and changed the story at this point?

John 13:3 = Yes, *the Father had put all things under His power*

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Page 3

### The Servant Takes Off His Outer Clothing (*John 13:4*)

How did Jesus take this final opportunity to show Himself as a servant?

John 13:4 = *Laid down* his seamless robe, Put towel around waist as a servant

The verb *took off* is also translated as *laid down* in John 10. Why is this significant?

John 10:11, 15 = Jesus also *took off His outer clothing* of human life for His sheep

Why did Jesus *take off* His outer clothing?

John 10:17-18 = Out of a servant's obedience to the Father's command

### The Servant in Action (*John 13:5-8*)

How did Jesus then show that we aren't just called to look like servants?

John 13:5 = He began to wash the apostles' feet

Was this a job for important or lesser servants?

1 Samuel 25:40-41 = The lowest of servants washed feet

How was Jesus' action accepted by the apostles?

John 13:6-8a = Peter felt it was wrong for Jesus to stoop so low

What did Jesus mean by *later you will understand*?

John 14:25-26 = The Holy Spirit would explain everything to them when He comes

### Clean Souls (*John 13:8*)

How did Jesus respond to Peter's refusal to be cleaned by Jesus?

John 13:8 = You must be washed by the Lamb to belong to Him

What part will those have who are washed by the Lamb?

Revelation 7:9-10, 13-14 = Praise God in heaven

Will these saved people live as servants or will they be served by others?

Revelation 7:15a = They will serve God day and night

What joy can there be in an eternity of servanthood?

Revelation 7:15b-17 = We will serve out of joy, all our cares will be covered

### Our Bath (*John 13:9-10*)

How did Peter over-react as usual to this threat of being excluded from Jesus' kingdom?

John 13:9 = Wanted Jesus to wash all of him, not just his feet

How did Jesus use Peter's misunderstanding to teach them other lessons?

John 13:10 = Those who have taken a bath only need to wash their feet

People didn't have baths in their homes, they had to wash at a public bath

After washing, they would have to walk home on dirt roads

People kept basins of water at their doors to wash street dirt off their feet

What bath was Jesus referencing?

Romans 6:4 = We were washed clean of sin in baptism

How are we to get the "street dirt" cleaned from our feet as we walk in this world of sin?

1 John 1:9 = *If we confess our sins, He...will forgive our sins and purify us*

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Page 4

Everyone is Invited to Bathe (*John 13:11*)

What did Jesus mean in verse 10 that *not every one of you* are clean?

John 13:11 = Judas was filthy with the sin of betrayal

Why did Jesus also wash Judas' feet, knowing what he was about to do?

1 John 2:1-2 = Judas, like everyone, was offered the forgiveness of Christ

Could Judas truly have been forgiven for such a large sin?

James 5:20 = Christ's forgiveness covers all our sins, no matter how large

The Lesson Explained (*John 13:12-17*)

After this great object lesson, how did Jesus make sure the apostles got the point?

John 13:12-13 = He sat down and explained it clearly

Why did Jesus go through this whole routine rather than just saying this up front?

John 13:14-17 = His example is much stronger than words

The Final Exam (*Luke 22:24-30*)

Did the apostles finally understand what servanthood is all about?

Luke 22:24 = No, they argued again over who was the greatest

Did Jesus finally just give up?

Luke 22:25-26 = No, He again explained that the least will be the greatest

What example did Jesus again offer?

Luke 22:27 = His own life

What reward is in store for those who serve?

Luke 22:28-30 = Greatness in God's kingdom

Closing Prayer

**Response** - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I tried to be great when I should have instead been a servant?  
(*Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45; Psalm 75:7; Isaiah 2:12; Luke 14:8-14; 1 Peter 5:1-6*)
2. How has Jesus shown me the full extent of His love for me?  
(*John 13:1; 15:13; Isaiah 43:4; Romans 5:8; 8:28-39; Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 John 3:16; Revelation 1:5-6*)
3. When and how have I shown others the extent of my love?  
(*John 13:1; Matthew 5:43-48; 10:42; 28:40; Galatians 5:13-14; Hebrews 13:1-3; 1 John 4:7-12, 19*)
4. When have I ever rejected the cleansing offered by Jesus?  
(*John 3:5; 13:6-8; Psalm 51:1-12; Acts 2:37-39; 22:16; Hebrews 10:22-23; 2 Peter 1:8-9; Revelation 7:9-17*)
5. How well do I emulate Jesus' example of servanthood?  
(*John 13:14-17; Luke 12:35-37; 22:24-27; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Peter 2:21; 4:10; 1 John 2:5-6*)