

Would you rather put in the extra work, before, during and after practice and be a better player or make practice, do what you have to do and stay where you are?

Would you rather be generous, giving and humble or lazy, self-indulgent and entitled? Same could be asked would you rather serve or be served? We all have a choice, and we all get to choose.

Serving is putting others before yourself. It's about humility and a desire to be there for others. The Bible lays it out pretty straight:

“Don't be selfish; Don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves” Philippians 2:3.

Giving of your time, which for most of us, is the hardest thing to give up or share. We have places to go. Things to do. People to see. But serving is simply about making yourself available in those spaces. It's giving your time and attention to somebody else. But let's be honest - serving others isn't always the top of our list. We're tired, distracted or want to do something else with our friends. But when we think about it for a minute from the receiving end, we can start to see the value and importance of serving.

Insert your story of when you served someone or group sacrificially. Maybe the time, place, number of people was changed up and you had to pivot – internally and/or externally.

Like the time I organized an event for the 4-6th graders to paint rocks for our local care pregnancy center. I ordered supplies and even special paint pens because I knew their skill level was up to it. I was also looking forward to connecting with them in their stage of life and the struggles they faced. We had a great group show up - along with all their younger siblings- and I'm talking pre-K and kindergarten! I had not designed the day or if I'm honest, desired for such young kids to be involved. I'd imagined a real bonding time with the older students. Instead, I ended up doing more babysitting than an art workshop. But I quickly made a plan B and it worked out great.

The younger littles were so proud of being with the big kids, the older kids eagerly helped the younger ones. The parents were glad that they could all be a part of serving others together.

Looking from our own perspective it's hard sometimes to see that we can make a difference and that's really the biggest thing - understanding that spending time with people *really* does make a difference in the world.

It's so easy just to ask, "Why bother?" It doesn't matter or make a difference, but it *does!* It matters to the people who you are serving and it can matter to you. That's the beautiful thing about serving. It's a win-win! And when we see what others struggle with, are lacking, or the challenges that they endure daily, we can gain a very healthy perspective and respect for those who we are serving and gain a greater appreciation of what we have.

Insert your own story of working with others who have less than you. *Like on a mission trip outside Cincinnati holding a weeklong free sports camp at a local park in the inner city for kids aged 6 to 12. Just having the opportunity to be a part of an organized sporting event, get free snacks and lunch, and be loved on by us running the program would be a highlight of these inner-city kids summer.*

Or filling gallon-sized Ziploc bags with socks, snacks, toothbrush and toothpaste wipes, chapstick, deodorant, band aids and antibiotic ointment, nail clippers and a comb. And carrying these in your car to hand out to people on the street. A tangible gift and example of your care for them.

Or serving those you'll never see or know by picking up the trash every few months along the highway.

For every effort we make to serve others, we get blessed in return. Imagine you being the one walking into a Care Pregnancy Center for a pregnancy test (with your girlfriend) . On the way in, you pass a rock garden filled with encouraging words with a sign take one. You pick up one that says "love life", "be strong", or "love more". Or being homeless and getting a real goodie bag not only for today, but with things that will last you a month or more. Or notice that the side of the road looks a lot nicer. It doesn't take a lot to make a big impact in the life of somebody else. That is the value of serving.

Think about how much time you spend pursuing your interests and hobbies. What drives you to give so much of yourself to those pursuits?

Who has modeled serving to you?

How have they modeled serving to you?

Where would you consider serving others?

