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# Shepherd's Path

## A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

### Spring Cleaning Series, Lesson 54

**Lesson Title:** Sweep Away Self-Centeredness

**Take Home Point:** Sweep away self-centeredness  
– serve others.

#### Warm-Up:

In his book, *The Prince and the Pauper*, author Mark Twain weaves a story about two boys whose appearance is so similar that they are mistaken for each other. But one is no ordinary boy. He is the Prince of Wales, heir to the throne of England. Servants respond to his slightest whim, and he grows up believing he is due the service of all and that he serves no one but himself. But for a period of four weeks, chance circumstances result in his living as one born in the lowest London slum, while his look-alike is treated with all the deference given a member of the royal family in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The young prince learns what it is like to be unloved and served by no one. When he is restored to his rightful position and crowned king, he always remembers what he experienced and rules his country with a consideration of others.

**Read:** Galatians 5:13-15, Matthew 20:28

#### Observation (What happened?):

What was the greatest service Jesus performed for us?

What is the negative alternative to serving others in love?

#### Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What does Paul mean when he says we will destroy each other if we don't serve?

What does it mean to "love your neighbor as yourself?"

#### Insight:

Jesus absolutely turned the world on its head through both his teachings and his life on earth. He taught us that our first priority, after loving God, is to serve others. That is completely counter to the world's view. The natural human tendency is "me first." In Mark 10:43-45 Jesus said, "...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." (NIV) As others see us serve, they see Jesus and are drawn to him. Service takes many forms, as many forms as God desires. Some are called to specific ministries such as pastor (or small group shepherd!); others are called to serve where they are – in their workplace, neighborhood, or social environment. Some give sacrificially so others can be freed of the need to earn a living. Some serve in abject poverty, some in positions of wealth. Some receive worldly recognition, most labor in obscurity. None of that matters. What matters is that we serve others and so obey the word of Christ. That is the real reward.

#### Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you keep your own self-centeredness in check?

Take a moment to thank God that he allows you to serve the children of your small group.