

Now Serving

2023



Anyone who wants  
to be first must  
be the very last,  
and the servant  
of all.

MARK 9:35

We are thrilled to embark on this journey of preparation for your mission trip at Impact! Thank you so much for your willingness to respond to God's call and your willingness to serve with us.

We hope that resources such as this devotion guide will be helpful to you as you prepare for your experience. Our goal is that your time at Impact will be more than a short-term experience – that it will be a new chapter in a life of mission. We have developed the devotions around our theme – Now Serving. One of the most important models Jesus set for us was that of a servant. And he has called us to live as servants of God by serving others. You'll have devotional material for before camp to help you prepare, during camp to help you reflect, and after camp to help you consider "what's next." Here's what you'll read each week:

**Before** - We will reflect on why we serve and what that means for how we should approach a mission trip (and life after).

**During** - We will reflect on how we can serve – both how we will serve during camp and other ways that we can serve so we don't have to wait for next year to serve again.

**After** - We will consider where we can serve – serving God and serving others is not location specific – it's a call for every day and every place.

Each devotion includes a passage to read, devotional thoughts, a reflection question, and a prayer prompt. You will also find a space for writing your thoughts at the end of each section (before, during, after).

We pray God's peace to you as you prepare to take on a new challenge as part of God's worldwide mission.

## Daily Schedule:

6:00 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30 a.m.	Morning Gathering
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Work on Job Site (lunch around 12:00 p.m.)
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Free Time/Shower Time
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Worship
8:00-8:30 p.m.	Church Group Devotions/Quiet time
8:30-11:00 p.m.	Free Time
11:00 p.m.	Lights Out

# Before Camp

## DAY 1 | WHY WE SERVE | MATTHEW 20:25-28 (NIV)

*25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

As you prepare for your week of Impact, you have a great opportunity to serve people you have never met. At some point during the week you will probably find people who are surprised that you would spend a week doing this kind of work. They'll be more surprised that you pay for the experience. We have ideas of what greatness is, and those ideas are what makes it so surprising that you would do what you're doing. But we have a different model for greatness – Jesus – who wasn't particularly wealthy, politically powerful, or great by any measure that was common at the time. Instead, he came to serve up to the point of giving his own life. While we are not likely to be called upon to sacrifice our lives, his example of service is our model for how we should serve. We can give of ourselves to others – dedicating our lives to serving others. That is how we will achieve the greatness that is eternal.

### Reflect

When has an act of service felt like something great – either a time you served someone or a time someone served you?

### Pray

God, help me to find a passion for service as I prepare to go to camp. Help me to find ways to serve others and experience the greatness that you offer through that service.

## DAY 2 | WHY WE SERVE | MATTHEW 5:13-16 (NIV)

*13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.*

*14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

One of the scariest things about a mission trip is when you realize that you are not just representing yourself – you are the hands and feet of Christ to the people you are serving. When Jesus spoke to the people at the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), he used the images of salt and light to show people that they bring God's flavor and God's glory into the world. People see God by looking at God's followers – in this case, that's us. We come to a mission trip (and honestly, every day of our lives) representing not just ourselves, but our families, our churches, our communities, and our God. When we serve others, whether it's offering a repair to their home or offering a kind word and listening ear while others do that work, we are showing people that God is a God of love. Our service teaches them God's character. What a privilege it is to be able to represent God to the world – and what a responsibility.

### Reflect

What are some actions you can take to ensure that you represent God well when you serve? What do you want your actions to say about God?

### Pray

God, thank you for the gift of being your representative. Help me to show others that you are a God of love by showing love to those I serve.

## DAY 3 | WHY WE SERVE | GALATIANS 5:13-15 (NIV)

*13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*

Freedom and service are two concepts that don't automatically seem to go together. Having freedom means some ability to do what we want. But in this passage Paul talks about freedom – and immediately tells us our responsibility. We are free to do what we want, but our response to that freedom in Christ should be to serve one another. We are free from the law, but we can fulfill the law by following one command – to love one another. That's a very different kind of freedom than the one we often see lived out around us. We are free to do what we want, so we do exactly that – regardless of how that affects the people around us. But when we see that freedom as a freedom to do for others, instead of for ourselves, we begin to see God's will for our lives.

### Reflect

What first comes to mind when you think about freedom? In what ways is it freeing to serve others?

### Pray

God, thank you for the freedom you have given us in Christ. Thank you for the call to serve that shows that freedom to others. Help us all to love our neighbor – so that we can know true freedom.

## DAY 4 | WHY WE SERVE | HEBREWS 6:9-12 (NIV)

*9 Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. 10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.*

*11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. 12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

One of the first questions we are taught to consider when any new opportunity arises is “what’s in it for me?” Taking this approach is so ingrained in us that it’s even become part of service. For many of you, your week at camp will satisfy a requirement for service hours. Different organizations give awards for service. And there’s a lot of praise and good feelings that come from giving your time – especially going away for a week to serve. It can be easy – if you don’t give thought ahead of time to why you are serving – to focus on how you benefit from it. Our goal – first and foremost – should be to show God’s love to the people we serve. We do it for their benefit – not for ours. But as the writer of Hebrews says, God is just and will not forget the work we do. We work for a blessing in the future. By honoring God’s love and serving our neighbors, whatever benefit we may receive in the short-term becomes a lot less important when we know that God has a reward for us that will be eternal.

### Reflect

In what ways do you benefit from serving? What is the best thing about serving others for you? How does the hope God offers fit into that?

### Pray

God, thank you for the opportunities that I will have to serve – and the ways you will bless me now and for years to come through that service. Help me to focus on how my service helps others and glorifies you, but help me to appreciate the gifts I receive as well.

## DAY 5 | WHY WE SERVE | ROMANS 12:1-2 (NIV)

*1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

The two things that really make Impact different than other camps you might go to in the summer are that we spend time serving people and we spend time in worship. Spending each day giving of yourself to others and spending time reflecting on what God is saying to you and worshiping with others is key to getting the full experience. But our acts of service and our worship aren't really two separate things. When we serve others – when we make sacrifices for the sake of others – that is an act of worship as well. It doesn't make sense to people who haven't experienced it, but that kind of experience can transform us. We take that time away from our regular lives to be more prepared to live out our lives of worship and service when we return. As you prepare to go to Impact, spend time reflecting on what you will be giving up during the week. And offer that to God as an act of worship.

### Reflect

When you think of service, do you see any elements of worship in it? When you think of worship, how does it transform you? In what ways do you need to be renewed?

### Pray

God, as I prepare to go and serve, I ask you to renew my mind. Accept the work I do as an act of worship, and show me your will for me.



A series of 20 horizontal lines, providing a template for writing or drawing.