

The Heart of Serving

Ready:

"Based on the gift they have received, everyone should use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, [his speech should be] like the oracles of God; if anyone serves, [his service should be] from the strength God provides, so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen." -1 Peter 4:10-11 (HCSB)

Set

Bottom line -- it is hard to serve others in the arena of competition. I remember the one great story that happened in 1976 at a Special Olympics track and field event in Spokane, Washington. During the race, one contestant took a tumble, and one of the other athletes turned back to help the fallen one. They both finished the race and crossed the finish line together. This was a classic example of a one competitor serving another in competition.

What does it mean to serve others when competing? If it had been you in the situation above, would you have turned to go back? When it comes to serving others as an athlete or coach, there are 4 P's at the Heart of Serving that God can use in our lives: Power, Purpose, Plan and Passion.

1. The Power of Serving

There is power in serving others. Not natural power but supernatural power. It is not about getting power but giving power. Many people serve so that they can be served. This is not serving that pleases God. Power comes through purity. We need to be anointed competitors, set apart for God purposes and ready to be used by Him. In 2 Timothy 2:21-22, Paul writes, "So if anyone purifies himself from these things, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

2. The Purpose of Serving

The purpose of serving is "For His Glory" -- that is, God's glory. After we have served others, they should say, "God is good," not "You are good." The purpose of serving is to lift the name of Jesus. Period. Rick Warren says, "We serve God by serving others. The world defines greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige and position. In our self-serving culture with its me-first mentality, acting like a servant is not a popular concept." When we serve, we represent to the world what Jesus looks like.

3. The Plan of Serving

The game plan of serving is to take every gift, skill, talent and ability that God has given you and use it to serve others. You experience joy when you do what God has created you to do. When serving, there needs to be intentionality (plan it), intensity (seize it) and intimacy (feel it).

4. The Passion of Serving

The passion comes from the heart. As competitors, we know all about passion. But do we have passion to serve. Does it consume us? Do we hit the field and say, "Who can I serve today at practice?" Samuel Chadwick nailed it when he wrote these words. "Spirit-filled souls are ablaze for God. They love with a love that glows. They serve with a faith that kindles. They serve with a devotion that consumes. They hate sin with fierceness that burns. They rejoice with a joy that radiates. Love is perfected in the fire of God."

Go

1. Is there power in your serving?
2. Is there a purpose when you serve your teammates?
3. Do you have a specific plan to serve others? Are you using your gifts to serve?
4. Are you serving with a passion that consumes?

Workout

Extra Reading: John 13:1-20

Overtime

"Lord Jesus, I want to serve others. Teach me how. I have teammates that need to see You through my serving. It is an incredible responsibility, but I know that You will help me as I remain faithful. My desire is to serve with a supernatural power, a clear purpose, a specific plan and a consuming passion." Amen.



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