

Serve Saints

All right, guys, welcome back to The Real Man podcast for the summer. We're in a Good Fight. It's a verse-by-verse-ish study of the New Testament Book of 1 Timothy, and I wanna thank you guys for tuning in. We've taken a break from the large live group meeting, so we're just doing kind of a little conversational time between you and I over the course of the summer. But thank you, it's been really remarkable. I mean, recently upwards of a couple hundred thousand guys a week are joining us just for our Real Men discussion. And the need is very, very great. And this week we're looking at Command number Five, Serve Saints, and it's in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. If you've got a Bible and you're looking, and the big idea this week, Paul is this older man, spiritual father, writing to a younger man, spiritual son named Timothy, kind of giving him practical advice for life. And it's the kind of stuff that every guy needs to hear and every young guy would benefit from hearing from an older man. And this week, the big E on the Eye Chart is Serving. And so, I wanna just talk a little bit about serving. Christianity is what we believe, but it's also how we behave. And serving is part of what it means to be a faithful Christian. And serving especially in your local church, honestly, is one of the things that the Holy Spirit will use to unlock maturity, growth, relationship, and joy in your life. I grew up in a... A little bit about my story. I grew up in a Catholic Church, altar boy for a few years, Catholic School. I didn't know Jesus and I didn't read the Bible. That was not the church's fault, I don't blame anybody. That was my responsibility and I never once remember really serving. Occasionally, I would attend and lay in the pew and take a nap as a kid, and that was about it. And never really served and didn't really care what was happening, and didn't really want to be a part of it. Fast-forward, I became a Christian at age 19 in college, and really all of a sudden, had these new desires from the Holy Spirit, and say, "I wanna learn the Bible and I wanna go to church, and I wanna meet God's people." And God was gracious. I found an incredible Bible-teaching church led by a gifted, godly, brilliant, and humble man of God. And immediately, I started serving. I'll never forget, they said, "Hey, we got all these things going on. We need people to serve." It was the first time in my whole life as a Christian that I actually thought, "Huh, I wanna serve. I gotta, I, this is my church, you know, I'm part of this big extended family. I wanna do my part to help." So, I started giving and I started serving. And so, I signed up and started serving in kids ministry. I think that was the first place I served. There was a women's Bible study. I was a 19-year-old college student and they couldn't find anybody to watch like couple dozen kids for a daytime women's Bible study. I'm like, "I'll do it." So, I signed up and I show up, well, come to find, I'm the only person that signed up to watch like a couple of dozen toddlers. And so, it's basically like a mini prison ride and I'm the only guard on duty. And so, I ended up learning to do, you know, snacks and teach Bible studies and pray with kids, and lead worship. And I'm sure it was all not very good, but the kids were gracious. And so, my first ministry was kids ministry and I really, really loved it. Then, I also started volunteering for a high school ministry called Young Life, and helping a little bit with the high school kids at the local high school. And then, they said, "Hey, we've got some elderly people in the community that can't get outta the house." So, we have Meals on Wheels and we bring food to them. By this time, Grace, my now wife, then girlfriend, was coming out to college to be with me. So, we took our Saturday mornings and we would drive meals to older people's homes and bring them food that couldn't get out. And it was amazing because they didn't get out and they didn't get many visitors. So, most of these people were very lonely and they wanted

you to come in and talk and visit with them. Well, we got to share Jesus with them and pray with 'em and some of them are sick and they're dying and they're like, "What happens you think when I die?" And I'm like, "Well, let's talk about the resurrection of Jesus and Heaven and Hell." And so, literally, immediately from the beginning of my salvation, I started serving and it changed my whole life. I fell in love with the church and met great friends and Grace and I have always, since our dating years when she came back to the Lord and a Candler, we've always served together. That's been one of the unifying factors in our marriage is just serving together. Fast-forward, we've got five kids. We planted a church in Arizona some years ago. We do real-faith ministries together. We do trendy church together. Grace and I serve together. I run Real Men, she runs Real Women. Our kids all serve Jesus. We're a family that just makes serving at church among our highest priorities. And it has been one of the great blessings in our entire life. We have great friends, great community, great support. We get to see God change people's lives. It's really fun, the kids own their faith early. It's their church, their ministry, their Jesus. And so, I'm just telling you God's so good that when you serve, everybody wins, you win, your marriage wins, your kids win, the church wins, and other people win. And the church of Jesus Christ today, is the biggest force for good and the greatest volunteer movement in the history of the world. So, this week we're talking Command number Five, Serve Saints. Let me just read the section to you 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and then we'll unpack it. "Deacons," and the literal word there means servant. People who serve. People who are serving. "Deacons, likewise, must be dignified." He's compare, likewise is the comparison to the previous list of leader qualifications that he just gave. Many would say that the first list was for the more senior leaders and that this list would be for the assistant leaders who come alongside of the senior leaders in the church. "Deacons, likewise, must be dignified. There's gonna be 12 traits and two rewards. Here are some of the traits. Not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, and let them also be tested first, then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise, must be dignified. Not slanderous but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children in their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus." Some of you are in churches where they'll have a group of people called deacons. I don't want to argue over terms and org charts and what different churches mean, but really, it just is servant. That's the original word. Deacon means servant, a person who serves. And unlike our culture, which is built on the serving and service industry where you pay people to serve you, in the Kingdom of God, serving is a high value. Jesus said, "I didn't come to be served but to serve." They asked Jesus, "How do You become the greatest?" And He didn't rebuke them, He redirected them. He said, "Well, if you want to be great in the Kingdom of God, you need to be a great servant." Whole Books of the Bible written by men like Paul, start by him introducing himself as quote, "A servant of Jesus Christ." And so, what we're talking about is a person whose primary ministry is serving. Some people the way they do ministry is with their mouth. They teach, they preach, they encourage, they counsel. Others, it's primarily with their hands. They serve, they do things. And so, the list of senior leaders and associate leaders here is pretty much the same with the exception of teaching. They both need to have the same character, but those who preach and teach have certain

requirements for their theological clarity and acuity. And for those who are serving, they need to love and serve the Lord, but they don't need to be able to articulate certain things at the same level of depth. And in this as well, there is a debate because it mentions here the wives. So, it talks about the men who are serving and then the wives. And the question is, well, are these the wives of the men that are serving, or an alternate rendering? Is the women, are these women who serve? I think it's women who serve. And what it's talking about here is men and women who are leaders in the church and they are serving, they may or may not be on paid staff. They may or may not have a title. They may or may not have an official position, but they have a very important role of serving, and I think He has some additional expectations for women. So, let me jump in. And these are things, as you hear these, it's always good to, first, a friend of mine says, "Use the Bible as a mirror to examine your own life before you use it as binoculars to judge others." You don't wanna take this list and just judge other people. You wanna judge yourself and you want to ask yourself, "How is my character? Are there areas that I need to grow, if I want to serve and or serve in a way that is leadership? Are there any areas of my character that need to be cultivated so that I can be best ready for that? Number one, dignified. And what this basically means is people respect you. When you're a young guy and you're growing up, most of the time the goal is to be liked. There's a big difference between being liked and being respected. The class clown, you know, the guy who will do anything for a dollar, the guy who drinks too much and makes a fool of himself. People like him but they don't respect him. What dignified means is they respect you. You're not perfect, but people look at your life and your character and they say, "That's the kind of guy I want to hang out with as a friend." Younger guys say, "That's the kind of big brother, I wish I had." Older guys say, "That's a son I want to invest in." And gals are like, "He's probably gonna be a good husband and father," it's you have dignity, you have your own gravitas, your own character, and people respect you. And leadership really, truly, at the end of the day, it's influence. And if you have character, you can influence people. But if you don't have character, people won't allow you to influence them. Number two, not double-tongued. And what this means is your yes is yes, your no is no, you don't have fear of man, you're willing to have healthy conflict. You don't say one thing to one person, one thing to another. When you do wrong, you own it, you own up to it. When you communicate, you're sincere, your heartfelt, you're earnest, you're honest, you're genuine, you're authentic. There are some people you're like, "Man, you say one thing to them and something to someone else. You're double-tongued like we're not sure who you are, what you believe, or what you're going to say." This is a person who is consistent in their character and their communication. Number three, not addicted. Here it mentions wine. Today, this would be any addiction. One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control. And if you can't lead yourself, you can't lead in anybody else. And before you devote your time to serving other people, you better get your own house in order. This would include not only alcohol addiction, this would include prescription drug addiction. This would include illegal drug addiction. This would include pornography addiction. This would include gambling addiction. There are all different ways that people go after the dopamine hit on the front of the brain and dudes get into a lot of trouble. And if you're somebody who is out of control, you need to learn to practice self-control before you can start serving other people. And sometimes what people do, sometimes people who are the most messed up, have the worst trauma or the deepest addiction, they run to the church and

they just wanna serve, serve, serve, serve, serve. And it's their way of ignoring their own pains and problems, and not healing from their own troubles and traumas. And so, you're not supposed to use serving as a way of avoiding dealing with your issues, but you deal with your issues so that you're a healthy person then, ready to help other people. All right, guys, Pastor Mark here letting you know about the latest book "New Days, Old Demons". It's a prophetic word against pathetic wokeness. You guys understand exactly what I'm talking about. Hopefully, it is on sale. If not, it's coming out very, very soon. Would appreciate your prayers as we punch a lot of people and things in the mouth, and if it's a help, get a copy. Goes on to say, "Not greedy for dishonest gain, and not a lover of money." Some will talk about that the love, that money rather, is the root of all kinds of evil. It's the love of money. And what it's talking about here is not greedy, not a lover of money, meaning whether or not you're paid or how much you're paid shouldn't change who you are and what you do and how you behave, and what you believe. Some people, if you pay them enough, they will literally change their character. They will do things that are shady or criminal or sinful. Other people, if you pay them enough money, they'll just completely disobey and disregard and defy God. And the question is, you know, is your soul for sale? If so, you really need to get right with Jesus. And the anecdote to greediness is contentment. And Paul says this elsewhere, he also writes this. He says, "I've had a lot and I've had a little, and here's what I've learned. Be content with what God gives." And so, if you are serving and or you're serving in a leadership position and you're greedy, all kinds of things can happen. Number one, you could start stealing stuff that didn't belong to you. That's what Judas Iscariot did in the Ministry of Jesus. Number two, you could start making decisions that compromise what the Bible says, but it generates more revenue or increases your platform on social media. Number three, it could be that you take people who are high net worth, and you generate revenue from them. So, you don't really tell the truth to them or have them deal with their issues or lovingly lead them well. Instead, they're sort of paying you to overlook their lifestyle, and sometimes when you're serving, or most of the time when you're serving, it's as an unpaid volunteer. And that's what's so amazing about the church. There's all these criticisms of the church, and most of 'em are just baseless. But Christians serve, they give their time in such incredibly generous hours. You think about the average local church, the vast majority or the average local ministry, the vast majority of everything that happens is from unpaid volunteers, and you know, those people aren't in it for the love of money because the total net gain for them is zero. So, thank you for those of you who serve. It goes on to say, "Holds the mystery of faith with a clear conscience." This doesn't mean that you're gonna win the "Bible Jeopardy" episode, and you've got everything figured out, and you've memorized whole Books of the Bible and you can argue the finer points of theology. What it means is this, I love Jesus, I believe the Bible. I understand the basics of the Christian faith. I wholeheartedly agree to them and I'm a faithful Christian. And if you're gonna be a preacher or a teacher, yeah, you're gonna need another level of knowledge or learning. But some of you are just, your guys who work with your hands, you're like, "I love Jesus, I believe the Bible. I can't argue Greek words, I won't quote dead people." And all the, you know, all the Latin words just kind of freak me out. And you know, if you ask me, I might get justification, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification messed up at some point. But I do know and love Jesus. What we're not looking for here are perfect theologians. We're looking for earnest Christians and a lot of their ministry is with their hands.

And I would say this, that's a lot like Jesus, the first 90% of His life up until about age 30, He wasn't preaching sermons and arguing theology that we know much. Instead, He was spending a lot of time swinging a hammer, working a job as a carpenter with His Dad. And what it's saying is, "Guys who serve are like that. They love the Lord." But a lot of what they do is with their hands. They may not win an argument, but they will finish a project. Faithful guys. And then, lastly, test it. That means proven worthy over time, you know, everybody gets off to a good start. Who's gonna hang in there and finish well? There's a line that comes to mind in the Old Testament. It's from a non-Christian, but it's an interesting insight. He says, "The man who is putting his uniform on before battle should not boast like the man who is taking off his uniform after battle." And the point is this: Don't tell us what a great soldier you are until the fight's done. And at the beginning of a ministry or a school year or a sports team or a military campaign, everybody's just, "We're gonna do this and I'm gonna do that it's gonna be amazing." And you, we wait and see, all right, well, let's just give it some time. Let's just see some weeks, months, years down the road you're still reading your Bible, still loving Jesus, still married to your wife, still invest into your kids, still paying your bills, still tithing, still showing up to church, still serving. Is there faithfulness over time? That's fidelity, and a lot of guys go up fast and they come down hard. The goal is to just stay up in the Will of God. And that's what testedness is. It's a fidelity over time. And how many of us know a guy who was highly gifted but didn't have great character and, man, it got off to a good start, and then just, you know, imploded their whole life. Sex, alcohol, drugs, sin, anger, heresy, deconstructionism, apostasy, whatever the case may be. Then there are some additional requirements. It says, "For the wives," I think the best rendering of the Greek, not that I'm a scholar but according to what I've studied, is the women. And these are one, two, three, four additional qualifications for women. And I would say this to the guys if you want to... If you're married and you wanna serve with your wife, these would be good things for your wife to also examine her character so that she'd be ready to serve others. If you are a dad, a girl-dad, as I am, I got two awesome girls. The question is, can you help cultivate these virtues in your daughters, encourage them?" And if you're a single guy looking for a wife, man, look for this girl. Look for the girl who loves Jesus, has character, and is serving Jesus. She's gonna be an awesome wife. First is dignified. And that means that she is generally respected by other men and women. Single guys say, "She's a good girl, she's not super sexual and flirty." Married couples look at her and say, "She's got good character, we like her." And she's the kind of gal, the kind of whoever you ask, they're like, "Oh, she loves the Lord and she's faithful and consistent and has character, she has dignity." And we live in a day, when there's a lot of undignified behavior that's encouraged for young women. Go online, take off your clothes, have a few drinks, act like a crazy, you know, available woman. That's not what we're talking about. Dignified is character in the Spirit. Godliness, integrity from the inside out at the level of the soul, not a slander. And what this means is she keeps an eye on her mouth. And sometimes, women can get into trouble with their tongue and I know that's offensive, but it's true, that's why it's in the Bible. And so, what this means is not a malicious talker, not a backstabber, not a gossip, not a liar, not a slander. She's not a busybody, she's not looking for gossip and news, she's not living on social media, peering into other people's lives and then peering into her own, meaning you can trust this person with information, they can hold a confidence and they tend to speak to people instead of about them. If you're a slanderer, you're speaking about someone. If you're

dignified and Godly, you speak to them, you're like, "Hey, we've got a problem, we need to talk about it." And I'm not going to invite in all of Instagram and try and form a mob to make this misery. Number nine, sober-minded. What this means, emotionally temperate, under control. Not a gal who's like a volcano that could explode at any moment. Not a chick who's like a grenade with a pin pulled. What we're talking about here is she has some emotional steadiness that is dependable and if a gal can't control her emotions or she can't control her tongue or she can't control her character, if she's serving in church, has close access to people, has a lot of inside information, all of a sudden, she not only harms herself, she harms everyone else and creates a lot of drama around her. I know this sounds offensive, I should have brought in Grace. She runs real women and she deals with women in women's ministry. And these are the gals that cause a lot of trouble. They don't have dignity, they don't control their mouth and also they can't control their emotions. Those are some issues and problems. I know it's an old book, but it's still the issue. Last one, for the gals, faithful in all things, that means whatever their role is, they've been dependable. If they're married, they're a faithful wife. If they're got kids, they're a faithful mom. If they've got a job, they're a faithful employee. If they're a friend, they've been a faithful friend. And the point is that you can trust them with people and information because they have demonstrated a faithfulness to the Lord in all areas of life. Two additional qualifications for men, and this is really important for us men to consider. Number one, "The husband of one wife." In the original Text, it literally means a one-woman-man. And what that means is he's committed to one woman. Now, in the ancient world, polygamy was a problem and tragically in our day, it's becoming a problem. You've got these weird shows, "Sister Wives", and I threw up in my mouth the other day and saw one called "Brother Wives" where there's some chick with a couple of dudes who apparently did not have a good father and should have wore a helmet playing sports as a kid because they're not thinking straight. But this weird day of polygamy and open marriages and all of this nonsense, it's coming back and it's tragic, but literally, a one-woman-man is you're only married to one person and it's a woman. Just write that down, dudes. Two things you want to do, get married, number one, to a woman. Number two, just make that a life goal. And so you're married to a woman but then you're faithful to that woman. You're not running around with another woman, you don't have other chicks on the side, you're not sliding into your DMs. You don't have what's called a work spouse, which is you've got a chick at work, that your wife is not there. But then, it's like an emotional surrogate. She gets you coffee, she makes sure that she, you know, looks pretty and smells nice and doesn't button all the buttons and comes over to lean over the desk and check in on your day and see how you're doing. And maybe, you get lunch together and decide to go on some sort of business trip together, which only ends with the breaking of commandments and quick succession, so it's not that kind of guy. It's the kind of guy that if a gal pursues him and is not married to him, he shuts it down. If a chick wants to follow him on social media, but it's his old high-school girlfriend who's hotter than Hell but literally with the flames of Hell, he blocks her and says, "No." It's the guy who, when he is interviewing for a gal at work, the gal who shows up and really flirts with him to get the job is not the gal that he hires. And so, it's a one-woman-man, it reminds me of Job 31:1. He says this, he said, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look upon another woman lustfully." So, this is a guy, his heart, his hands, his eyes, his mind, his soul is just devoted to his wife. And I've been faithfully married to my wife, Grace, for more than 30 years. We had our first

date, March 12th, 1988, and I've only held hands with two girls since then and those are my two daughters, that's it. That's all I've got to report. A very joyful, boring testimony. But, man, if you're gonna be a man in ministry, people are gonna trust you. Women are going to feel safe with you. People are gonna confide information in you, they're gonna invite you into some of the most emotional, weak moments of their life and they're vulnerable, and if you're a leader, you need to be a safe man, especially for women, and that's what it's talking about. And then, lastly, one other for us guys, manages household and family well, and even if you're never gonna be a formal official leader in the church, you wanna be a good servant of Jesus, you wanna be a good servant of your wife, you wanna be a good servant of your kids and you want to be a good servant at your church. And ministry starts at home. And when He says managing the family well, what He's talking about here, their children, and it, here, means young children. If you're a 70-year-old senior pastor and your 40-year-old son gets a DUI, that's on him, not you. He's a grown man. It's talking here about when your children are under roof and when you're their father and they're growing up, that you're praying with them and you're ministering to them and you're teaching them the Bible and you're setting a godly example of faith in the household and in the Church House for them, and ultimately, what it means is this, ministry starts at home. And if I had to say anything, I think that oftentimes what we do, those of us who care a lot about ministry or love the church or feel called to ministry, whether it's paid or unpaid, we overlook our first ministry, which is our wife and kids. And Jesus says, "Love your neighbor," well, I'll tell you, your closest neighbors are your wife and kids. Those are your nearest neighbors. That's what Martin Luther says. Start with your nearest neighbor, your wife, and kids. And if you're not doing ministry at home, then start there at your house before you go to God's House. before you or your wife give all your hours to the church, make sure that you're loving each other, caring for one another, growing in your friendship, praying together, investing in your kids. And then, what happens is as your church is welcoming you, you're bringing the overflow of life and the Spirit in your marriage and family into the church to serve together as a family rather than going to the church as an excuse to not work on the things that you need to work on with your marriage and kids. And I've seen this way too many times in my life where the wife or the kids or the husband feel like they've been widowed or orphaned, that the ministry or the church has overtaken the family and that's not God's priority. "Two rewards," He says you get as we wrap this up, a good standing. And what this means is you're gonna be honored and rewarded before God eternally but also, you have a clear conscience. You're not a perfect guy, but you're like, "You know what? I do love Jesus and I love my wife and I love my kids. And we're serving Jesus together at our church, and we're doing some sort of ministry as a family." And I don't care what this is. You're musical, join the worship department. You're nice, join the greeting team. You're nerds, be on the tech team. you like getting thrown up on serve in kids ministry or recovery ministry, just find a place that works for you. In addition, He says, "You have great confidence in the faith," and what this means is the more that you're serving together as a family, the more everyone in your family is going to own their faith personally. They're like, and I'll say this if you serve, you're gonna grow deeper in your relationship with the Lord and have a greater love for your church family. If you serve with your wife, God's gonna bless that and it's gonna deepen your marriage and give you something meaningful ministry-wise to do together that causes you to feel like, "Man, we are filled with the Spirit. We're serving Jesus, God's using us, we're helping other

people, this is awesome." And then, your kids draft behind that. This is the bonus round, and your kids are like, "We love Jesus, we wanna serve." And a lot of times parents will ask, "How do I get my kids to really take their faith seriously?" It's really simple. Get 'em to serve as soon as possible. Have them serving in ministry, serving in church, praying for other people, serving other people, doing things to where they're owning their faith as early as possible because we live in this consumer culture that says the way that you mature is by consuming, it's not. It's not just consuming sermons, consuming worship music from bands, consuming programming. It's not by consuming, but it's by serving, that's the key. And so, as early as your whole family can be serving each other and serving Jesus together, what it says is a good standing and great confidence. Everything will be blessed and get better. The, one of the great joys, I'll close with this, in my life, is planning a church with our kids where we all serve together and we still do. And they met their spouses serving at the church and they met their friends serving at the church. And when my grandkids get here, they're gonna grow up serving and making friends with other families at the church, their mentors, their support system. Our older couples in the church, the people that they're investing in are younger people like brothers and sisters, younger brothers and sisters in the church. And so, it has been the great blessing and joy of our life and family. And because we love you, we want the same for you. So, two questions for those of you guys who are in groups, are you serving in your local church? And if so, what difference has it made and what blessing has it been? And what have you learned even through the hard times and the difficulties because you're still dealing with human beings. And number two, if you're not serving, when are you gonna start? Where are you gonna start? How are you gonna start? And if you are the dad, you gotta pick the church. You're the head of household. And statistically, when dad goes to church, the whole family goes to church. If mom goes to church and dad doesn't go, eventually, the kids don't go either, especially the sons. So, you men, find your local church, maybe visit a few times for yourself if you don't have one, bring your wife and kids. Sign up to start serving and I promise you it's gonna change your life. Thanks for tuning in. Pastor Mark here saying thank you for giving me the honor of helping you to learn God's Word in a world filled with bad news, you need some good news. In a world filled with lies, you need some truth. And so, as I like to say, it's all about Jesus. We open the Bible and we help people learn about Jesus Christ, and I just want to say, if you would help me get the Word of God out, it would mean the world to me. You can go to realfaith.com, Mountain of Bible teaching. I mean, we're coming up on three decades of Bible teaching and or if you just go to 99383, and text the word UNFILTERED again, that's 99383 UNFILTERED, we'll send you a link that'll open up literally thousands and thousands and thousands of pieces of free Bible teaching.