



**Intro Video: Happiness is helping others (full 3:05 video)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcrulov45bl>

Emotions. Happiness. Deeper understanding. Love. A world made more beautiful. According to this commercial by Thai Life Insurance, these are things that you can receive, feel, or witness when you help others.

Tonight, we're focusing on what it means to serve, and the importance of putting others before ourselves. The passage we'll be studying is a conversation that Jesus had with His disciples, but before we get into that I want to tell you a story.

**[LEADER NOTE:** Next, tell a story about how you or someone you know put themselves up on a pedestal. My story follows below.]

*As you know, I was in the restaurant business for quite a while before God called me into ministry. I want to share with you the single most important thing I learned in 12 years of managing restaurants; leading by example. I had so many bosses that told me what to do and how to do it, but they wouldn't lift a finger to do it themselves. The best boss I ever had was one of the "higher-up" bosses that flew in a couple times a year to check up on our restaurants.*

*As soon as he walked in, he greeted everyone. What amazed me though was that the next thing he would do is throw on an apron! What? A guy that makes six figures that spends time flying around to different states puts on an apron when he's visiting? And get this, he not only put on an apron, but he'd wash his hands, sweep the floors, clear off tables, bring customers their food, scrub down walls... you name it! He always talked about the importance of doing these things but his actions spoke louder than words; he led by example!*

*Over the years this boss of mine became my mentor. I eventually learned the importance of leading by example. I learned that as a manager I could demand things all I wanted, but unless I was working alongside my team they wouldn't give me the time of day. When it came to teaching someone how to clean a grill, I'd be right next to them. When we needed to spend*

*time cleaning the nasty smelling floor drains that had who knows what in them, I was right next to them with elbow length gloves. It was insane how much harder the team worked when I was working right next to them. I earned their respect by doing the same nasty work they were doing. I wanted to be this manager that had an amazing team that was passionate and excited about customer service, great food, and clean restaurants. And it turns out that to create that, I just needed to learn how to have a servant attitude. Originally, I had put myself up on a pedestal, thinking of myself higher than my team because of my position. I thought I was better than them, and had acted like it for a long time.*

We do that all the time in our lives, don't we? We put ourselves up on a pedestal because of things we've achieved; the A+ in the AP class, the amount of money we've made from working, the huge group of friends we have, how many 'likes' we got on our last Facebook post; the list could go on! And it doesn't help that in our culture, we're supposed to have the next best thing. We're supposed to be better than other people and we're supposed to have nicer things. That's what our culture tells us success is, and so that's what we go after, and before we know it we are acting as if the world revolves around us.

### **Our Calling: Putting Others Above Ourselves**

But that's not the attitude we're called to have. Instead of putting ourselves above others, we're called to put others above ourselves. We're called to serve others. The conversation that we'll be looking at tonight is in the book of Matthew, so whether it's opening your Bible or pulling up the Bible app, go ahead and get to Matthew 20, and we'll be starting in verse 20. As you're getting there, I want to give you a little bit of context.

This passage we're reading tonight is a conversation that a mother and her two sons are having with Jesus. And these two men aren't just some random people in the Bible. They're two of the twelve disciples. And just like we put ourselves up on a pedestal, they're trying to do the same thing. They know Jesus is about to die, so they're trying to make sure that they're set up well; that they would be seated at the left and right side of Jesus in His kingdom; basically to be second in command. Let's see how that plays out.