

# Better Together

*EXPLORING REAL WAYS  
TO LIVE IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY*

STUDY GUIDE





## SERVE ONE ANOTHER // 1

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Scripture uses two Greek words for “serve” that can be translated as “to be the slave of” and “to wait on.”

“To serve one another” literally means to wait on others as if you decided to be their slave. To serve means giving up yourself – self-sacrifice.

When Paul writes in Galatians 5:13, “For you were called to freedom; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, rather, serve one another in love,” he connects three ideas: to be free, to serve, and to love:

- Freedom is having a choice
- Serving is voluntary
- Love is choosing to serve

For Paul, living by the Spirit turns our attitudes and actions upside-down. The context is Christian community – how we live with and love one another.

In the Spirit, we who are free, freely serve one another in love. In contrast, those who live in self-indulgence, or sinful nature, are captive. They destroy one another, “becoming conceited, provoking and envying each other.” Serving one another is a choice to live by the Spirit, an intentional choice to live in community.

### PRAY:

Ask God to reveal something meaningful through this time of reflection.

### READ:

Offer your full care and attention to reading the provided scripture passages.

### DISCOVER:

**Galatians 5:1** For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

**Galatians 5:13** For you were called to freedom; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, rather, serve one another in love.

**Galatians 5:19-26** Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

**Matthew 20:25-28** But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

## DISCOVER, CONTINUED:

*John 13:12-15* After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”

- 1) How does serving relate to freedom? How does the sinful nature relate to slavery?
- 2) How does love fit in the picture?
- 3) Using the Galatians 5 verses, note how many of the “works of the flesh” and the “fruit of the Spirit” are relational. Choose one or two of the traits in each list and describe how they break down or build up relationships.
- 4) Can you recall a time you were served by a Christ-follower? How did that experience affect you?
- 5) With Matthew 20:25-28 and John 13:12-17 in mind, why is it especially important for a leader to become a servant?
- 6) How can we help build a community that makes serving one another a regular practice?

