



FRESH START

You are beginning life's most satisfying adventure – your walk with God! As you start this adventure, here's what God says to you:

Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be —you get a fresh start, your slate's wiped clean. Psalm 32:11 (MSG)

When you make a commitment of your life to Jesus, not only is your "slate wiped clean", you also get a "fresh start" – a new lease on life. This class is designed to help you have a good start to your fresh start. During these weeks together you'll discover and begin to unwrap ten gifts that God gives you:

F ORGIVENESS	– Accepting God's Grace
R ELATIONSHIP	– Worshipping
E NCOURAGEMENT	– Handling Failure
S CRPTURE	– Understanding God's Word
H ELP	– Following God's Guidance
S HAVE	– Being You
T OGETHERNESS	– Living in Community
A UTHORITY	– <i>Serving Others</i>
R ECOGNITION	– Being Baptized
T ESTIMONY	– Telling Your Story

This session: AUTHORITY – Serving Others

—Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority. Matthew 10:1 (NLT)

—the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. Mark 10:45 (NIV)

Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." John 20:21 (NIV)

—serve one another in love. Galatians 5:13 (NIV)

What we see in the life of Jesus and throughout the New Testament is a newly defined authority. Not dictatorial. Not power-grabbing. Not ascent, but descent. Jesus turned the concept of authority upside down by teaching that true power and authority come from serving others in love.

How do I live out my authority to serve others?

1. I lay aside personal desires

Jesus said, I came down from heaven to do what God wants me to do, not what I want to do. John 6:38 (NCV)

One writer expressed this: "I size up other people in terms of what they can do for me; how they can further my programs, feed my ego, satisfy my needs, give me strategic advantage—Lord, I turn to You to get the inside track and obtain special favors, Your directions for my schemes, Your power for my projects, Your sanctions for my ambitions, Your blank check for whatever I want. Change me Lord. Make me a man who asks of You and others, 'What can I do for You!'"

2. I get personally involved with others

Jesus knew that the Father had given Him authority over everything.... So He got up from the table, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, and poured water into a basin. Then He began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel He had around Him. (Jesus said) "I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you." John 13:3-5,15 (NIV)

One woman, taking an inward look at her servant attitude prayed: "You know Lord, how I serve You with great emotional fervor in the limelight. You know how I eagerly speak for You at a woman's club. You know how I effervesce when I promote a fellowship group. You know my genuine enthusiasm at a Bible Study. But how would I react, I wonder, if you pointed to a basin of water and asked me to wash the callused feet of a bent, wrinkled, old woman day after day, month after month, in a room where nobody saw and nobody knew...I wonder!?"

We cannot serve in absentia or at arm's length. It means if someone is drowning in a troubled sea, we get wet, we get in touch. It means if someone drifts away, we don't ignore that person, we reach out to help and to restore. Nobody ever learned how to water ski in the living room through a correspondence course. You have to get in the water and get personally involved.

3. I learn to see others as Jesus did

When (Jesus) saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:36 (NIV)

That phrase "He had compassion on them" is used over and over in the New Testament to describe the heart of Jesus. People were never interruptions. He saw that they had needs and He wanted to meet them.

4. I demonstrate love for Jesus by living like Jesus

The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Luke 22:26 (NIV)

Let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy He knew would be His afterward. Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)

Our authority is not found by being at the top, it's about serving. Of all His teachings, none is so hard to comprehend as His teaching that we become great by becoming a servant. It just doesn't make sense...but that's how it works in His kingdom. One author has called Jesus' kingdom "the upside down kingdom". It's a kingdom where those who strive to exert power are the least and those who give themselves in service are the greatest. You may never win a Pulitzer Prize, the Nobel Peace Prize, an Academy Award, an Emmy, a Tony, or a Grammy. You might never be an All American. But here's what I'm sure of. If you are a servant, if you use your life, your authority, to help others, you can be a nobody in the eyes of the world and one day God will reward your every act of servanthood.

In our next session:

RECOGNITION – Being Baptized

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