

Footwashing



522) What is footwashing?

- A. Footwashing is a spiritual ceremony where God deals with our pride by teaching us servanthood and building love in our hearts for all the saints who make up the body of Christ.

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet."

JOHN 13:14 NIV

523) How was footwashing used in Biblical times?

- A. Most travel was done by foot. People wore open sandals as they traveled the hot and dusty roads. At the end of a trip, one of the most necessary and refreshing things that could happen was having your feet washed.
- B. It was a common element of personal hygiene and hospitality.
- C. It was not done in times of mourning.

"My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square."

GEN 19:2 NIV

"You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square." [21] So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink."

JDG 19:20-21 NIV

"Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely."

2SAM 19:24 NIV

"Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her

tears and wiped them with her hair."

LUKE 7:44 NIV

"No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, [10] and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds."

1TIM 5:9-10 NIV

524) Who performed the footwashing?

- A. It was done either by yourself with water that was provided by your host or by the lowest servant in the household.

"Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. [3] He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. [4] Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree."

GEN 18:2-4 NIV

"She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master's servants."

1SAM 25:41 NIV

525) How did footwashing take on a spiritual significance?

- A. As part of the Last Supper, Jesus took on the role of a servant and washed His disciple's feet. This was done as an example to teach His disciples.

"Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; [4] so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. [5] After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

JOHN 13:3-5 NIV

526) Why did Jesus take this time to teach on servanthood?

- A. As the great trial of the cross drew near, the disciples were fighting among themselves.

"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. ... [4] so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. [5] After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

JOHN 13:1, 4-5 NIV

527) What problems were evident among the disciples?

- A. There were rivalries over position and leadership which exposed their pride.
 - 1. They were arguing about who was the greatest while each was jockeying for a leadership position in God's kingdom.
 - 2. They were focused on themselves and not Jesus or each other.
- B. They distrusted one another.
 - 1. The other ten did not appreciate the attempt of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to secure what they thought would be places of influence in God's kingdom.
- C. Betrayal.
 - 1. Judas betrayed Jesus as they shared their last supper together. When Jesus didn't live up to Judas' expectations, he betrayed Jesus to His enemies.

"Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest."
LUKE 22:24 NIV

"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. [21] 'What is it you want?' he asked. She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.' [22] 'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?' 'We can,' they answered. [23] Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.' [24] When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers."

MATT 20:20-24 NIV

"The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus."

JOHN 13:2 NIV

528) What did Jesus teach His disciples when He washed their feet?

- A. He taught them that true leadership was becoming a servant. He demonstrated that by taking on the most humble of duties reserved for a household servant.
- B. He taught them that God's kingdom operated differently than the Gentile kingdoms they were used to. In those kingdoms, the leaders were oppressors. In His kingdom, the leaders would be servants.

"Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. [26] Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - [28] just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"

MATT 20:25-28 NIV

"Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. [26] But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like

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the one who serves. [27] For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

LUKE 22:25-27 NIV

"When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. [13] "You call me Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. [14] Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. [15] I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. [16] I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

JOHN 13:12-17 NIV

C. He taught them that love for each other was more valuable than position.

"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love."

JOHN 13:1 NIV

"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."

LEV 19:18 NIV

"Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

ROM 13:10 NIV

529) Why do we hold footwashing services?

A. To build proper love relationships within the body and to correct improper attitudes that develop as we live and fellowship together.

1. The Gospel cannot be effectively communicated to the world unless there is love within the ranks of the church.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. [35] By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

JOHN 13:34-35 NIV

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves."

ROM 12:10 NIV

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. [5] It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."

1COR 13:4-5 NIV

B. To teach that servanthood is the basis of all ministry and leadership.

- C. Just as any family runs into times when it is hard to live with one another, the same is true in the church. Footwashing is one tool God has given us to help keep our attitudes correct.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. [4] Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. [5] Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: [6] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, [7] but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. [8] And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"

PHIL 2:3-8 NIV

"Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1PETER 5:5 NIV

- D. Jesus told the disciples that they should wash each other's feet.

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. [15] I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. [16] I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

JOHN 13:14-17 NIV

530) What should our attitude be when we wash another's feet?

- A. We should repent of any lack of love we have had toward any member of the body of Christ.
B. We should take on the humble heart of a servant.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

EPH 4:2 NIV

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: [6] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, [7] but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. [8] And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"

PHIL 2:5-8 NIV

531) What should our attitude be toward the one who washes our feet?

- A. We should receive them as we would if Jesus was washing our feet.
B. We should have a heart to receive the love and ministry that they bestow on us as a servant of God.
C. We should pray down God's blessing upon their life.

532) What are the blessing of footwashing?

- A. The Holy Spirit reveals what it means to be a servant in God's Kingdom.
- B. Strife and enmity against one another is removed.
- C. Barriers are broken down so unity can be produced.
- D. Those who are hurt, angry or alienated from the body can find restoration.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. [32] Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

EPH 4:31-32 NIV

533) How is footwashing accomplished?

- A. It should take place in an atmosphere of praise and worship.
- B. We follow that pattern that Jesus established.

"so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. [5] After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

JOHN 13:4-5 NIV

- C. One person sits barefoot in a chair with a basin of water at his feet. The servant kneels before him and washes his feet, one at a time. The servant prays for the blessing of God to fall upon person during the entire footwashing. Likewise, the person whose feet are being washed should pray for the servant as he ministers to him. When the footwashing is complete, the two people should reverse roles and do it again. This pattern should be continued until everyone has had a chance to minister and be ministered to.
- D. For reasons of modesty and propriety, men and women break into separate groups. Men wash the feet of men and women wash the feet of women.

534) How often should footwashing services be held?

- A. It should be held whenever the senior pastor feels the need to deal with problems that can grow within the fellowship.
- B. It can be held as part of a teaching on love, servanthood or humility.

535) Why might a pastor call for footwashing in a church?

- A. When love grows cold within a body of believers, strife and competition work their way in to try and pull us apart. This is a perfect occasion for footwashing.

"while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, [25] so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other."

1COR 12:24-25 NIV

"The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." [15] If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."

GAL 5:14-15 NIV

Name: _____ Group Leaders: _____

Date: _____

Homework for Chapter 35

Please answer the following questions from the textbook in full sentences and return to your Group Leaders next week.

- 1) Explain the Spiritual significance of footwashing.

- 2) List three blessings brought about by footwashing.

- 3) Explain what Jesus taught His disciples when He washed their feet.
