

Devotions for Those Who Serve



Serving With Purity



Tom Lemler

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From the Author

There are few things, if any, that are as emotionally exhilarating, and draining, as the task of serving others. Having worked in a variety of ministry settings, including various roles within Christian camp ministry, I understand the excitement that often comes with the beginning of a new ministry or ministry season. I also understand the weariness that can develop when our focus begins to drift away from the ministry of serving and onto ourselves.

This devotional guide is part of a series that came about through some conversations at a Christian Camp Leaders' Conference about the need for camp summer staff devotional material that would be useful without being a burden in an already busy schedule. On my way home from the conference, I began to pray about what would be a useful format and about potential topics for devotions developed specifically for those who serve. Out of that prayer time, this series began to form in my mind and then on paper.

It is my prayer that every Christian recognizes the importance of serving others. With this guide, I pray that you would learn to serve with complete purity of heart, mind, soul, and actions. As you go through this devotional guide, each day will focus on a different aspect of the purity God calls us to have. As you pray, ask God to help you recognize any impurity you have allowed in your life. Pray that the people around you would see God's purity reflected in you. Use the note section at the bottom of each page to jot down thoughts, ideas, or action steps that God will bring to your mind.

In prayer,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom".

Tom Lemler

Day 1
Purity in Body and Spirit
(2 Corinthians 7:1)

What comes to mind first when you hear the word purity? Are there other aspects of purity that may not come to mind right away but are just as important? What are they? What are some things that would contaminate your body and spirit? How deliberate are you in purifying yourself from such things? Why would having purity in body and spirit be important as you serve others?

Most of the time I hear or read about purity, it focuses almost exclusively on sexual purity. While there does need to be attention focused on that aspect of purity, much of the time a lack of purity in our sexuality is only one of the symptoms of a lack of purity elsewhere in our life. When we serve others we must be pure in both body and spirit so that our reverence for God is seen and heard. As Jesus put it, it is what comes from the inside of a person that contaminates the outside. We will rarely have complete purity with our body until we allow God to purify our spirit. As you pray, ask God to help you see anything in your life that reflects an impure body and/or spirit. Pray that your reverence for God would lead you to remove every contamination from your life.

Notes: _____

Day 2

Purity from a Fear of the Lord

(Psalm 19:9)

Is there someone in your life that you respect and love so much that you would do everything in your power to avoid hurting them with your words and actions? Who? When are some times that a knowledge of consequences keep you determined to do what is right? How does the purity of an authority influence your willingness to obey them? Do you view the phrase, “Fear of the Lord”, in a positive or negative way? Why? How would having a pure fear of the Lord help you as you serve others?

Very few of us, if any, like to be manipulated or feel that we are being manipulated. When we have a fear of the Lord that is pure, we understand that His actions are always looking out for our best. Yes, the fear of the Lord contains an awareness of consequences if we disobey Him, but the element of purity helps us to realize even the consequences are designed not to harm us but to draw us back to Him. As you pray, ask God to put within you a fear of the Lord which is pure. Pray that you would desire to do right because of God’s love for you. Pray that you would serve with a purity that comes from a fear of the Lord.

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Day 3
Purity of Heart
(Psalm 51:10)

Do you consider yourself to be an emotional person? Would your closest friends agree with your answer? How often are your actions driven by your emotions? When are some times your emotions have led you to say or do something that you later realized you shouldn't have? When are some times when your emotions have led you in a good direction? What made the difference? How does having a purity of heart (emotions) help you to serve others well?

While not everyone displays or expresses their emotions in the same ways, we all have emotions that can drive us to serve well or to serve poorly. In the American culture I live in, when I think of God creating in me a pure heart, I think of having pure emotions. The emotions that we feel and experience are not a surprise to God. The emotions are His gift to us but how we react to them and what we do with them is our choice. Love, hate, anger, sadness, and whatever emotion you want to list, have all been experienced by God yet He does so in a way that is completely pure. As you pray, ask God to help you be pure in heart at all times. Pray that the emotions that well up within you would be pure as you serve others.

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Day 4
Purity of Your Walk
(Psalm 119:9)

How often do you think about having a purity in the way you live? Does the level of purity in your daily walk reflect how much attention you pay to it? How often do you realize that you are being tempted to not keep your way pure? Are you likely tempted more often than you realize? How does God say a person can keep their way pure? What would living according to God's Word require from you? How does keeping your daily walk pure help you as you serve others?

We live in a time when most people would agree that keeping one's self pure in their daily walk is a difficult thing. God says that the way to keep our way pure is to follow His instructions. It is so easy, as we go about life each day, to let distractions keep us from considering what God's Word says about the way we ought to walk. It is time spent in God's Word that becomes the straightedge in our life to see if our way is pure or not. When our way is pure, then our serving reflects God's Word into the lives of people. As you pray, ask God to fill you with a desire to walk in a pure way. Pray that you would meditate on, and live by, the Word of God so that your way is pure as you serve the people around you.

Notes: _____

Day 5
Purity of Speech
(Psalm 141:3)

How well do you guard what comes out of your mouth? How about the words that you post on social media? Are there conversations that you have in person or online that you would be embarrassed about if your parents or preacher were to hear them? Do you ever begin a conversation or social media post with the phrase, “pardon the language”? Why? What does the words that you are comfortable using and hearing say about you? What influence does the purity of your speech have on the effectiveness of your service to others?

I believe it is important to have purity of speech both in the content and in the intent of the words we use. Many people think I’m old-fashioned when I cringe at the language that Christians use freely or when they feel a disclaimer is adequate to allow for foul language. We like to say they’re just words but Jesus said that it is out of the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks. When our speech is impure, it is a sign that our heart needs some cleaning too. As you pray, ask God to help you examine the words you use in both spoken and written forms. Pray that you would put a guard over your speech so that you may serve others with complete purity.

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Day 6
Purity of Thoughts
(Proverbs 15:26)

What do you think about most? What things would make a thought impure? Do you think that list is larger or smaller than most people imagine? Why? How does your intent, or motives, influence the purity of your thoughts? How often are your thoughts pleasing to the Lord? Do you think He agrees with your answer? What would make a thought pleasing or displeasing to God? How will having pure thoughts help you serve others more effectively?

As with most aspects of purity, sexual temptation is an area that can quickly overtake a person's thoughts and wreak havoc in their ability to serve. Because it is so predominant in our culture, it is easy to be on guard against impure sexual thoughts while completely ignoring the danger of other thoughts that are just as impure. We have thoughts of selfishness, pride, and envy that can cause us to not serve as we ought if we let them take over our mind. Any thought that doesn't please God becomes a gateway for evil to take root. As you pray, ask God to cleanse your thought life. Pray that you would take captive every thought and make them obedient to Christ as you serve others.

Notes: _____

Day 7
Purity of Actions
(Proverbs 20:11)

Why do you do what you do? What motives compel you to serve, or keep you from doing so? What do you think your actions reveal about you? What would your closest friends say about your purity based on your actions? What would strangers say? Should those answers be the same? Why? What standard do you use to determine “good and right” actions? How will having purity in your actions help you as you serve?

While our thoughts influence our actions, it is our actions that influence our character — what people think about us. Whether we like it or not, people are watching and they make judgments about what kind of person we are based on what they see us doing, or not doing. When those we are serving watch us, they decide rather quickly if we can be trusted as they observe our actions with others and experience our actions toward them. When our actions honor God, we find ourselves serving others in ways that honor God as well. As you pray, ask God to help you see how well your actions are reflecting Him to those you serve. Pray that the people around you will know you as God’s child by the way you live.

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Devotions for Those Who Serve: Serving with Purity is a part of a series of devotionals written specifically with those serving in Christian camp ministry in mind. I pray that these devotionals are useful tools in a wide variety of ministry and service settings. While the development of these devotional guides is an ongoing project of Impact Prayer Ministry, the following is a list of the initial topics to be addressed:

Called to Serve

Serving with Contentment

Serving with Strength

Serving with Courage

Serving with Excellence

Serving by Faith

Serving through Friendship

Guard Your Heart in Serving

Serving with Integrity

Serving by Listening

Serving with Patience

Serving in Purity

Serving as you Go!

Please contact Impact Prayer Ministry for information about using these devotionals in your ministry. If you have ideas for other topics related to serving, please feel free to pass them along also.

www.impactprayerministry.com

About the author:

Tom Lemler is the director of Impact Prayer Ministry where his preaching, teaching, and resource development is designed to help individuals have a greater connection to God through prayer.

For more information about Tom's ministry of teaching, preaching, and writing, visit the "Tom's Treasure" blog at impactprayer.com or the Impact Prayer Ministry website at impactprayerministry.com.

