



**SERIES: Pursuing Spiritual Fitness**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Friday, August 18, 2023**

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:26; 1 Peter 4:8-11; Hebrews 6:10

**TITLE: Those Painful Verses**

What's one of your least favorite verses? Don't act like you don't have one. We all have those verses that when we hear it, we think, "Ooh, I don't like that. That goes against what I want." For me, one of those verses is Matthew 20:26. It's where Jesus says, "[whoever wants to be great must be a servant of all.](#)"

It goes against conventional wisdom, doesn't it? But Jesus is right. If we are going to be great in the eyes of God, we must become servants. If we are going to fulfill the full calling of the Church, we must be servants of all. Listen to Peter's challenge in 1 Peter 4:8-11 (NIV):

[Above all, love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides so that in all things, God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever.](#)

We know that God gives each of His spiritual children spiritual gifts. But those gifts aren't for us to make ourselves look or feel good. They're not there to build us up, but instead, they are there to serve the Church.

In Kevin Harney's book "Organic Outreach for Ordinary People," he reminds us that we are grace-bearers. We are meant to pass on the grace that God gives us. We aren't meant to hoard God's gifts. We are called to pass them out freely, just as we've received them.

Passages like these are incredibly challenging because it's not what we want to hear. It's not what the culture teaches. The culture says, "Do what you want for yourself as much as you want. If you have something extra, see if you can store it somewhere else. If not, then I guess you give it away." But God says, if you want to please Me and you want to be the body of Christ, serve others freely. Give away what I have given you. And friend, you will be rewarded for doing so.

The writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 6:10,

[God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.](#)

You see, we don't perform for God's love. We perform from it. And because God is a good Father, He rewards His children for their obedience.

So here's my challenge for you today: serve. I know we're still living in a COVID world, but God doesn't call us to settle for the easy life. So find one way to serve one person in your neighborhood, in your workplace, in your church, or wherever God is placing you. And then share what you did below. I love hearing from you. I love watching you encourage each other. So let's go be the Church. Let's go serve. Now, go win the day.