

The Heart to Serve

John 13:34-35, Galatians 5:13

Spiritual Life:

I was born into a Christian household, and there God blessed me with parents that put God at the center of their lives, as well as three older siblings who were pivotal in helping me grow. I was also blessed to go to a Christian school leading up to university. Growing up in the church, I learned about God from a young age and never doubted who He was based on what the Bible taught me. However, even though I knew about God, I didn't know God personally, and I only believed because that was what I was taught both by my family and my church.

When I was 9, my grandparents (dad's side) moved in, and it felt like my life turned upside down. They made life very difficult, adding stress to my parents and humiliating me and my siblings anytime they pleased. One example is when my grandfather called me from my room, making me watch an 8-year old violin prodigy and proceeding to mock me, saying I will never be as good as that kid in my piano. All of these things, and more, made me develop deep resentment for my grandparents and anger problems that spilled into every area of my life. I had taken refuge at my school, where I sought love and approval from my classmates.

In Grade 7, new kids came to our school and became popular by messing around, and in order to preserve that approval from my classmates, I followed in their footsteps. I hurt many people with my words and my actions, and even though I knew it was wrong, I still did those things because in my mind, that love and approval I gained was something I couldn't receive from home. I kept getting in trouble, and all of those things would culminate until April, when the school had enough and suspended me for the rest of the school year.

After the suspension, I felt lost. Everything I built up with my classmates was gone, and I was left alone with the weight of my actions. In the next couple months, I expected to be rejected and hated for what I've done, but instead I was shown grace. My parents sacrificed time to take me to counseling (as ordered by the school) and help in other ways to ensure I was back on my feet. My siblings never provoked me, but instead made a bigger effort to check up on me and make sure I was okay. My school even supplied me with homework so I was caught up with classes. Through all this, I thought to myself, "Why are they doing this for me? I have done much more harm than good to them, and yet they still showed me love."

A few weeks later, our pastor was preaching and to end the sermon, he talked about the depths of God's love, and at that moment it really hit me why they were able to love me that way. God loves so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins, that even though

we're not perfect and can stray far away from Him, we are able to have a relationship with Him eternally if we believe in Him. Because of the love and grace that God has first shown to us, my family and teachers were able to love and be gracious to me ([1 John 4:19](#)), and from that moment, my faith was no longer my parent's faith, but my own. It has taken time, but I have also forgiven my grandparents.

Ever since giving my life to Jesus, I have taken my faith more seriously, committing to reading the Bible daily, prayer, and serving in the ways God calls me to. Even though it hasn't been perfect, I feel safe to say I've been growing in my faith and spiritual disciplines. In my walk, I'm also thankful to have a strong Christian community outside of CCF. Aside from my family, who I can always turn to for support and advice, I also attend Chinese Gospel Church Toronto. I have gone to this church my whole life, and from here there are many who know me on a personal level and who I feel safe pouring out to. From CGCT, I have a bi-weekly small group with other students, as well as a mentor, to help me grow spiritually and keep me accountable.

Candidacy:

To me, UTCCF is a university fellowship that seeks to strengthen the walks of faith of Christians regardless of where they stand, spread the gospel to those unreached on campus, and build relationships with one another, growing together in their faith journeys. You don't have to be Chinese, Christian, or even go to the University of Toronto, but all are welcome to attend CCF and partake in fellowship with one another. UTCCF is a fellowship that shouldn't seek to only strengthen our walk with God during our university years, but to equip people to handle the dangers of the world after we graduate and to be witnesses in the places God calls us to be.

As for the UTCCF committee, I believe their role is to lead the fellowship, both on a spiritual and administrative level. As the people who oversee the fellowship, the leaders not only plan events and budget, but they also shepherd the fellowship, care for its spiritual needs, and lead the members in the direction of their vision so that CCF is not just a club with Christians, but one that seeks to deepen their desires to know God more. As leaders, the committee is not called to assert authority over its members, but instead called to lead by example ([1 Peter 5:2-3](#)), so that we enable the fellowship to grow and let their light shine before others ([Matthew 5:16](#)).

A couple months ago, I had no intention of running for committee. My discernment process began when a few people approached me and asked me to consider running. At this time, I was hesitant, for I didn't want to step up just because I was asked, and I was discerning between serving on committee for CCF and stepping up my involvement with CGC. At first, I

was more compelled to serve at CGC because as my home church, I felt a lot more integrated in that community. Another main area of concern was the busyness in my own life. Having many commitments, including CCF, has pushed my limits in the past, and discerning this last year led me to not serve as an IG leader this school year.

In spite of all these obstacles, I believe God has clearly brought me towards serving at CCF this year. After much prayer and reflection, God has revealed to me how CCF has grown over the years, as well as giving me a vision of how to help CCF grow this upcoming year. He has not only given me practical ways to build up CCF with my vision, which I believe can be best implemented through the role of Social Coordinator, but a genuine eagerness and joy to serve in this community that God has placed me in. Even with the busyness of my life, I believe that God is calling me to run on committee, and even if I am not elected, I will continue to serve in various ways, such as offering my home for fellowship events, building relationships with others, attending CCF events, and serving as the captain of our intramural basketball team.

Vision: The Heart to Serve

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” -

John 13:34-35

As John 13:34-35 says, Jesus calls us to love one another just as He loved us. One thing that stands out to me is how Jesus's love was sacrificial, that He came not to be served but to serve ([Mark 10:45](#)). He humbled himself, taking the form of a servant, and this is seen earlier in John 13, where Jesus washes His disciples' feet ([John 13:1-20](#)). This is reflected in many other examples, the most important being that He laid down His own life on the cross, taking on the punishment for all our sins so that we can have a relationship with Him ([John 3:16-17](#)).

The way I want to see Jesus's example of love applied is through servanthood. One problem that I've observed in CCF is the tendency for people to become stagnant in their faith. A specific way I've seen this is when talking to people who aren't in leadership, some of whom believe they aren't serving simply because they don't serve in a position with an official title. In these conversations, I've observed how dangerous this way of thinking can be. If someone doesn't believe that they're serving, it can lead to feeling guilty and ashamed, have people question their faith, and lead to people distancing themselves from other believers. From this, what I desire for CCF is to foster a community that understands what it means to serve on a

deeper level, and in understanding this, viewing serving as more than something we do, but as a form of worship and a reflection of the God that we serve.

“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” - Hebrews 13:15-16

First and foremost, we must recognize that everything we are and have belongs to God. We should serve because it honours Him, and by serving with love and humility, we reflect His character, enabling us to be salt and light to others. This is the heart posture we should have, that we seek to honour the LORD and reflect His character in everything we do so that we serve not out of selfish gain ([Philippians 2:3](#)), but to build one another up ([Proverbs 27:17](#)) and in doing so, experience joy in following God ([1 Peter 1:8](#)).

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” - 1 Peter 4:10-11

As said in 1 Peter 4:10-11, God has equipped each and every one of us with various gifts to further His kingdom. Having this in mind, God calls us to use these gifts to serve one another so that He will be glorified. Not being in leadership does not excuse us from this calling, as our gifts can be used to serve in many different ways, regardless of where we’re at in our faith journey. This can include building relationships and investing in other people’s lives ([Philippians 2:4](#)), meeting up with others and encouraging them ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)), praying for one another and being open with each other ([James 5:16](#)), and other practical ways such as offering your home to people, talking to a newcomer or someone who doesn’t have many friends at CCF, or even showing up to fellowship.

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” - Galatians 5:13

With regards to Galatians 5:13, I want to help create an environment where people not only feel comfortable when serving, but have the heart to serve, which through love, seeks opportunities to build one another up and serve sacrificially, even if it isn’t the most convenient thing for people and (especially) even if they aren’t serving in leadership. In a practical sense, this looks like making CCF a place where we are constantly thinking about how to apply Scripture in our lives and cultivate a heart that reflects God’s love. This can be done in many ways such as accountability groups throughout the year, incorporating questions of how we can *specifically* apply what we learn (e.g. discussion questions in Bible studies, Men’s/Women’s

ministry), and setting up different opportunities that people can serve in (e.g. bringing back Sports Ministry).

In order to create this environment, however, CCF needs to be a fellowship that is open and honest with each other. If we are not honest about our spiritual lives, not only will we not know how to serve one another, but we ourselves would not be serving wholeheartedly. As members of the body of Christ, we must speak truthfully with one another and put off falsehood ([Ephesians 4:25](#)). In CCF, this means being a community that seeks to build relationships with one another, desiring to challenge each other to grow beyond CCF and in their daily lives, as well as a community that is intentional with listening and slow to judgement ([James 1:19](#), [Matthew 7:1-4](#)). Some practical implications include continuing the practice of testimony sharing (whether it be at Friday night fellowship, small groups, or elsewhere) and making more time to intentionally talk and pray for one another.

Overall, this is a vision that can be very hard to implement. We can often find ourselves stagnant in our faith due to external pressures such as our careers, school, various idols overtaking our lives, and through these pressures, we can become prone to varying levels of physical and spiritual tiredness, affecting our personal relationship with God. Additionally, it can be very easy to get comfortable with our circle of people and not branch out to others. However, my prayer is that we won't squander the opportunities we have to earnestly serve one another and build one another up in the faith, and that through this, we will love another, just as Christ loved us.

Personal Evaluation:

One ability that God has given me is the ability to connect with others. Although I am introverted, God has given me the desire to reach out to others, care for them, and invest in their lives however I can. This is carried out in different ways, whether I am listening to what someone has on their mind, encouraging them, or giving them advice when asked. I believe how God has allowed me to do this is through making me someone who is honest and open about his own life. I believe that my honesty and openness not only enables others to feel safe and comfortable around me, but also allows me to relate with people in a more personal way. I also believe that God has given me a discerning mind, that things in my life are not done rashly and I can constantly consider the needs of a situation at hand.

Although I have these God-given gifts, I am far from perfect and have a slew of weaknesses. For one, I am someone who tends to be quiet and timid. There are moments when I either lack the boldness to speak up or struggle to express my thoughts in a clear manner. I

have seen this cause some struggle in my own life, where miscommunications occur and people may fail to understand my point until further elaborated on. Upon reflection, some of this may stem from seeking approval of other people. While I try to surrender all my life to God and trust in Him alone, I can't help but sometimes feel anxious about how others view me, worried that I'll be judged if I say something in the wrong way and people will perceive me the wrong way. In the past, this has led me to temptation, to do things because it makes others happy and not exactly because it's what God calls me to do. For this, I pray that God will humble me and give me a heart that fears Him and finds rest in Him ([Proverbs 19:23](#)), that I can cast these anxieties on Him and be more bold in my serving.

Another weakness in my life is my tendency to overwhelm myself with many things and hit a state of heavy fatigue. This also stems from wanting approval from others and attending most events that I'm invited to for fear of missing out. However, all these things can pile up, and that not only makes me very tired, physically and emotionally, but it gives me less of a capacity to spend time with God. I have found this to be the case this past year, where too many commitments made me very fatigued. This led me to making compromises in my spiritual disciplines, with my quality of devotions getting worse and my prayers becoming more like rushed words than me speaking with God intently. In these moments, I've been learning to manage my time better and to say no to certain things, but more importantly, I'm learning that even with the busyness of my life, I must make God the ultimate priority of my life, and in Him I can find true rest ([Matthew 11:28](#)).

Amidst these weaknesses, I feel one of my biggest strengths is the ability to take feedback well. Although I struggled heavily with this growing up, God has made me more receptive and open-minded over time, and I am able to both thoughtfully consider the feedback given to me and reflect on the steps needed to improve. In terms of handling my weaknesses, I am also thankful to be very close to my home church (CGCT), having many people I can pour out to. It's also encouraging to remember that even though none of us running for committee are perfect, God's grace is sufficient for us, and He will use all of us, though we are broken vessels, for His glory ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)).