Friday, May 19 – An Unexpected Opportunity

BOTTOM LINE: Serving is deliberately walking away from selfishness, using my power and resources to meet another’s needs—without coercion or manipulation.

*If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life.*
Matthew 5:41

Years ago, Norman Vincent Peale took Jesus’ principle of always choosing a positive faith perspective and turned it into the book that remains a best-seller today: *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Mr. Peale expounded on Jesus’ challenge to view every situation in life through eyes of optimism and faith. He said it would turn even obstacles into opportunities.

He was right. Jesus knew it and said it first. There was no situation Jesus didn’t know how to use for good. When He was teaching (recorded in the Sermon on the Mount), Jesus took a most unlikely, hard situation and showed us how to find the best in it. He acknowledged that we would all have people who take advantage of us, and He said, “When that happens, don’t take revenge or get bitter. Handle it in a brand-new way. See this situation as the perfect opportunity to practice the servant life.”

Wow. Now that’s a challenge. But centuries of serious Christ-followers have found it to be a challenge worth taking, one that is ultimately very fulfilling. Deciding to use the ways people mistreat me as a willing opportunity to refine my serving skills helps me, and causes mercy and grace to boomerang back into their lives, bewildering and astonishing them and observers. Often times this unexpected serving results in changed circumstances, and eventually leads to changed lives. Bitterness has no chance to grow in me because Satan’s plans to abuse me get thwarted, and they become an opportunity for my growth and development. Something that started as all bad becomes a win in a most unexpected way.

Here’s a little secret. Chances are, before this day is over, you are going to get a challenge. Turn it into an opportunity to practice the servant life. See what happens.

- Pray: Lord, I confess I see most situations like this as attacks, trials, and the worst that could happen to me. Today I ask you to help me see these negative attempts Satan makes against me through other people as positive opportunities to develop and refine my servant life. Help me grow more like You today. Amen.

- Review the day at its end. How did you do?