



## Part 5 | Personal Ministry

Have you ever attempted to do something for God you felt unqualified to do? Why would someone even attempt something they aren't qualified to do? Well, sometimes people see a need and believe that acting on that need is the right thing to do. Other times people feel "called" to do something, even though they don't feel qualified. Have you ever considered why God may call people to do something outside of their comfort zone - outside of what they feel qualified to do? Perhaps God knows that when a person operates out of a weakness then they will have to rely upon him more. In this study we will explore the relationship between our faith and our service to others.

**Bottom Line:** Our faith and trust in Jesus grows we experience his power through our weakness.

### Discussion Questions

Read Matthew 14:13-31.

Question 1-3 will help introduce this week's discussion. The goal is to surface the tension we feel when God is urging us to serve in a setting for which we feel ill-equipped or inadequate.

1. Have you ever been asked individually or in a group setting to serve in a church or ministry related context? What has your initial response been to those kinds of requests?
2. Have you ever sensed that God was urging you to do something, yet you refused to do it because you felt inadequate or unprepared? If so, what was it? Why did you refuse?
3. When have you ever said yes to something God was urging you to do for which you felt unprepared? What was the impact of that experience on your faith?

4. Read Matthew 14:13-17. The disciples used the size of the crowd and their lack of food as excuses to not do what Jesus asked. What excuses have you used?
5. As you consider the disciples' excuses, what were they forgetting to factor into the equation?

The disciples gave Jesus what they had to work with, he blessed it, and then gave it back to them to distribute to the people. No one standing there that day would have considered the fish and loaves as things Jesus might use in a miraculous way. But he did.

6. Read Matthew 14:18-21. What talent, skill, experience, expertise, or ability do you have that, like the loaves and fish, don't appear to be things God could use in a significant way?
7. The disciples did what they knew how to do. They passed out the broken pieces of bread and fish. And God blessed their efforts and allowed them to accomplish far more than they could have in their own strength. What is the lesson for us?
8. We do what we can do and trust God to do what only he can do. Who has chosen to serve you in spite of the fact that they were ill-equipped and unsure of how things would turn out?"
9. For parents: Is there someone who has set aside time to invest in your children?
10. What opportunities do you sense God opening for you to practice an act of personal ministry?
11. What has been the most helpful or encouraging thought/idea from the message this week? How has that thought/idea helped you?

## **Your Time With God**

### **Week 5 - Day 1**

Matthew 14:13-16

Have you ever been in the disciples' position? Has God ever asked you to do something that you know, without a doubt, is impossible for you to do? Why does He do that? Why does Jesus ask us to do impossible things? Our faith grows when He asks us to do the things that cannot be done unless He shows up to fill in the gaps of our weakness and inability to accomplish them on our own. If we only do those things we know we can, we never really have to trust Him. And so we never really know Him to be trustworthy.

Prayer: Father, what impossible things are you asking me to do?

### **Week 5 - Day 2**

Matthew 14:13-17

Here we find Jesus asking his disciples to do something that was actually impossible for them to do. And the impossibility of the task was not lost on the disciples. They used the size of the crowd and their lack of food as excuses to not do what Jesus asked. What excuses have you used not to do what Jesus has asked you to do when it comes to serving others in personal ministry? And what do our excuses expose in us?

Prayer: Father, show me what my excuses are.

### **Week 5 - Day 3**

Matthew 14:18

The disciples brought Jesus everything they had, even though everything they had was very little and not nearly enough to accomplish the task at hand. Can you imagine how inadequate they felt their offering was? How silly they may have felt giving Him so little? But there must have been some relief as well, resting in the fact that feeding these people was now His responsibility. Once we give Him everything we have, the responsibility for results really do become His. And we can find great peace and rest there.

Prayer: Father, help me trust you for results by giving you everything I have.

### **Week 5 - Day 4**

Matthew 14:19

Jesus "looked up to heaven" trusting God to do the impossible through Him. He said a blessing for the meal miraculously provided by God the Father—a fitting practice for all who trust the Father to do what only He can do. What would the disciples have missed out on had they still refused to do what He was asking them to do? If they had thought how

embarrassed they would be to start handing out food and then run out on the first row?  
What do we miss when we do the same thing?

Prayer: Father, don't let me miss out on anything you want to do through me.

### **Week 5 - Day 5**

Matthew 14:20-21; Ephesians 3:20-21

Jesus did not just give the people what they needed. He gave abundantly beyond what was needed for the task. He enabled the disciples to give out more food than they even needed to feed the thousands of people who were there. The Bible tells us in the Ephesians passage that God is able to abundantly and beyond anything we can ask or even think of in us and through us. As we let His power work in us and through us, we are likely to see lots of "left overs" in our personal ministries as well. And our faith will be BIG faith.

Prayer: Father, help me surrender to your power in my life to do what you want me to do.