

FLOURISHING IN GRAD SCHOOL
WEEK 13: EMPOWERED TO SERVE

JOHN 13:1 - 17

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." ⁹ "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" ¹⁰ Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean. ¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Read the passage out loud together. Give everyone five or so minutes on their own to review it. Invite study members to note things that stand out and add a comment or question about it on their sheet.

Discussion Questions

What is the setting for this story from John 13?

What does John tell us in verses 1-3 about Jesus' self-understanding? How does Jesus use his power and place as "teacher and Lord"?

How does the way Jesus uses his power and privilege compare to the way you see power and privilege used around you — in your department, in the university, in our world?

How is Jesus's service received? Why do you think this was so?

As their Teacher, Jesus has set an example for them — one they are to follow. Your advisor is seeking to do the same, and no doubt wants you to work like he/she works when you are done. To what extent do you admire your advisor's work style, life choices, etc.? If you've not yet chosen an advisor, how might this impact your decision? Upon what criteria are you making the decision?

Which feels more challenging — to wash or be washed? Peter resists Jesus's cleaning. Do you want what Jesus offers you? Do you want to be clean, particularly if cleanliness then calls you to a similar life of service?

Are there other things from the passage you want to comment on or ask about?

Spend a few minutes filling in the table below. When you are finished, discuss these final questions together and then pray for one another and for this group. Think about the places where you have power or influence. How are you stewarding this to honor God and serve others? Where might you need to change? Are there ways you may be called to "serve one another" in this group?

Where/over whom do you have power or influence?	Are you honoring God with your power? What might need to change?