

TALKING POINTS

STRETCH - BEYOND YOU

LEANING IN

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, we've become a narcissistic culture - all about *self*. That said, it's easy to be self-absorbed and self-centered. In order for us to "stretch" and increase our capacity for God, we have to take a hard look at whether what we receive from God ever benefits anyone else.

We may feel we have a perception of what the Christ life is, but in reality, if our life in Christ never impacts anyone else, we need to re-think how we're living.

If we really want to reflect the heart and character of Jesus, there's some things we need to do. First, we have to have a genuine humility which allows us to see others in a more significant way than we see ourselves. Second, we need to *act* in the best interest of others using everything God has given us.

We have to be careful our desire to *convince* or *correct* someone doesn't override our necessity to *help* someone.

Jesus modeled what it meant to live beyond ourselves. Thinking not just about ourselves, our opinions and our presuppositions, but *really* thinking of others.

Read Philippians 2:3-8

What are subtle ways we can get caught up in narcissism and self-centeredness?

LIVING IT OUT

As we attempt to "stretch" our capacity for experiencing God, we must have an "others first" attitude in how we live our lives. In order to cultivate this attitude, here are two key principles we must always keep in mind:

The Christ Life Is Not A Reservoir That Floods, It's A River That Flows - when God does something *in* us, it's not *about* us. In the end, what we receive from God is intended for the benefit of others. The blessings (and even the trials) we receive from God must flow *through* and *from* us, not *end* with us.

Read Proverbs 11:25, Acts 20:35

How do we guard against being a "reservoir"?

We Need To Add A "So That" To Our Lives - whether it's our treasure, our talents or even our trials, everything we have and everything we experience is ultimately to be used in the service of others. So, we can say God has given us treasures "so that" we can be generous to others, talents "so that" we can serve others, and trials "so that" we can empathize with others. These are our opportunities to go beyond ourselves. This is how we stretch our capacity for God.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Acts 2:43-45

By evaluating your treasure, talents and trials through the lens of "so that", what kind of impact can you (should you) have in this world ?