

# SERVICE - THE WAY OF JESUS<sup>1</sup>

From the very beginning, Jesus' reign looked nothing like any other king in history. One author describes Jesus this way:

"Jesus worked in obscurity as a blue-collar worker for most of his life. He repaired broken chairs. He fixed breakfast. He washed feet. He touched lepers. He healed sick people. He brought food to the hungry. He played with children. He listened to the broken-hearted. He went to parties with social outcasts. He invited the poor into the Kingdom of Heaven. He ministered to people who interrupted him. Day after day for three years he quietly taught a few uneducated men and women how to be his apprentices in godly living. He loved his enemies, blessed those who cursed him, and prayed for those who abused and crucified him."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus brought a kingdom to this world in a way that no one expected. And this was no accident. Jesus could have come in incredible glory and the world would have bowed at His feet. Yet, He was the one cleaning their feet. Here's how Paul reminds us of this incredible Gospel that turned everything on its head:

"Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:6-11)

Jesus did come as the King, but His kingdom did not follow the kingdoms of this world. Human kings used their power to keep and extend their power. King Jesus, who has ultimate power, became a servant and gave His life for His people so that He might empower them through His Spirit. As Richard Foster writes, "The spiritual authority of Jesus is an authority not found in a position or title, but in a towel."<sup>3</sup>

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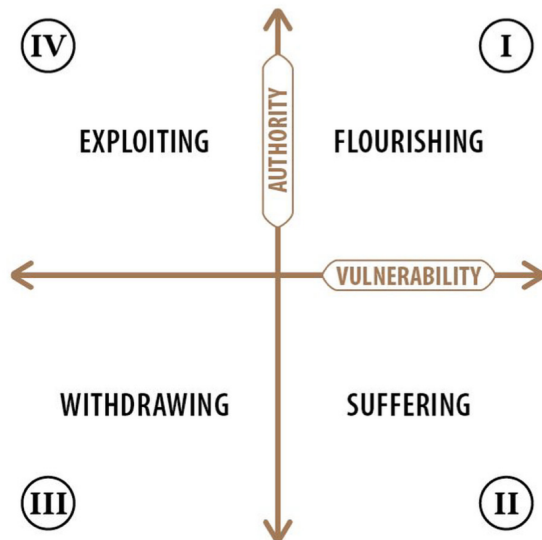
<sup>1</sup> This reading is from *Spiritual Formation Guides* written by Ken Flower and Amy Latrop at Doxa Church

<sup>2</sup> Bill Gaultiere, <https://www.soulshpherd.org/the-little-way-of-service/>

<sup>3</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, pg. 128

This is antithetical to the way our world thinks. The Way of Jesus is that flourishing and life comes through giving our lives away in service to others.

Andy Crouch makes this beautifully clear in his book, *Strong and Weak*.<sup>4</sup> He argues that true flourishing comes when we have both authority, or capacity for meaningful action, and vulnerability, or exposure to meaningful risk.



- **Quadrant IV** - When we have high authority and low vulnerability, we're tempted to exploit others, just like the earthly rulers in Jesus' day.
- **Quadrant III** - When we shun both authority and vulnerability, we withdraw, protecting ourselves and helping no one.
- **Quadrant II** - When we experience great vulnerability without any authority, we likely suffer.
- **Quadrant I** - The way of Jesus is to have authority and then to willingly take on incredible vulnerability so that others might flourish. This way leads to true flourishing.

Dallas Willard also writes about how important selfless service, which will require greater levels of vulnerability, is for those with power and privilege. He writes: "I believe the discipline of service is even more important for Christians who find themselves in positions of influence, power, and leadership... Those who would live this pattern (having power and privilege) must attain it through the discipline of

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<sup>4</sup> Andy Crouch, *Strong and Weak: Embracing a Life of Love, Risk, and True Flourishing* (Learn more about the concepts of authority and vulnerability: <https://www.faithdriveninvestor.org/blog/authority-and-vulnerability>)

service in the power of God, for that alone will train them to exercise great power without corrupting their souls."<sup>5</sup>

Will you trust Jesus when He tells you that the way to abundant life is through giving your life away for others? Or will you seek to preserve yourself and keep your life? Will you heed Jesus' invitation to lose your life for His sake? "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matt. 10:39)

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<sup>5</sup> Dallas Willard, *Spirit of the Disciplines*, pg. 183.