

## Base Camp | People Matter: Gifted Service

Jake Barker | Acts 6:1-4

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Hey, Trader's Point. My name is Jake, and it is my privilege to serve here on staff. Wherever you are joining us, whether you are at one of our campuses or tuning in online, we are so grateful that you made this part of your weekend, especially if you're one of our guests, or maybe this is your very first time. We know that coming to a new church can be overwhelming and it can be intimidating, and so we celebrate your courage for just showing up. We hope God does something here in a big way in your life and that someday you might even call this place home.

Before we dive in today, I want to give you a sneak peek as to what is going to happen next weekend. Next weekend, we're kicking off a brand new sermon series called *BYOG*, and that stands for *Bring Your Own God*.

What we know is that all of us have either inherited or invented a version of God that is either not true, accurate, or helpful. Maybe it was something that someone told you as a kid a long time ago and it just stuck in your head; maybe it's a conglomeration of things that you've read or heard on TV or someone said in that psych class one time; maybe it's just the version of God that you want to be true but it's not.

It's leading many of us to a lifestyle that God doesn't bless. In fact, it's not the life that God intended for us, so what we're going to do is, over the next few weeks, dismantle some of those false versions of God and point to the one true God.

If you've been here for awhile and you've been waiting to invite someone, maybe it's a neighbor or someone you go to school with, someone you work with, this is the perfect week to invite them. This series is designed for them, to wrestle with some of their skepticism or questions or some of your own as well. So if you've been sitting on that invite, make sure to do it this week and get them here for week one of *BYOG*.

If you need to accidentally refer to it as *BYOB* to get them here, do what you need to do. You do you. We endorse it all. Just make sure you don't miss next week.

Today, we're wrapping up a series that we've been in for the last few weeks called *Base Camp*. Week after week, we've been rolling out our seven values as a church. They are our guardrails. They're the things that are who we are and then what we do.

The reason we would spend so much time rolling these out is twofold. Number one: There are a lot of you that are here and you're new. You're just checking it out and maybe you're considering making this place home, setting down some roots, even investing with your time and your resources. We want you just to know what kind of people that we are, what kind of church you would be joining--want you going in eyes wide open.

Some of us have been around for awhile and we just need a reminder because as with all groups of people who are trying to accomplish something, there's this thing called **mission drift** where when we started we were about this one thing and it was really good and we were all on the same page. Over weeks and months and years, we drift over to that thing, which was never the original intent. Much like your car needs the occasional realignment, so does a church, so we're spending our time talking about these values.

Now the key that we've been saying all series long is that if it stays at a corporate-church experience, if it's just about the collective whole that these things are true, that's good but it's not enough. In fact, we need to adopt these values as our personal individual values if this is ever going to work.

In fact, you could say it like this: These values are true about **us** and true about **me**. It can't just be the whole. It can't be the collective. It has to begin with each individual saying, "This is going to be true about my life."

Because here's the danger: If these values just stay here at **us**, **us** can become **they** very quickly. In fact, the very first time that you get sideways, the first time you're disappointed, the first time you disagree with a decision made by the church, it's going to go from **us** to **they** really fast. "They over there, they must like that stuff. They over there, they made that decision. That's them; that's not me." So we need to adopt these as an individual so that it can collectively be true about all of us.

The last value that we're going to roll out this series is called Gifted Service, and it says we will always look for ways to **contribute**, rather than **consume**. One more time, we will always look for ways to **contribute**, rather than **consume**.

If you were looking for a word to describe our culture, **consumer** would be a great place to start. We are master consumers. We consume the news all day long on cable news or on Twitter. We consume fast-food meals that are made at a lightning speed with the promise that we will get it just like we want it.

We have had to invent new language to describe the way that we consume television now. We've started episode after episode after episode so long that we had to invent a word to describe our behavior. Anybody know what that word is? It's binge watching. We had to come up with new language to describe what we are.

Now binge watching is that thing where you get to the end of the episode and then there's that little circle. Netflix says you've got six seconds until the next episode. You look at each other and you're like, "One more?" You're like, "Yeah, one more." Four days later, you're still watching the same thing.

I think the most insulting prompt on Netflix is the *are you still watching* prompt that comes up. "Yeah. Back off, Netflix. This isn't my fault. You made it too easy." That's what we're doing.

Not only has this become so much part of our culture, but scientists have actually studied the effects of binge watching on relationships. I promise you. Look what they found: "These studies show that shared media can enhance interdependence and allow people to compensate for lacking a shared social network in the real-world." --*Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*

Here's what it's saying: Binge watching can be a great substitute for actually having friends. That's what the scientists have said.

Now listen, I'm no scientist--I don't have letters after my name--but I feel pretty comfortable saying that's dumb. That is not a good way of doing life. Maybe have a conversation; that would be a good idea.

But we've become such consumers that we've invented new language. We've even used science to support it. And not only has it affected our behaviors, but it's actually crept into our lives where it started rewiring some of our values--the things that are most important to us.

I know this stuff is true about me. I don't know you. I don't know your life. You can self-apply if this is true, but here's what I know: Our lives are built to accumulate comfort. That's just the natural downstream effect of our culture. Our lives are built to accumulate more and more comfort.

This week online, I read an article and it was listing the seven most comfortable pickup trucks. Now, call me old-fashioned, but I thought pickup trucks were functional, not comfortable. I guess I have this image of my dad's rusty, old, red F150 in my head. That's a pickup truck, but

now you have iPads in the dashboard and an espresso machine in the bed, and that's a pickup truck. We've gone from functional to comfortable.

Have you seen these? These are the cooling mattresses that they're selling now. They solved sweaty sleep. It's amazing. I thought you just flipped over the pillow. Now you can sleep on a sheet of ice. I don't really know what that is, but we want it more comfortable.

The other week, I went to a movie theatre to watch a movie. I sat down in the chair and I reached for the recliner. Everybody has hopefully been in one of these where you just lie back and you watch the movie; it's amazing. So I sat down and I reached to my right and the button wasn't there. Then I reached to my left and there still wasn't a button, and I realized I was sitting in a *chair*. What is this, prison? What are we doing? How do I enjoy a movie if I'm not fully reclined in front of a bunch of strangers? I'm so entitled to this comfort that I've only had in my life for the last two years.

I love comfort. Here's how I know it's real, all jokes aside. Here's what's true in my life: When I plan for the future, **comfort** is almost always the **goal**. When I'm thinking about my life as an individual or my family, when I think about what's next, the next purchase, the next project, I want it to be comfortable.

I want the expansion. I want the renovation. I want the upgrade. I want to go from my iPhone 8 to an iPhone X because I don't want to touch a button to unlock my phone; I want it to read my face. That's what I want. I want comfort. So much of our lives, when I think about what's next, it's what's going to be more comfortable.

The next downstream effect of our culture is that our lives are built to protect privacy. That's what we do. We've kind of created these private lives where we have a social network, but I engage with who I want, on my terms, when I want. So we have thousands of connections online, but it's behind a keyboard so I only engage if I want to.

We've even gone so far as some of us have built these castles with literal drawbridges called garage doors. We click them with a button, we drive our car in, we click the button, it closes behind us, and we never have to talk to anybody that we don't want to. An introvert for sure invented the garage door.

Observers have even noticed that back in the day they used to build houses on the front of the lot close to the street, and the front porch was the crown jewel, where you would talk to your neighbors as they passed by. Many of you who live downtown, you see the old houses right on

the street.

Now when you build a house, it's far from the street and the crown jewel is the private deck with the privacy fence because we want to engage with people when we want, on our terms. We've built a private life.

The final downstream effect of our culture is that our lives are built to avoid injustice. What we've done is we've tried to create a life where we can eradicate suffering. So when we're choosing where we want to live, we go to the neighborhood that already has the good schools and already has the clean parks and already has the low crime rate.

What happens is we insulate our lives from injustice and suffering so much to the point where we become numb to the injustice that actually exists. Just because it's not our experience, we forget that it's anyone's. We're not in their lives and we fail to serve them.

We accumulate comfort, we protect our privacy, and we avoid injustice, and so let me just make a couple comments real quick. First of all, the things that I'm mentioning are not inherently bad. There's nothing inherently bad about comfortable pickup trucks or privacy fences. The challenge is when good things become ultimate things in our lives. That's when it gets dangerous. When the good things become things we can't live without--that's what we're going to talk about later--that's when we're really in trouble.

Second of all, I am right there with you. This is not me casting stones on anyone. We are in the exact same seat. In fact, right now, our family is in a season where we're moving and trying to find a new place to live, and we're asking the same questions. "Where are the good schools? Where are the safe neighborhoods? Where are the nice parks?" We are right there with you.

That means that every single one of us is going to have a challenge on our hands today because we're going to read a passage of scripture that describes the early Christian life. It describes the early church, and you and I, we're going to see how it confronts the natural tide of our culture. Then we're going to have a decision to make. Every single one of us is going to have to choose either "I keep allowing the tide of our culture to pull me downshore or I'm going to live the life that God's called me to even though it's very different than many of the people around me."

If you have a Bible or a Bible app, I'd love for you to join me in the book of Acts. It's where we're going to be hanging out today, in chapter 6 specifically.

All series long, we've been in this book of Acts because we want to show you that our values as

a church, it's not something that we just invented. We're not that creative; we're not that brilliant. All we did is extract them from God's Word.

If you're not that familiar with the Bible or the book of Acts, we are so glad you're here. You are welcome here, and just let me give you a CliffsNotes version of the book of Acts. Acts records the beginning of the Church, so what you're experiencing right now got its start 2000 years ago, and we read that it launched with a bang.

In the matter of one sermon, thousands of people had a life-changing experience and came to Jesus and then joined the church, and so it got big really, really fast. The leaders of the early church, they didn't exactly have their MBAs from the Kelley School of Business. Organizational leadership was not their skill set. They were former fishermen who had just quit the docks to follow Jesus, so their leadership capacity was tested from the very getgo.

This thing got big. It got complicated. They were trying to teach people who Jesus really was, keep them on mission, make sure everybody was organized. It was overwhelming.

Not only that, but they faced outside adversity as well. You read that the church leaders were persecuted by the local religious authorities. They actually threatened them if they wouldn't stop preaching about Jesus.

Then we learned last week that a couple came forward and lied about their generosity. In order to make themselves look better than they really were, they lied about how much they were giving and paid the ultimate price for their dishonesty. If you missed that message, you should go back online and check it out.

Today we're going to find a third in a series of challenges that threatened the life of the early church. I don't think I'm over-exaggerating when I say that the way that the church responds to this problem we're about to read has set the trajectory of what we are today. It's that big of a deal. It was that important. If they had responded differently, it may not have ended up like it has, so join me, Acts 6:1. It says this: "But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent."

So the church is blowing up. People are joining left and right. It's going gangbusters, and not everyone is happy. There are rumblings of discontent. There's grumbling. There's murmuring.

I know you know what that sounds like when some people get together and complain and get frustrated. You've probably heard other people do it (I'm sure you didn't do it), but just so that

we feel it at all of our campuses, here's what we're going to do. When I count to three, you are going to say the word *grumble* in your most dissatisfied voice, most annoyed voice--just so we can feel it. It's going to go like this: grumble, grumble, grumble. You ready? One, two, three, go. (Audience responds.)

Isn't that the worst? Isn't that the worst sound ever? Especially as a leader, it is like nails on a chalkboard, people being dissatisfied.

Put yourself in the shoes of the early church leaders. Things are awesome. People are coming to Jesus. There were all kinds of baptisms. That guy used to be blind and now he's not. "What is your problem?"

Let's continue reading verse 1 and find out what the problem really was. It says, "The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food."

That's a big deal. Let me give you some context as to what was happening. This was in the city of Jerusalem. At this point in history, Jerusalem had become a popular retirement destination for many widows. Being a widow is always difficult, but at this point in history, it was actually dangerous. Many widows, either their husbands died without leaving them enough to live on or they had been so generous and given so much away that they didn't have what they needed for themselves, so they moved to the city of Jerusalem because there were resources for the poor.

There was a Jewish system of distributing food, but now that they had converted to Christianity, those resources were most likely not available to them anymore. So the church had widows that they needed to feed. They were part of their body, and they knew it was their responsibility to take care of these women.

Now here's where the accusation comes in. They were saying that there were two groups of widows. Some widows are being taken care of, and others were being ignored and even discriminated against. The first group of widows that were being taken care of were those from a Jewish background. They spoke Hebrew, they knew the religious ins and outs, and they came from the same places that the church leaders came from.

The group that was being ignored and discriminated against were from a Greek background. They didn't speak Hebrew, they didn't know the religious ins and outs, they didn't come from the same places, and they weren't getting what they needed.

Just allow yourself to sink in these ramifications of that accusation. If you look a certain way and speak a certain language and come from a certain place, you're good. If you look a certain way and speak a different language and you don't know all the ins and outs, then you're going to be ignored and even forgotten.

If you look and speak and act like the church leaders, you're taken care of. If you're anything other than that, you're not going to fit in. This is a dangerous moment in the early church. This is a powder keg of division just waiting to explode.

Now we learn a lot about the church just in this one verse that we can't afford to pass by too quickly. The first thing is this: The church was **diverse** from day one. There were people from all kinds of backgrounds and languages and experiences making up the early church.

In fact, when the church started with that very first sermon, it was a multilingual experience. God did not want the language barrier to keep people from Jesus. So there were all kinds of people from all kinds of backgrounds. I love the way Aaron said it a couple weeks ago: That is not a politically correct statement; that's just a biblically correct statement. That's what it was.

Anytime that you have people from diverse backgrounds getting together to try to do anything, you're setting yourself up for misunderstandings and cultural insensitivities. It's just what happens. We have different growing-up experiences. Sometimes we even mean different things with the same words.

I've talked a couple times about our next-door neighbors whom we live next to. Their names are Ravi and Shilpa, and we love them. We love their family. They are from India, and they moved to Indianapolis and they live next to us.

Last week, they invited us to celebrate their son's third birthday. As Ravi was inviting me, he said, "Do you like spicy food?" I said, "Yeah, I like spicy food. I get the spicy chicken sandwich at Chick-fil-A. I use tabasco sauce. Yeah, I like spicy food." He goes, "Okay, there's going to be Indian food at this party and it is not for you. You cannot handle this." Essentially, he gave me the white-boy warning. He's just like, "You ain't ready for this, man. It will tear you up."

So what did I say? I said, "Sir, yes sir." I am not messing with that. I do not need to be down for the count for an entire month because I thought I could handle spicy.

This is what happens. There are cultural misunderstandings and diversity. Sometimes we mean different things by even using the same word.



So not only was the church diverse from day one, but the church was also **messy** from day one. Anytime that you get imperfect people trying to do something together, there's going to be a mess. There are going to be mistakes. There are going to be oversights.

Biblically speaking, this was nothing more than a logistical oversight, but it was very much portraying who belongs and who doesn't. In the early church, it was messy. Sometimes in church world, you'll hear people kind of idolize the early church as if they had it all together; we messed it up. They were messy from day one and guess what. So are we.

Here at Trader's Point, we are far from perfect, and we are going to make mistakes and miscalculations. It'll never be intentional, but sometimes it'll be impactful. If you are a guest here and you are looking for the perfect church to be a part of, I'm sorry if I'm disappointing you. I wish you luck on your journey.

Here's a piece of free advice: If you find that perfect church, the one thing that you can't do is join it because you'll mess it up. That's what's going to happen. There's no perfect church.

So it was diverse, and it was messy, and we really honestly kind of want that to be part of our story too.

The way the church leaders respond in this crucial moment could set the trajectory of the church for the next 2000 years. They had on their hands who belongs and who doesn't, who matters and who doesn't. Not only who matters and who doesn't in this church, but who matters and who doesn't to God. That's what was on their hands.

Watch how they respond in verses 2 through 4. It says, "So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, 'We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.'"

You notice that the leaders, they assessed the situation, they took the lay of the land, and they addressed the problem head on because leaders take responsibility. That's what they do.

They easily could have just swept this under the rug because it's pretty bad PR for an early church in its infancy. They could have blamed the people that were complaining, like, "Why are you whining so much?" They could have gotten defensive and said, "Don't you know what's on

my plate? I'm preaching; I'm praying; I run a food program. That guy used to be blind," like the whole thing. "Don't you know what I have going on?"

But instead they took responsibility. How did they do it? They delegated responsibility to other people because there is a simple truth that you would think would have sunk in a long time ago. It's so easy to understand, but we miss it all the time. It's this: No one can do everything. Everyone can do something.

Again, that's not revolutionary. It's not even hard to understand, but it's amazing how often we miss this point. No one can do everything, and everyone can do something.

The apostles there in the early church, they could not meet every single need in their church and in their city, and the same is true today. Aaron and the staff and even a key group of volunteers cannot meet every need that is in this church and in this city. It's why the church is called a body. It's a group of believers who are moving from consumers to contributors, to where we all serve together because we're all called to it.

There's an important detail that we can't afford to pass by too quickly. Did you notice that when they were looking for someone to run the food program, the apostles didn't take the warm-body approach. They didn't say, "Hey, is there just anyone that's willing to give up five or ten hours a week to do this administrative thing? We like the preaching and praying. It's super-cool. It's the thing with the spotlight and we don't really want to do this thing. Could someone just go do that?"

They didn't take that attitude at all. In fact, they said that if someone's going to run the food program, then they need to be full of the Spirit of God and of wisdom. They needed someone full of practical wisdom, who was guided by the Spirit of God to run this food program, and here's why. It's because all service is spiritual.

All service is spiritual.

One of the greatest misconceptions that's out there, and maybe it's in your head, is that there are categories of service. There's one category that's the spiritual kind. That's the preaching and the praying and the counseling and the discipling. That's reserved for the super-Christians, the ones with the S on the chest and the cape. They do all the really spiritual stuff.

Then there are a bunch of normal things that just have to get done. Someone needs to open the doors. Someone needs to park the cars. Someone needs to mentor the 3rd grader.

Someone needs to serve at the homeless shelter or take care of the elderly neighbor. That's the normal stuff, but the spiritual stuff is over here for the super-elite.

The problem is that there is no biblical evidence for categories of service. In fact, there is just spiritual service. I love the way the apostle Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians. He says, "These are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord." All service is spiritual.

Let me tell you about a few people that are doing that around here at Trader's Point. At our North campus, there is a family whose husband is in the Air Force, and he was recently deployed to Turkey for an extended season. So one of our men's groups has adopted that family and they are going to take care of them while he is gone. They recently cut down a dead tree and removed it from the yard. They have been cutting the grass every single week.

You may refer to that as normal, but I'm going to call that spiritual because they are loving on that family. They are letting them know that their church family cares for them and loves them. That is a spiritual act of service.

Or there's Brian. He's one of the truck drivers at our West campus. Each and every week, he starts driving his truck at 5 a.m., pulls the trailers, he helps set up the West campus, stays for both services, and then helps tear down and haul it away. He's serving because he is incredibly grateful for what God has done for his life and the church that he loves.

Now you can call driving a pickup truck normal. I'm going to call it spiritual because there is no way that the West campus happens without guys like Brian, guys that are willing to sacrifice their time and their energy to make this thing go.

There are no categories. All service is spiritual.

Here's the crazy thing, and here's how brilliant God is. I don't know if you ever think about God as brilliant. He's powerful and almighty and all those are true, but He's also brilliant and here's why. Not only did God give us the gift of grace, and grace says that no matter who you are and what you've done, if you surrender to Jesus and give your life to Him, He will forgive you of your sin and He will change your life here on earth and in eternity. It's not what you do, it's what God has done, and it's all for His glory. That's the gift of grace, so you would think that we need to write a major thank-you note for that gift of grace.

Not only did He give us grace, He also gave us these things called spiritual gifts that are our way of living a life of gratitude back to God, so He gave us the gift and the ability to live a life of

gratitude. God gave us everything. It's amazing.

Here's how it's put in a book of the Bible called 1 Peter. He says, "Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies."

So Peter here, he's saying that God not only gave you the gift of grace, but has also given you spiritual gifts to live a life of gratitude. Did you notice he didn't just say it was the preaching and the praying, he mentioned hospitality. Hospitality is a spiritual gift. You know what it's like when someone welcomes you into their home and makes a great meal or makes you feel cared for. You feel loved. You feel encouraged. That's a spiritual gift.

All of us, we have spiritual gifts and it's our responsibility to use them to live a life of gratitude. I didn't know how to make it any simpler than this, so I just made a very simple question: What are you good at? Do it for Jesus.

It really doesn't have to be more complicated than this: It's what are you good at, and then use those gifts, because God gave them to you, to do it for Jesus.

Maybe you are really handy and you have a very mechanical mind. You can fix things around the house. Guess what. You are good at something that I am not. I can't fix anything. You have a gift and you can use that to build low-income housing for people in Indianapolis or all over the world.

Maybe you have the gift of administration and you love the details and you love working behind the scenes. There are so many people who have brilliant ideas and cannot make them happen because they need someone like you to support them.

All of us have gifts.

You may be sitting back and you're like, "Man, I'm not sure. I don't know that I actually am good at anything. I don't know what I would bring to the table." Well, two things: First of all, right after the service, what you should do is talk to someone that you love, someone that you care about, a friend or a family member, and just ask them because so often other people can see things in our lives that we can't see ourselves. So ask them, "What do you think I bring to

the table?” and if they can’t tell you, then you need new friends. That’s really the moral of that story. They ought to be able to tell you, “Here’s what you are good at.”

Or you can even do this (we made it so simple): [tpcc.org/spiritualgifts](http://tpcc.org/spiritualgifts). Go to this website. Or if you’re on our church app, on today’s sermon there’s a button that says *spiritual gifts assessment*. If you take 10 minutes and answer a series of questions, it will email you in your inbox your spiritual gifts. We could not have made this any easier. Take the assessment and then you’ll have a list of “here’s really how God’s wired me. Here are the gifts that He’s given me to live a life of gratitude.”

We do groups around here because we believe in a thing called discipleship. Discipleship is where we grow stronger in our faith and more in love with Jesus as He changes us from the inside out. So if you’re in a group this week, I’d love for you to take the assessment before your group meets, share your gifts with everyone, and then talk about how you’re going to use them because once you know them, it’s your responsibility to use them for Jesus.

As we wrap up today, I’m going to give you three questions, three questions that come back to that natural tide of our culture that carries us downstream. These are great questions for you to talk about on the ride home or in your groups this week, but just ask yourself these questions. It might unnerve a few things.

Here we go: When it comes to accumulating comfort, what am I unwilling to give up? What in my life do I just have a white-knuckle grip on that I can’t imagine living without?

I know in my life there have been things that I used to not need to live, but now that I have them, I can’t imagine living without them, stuff that I couldn’t afford and now I can. How would I ever live without this? Stuff I didn’t even know used to exist and now it’s in my world. I don’t know that I could go on.

Our family has been on a journey with this very topic over the last few months. Some of you know that we will be moving in December to plant a brand new church in the state of California, in the city of Santa Barbara, because we’re convinced that there are cities all over the world that need new churches to tell new people about Jesus. We know we’ve been called to do that, and we’re on that journey.

I have to tell you that when God made that clear to us, when He just put it on our hearts, when it was confirmed by other people’s prayer and other people’s affirmation, I just have to tell you my first thought. I’m not that spiritual. Maybe it looks like I am; I’m not. My very first thought

was, “Man, we’re going to have to give up a lot.”

I have been here for 12 years. My wife has lived here her entire life. We love this church. It is amazing. No matter what campus you’re at, look around you. This is incredible. This is not normal; this is incredible. We have the best friends. I get to work with some of my best friends. I’m sure your friends are cool; my friends are way better than yours. They are just so, so great, and I’m moving to a place where I don’t know a ton of people.

We love the school that our kids go to, and we love our neighborhood, and we love our group, and it is so comfortable. What God’s done in my life is that He knew I just had this bear grip on stuff that made me comfortable and stuff that gave me confidence, and He is just trying to pry my fingers loose.

Instead of finding my comfort in the things, instead of finding comfort in the familiarity of my life, He’s asking me to find comfort in Him. He’s my comfort. It’s not that I know where everything is, and it’s not that everybody knows my name. Some of you have said some of the nicest things about us and our family since we’re going, and I know they’re not true. How am I going to convince other people that it’s true of me? I don’t know how to do any of this. And God is over here saying: Trust me. I can be your comfort. You don’t need all this stuff.

So let me just get in your face a little bit. What won’t you let go? What do you have such a grip on that you couldn’t imagine living life without it? Maybe you won’t let go of your time. Maybe your life is so busy and you’ve jampacked it so much with long work weeks and social calendars and travel sports that you couldn’t imagine doing anything else.

You spend weekend after weekend at a ball field watching your kid play a sport that they probably won’t play after the age of 18, and you spend all your time at the office making money that seems to just go right out the window over and over again. We spend our time on leisure activities that once we’re done with them we’re not really sure what value it added, “But I just couldn’t imagine not doing any of that,” and maybe God’s saying: Let go. Let go. It’s going to be a little uncomfortable, but let go.

Maybe it’s your career, and you’re in a job right now that demands so much of your physical time and your mental energy that you are inaccessible to your family and you’re inaccessible to your church; you’re inaccessible to your community. You couldn’t imagine doing life that was any less busy, and God’s saying: Let go. Let Him be your comfort.

So what are you unwilling to give up?

Second question goes like this: When it comes to protecting our privacy, who are you keeping out? With your tightknit circle of social interactions that you choose to engage on your timeline, who are you keeping out?

Maybe it's people who don't look like you, people that have different ideologies. Maybe it's your nextdoor neighbor whom you've lived next to for 10 years and still don't know their name. We get so much into our own lives that we forget that people matter. Stuff doesn't matter. The accomplishments don't matter. The raise doesn't really matter. It's the people who matter. So who are you keeping out?

Final question is this: When it comes to avoiding injustice, where do you need to step in? See, many of us, we've created an insulated life to where we don't experience injustice and we forget that anyone does. Maybe it's time for you to step in for someone who can't stand up for themselves.

Last week, you heard a lot about our *Live1:17 ministry* that cares for vulnerable kids, those who need to be adopted and in foster care. There's an organization in Indianapolis called *Ascent 121* ([ascent121.org](http://ascent121.org)) that does trauma care for those teenage victims of sex trafficking in our city. You can volunteer. You can get involved. You can step in for those who can't stand up for themselves.

See, the brilliant thing about God is that He gave us the gift of grace and then gave us spiritual gifts so we can live a life of gratitude for Him. Sometimes His word makes us uncomfortable. Maybe that's where you are right now and you're squirming a little bit and it doesn't feel that great. I promise you that's exactly where God speaks the loudest in my life. It's when I'm not at ease and when I'm a little tense and He's maybe asking me to give up something that I never thought I could live without.

Today, right now, I'd love to pray a prayer of courage for you, a prayer of courage that you would take the next step, that He would embolden you to live a life of gifted service, even if it means letting go of some stuff. Will you pray with me?

Father, we are so grateful for Your word. It is beautiful and it is brilliant and it is encouraging. It's also convicting and unsettling. Sometimes You say stuff that's not the easiest to hear, and what we know is that Your grace is always good, but it's not always easy. Sometimes You push us way past our comfort zone.

I pray today that there are some people here that have the courage to make a decision, a decision that maybe they've been sitting on for a long time and they know that You're pushing them there and they know You want them in that direction, but they just need the courage to take a step. God, embolden them, empower them. In this very moment, let them say yes.

God it is in Your good and brilliant and loving name I pray. Amen.