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Grounders:

Serving is the sweet spot of joy. The apostle Paul said that this joy is discovered at the intersection of serving Christ's interests, our unselfish interests, and the interests of others. Arthur Ash, the great tennis player who gave his life to serving others both on and off the court said that joy can only be found in serving others. Just like the heart of the tennis racket is the sweet spot, so the sweet spot of joy resides in the heart of Christ the servant (Phil. 2:1-11).

First, we must unite ourselves with Christ in order to *serve His interests* (Phil. 2:1-2). Too often, we falsely unite ourselves with Christ only to seek our own selfish desires. However, we are to humbly unite our hearts with Christ in order to serve His interests.

Second, we must *serve our own unselfish interests* (Phil. 2:3-4). That's right, it is ok to serve our own interests when they flow from a humble heart surrendered to Christ. Unselfishly, seek a balanced budget, health, good relationships, and growth.

Third, we must *serve the interests of others*, considering them better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4). Many people outside the Church are able to do connect with others well, but it is superficial, only to serve their selfish interests. Paul tells us to serve others from a heart that seeks their interests in Christ.

Finally, Paul gives us the example of Christ who being God, descended from heaven to die on a cross, and God exalted him to the highest in the heavenly realm (Phil. 2:5-11). Contrast Christ's emptying with Adam who being man ascended to be like God (Gen. 3). Both accounts led to death, one willingly, one unwillingly.

Unfortunately, our stories all resemble Adam. The only way to reconcile with God is to realize that in His kingdom, the pathway up is down. We must humble ourselves and serve others so that they will serve the Lord (Matt. 10:39). Jesus said that He was humble in heart (Matt. 11:29). He taught followers that God desired them to have that same heart (Luke 18:14). Each of us must examine our heart to see if it is like Christ's. If it is, then we will serve others so that they will serve the Lord. Peter said that we are to use our gifts from God to serve others in a way that releases God's grace (1 Peter 4:10).

This week, make your muscles move with your prayers for God to use your suffering to serve someone going through a similar situation. Go find that person and serve him.

In Him,  
Mitch