



**September 22, 2024**  
**Serve**

**Mark 7:31-37 NRSVue**

Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup> They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup> He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup> Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” <sup>35</sup> And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup> Then Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup> They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

**B.L.E.S.S. Discussion Questions:**

**OPEN:** What would you say is the greatest change or paradigm shift of your lifetime?

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**DIG:** Why do we resist serving even the people we care about most?

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Read John 13:1-17. Why did Jesus choose to wash His disciples’ feet the night before His crucifixion? How would you have felt if you had been there?

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Read Mark 7:13-37. What stands out to you about this encounter between Jesus and the deaf man with the speech impediment?

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Jesus served in *proximity*, He served *personally*, and He served *powerfully*. Which of these qualities is most difficult for you to exhibit when it comes to serving people around you?

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**REFLECT:** Who do you think God wants you to serve this week?

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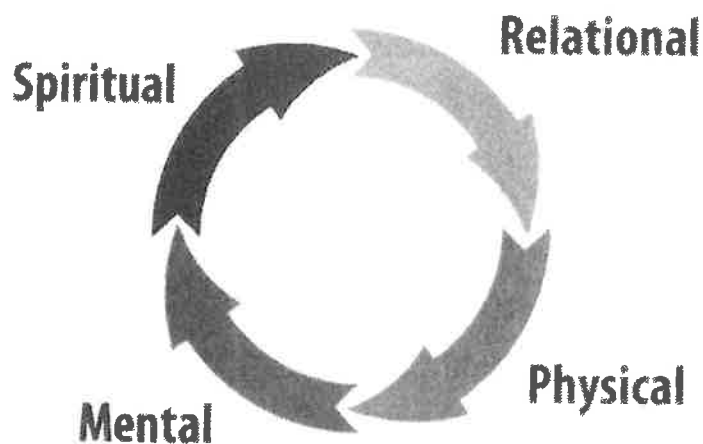
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## R-P-M-S

The B.L.E.S.S. practices are intentionally sequenced in an order that builds a bond of friendship and helps people feel loved. It's what Jesus did, and it's hard to improve on that. It is in the context of friendship and love that others will often confide in you how you can serve them. For example, in Chapter 2 I told you about my friend Michael who told me about a tragic event from twenty years prior that haunted him every day. He was looking for forgiveness from the tragedy he had caused. I was able to serve him by telling him how he could be forgiven and how God redeems our pain. Other times, people are not as forward with what they need and how you can serve them. That is where this simple tool of R-P-M-S can help you discern how to serve your neighbor.



Just as RPMs (revolutions per minute) can help you gauge the health of an engine or motor, I have used a similar acrostic as a way to monitor my own personal well-being for many years. It comes from Luke 2:52, which describes Jesus's own personal development: "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (NIV). He grew in these four areas:

**Relational:** He grew in favor with men.

**Physical:** He grew in stature.

**Mental:** He grew in wisdom by developing His mental capacity.

**Spiritual:** He grew in favor with God.

Every morning I write these four letters (R-P-M-S) at the top of my journal and give myself a score from one to ten on how I'm doing on each of them. I call it a "two-minute checkup." It has been a great help to me personally.

More recently, I've used R-P-M-S to find out how the neighbors and friends I want to bless are doing. Let me briefly give you a few questions to ask about the neighbors you love.

### **How's my neighbor doing RELATIONALLY?**

- How is their home life?
- How is their marriage, dating, or family life going?
- Do they have close friends?
- How are their relationships at work?
- Do they have a healthy circle of friends?

### **How's my neighbor doing PHYSICALLY?**

- How is their overall health?
- Does their energy level seem good?
- Are they getting regular exercise?
- Are their eating habits healthy?
- Do they mention not being able to sleep?

### **How's my neighbor doing MENTALLY?**

- Are there any signs of anxiety?
- Is there any indication of depression?
- Have I noticed any mood swings?
- Are they learning?
- Are there any unhealthy thought patterns showing up?

**How's my neighbor doing SPIRITUALLY?**

- Do they sense something is missing in their life?
- Are they willing to have you pray for them?
- Do they display a spiritual curiosity?
- Do they initiate spiritual conversations?
- Are they moving closer to God?

Just as we serve ourselves and God when we monitor our personal R-P-M-S, we can bless others in these same four areas. Once you identify their needs, serve them!