

FLEXIBILITY, RESILIENCE, SELFLESSNESS *Inside Out—Session 6*

Servant leaders are flexible, resilient, and selfless, even in the face of enormous challenges.

Before the session: *Read chapters 16–19 of Inside Out by Rich and Robyn Wilkerson*

Introduction:

Begin by discussing the following questions together.

- Think of a leader who embodies selflessness. Share how you see this trait in his or her life.
- Flexibility is key for a servant leader, especially in times of crisis. What are some of the ways you have seen flexibility in a leader?

Today we'll look at the last three traits of a servant leader: flexibility, resilience, and selflessness.

Video: Let's watch this session's video from Rich and Robyn Wilkerson.

- What is one thing that stood out to you in the video?

FLEXIBILITY

Recognizing there is a lot of independence in today's world, authors Rich and Robyn Wilkerson acknowledge that as individuals we often want our own way. Compromise, giving in, and avoiding opposing views become barriers to effective servant leadership. That's where flexibility comes in.

- Respond to each of these thoughts based on this chapter. Why is each concept important in servant leadership?
 - Flexibility is an essential quality in all servant leaders (p. 182).
 - When all team members are willing to be flexible, the most good happens (p. 177).
 - It's not necessary to see everything eye-to-eye, but it is vital to share a common purpose and vision (p. 179–180).
 - When things go well, servant leaders give everybody credit (p. 183).
 - When things go wrong, servant leaders ask themselves what they could have done differently to allow people to be as great as they can be (p. 183).

Reflection: Make a list of situations in which you have had a difficult time being flexible. Beside each, write how you could have handled the situation in a more flexible way.

RESILIENCE

Rich and Robyn share the Bible example of Joseph as someone who demonstrated resilience in his life. As he faced challenges, he was able to bounce back from them.

- When you encounter a moment of apparent defeat, especially as a servant leader, how do you react?

Here are some choices that servant leaders make to demonstrate resilience. As you read this list, share with your group if each choice is easy or a growth area for you.

- Leaders quickly decide not to be a victim of their circumstances.
- How leaders respond to trying times is a measure of their greatness.
- Trying situations become opportunities to overcome.
- Leaders must decide to bounce back when life's trials come against their dreams.

SELFLESSNESS

Selflessness is about giving our all. Everything, 100 percent. Rich and Robyn propose it can also be demonstrated through all the other traits they have identified for servant leaders.

- As you review the summary of traits on p. 199–201, which expression of selflessness stands out to you? Explain your answer.

In chapter 19, Rich and Robyn share how Jesus demonstrated each one of the traits of a servant leader in His life.

- Think back to the traits you identified as a growth area in session 1. How did Jesus demonstrate this trait in His life?
- How can you incorporate Jesus' example in your own life?

INSIDE GOD'S WORD

Esther—queen of selflessness

Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king." When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:10–16).

Esther was a stranger in a very strange land. Taken from her Jewish family, she was favored by the king of Persia and chosen to be his queen, even though she was very young. This was, of course, a great honor, but it was also fraught with danger. King Xerxes had little patience for nuisance, and he offered swift and permanent retribution for those who displeased him.

Against this backdrop, Mordecai, her Jewish uncle, brought her news of a plot to destroy the Jewish people. Obviously, Esther would not suffer this fate, but most of her people would be wiped out. Esther was faced with a terrible choice: sit by in safety and watch as her people were killed, or speak up and risk her own life for the possibility that the king might listen and save many people.

Obviously she made the right choice, but imagine the courage it required. Esther was a young woman in a foreign land, married to a powerful king she barely knew. Faced with an impossible choice, Esther risked her life to request help from the king, knowing that since the plot came from within the king's inner circle, the king would have to choose his queen's people over some of his own.

Esther was thrust into a leadership position, not by choice, but according to God's destiny for her life. Nonetheless, she chose to serve her people by valuing their lives above her own. As a result, she saved their lives and paved the way for Israel to ultimately return to their homeland and rebuild the temple of the Lord.

Selflessness requires more than meekness. Esther embodied a sense of resiliency and flexibility that everyone should strive to exhibit. Servant leaders aren't always mighty men of God. Sometimes they're young women facing down unbelievable choices with grace and determination.

- What can we learn about servant leadership from this example?

RESPONSE

Reflection: Now that this study is almost complete, take a moment to reflect on how you have grown as a servant leader. Check the trait(s) you have improved in the most.

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clear vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Encourager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Absolute values | <input type="checkbox"/> Generous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful | <input type="checkbox"/> Honor and respect others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accepting | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor one another |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humble | <input type="checkbox"/> Resilient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity | <input type="checkbox"/> Selfless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate | |

Leading Inside Out: Give up something important to you today. For some it may be your morning cup of coffee; buy one for someone else instead. For others, it may be buying a fashionable piece of clothing or a bag. Consider spending the money by buying something for someone in need or donating the money to an organization that helps those in crisis.

CONCLUSION

Rich and Robyn conclude with a reminder that being an effective servant leader means we have to get involved. Take time this week to read chapter 20. Then look for opportunities to ASK, "How can I help?"; SEEK opportunities to get involved; and KNOCK on the doors of places where you can serve.

Video: Let's watch the final video from Rich and Robyn Wilkerson.

- What is one thing that stood out to you in the video?

PRAYER

Close in prayer and ask God to use each person in your group as servant leaders.