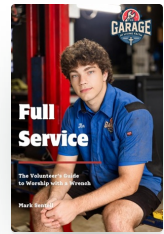


# Full Service

*The Volunteer's Guide to Worship with a Wrench*

MARK SENTELL



This book shouldn't take very long to read, but I know you're busy, so if you can only read two pages, these are them.

**Why you show up matters, because motivation is the engine of service.** People serve out of usefulness, loneliness, guilt, compassion, or faith. None of those are shameful, but not all of them last. The person who shows up to feel good will stop coming when serving stops feeling good, and it will, because some days don't. Paul writes that "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The word is *hilaros*, an almost absurd, overflowing gladness. Borrowed joy runs dry. Joy from a deep well of received grace replenishes itself.

**The people you serve are not charity cases.** One kind of charity quietly says, "You are less than me. And I am generous enough to help you anyway." People can feel it. But "there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:22–23). You're not a healthy person helping a sick person. You're one person who's received grace helping another person who needs it.

**We love because he first loved us.** That is the whole motivational structure of the Christian life (1 John 4:19). God got his hands dirty: "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Let that land, and it overflows. You cannot sustainably give what you haven't received, and the volunteer who serves from overflow will outlast the volunteer who serves from obligation every single time.

**Jesus served from strength, and love moves downward.** Knowing "that the Father had given all things into his hands," Jesus took a towel and washed the feet of men about to abandon him (John 13:3–5). Because his identity was secure, he was free to take the lowest place. Then he said, "you also should do just as I have done to you." Real service also costs something: "even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The question is not what you are willing to contribute, but what you are willing to sacrifice.

**The volunteers who last are F.A.T.** Luke 9:23 calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow, daily. On any team, that means three choices:

1. **Flexible:** willing to do what needs doing, not just what you came to do.
2. **Available:** showing up consistently, even when it's inconvenient. "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'" (Matthew 5:37). Showing up is integrity made visible.
3. **Teachable:** willing to learn, to be corrected, and to say, "I don't know. Let's find out." You cannot grow in a skill you've decided you've already mastered.

Add humility, which is holding your gifts lightly, without the anxious need to prove or protect your position. Bring your whole self, because God doesn't make generic people. And love the person, not just the task.

**What you do is worship.** “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). The word is *latreia*, the priestly service of the Temple. Your calloused hands and aching back, offered to God, are priestly service. That is what Full Service means: a life comprehensively offered. Work “as for the Lord and not for men” (Colossians 3:23), and you are freed from managing how people perceive you.

**Serve in secret.** Those who serve to be seen “have received their reward” (Matthew 6:2), *apecho*, paid in full. So do some things nobody will ever know about. If you can say the Father saw it and that’s enough, that’s what freedom feels like.

**The hard days are not obstacles to your growth as a servant. They are the means of it.** “Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (Romans 5:3–4). After a hard day, don’t ask “why did this happen to me” but “what am I becoming through this?”

**You were not made to serve alone, and you are not a resource to be used up.** The body only works as a body, and the members that seem weaker are indispensable (1 Corinthians 12). To last, stay connected to the source (“they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,” Isaiah 40:31), let people know how you’re doing, and serve where you’re gifted. You are a person to be led, developed, and loved.

**You were made for this.** “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). The people you serve were prepared beforehand to cross your path. Your life matters. What you’re doing is eternally significant. You are loved. And you are loving. That is not a small thing. That is the whole thing.

That is the book. The rest of it tells the stories of the volunteers who taught me these things.

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**Free to share.** Print it, copy it, hand it out, and use it in your church. Freely I have received; freely I give. “You received without paying; give without paying” (Matthew 10:8). If you’d like the whole book, it’s at [marksentell.com/books/full-service](https://marksentell.com/books/full-service), along with a free leader’s guide.

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