



January 29, 2020

### ***CONSUMER/GIVER***

I have loved basketball since I was a child, playing one-on-one in the driveway. I was never good enough to play for my school, but I have always joined pick-up games at parks and local gyms. Over the years, I have noticed that there are some days when I am just playing for myself: I focus on my own enjoyment, hoping to make a few great plays, and celebrating when other players pass me the ball and shout words of encouragement. These are my consumer days.

On other days, I remember that I have a chance to be of service to others. I try to set up plays that will allow my teammates to shine, and I find joy in their successes. I speak up with words of encouragement for my court companions. On these days, the gifts that I receive become richer while my focus is on the people around me. Making the game better for others makes it better for me.

It seems to me that the same lesson applies to every aspect of life. Instead of thinking only about my own experience, as if I am simply a consumer of life, a focus on what I can give to others always brightens the day. What's true on the basketball court is true at the grocery store, the morning commute, the board meeting, the family meal, and at church.

It's easy to slip into a consumer mindset at church, for this is where we receive gifts of comfort, strength, and love. But when we look for how we might be of service to others, we find that the gifts we receive become richer while our focus is on those around us. When the disciples were focused on getting to sit at places of honor, Jesus reminded them that those who want to be great must become servants of all.

I'll see you in church.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster  
Senior Minister