

Submissive Servant

How to be Great - Mark 10



series: The Jesus I Follow

week 7

James and John, Zebedee's sons, came up to him. "Teacher, we have something we want you to do for us."

"What is it? I'll see what I can do."

"Arrange it," they said, "so that we will be awarded the highest places of honor in your glory — one of us at your right, the other at your left."

Jesus said, "You have no idea what you're asking. Are you capable of drinking the cup I drink, of being baptized in the baptism I'm about to be plunged into?"

"Sure," they said. "Why not?"

Jesus said, "Come to think of it, you *will* drink the cup I drink, and be baptized in my baptism. But as to awarding places of honor, that's not my business. There are other arrangements for that."

When the other ten heard of this conversation, they lost their tempers with James and John. Jesus got them together to settle things down. "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around," he said, "and when people get a little power how quickly it goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served — and then to give away his life in exchange for many who are held hostage."

- Mark 10:35-45,
The Message

Each of us is subconsciously aware of the fact that we don't have all that much time here on planet earth, and somewhere inside us a voice speaks up from time to time, reminding us that if we don't hurry up, we're going to lose our chance to make a mark for ourselves. "You're not getting any younger." "You got to grab all the gusto you can." "The early bird gets the worm." And so on.

The problem is, when you're a servant, it can seem like a waste of time. When you focus on meeting others' needs, and not just your own, it can feel like you're losing your place in line, like you're letting everyone else get ahead of you, that you're letting those golden opportunities get away.

And that's exactly what Jesus wants us to feel. He wants us to become aware of our tendency to behave like *driven* people, and He wants us instead to begin to live like *called* people. And the best way to do that is to choose to be servants.

Read the following two passages, and note what they teach us about ourselves and about what it means to be a servant:

- **Mark 9:33-37**

- **John 13:1-17**

Symptoms of Driven People

1. A driven person is most often gratified only by accomplishment.
2. A driven person is preoccupied with the symbols of accomplishment.
3. A driven person is usually caught in the uncontrolled pursuit of expansion.
4. A driven person tends to have a limited regard for integrity.
5. A driven person often possesses limited or undeveloped people skills
6. A driven person tends to be highly competitive.
7. A driven person often possesses a volcanic force of anger.
8. A driven person is usually abnormally busy.

- from Ordering Your Private World,
by Gordon MacDonald

Mark 10:35-45

- Read this passage, and then read the parallel account in Matthew 20:20-28. What does Matthew's version add to the story?
- Do the two accounts contradict each other?
- Verse 35. What is odd about this request?
- Verse 36-40. What do you notice about Jesus' response? Is this how you would have answered such a request? What does it tell you about Him?
- Verse 41. How do the other disciples respond? What does it tell you about them?
- Verses 42-45. Instead of throwing up his hands and stomping off in a huff at the lack of maturity among his men, Jesus sees the opportunity as a "teachable moment." In a nutshell, what does he teach them?

Symptoms of Called People

1. Called people understand stewardship.
2. Called people know exactly who they are.
3. Called people possess an unwavering sense of purpose.
4. Called people understand commitment.

"Driven people are confident they have that quality as they forge ahead. But often, at the moment when it is least expected, hostile events conspire, and there can be collapse. Called people have strength from within, perseverance and power that are impervious to the blows from without.

"Called men and women can come from the strangest places and carry the most unique qualifications. They may be the unnoticed, the unappreciated, the unsophisticated. Look again at the men Christ picked... It is not that they were unusually awkward. It is just that they were among the ordinary."

- from
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LIFE RESPONSE—What does it mean to me?

1. **List three people** who come to your mind when you think of being a servant. What about their lives made you think of them?

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2. **Name three people** in your life today who you think God wants you to serve:

3. **Right now in your life**, are you living more as a driven person or a called person?