



# *Gospel of Mark Bible Study*

**Session # 11 January 5<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> Mark 9:33-50**

Tuesday 6am @LW – Tuesday 5:15pm @AV

Wednesday 10am & 6:15pm @LW

Sunday 10:30am @AV

## **Who Is the Greatest? - Mark 9:33-37 Life Application Notes**

**9:34** The disciples, caught up in their constant struggle for personal success, were embarrassed to answer Jesus' question. It is always painful to compare our motives with Christ's. It is not wrong for believers to be industrious or ambitious. But when ambition pushes obedience and service to one side, it becomes sin. Pride or insecurity can cause us to overvalue position and prestige. In God's kingdom, such motives are destructive. The only safe ambition is directed toward Christ's kingdom, not our own advancement.

**9:36-37** Jesus taught the disciples to welcome children. This was a new approach in a society where children were usually treated as second-class citizens. It is important not only to treat children well, but also to teach them about Jesus. Children's ministries should never be regarded as less important than those for adults.

### **Study Questions:**

1. How did Jesus get His disciples' attention? (9:33-34)
2. How did Jesus explain what it means to be great? (9:35)
3. What does it mean to be a servant of all?
4. How can you become a "servant of all" in your everyday actions and attitudes?

## **Whoever Is Not Against Us Is for Us - Mark 9:38-41 Life Application Notes**

**9:38** The disciples were jealous of a man who healed in Jesus' name because they were more concerned about their own group's position than in helping to free those troubled by demons. We do the same today when we refuse to participate in worthy causes because (1) other people or groups are not affiliated with our denomination, (2) these projects do not involve the kind of people with whom we feel most comfortable, (3) others don't do things the way we are used to doing things, (4) our efforts won't receive enough recognition. Correct theology is important but should never be an excuse to avoid helping people in need.

**9:40** Jesus was not saying that being indifferent or neutral toward him is as good as being committed. As he explained in Matthew 12:30, "He who is not with me is against me." In both cases, Jesus was pointing out that neutrality toward him is not possible. Nevertheless, his followers will not all resemble each other or belong to the same groups. People who are on Jesus' side have the same goal of building up the kingdom of God, and they should not let their differences interfere with this goal. Those who share a common faith in Christ should cooperate. People don't have to be just like us to be following Jesus with us.

**9:41-42** Luke 9:48 states, "He who is least among you all-he is the greatest." In Jesus' eyes, whoever welcomes a child welcomes Jesus; giving a cup of cold water to a person in need is the same as giving an offering to God. By contrast, harming others or failing to care for them is a sin, even if they are unimportant people in the world's eyes. It is possible for thoughtless, selfish people to gain a measure of worldly greatness, but lasting greatness is measured by God's standards. What do you use as your measure-personal achievement or unselfish service?

**9:42** This caution against harming little ones in the faith applies both to what we do individually as teachers and examples and to what we allow to fester in our Christian fellowship. Our thoughts and actions must be motivated by love (1 Cor. 13), and we must be careful about judging others (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 14:1-15:4). However, we also have a responsibility to confront flagrant sin within the church (1 Cor. 5:12-13).

## Study Questions:

1. What do people argue about in your family?
2. What issue concerned the disciples? (9:38)
3. What attitudes did the disciples have in this situation? (9:38)
4. How did Jesus respond to the disciples' question? (9:40)
5. Over what issues do we tend to be divided as believers?
6. How does Christ want us to respond to others who minister in His name, even if they do not come from the same group or background as we do?
7. What can you do to support someone who does good and is "not against you"?

## Causing to Sin - Mark 9:42-50 Life Application Notes

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**9:43ff** Jesus used startling language to stress the importance of cutting sin out of our lives. Painful discipline is required of his true followers. Giving up a relationship, job, or habit that is against God's will may seem just as painful as cutting off a hand. Our high goal, however, is worth any sacrifice; Christ is worth any possible loss. Nothing should stand in the way of faith. We must be ruthless in removing sins from our lives now in order to avoid being stuck with them for eternity. Make your choices from an eternal perspective.

**9:48-49** With these strange words, Jesus pictured the serious and eternal consequences of sin. To the Jews, worms and fire represented both internal and external pain. What could be worse?

**9:50** Jesus used salt to illustrate three qualities that should be found in his people: (1) *We should remember God's faithfulness*, just as salt when used with a sacrifice recalled God's covenant with his people (Leviticus 2:13). (2) *We should make a difference in the "flavor" of the world we live in*, just as salt changes meat's flavor (see Matthew 5:13). (3) *We should counteract the moral decay in society*, just as salt preserves food from decay. When we lose this desire to "salt" the earth with the love and message of God, we become useless to him.

## Study Questions:

1. What are your favorite seasonings?
2. What was Jesus' attitude toward sin? (9:43-47)
3. Why did Jesus use extreme examples in this context? (9:43-48)
4. When Jesus talked about "salt," to what exactly was He referring? (9:50)
5. How do you think a Christian can cause others to sin?
6. In what ways is causing another person to sin worse than sinning yourself?
7. What concrete action can you take this week to avoid a sin that you have struggled with in the recent past?

**Bible Memory Verses: Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." Mark 9:37**