

## DAY 7: DISCIPLESHIP IN EVERYDAY MATTERS

### Mark 10

**MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE (MARK 10:1-12)** The Pharisees test Jesus with the question, “*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?*” (10:2). Moses allowed divorce, they argue (10:4). Jesus explains that the Mosaic statement on divorce was a concession to sin, “*because of your hardness of heart,*” not an affirmation of God’s will. What does God intend for marriage? Jesus goes back before the Law was established: “*From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*” (10:6-9).

In addressing the issue of divorce, Jesus addresses the worth of women. Quoting Genesis 1:27, He infers that a woman’s value equals a man’s. Then, quoting Genesis 2:24, He affirms that a man’s obligation to his wife surpasses his obligation to his parents. Moreover, Jesus says, a man who marries another woman commits adultery against his first wife. In His day, adultery was said to be committed against a woman’s father or her husband, but never against her—a telling commentary on a woman’s worth. Jesus speaks of a woman not as a subject, but as a free partner who, in contrast to any precedent at that time, *may divorce a man*—and bear the consequences.

**THINK ABOUT** how this passage can help couples seeking to understand and to uphold God’s intention for their union. On the other hand, this passage does not teach that divorce is an unpardonable sin. As a failure to meet God’s ideal, divorce, like all sin, should result in repentance and a fresh appreciation of the mercy of God. And, like all sin, it can be forgiven.

**DISCIPLESHIP AND POSSESSIONS (MARK 10:13-34)** The disciples try to prohibit some children from approaching Jesus, but He opposes them sharply. This is the only passage in the Gospels that describes Jesus as “*indignant.*” After rebuking His disciples, He takes the children in His arms and blesses them for their openness, receptiveness, and trust—the very qualities that are needed for entrance into the kingdom of God.

Next, a man approaches Jesus with a question. Matthew says the man is young, and Luke calls him a ruler. His haste (“*a man ran up*”) and posture (“*and knelt before Him*”) indicate his earnestness. The man wants to know what he should do, and Jesus directs him to live out the Ten Commandments. The young man claims to have kept the commandments since he was a child. “*You lack one thing; [Jesus says] go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me*” (10:21). The young man’s heart sinks, and “*he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions*” (10:22). He cannot bring himself to part with them.

Judaism taught that wealth was a sign of God’s blessing. It is hardly surprising, then, that the disciples are “*astonished*” when Jesus says, “*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God*” (10:25). Wealth can sometimes pose a threat to faith. Nevertheless, this command of Jesus is not a general rule for all Christians. Wealth prevents *this* man from doing the one thing Jesus asks—putting Christ first in his affection. He loves his money more than he loves Jesus.

So then, are Jesus’ disciples better off for their material sacrifices? This seems to be Peter’s thinking: “*We have left everything and followed You*” (10:28). In response to Peter, Jesus says that any sacrifice we make to follow Him is nothing compared to the returns, both now and in the life to come.



For the third time Jesus predicts His death and resurrection. This third prediction is more detailed than the previous two. Each of its six elements will soon be fulfilled in Jerusalem: the handing over to the chief priests; the condemnation; the handing over to the Gentiles; mocking, spitting and scourging; execution; and resurrection.

**THE REQUEST OF JAMES AND JOHN (MARK 10:35-45)** The Zebedee brothers come to Jesus, blurting out a request: they want the places of honor when Jesus achieves His coming glory. Jesus responds, “*You do not know what you are asking.*” The disciples have heard about His resurrected glory, but apparently have missed the suffering it will include.

“*Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?*” Jesus asks. James and John impetuously reply that they can do all this. Jesus concedes that they will—for them, discipleship will lead to sacrifice and suffering. As to the glory the brothers ask for, Jesus defers entirely to God: it “*is not Mine to grant.*” He then seizes the occasion to teach on servant leadership. The world sees leadership as dominance, authority, and the effective uses of power and position. “*But,*” Jesus counters, “*it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all*” (10:43-44). Then He utters what may be the key verse in the Gospel of Mark: “*For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many*” (10:45). The compassionate Son of God offers His suffering, death, and resurrection—that which no human can offer—as payment for the sins of mankind.

**BARTIMAEUS: A MODEL DISCIPLE (MARK 10:46-52)** On the final leg of the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus is passing through Jericho when a blind beggar named Bartimaeus calls to Him, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*” (10:47). Jesus asks him, “*What do you want Me to do for you?*” (10:51). In humble trust he asks not for wealth, power, success, but for his sight. “*Go your way; your faith has made you well*” (10:52). The Greek for *made you well* also means *saved*, thus reminding us that salvation is ultimately a process of total wholeness. Bartimaeus’s faith enables him to receive healing, and he responds by “*follow[ing] Him on the way.*” Jesus has transformed Bartimaeus from a roadside beggar to a disciple.

**PERSONALIZE** this lesson. God wants us to be honest with Him about our desires and to depend upon Him to meet all our needs. Bartimaeus obviously pleased Jesus with his candor, humility, and faith. If Jesus were to say to you, “What do you want Me to do for you?” what would you say? What needs and desires can you bring before Jesus in faith this week?

#### **REVIEW: DISCIPLESHIP IN EVERYDAY MATTERS**

14. Share ways in which this lesson initiates a new or deeper commitment to be a disciple of Christ, or inspires you to a specific action in your life.