

Small Group Discussion Guide

Mark 9:30-41

“Status Games”

Based on Sunday's
Sermon 8/9/26

Background

“As was frequently the case, the Lord was teaching His disciples that “the Son of Man (a messianic title taken from Dan. 7:13) is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later” (cf. 8:31; 9:12; 10:33–34). That was the primary truth that they needed to understand—and that they were unable to comprehend or accept. As it was for their fellow Jews (1 Cor. 1:23), a crucified Messiah was a stumbling block for the disciples; a dying Messiah was utterly incomprehensible and unacceptable to them. For that reason Jesus exhorted them, “Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men” (Luke 9:44). They needed to listen carefully and understand what He was saying to them about His death.”¹

“At no point does the way of Jesus differ more sharply from the way of the world than on the subject of personal greatness. I appreciate the words of one man who has been honest enough to put this into language that anyone can understand: The Church is in great need of deliverance from these very attitudes. There is a mindset that defines ministry as a kind of lordship: sitting in the honored seat, being the fêted guest at luncheons, speaking to vast throngs, building monuments and collecting honorary titles. This type of attitude values being served. For those caught up in such thinking, Christianity exists to give *me* eternal life, to increase *my* physical health, to coddle *my* body, to enlarge *my* power, to elevate *my* prestige. Jesus has a message for all who serve in ministry: *It isn't about you!*”²

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. When was a time you saw someone quietly serve without seeking recognition, and it stuck with you?

Observation

2. What does Jesus teach His disciples about His coming death and resurrection, and how do they respond?

¹ John MacArthur, *Mark 9–16*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2015), 34.

² Charles R. Swindoll, *Mark*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, 2018), 257–258.

3. What were the disciples arguing about on the road, and how does Jesus address it?
4. How does Jesus use the child as a living illustration? What actions does He take?

Interpretation

5. In the ancient world, children had no social status. How does Jesus' act of embracing a child redefine greatness?
6. Why does Jesus repeatedly teach about His suffering and resurrection in private settings?
7. How does this teaching contrast with the disciples' argument about status?
8. Read Isaiah 66:1-2. How does this passage about humility and how does this passage connect with Mark's passage?

Application

9. How can you cultivate a spirit of partnership rather than competition?
10. What would change in your church or group if greatness were measured by service and humility rather than visibility and status?

Prayer List: