

Message Discussion Guide

THE GOSPEL DEMANDS RADICAL ABANDONMENT, PART 1

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

October 12, 2008

Mark 10:17-31

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Remind learners that current economic times as well as circumstances such as experiencing a devastating hurricane or tornado can often lead us to conclude that possessions and money do not bring satisfaction. Invite learners to share a time when they got a glimpse of the truth that possessions do not bring happiness and do not last. Answer the following questions:

- Where do we usually turn for joy when possessions fail? Why?
- How easy is it to turn back to possessions when circumstances do not continue to be challenging? Why is that so?

Explain that we will be discussing surrendering possessions and money for the joy that Jesus offers us.

Option 2

Explain that within the Church, we often have our own personal "pet peeve sins." These sins are the ones that we find disgusting and are often quite judgmental of persons who commit these sins. Invite learners to name some of these types of sins. (*Examples could include adultery, homosexuality, pornography, being abusive, drug addiction, etc.*)

Now explain that we often excuse other sins for our own convenience. Invite learners to name some of these types of sins. (*Examples may include lack of self-discipline, lying on taxes, gossip, overeating, and neglecting the poor.*)

Ask the following questions:

- Why do we readily allow or even condone some sins over others that we condemn?
- Although the consequences of some sins will be more pronounced than others, should some be "swept under the rug?"
- What does our categorization of sins indicate about the lack of seriousness with which we view sin?

Explain that we will be discussing the radical nature that Christ views for us to take care of the poor.

Review the Message . . .

A Radical Approach . . .

Jesus' call to salvation demands total surrender .

- Salvation is never a matter of external reformation.
- Salvation is always a matter of internal transformation.
- Jesus is not merely a respectable teacher .
- Jesus is the sovereign Lord .

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Mark 10:17-31.
- What was Jesus' first response to the young man's question of how he could have eternal life? (*following some of the 10 Commandments*) Was Jesus advocating a works-based salvation? Why or why not? Read 1 John 3:17 for further explanation.
- If the young man had truly kept all of the Jewish commandments in his life, he would have appeared to others as if he had undergone transformation. But, what did his response to Jesus' command to sell all of his possessions indicate about the reality of his internal transformation?
- Why did Jesus choose the area of possessions for this man to forsake?
- Can being obedient to the commands of Scripture indicate a changed life? What is the difference between simply following external rules and exhibiting evidence of a transformed life?

Application . . .

- How would we have answered this man's question? What does that indicate about how we view the requirements of the gospel?
- Can we do enough good things to earn salvation? How does that affect the way that we view Jesus' commands?
- Why is appearing to follow Jesus without actually being changed by Him easy for us?
- What areas in our lives would Jesus point to as a lack of evidence for our transformed lives?
- Do we often treat Jesus as a therapist who makes recommendations or the Lord who makes demands on all of our decisions? How would our view of Him affect our obedience to His demands?

A Radical Affection . . .

Jesus calls us to give sacrificially because He loves us.

- He is a Shepherd who protects us.
- He is a Father who delights in us.

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- He is a King who _____ provides _____ for us.

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- Invite a volunteer to read Mark 10:21 again. What does this verse indicate about Jesus' emotions toward this young man?
- Do you think that Jesus response to the man showed love?
- How did Jesus show His love for this man?
- Enlist a volunteer to read Luke 12:15-21, 32-34. What does Verse 32 indicate about God's affection toward His children? (*Specifically focus on the words "little flock," "Father," and "kingdom."*)

Application . . .

- Knowing that Jesus loved the man how do you think Jesus felt when the man walked away? Why?
- How does knowing that God is not devoid of emotions toward His followers change your view of Him?
- Is obedience toward a loving and relational God easier than obedience toward a distant God? Why?

A Radical Command . . .

Jesus gives commands, not _____ considerations _____.

- As followers of Christ, we do not consider _____ options _____.
- As followers of Christ, we _____ obey _____.

Discussion Questions

- Focusing on Mark 10:21, what kind of language did Jesus use when instructing this man?
- Explain that Jesus issued five commands to the young man. Should these instructions be interpreted as Jesus said them (commands) or as suggestions? Did Jesus literally want the man to give up his possessions?
- What choices did Jesus leave with this man? (*to obey or disobey*)
- How did that choice reveal whether the man really wanted eternal life on Jesus' terms?

Application . . .

- How can we interpret this passage to make it fit our own desires instead of being faithful to Scripture? Why do we often want to make Scripture "fit" into our lives?
- Why do we often view Jesus' commands as suggestions for a Christian life instead of non-negotiable commands? What does this behavior suggest about our own willingness to obey Christ? Our surrender to Christ as Lord?

A Radical Reward . . .

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Jesus does not want to strip us of our pleasure; He wants to satisfy us with His treasure.

- Which do we want?
 - Short-term treasures we can't keep...
 - Or long-term treasures we can't lose?
 - Unpredictable investments...
 - Or inexhaustible savings?
- Where is our heart?
 - Our use of money is a sure barometer of our present spiritual condition.
 - Our use of money is a sure indicator of our future eternal destination.

Discussion Questions

- Read Matthew 6:19-21. What is the greatest treasure—that which can be destroyed or that which cannot? Why?
- What does this passage reveal about what God desires for His children?
- How does treasure reveal where one's heart is?

Application . . .

- How do we know what our treasure is? How can money reveal our hearts? Is this an accurate measurement? Why or why not?
- How do we find the balance between taking care of our families and giving up our possessions?
- Is holding onto temporary treasures an expression of distrust of Christ's plan for our lives? Why or why not?

A Radical Loss . . .

Love of possessions will inevitably and ultimately rob us of the joy for which we have been created.

- His eyes were blind.
- His face was sad.
- His hands were full.

Discussion Questions

- Read Mark 10:22 again. How intense were the man's emotions as he walked away from Christ? What does it mean that he was grieving?
- Remind learners that this man is the only one in the book of Mark who left Jesus without being joyful? What does this truth indicate about his choice to walk away from Jesus?

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- The man left Jesus in the same condition that he arrived—with all of his possessions. Yet, now he was sad. Why was he sad, and what does this indicate about His attachment to His possessions?
- Why do you think the man didn't realize that with God you always trade up?

Application . . .

- Why are possessions so easy to love?
- What does it take for us to often see possessions as artificial happiness?
- Knowing that we often allow possessions and money to dictate our lives instead of Jesus, why do we continue to do so?
- If Jesus asked you to give up all of your possessions for Him, would you do it? Is Jesus asking you to give up all of your possessions for Him? What is He asking you to give up?
- Encourage your attendees to pray the prayer that David suggested at the end of the message and wait for a response: "Lord, what do you want me to sell or give away?"